



History of the Northeast Region

Northeastern Connecticut Regional Planning Agency

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ABSTRACT

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ABSTRACT This report is a brief discussion of the early history of the Northeast Region. Information was gathered regarding the settlement of the individual towns and the prevailing social, economic and intellectual concerns of the region. Although the prime focus is on the early history, some material is presented which covers the 19th and 20th centuries. Character sketches and outlines of the more important residents of the region are presented as indicators of prevailing interests and concerns. Maps and illustrations are designed to show early transportation corridors, types of construction, and rural scenes.

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NORTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY

HISTORY OF THE NORTHEAST REGION

April 1972

This brief history of the Northeast Region is hopefully a new beginning for the collection of additional data relating to the ten towns in the region. It is hoped that historical societies, historical commissions, community organizations and interested individuals will add to the work herein presented and attempt to fill in the gaps of information. Much has been written by earlier sources and much more is needed.

The Northeastern Connecticut Regional Planning Agency by a vote of its members accepted by resolution on April 24, 1972, this historical report as a special study to be included in whole or in part in other works to be undertaken by the Agency.



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INTRODUCTION

attempting to compile a short history of the ten-towns of the Northeast Region, one is faced with the extremely difficult task of fitting out many bits of history into a comprehensive whole. It is astonishing at first to discover that there is a considerable body of work devoted exclusively to the Windham County area. Although there are some areas of discrepancy between the various accounts, it reveal a great devotion to historical accuracy and literary style. The problem for this writer was to decide what portions of histories should be included.

A partial product is herein presented with apologies at the start. I have not covered in depth the details of biography of important residents to the extent I wished. For this, I can state that time is the deciding factor. It is hoped that at some point, I may be able to devote much more effort to the notable residents of the ten-town area and the contributions they have made to our present way of life. On the other hand, it can be stated that I have devoted too much space to persons of little note. This was done because I believe that the spirit of an age or an area is often reflected in lively stories or character sketches. None of the information is original or being presented for the first time. I have relied on available historical sources and have restated their information. Had I more time, I would expect to uncover many more stories and perhaps some documents or diaries relating to the region. Perhaps such an admission of gaps will be an incentive to others, interested in history, to pursue new courses of investigation.

It is not general policy for a public agency like the Northeastern Connecticut Regional Planning Agency to sponsor historical work. However, when one views the Northeast Region, one is struck by the fact that what we have to work with in 1972 is part of a continuum from the early settlers to the industry and highways of the present day. Most of the towns bear the marks of the past in terms of the visible elements like historic homes and verdant town greens, and in terms of the intangible attitudes and character that separates one town most surely from another. Therefore, the study was undertaken and hopefully, will continue. I have offered my apologies for the gaps and weak points of this work and now ask your encouragement and participation so that this small effort can be expanded through the efforts of other residents of the Northeast Region.

Nancy Pritchard Weiss

PICTURE CREDITS

The drawings and illustrations in this report are by Norm Chartier of Central Village, Connecticut. Many of the illustrations are based on old photographs, supplied through the courtesy of Scott Symington, and the artist's conception of local scenes.

Appreciation is extended to the National Geographic Society and most especially to Mr. William Palmerston, for use of the map of the Post Roads. National Geographic has been extremely cooperative in supplying the negative of the map, first printed in the magazine in August, 1962.

INDIANS OF THE NORTHEAST REGION

Most of the Indians in Windham County belonged to tribes that were subdivisions of the Algonquins. The region was called "Nipnet", meaning fresh water country. The inhabitants of the area were called the Nipmunks or Nipnets and their territory extended to the present site of Webster Lake, the dividing line between the Nipmunk and Narragansett territories.

The Wabbaquassetts, or mat-producers, lived in the area west of the Quinebaug River. They apparently were a peaceful group and are credited with being the first tribe to assist the Winthrop Colony at Boston when Acquittamaug and his father journeyed with others of the tribe to Boston with corn. The Quinebaugs inhabited the approximate area of the present towns of Plainfield and Canterbury and called that section Whetstone because of a quarry located there from which they gathered certain materials. Constant conflict occurred between the Nipmucks and the Narragansetts over jurisdiction of the land east of the Quinebaug River. "About twenty years before the coming of the white settlement of Connecticut, the Pequots invaded the area and drove away the Narragansetts, conquered the Quinebaugs and Wabbaquassetts and assumed jurisdiction over all the land now known as Windham County."

When the Pequots were overthrown, their land became the property of Uncas, the chief of a small band of Mohegans. Uncas apparently had no trouble in asserting his power over the docile Wabbaquassetts, but the Quinebaugs were not so easily won. Pessacus (Moosup) claimed the Quinebaug Country as a Narragansett territory. For many years the Quinebaugs were split in their allegiance and paid tribute to both Uncas and the Narragansetts. Finally three Narragansetts brought the Quinebaugs under their domination and built three forts, one at Egunk Hill (Sterling Hill), one year the Greenwich Path and one at Wanungatuck Hill. Another Indian fort was built at the junction of the Quinebaug and Assawanga (Five Mile River). The Whetstone Country was also in contention with the inhabitants favoring the Narragansetts.

The present site of Danielson was once approximately the Indian area called Acquiunk. It is the site of the only known battle between the Indians. The cause of the problem was strictly culinary. It seems that the Narragansetts once invited the Nipmucks for a feast of shell fish. The Nipmucks returned the invitation and invited the Narragansetts for a dinner of eels. Unfortunately, the Narragansetts could not eat the slimy delicacy and soon their hosts were offended. One thing led to another and they started fighting, a disastrous situation for the Narragansetts. Only two of the visitors escaped, soon returning with a number of warriors to avenge their dead. War raged at Aquiunk for three days, and the Nipmucks were again victorious. The Narragansetts retreated and the Nipmucks buried their dead on the battlefield in a place still known as the Indian Burying Ground.

Another record of the Indians in Windham County is the story of the "praying Indians." In 1670 the influence of the preacher Eliot reached the Wabbaquassetts and three churches or "praying towns" were established. One was located in Woodstock, probably near Woodstock Hill, one was at Quinnetisset, now part of Thompson and another was at Myanexet, also part of the present town of Woodstock.

The peaceful Wabbaquasetts, still under the authority of Uncas, had accepted a form of Christianity and stories of missionary work among them reached Eliot who promised to come and visit. He arrived in 1674 with Major Goodkin and was extremely pleased with the successes that greeted him. Eliot preached to the Indians in their own language and the general spirit of good will was apparently quite pervasive. Uncas, however, was not happy about the situation and sent a secret messenger whose threats marred the festivities. The timid Wabbaquasetts were worried, but Goodkin assured them that they were part of the government of Massachusetts and had little to worry about.

Unfortunately the successes of the "praying Indians" and Eliot were soon forgotten in opening of hostilities known as the Narragansett or King Philip's war. No known fighting occurred in Windham County, but the area was constantly traversed by scouting parties. According to the historian Bayles, the "praying Indians" wanted to go to war on the side of the English, but they were not trusted and were moved to Deere Island in Boston Harbor where they suffered extreme hardships. By the time the English were prepared to trust them, the conflict was just about over. The war marked the end of major altercation between the Indians and white settlers.

What vestiges of the Indians that remained other than a small number of inhabitants was their original claims to land. Uncas land extended in two major tracts that included the ten towns of the present north-east region. One tract, the hereditary land of the Mohegans was the area bordered by the Whetstone Brook, the Quinebaug and Five Mile River and, on the west, the Willimantic River and some areas beyond. The second tract of land was his as a result of his victory over the Pequots and included the Wabbaquasett County, now the towns of Pomfret, Woodstock, Eastford, parts of Putnam and Thompson, and other towns now part of Tolland County.

Uncas was apparently quite successful in maintaining his claims, and used his position as sachem well. (It is strange that the early settlers could on one hand practically annihilate the Indians and on the other, respect their early claims to the land and purchase it from them.) Unfortunately Uncas' successors were not as wise as he. The first tract of land was given by Uncas to his son Joshua. Joshua died quite soon thereafter, and willed his land to Captain John Mason and fifteen others for the purpose of establishing a plantation. The second tract of land was left to Owaneco, the most unfortunate of Uncas' sons. Poor Owaneco had a drinking problem and soon Major James Fitch was appointed his guardian. Little by little the fortunes of Owaneco were exchanged or sold for hard cider and he spent his last years begging from door to door with his wife. Having once owned almost all of Windham County, his land fell into the hands of early speculators and he became a comic-pathetic figure. The disposal of his land, however, remained a problem long after he was gone and conflicts arose among the white settlers as to the exact ownership of much of Windham County.

Little more is recorded of the Indians. They soon fade from the histories as other concerns arise. One last bit of information however, is supplied. After the close of the Revolution, Woodstock reserved one hundred acres for the Indians at Hatchet Pond. By about 1850 most of them were gone and the land was purchased by white families. At Hatchet Pond the Indians produced baskets and birch brooms, often traded for commodities in the country stores. Some of them worked in the nearby homes of white families, but in general the last days of the Wabbaquassetts were seemingly uneventful. Hatchet Pond is the resting place of the last chief of the Wabbaquassetts.



EARLY LAND PURCHASES AND SETTLEMENT

The area that was to become the Northeast Region was at first merely a space of trackless wilderness to be crossed by the settlers of the earlier Connecticut towns. It was known to the English as early as 1635-6, but apparently no attempts at settlement were made. An early trail, called the Connecticut Path was used in 1633 by John Oldham and his companions and there is evidence that Thomas Hooker and his band, encumbered with their cattle and flocks, crossed the towns of Thompson and Woodstock, fording the waters of Crystal Pond at Bennett's ford by the same route. Apparently many of the early settlers used the Path, but because it was never improved for use by carts, it was discontinued through Windham County in 1725.

The first transfer of land in Windham County was in 1653. John Winthrop received a deed from the Indians, James and Massashowitz, who really were not entitled to sell it. Winthrop, however took great care to assure the legality of his purchase and it was upheld in the General Court of Connecticut in 1671. Winthrop intended to start a plantation on the land, but never did. He believed that there were some white families living here at the time of his purchase, but no trace of them has been found. It is recorded that one Englishman attempted settlement, but was driven off by threats of the Indians. Complications regarding the sale developed between the sons of Winthrop and Major James Fitch. Fitch had been appointed the guardian of Owaneco, who claimed all the land, including some portions that had been sold to Winthrop. Fitch settled at Peagscomsuck, now part of Canterbury, and the dispute between him and the Winthrop heirs was settled by the decision to make the Quinebaug River the dividing line between the two tracts. Winthrop's claim thus became the area east of the Quinebaug, except for a strip of land in the southwestern part of Plainfield. As soon as the dispute was partially settled, Fitch became interested in selling the land for the establishment of communities. As a land speculator par excellance, he wanted to avoid rampant dealing by others. The discussion of the town of Canterbury, included in this study, relates further land disputes.

The Woodward-Saffery line presents another historical example of early land problems in this region. The boundary between Massachusetts and Connecticut was determined to be the line designated in 1642 by the work of Messrs. Woodward and Saffrey. Unfortunately, these men were not at all accurate and Massachusetts ended up by claiming all the towns that are presently on the Massachusetts-Connecticut border. The error in their calculations was rather large as they intended to survey the area three miles south of the Charles River and ended up by including all the land on a diagonal to the northern edge of the town of Windsor, ten miles south of their original starting point. The line is important because the first sale of land by Major Fitch was to the town of Roxbury, Massachusetts, for the creation of a new town, New Roxbury, later Woodstock, Connecticut. The problems experienced by Woodstock in the effort to become part of Connecticut will be noted in the section of this study regarding the town. However, the dispute over the Woodward-Saffery line continued until Woodstock seceded from Massachusetts in 1749, and officially became part of Connecticut.

An Historic PLAN
of the

POST ROADS

between
NEW YORK & BOSTON

Also

An accurate description of America's
first Postal Routes, and present-day highways
run in a distinct Manner: Mountains, Rivers, Bays,
Curves, Soundings in fathoms, Currents on the coast
& Cities, Towns, and Townships. From Maps of
no^t Jefferys &c, and a great Number of actual
Surveys and other Materials.

Published at Washington, D.C.
by the
National Geographic Society
August 1962

Faithfully set down by
Lisa Biganzoli
at the instance of
Geo Beatty, Geographer
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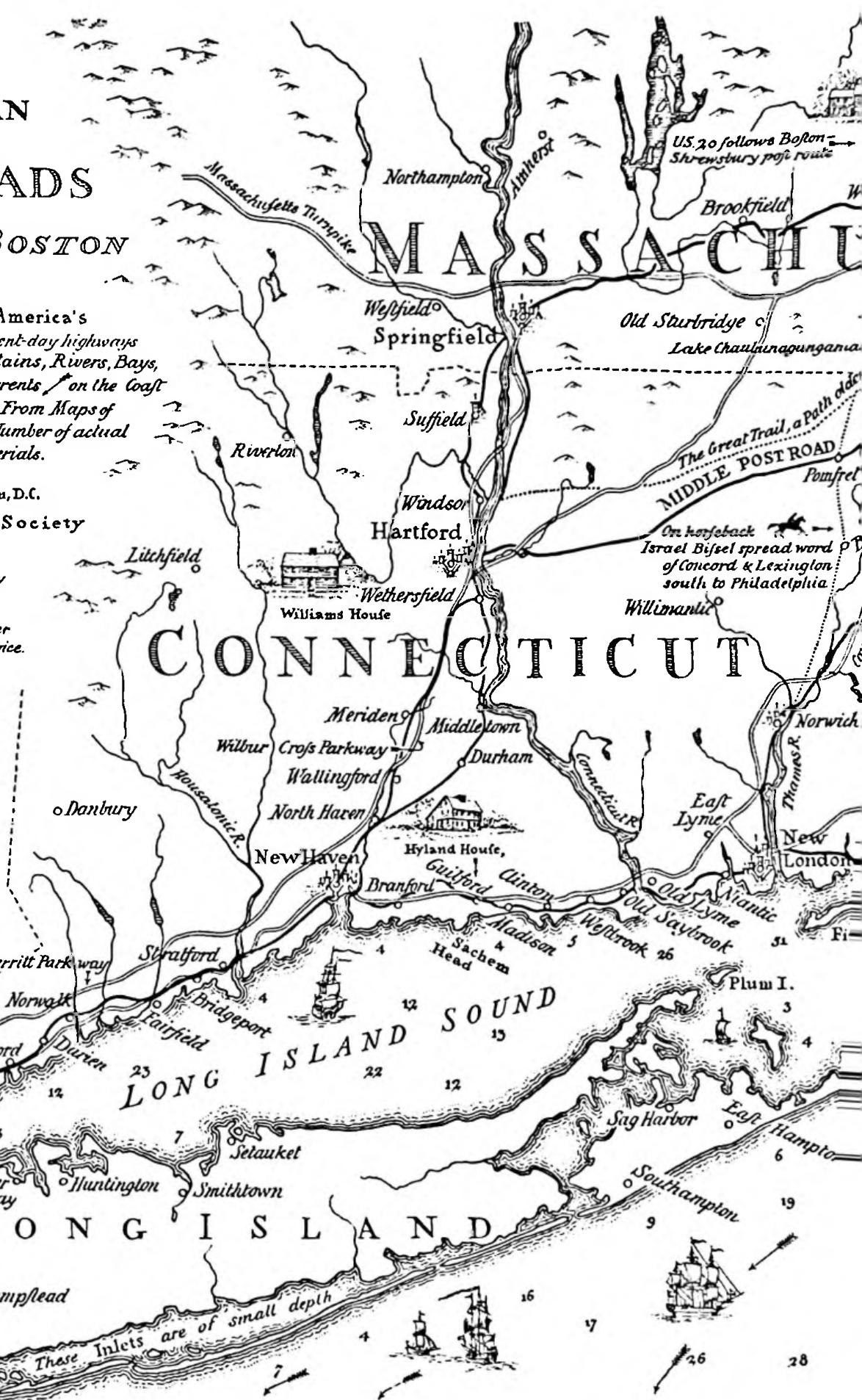
Peekskill
Laverstraw
Hudson R.
Norwalk
Merritt Parkway
Stamford
Danbury
Stratford
Fairfield
Bridgeport
Norwich
Greenwich
Port Chester
Larchmont
Rye
New Rochelle
Jerome Park Reservoir
Kings Bridge
Oyster Bay
Huntington
Smithtown
Setauket
Islip
Flushing
Jamaica
Hempstead
Bowling Green
Brooklyn
Flatbush

These Inlets are of small depth

LONG ISLAND SOUND
ISLAND

LONG ISLAND

Amherst
Northampton
Massachusetts Turnpike
Westfield
Springfield
Suffield
Windsor
Hartford
Wethersfield
Williams House
Litchfield
Meriden
Middletown
Durham
Wallingford
North Haven
New Haven
Branford
GUILDFORD
Clinton
Madison
Sachsen Head
Old Saybrook
Wightbrook
Old Lyme
East Lyme
New London
Norwich
Thames R.
Middletown
Wilbur Cross Parkway
Housatonic R.
Danbury
Stratford
Fairfield
Bridgeport
Norwich
Greenwich
Port Chester
Larchmont
Rye
New Rochelle
Jerome Park Reservoir
Kings Bridge
Oyster Bay
Huntington
Smithtown
Setauket
Islip
Flushing
Jamaica
Hempstead
Bowling Green
Brooklyn
Flatbush



An Historic PLAN
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POST ROADS
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Also

An accurate description of America's
earliest Postal Routes, and present-day highways
Showing in a distinct Manner: Mountains, Rivers, Bays,
Harbours, Soundings in fathoms, Currents, &c. on the Coast
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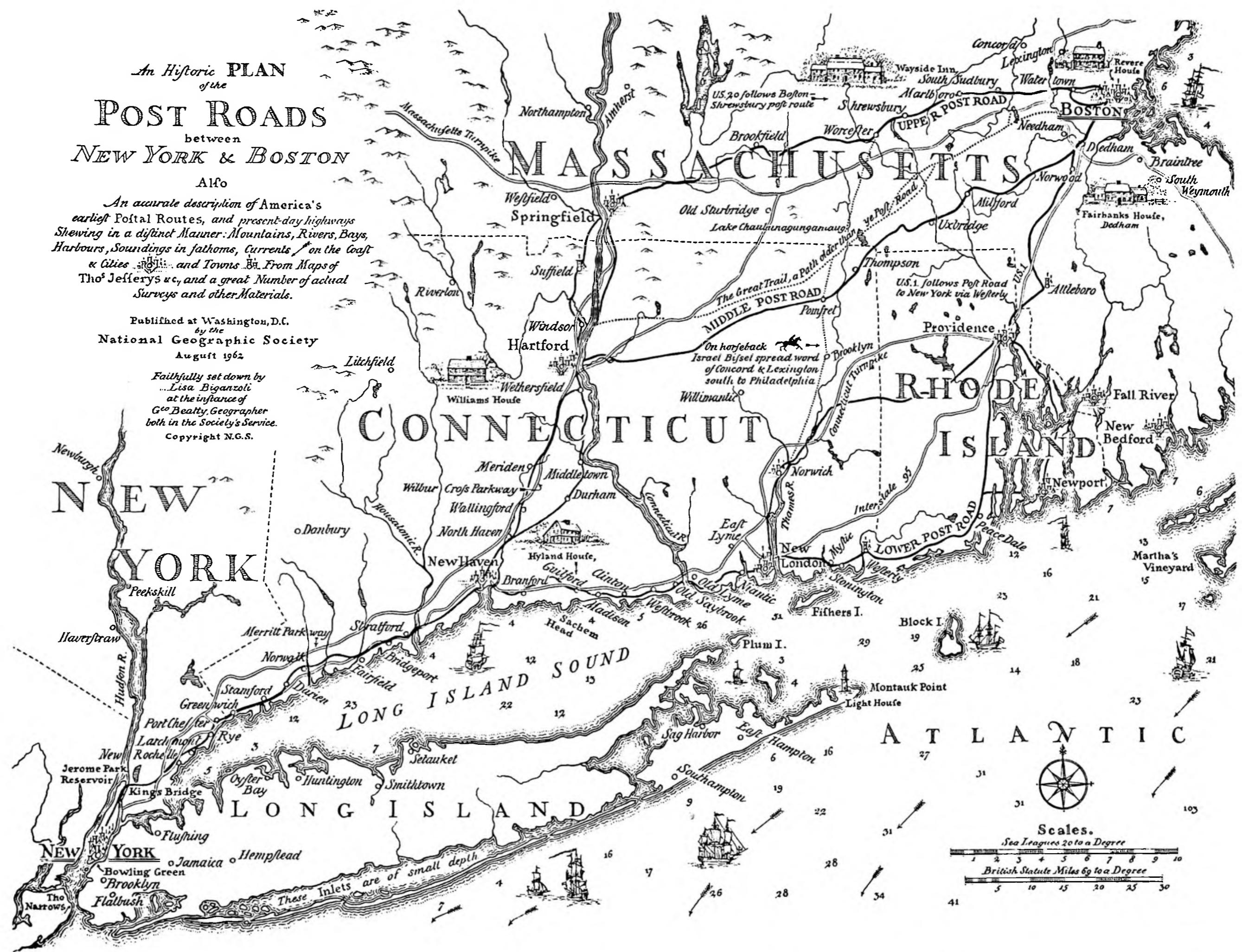


An Historic PLAN
of the
POST ROADS
between
NEW YORK & BOSTON

Also
An accurate description of America's
earliest Postal Routes, and present-day highways
Shewing in a distinct Manner: Mountains, Rivers, Bays,
Harbours, Soundings in fathoms, Currents / on the Coast
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The next major settlements are almost all part of the original dealings of Major Fitch and are related in detail in the sections pertaining to each town. The conflicting claims and the changes in status of the area, some following the pattern of first becoming societies or recognized settlements, then petitioning to become separate towns and finally being recognized as such and incorporated, is often complicated, but serves to indicate that even in the early days of settlement some system of regulating and viewing land areas was used. Despite all the visions of wilderness and isolation that are inspired by a reading of the early history, chaos was not the rule and a fairly equitable system was worked out by the legislatures.

ROADS

Roads and transportation are often the clues to the early establishment of towns. The region was much like it is today in terms of water power and population growth. Many of the first prosperous towns are still growing and expanding some three hundred years later. Roads, however, have changed with some of the early paths now essentially lost and forgotten.

The Connecticut Path has been discussed earlier. The Nipmuck Path and the Greenwich Path also traversed the area and were used for quite some time. The Nipmuck Path crossed diagonally through the Woodstock area and extended in a southerly direction through the Town of Canterbury and on to the sea. The Greenwich Path began near Peagscomsuck, Canterbury, and ran through the present town of Plainfield, through the area called the Whetsone Country and on into the town of Voluntown. As settlement came to the area, new roads were built and turnpikes were established. Often the construction or improvement of a road brought great changes to a settlement. In response to increased travel, inns and taverns were established to fill the needs of the weary. Taxes were sometimes collected from the residents of particular areas crossed by early roads, often causing great consternation as in the town of Canterbury when the turnpike to Providence from Norwich was suggested. Bridges were often difficult to construct and patents for their construction were necessary. Early attempts to bridge the Quinebaug were frequently doomed to failure because of the spring floods and "September gales". Dams on the river were opposed by residents of Canterbury in particular as they did not want anything to upset the annual ascent of the shad.

A map is included to illustrate the early roads in the region. Post roads were also of importance, especially the Middle Post Road running across the towns of Thompson, Pomfret and on to Hartford. These early transportation avenues changed the area a great deal in increasing the flow of information in the region. It was via the Post Road that General Israel Putnam heard the news of the attack at Lexington and Concord, and according to tradition, left his plow in the field and departed for battle.

EARLY SETTLERS

Once settlement began in earnest in the Northeast region of Connecticut a number of similarities are noted. Generally the early settlers were of the same stock. Most settlers were of English descent and belonged to the Congregational Church. The town leaders were chosen in respect of age and generally the most prominent families were asked to fill the important town positions. The early town clerks performed important service in providing accurate information of the early years of the region. Births, deaths, land sales and disputes within the church were all a matter of public interest and were preserved in the town records. Once the first rude dwelling units were constructed, the town generally turned its attention to the meeting house and its construction was a total town function. All were required to contribute something for its construction and maintenance and the choice and salary of a minister were of paramount importance. The settlers were used to an orderly form of existence in England and in Massachusetts, and fully intended to continue this system in their new surroundings.

Many short sketches are included in the section devoted to a town-by-town study of early settlers. Some immortalized themselves through their valor and sheer courage in facing the wilderness, others through less auspicious actions. In general women played rather important roles and showed great personal courage in the face of danger. Ester Grosvenor, Mrs. Spaulding, Mary Utter, Mrs. Chandler and later Prudence Crandall all performed important functions in the emerging society. Most of them devoted themselves to protecting and raising their families, but others like Miss Crandall, found different callings.

Some of the early purchasers were never settlers. The manor of Mортlake, purchased as a refuge for English and Irish dissenters by Sir Robert Blackwell, was never inhabited by him. The original purchaser of Thompson, Sir Robert Thompson, never visited his purchase. These individuals were, however, the exceptions to the rule. Most of the men purchased their land, sometimes sight unseen and moved here with their best dreams in hand.

In the book, Town Meeting Country, by Clarence M. Webster, the point is made that the early settlers were determined to live as they had in the past: "From the very first, my people were town folks. They were individuals also, and appallingly set ones, but they instinctively realized that to carry their insistence on personal freedom too far was fatal. Very seldom do you hear of a lonely Puritan homesteader living miles away from anyone and obeying no community rules."² When one views the town centers, lined with large white houses and centering usually on a church, it is immediately evident that the beginnings of each town were here close to one another and close to the meeting house. Such proximity was conducive to the strict moral codes and other enforcement practices followed by the early settlers. Due to this community of common heritage and religion, any deviation was thought suspicious. In the early history of Putnam, before it became a separate town, much interest was shown in the arrival of a French-Canadian family as they represented a different way of life and thus a threat. When in-migration finally did occur, it resulted in the typical observation that the newer nationalities settled the area near the Quinebaug and the older families resided and in fact still reside on the high uplands surrounding the river valley. A discussion of the new migration to the region is found in the following section.

NEW SETTLERS

Little information is readily found regarding the new migration that followed the early settlement of the region. For a rather long period of time, most of the towns remained the same. Population increase was natural and not the result of in-migration until the coming of industrialization.

The most complete discussion of this change is found in a report by Maurice Rotival and Associates in the 1950's. Following the disastrous flood of 1955, the services of Mr. Rotival were engaged for a planning study. Included in the study is a section on nationalities. He first noted that there are patterns of national congregation in the area and then conducted a survey to determine the root of such settlement. His explanation is paraphrased as follows:

The area near the Quinebaug River is broadly populated by persons of the Latin race and the Anglo-Saxons inhabit the surrounding plateau. Absentee management seems to explain this situation with the early settlers managing the enterprises that serve as places of employment to the later groups. The major "Latin" groups are French-Canadian arrivals of the middle and late 19th century and the early 20th century. French-Canadian immigration was sparked by the building of railroads that ran directly from Canada to the area. Settlement by this national group is most evident in the towns of Putnam, Plainfield and the subsections of the Grosvenordales, Danielson, Moosup and Wauregan. "They settled one section of town and molded it into a French community. They maintained a social ethnic integrity and shaped the local religious and educational patterns to a distinctly French-Canadian orientation."³

The English settlers of the area were farmers and chose to settle away from the Quinebaug in the towns and villages that still are populated by persons with predominantly English names. With industrialization, many retreated even farther back from the River while others became the absentee managers previously mentioned. The Irish settlers arrived in the 19th century and inhabited both the valley and the plateau areas.

The Swedish settlers, at the time of the Rotival study, were involved in dairy farming and settled in the northern part of the Quinebaug Valley in the early part of the 20th century and late 19th century. "They have settled areas which resemble the country from which they came. They have attempted to re-create their homelands."⁴

Finnish immigration in the 20th century has been centered in the area of Canterbury, Brooklyn and parts of Sterling and Voluntown. At the time of the study, most of the Finnish people were engaged in poultry farming and lived on rather isolated farms. The Baltic immigrants were much like the Finnish.

Mr. Rotival's study draws the following conclusion: "One finds that with few exceptions, the Catholics inhabit the Valley of the Quinebaug itself, whereas the Protestants inhabit the highlands surrounding the flood plain. Another interesting conclusion...is the fact that the highlands (plateau) of the Valley were first settled."⁵

THE STRUCTURE OF TOWN GOVERNMENT

At the earliest level of settlement of the original towns in the area, is the town meeting system. The procedure of eliciting the opinions of all voters of a town in assembly is often a tedious process, but remains a venerable institution in most of the towns in the Northeast region. At one time in the early Massachusetts Bay colony, all affairs of the town were handled in a town meeting. Soon it became evident that such a system was much too cumbersome and the present procedure of having two regular town meetings a year was instituted for the approval of town appropriations. The system was carried to Connecticut by the early settlers and was continued in all the towns of the present Northeast region with one exception. The exception to the town meeting form of government was the manor of Mortlake, discussed in detail in the section on Pomfret. Essentially, Mortlake was the domain first of Blackwell and later of Jonathan Belcher. No form of town rule other than the manorial rights of the owners was instituted until problems arose over support of one Peter Davison and later over the selection of a minister. The rights of a manor were eventually given up and Mortlake became part of Brooklyn, a town with a continuing tradition of town meetings.

The system of the past is still used today in all the towns except Killingly. Town meetings are called, moderators are selected, some type of procedure is followed, and decisions are rendered. Typically everyone is allowed to speak at the meeting, although most often discussion is centered on the persons immediately involved in the issue at hand. The elected officials of the town are often called upon to defend their actions or explain the reasons for certain requests for appropriations. To casual observers, the town meeting system may seem to be archaic and inefficient but it serves a basic need and represents one of the few examples of direct democracy. Historically, the town meeting has been used to settle important questions of the town as represented in the early Roxbury meeting, held to ascertain the fact that residents believed that the town was too crowded and it was time to create a New Roxbury, now Woodstock. Early important decisions in town meeting have determined the later direction of the towns. Discussions regarding the early construction of meeting houses, the establishment of school districts and other important matters have been conducted and recorded in the remarkable records of the early town clerks who covered everything from morals and religion to taxes and turnpikes. Perhaps the one error in some of the histories is that these servants of the towns did not get enough credit.

One important thing remains to be said about the early structure of town government: it apparently worked and worked quite well. The towns grew and prospered, roads were constructed and later paved, school districts were established and later consolidated and the work of the town went on. If one is not truly familiar with the venerable institution of the town meeting, all he has to do is wait for the next meeting in any town in which he is a voter or a property owner.

JUSTICE - INJUSTICE

Puritan justice was generally swift and cruel. Few can forget the story of Hester Prynne in Hawthorne's Scarlet Letter but similar practices were not always typical in Windham County. Murderers were tried and summarily hanged, before an audience of residents, gleefully watching in a mood of celebration, the proper execution of justice. A local preacher generally reviewed the story of crime and then, supplied with a captive audience he could draw further parallels and moral lessons for the benefit of the condemned and the audience.

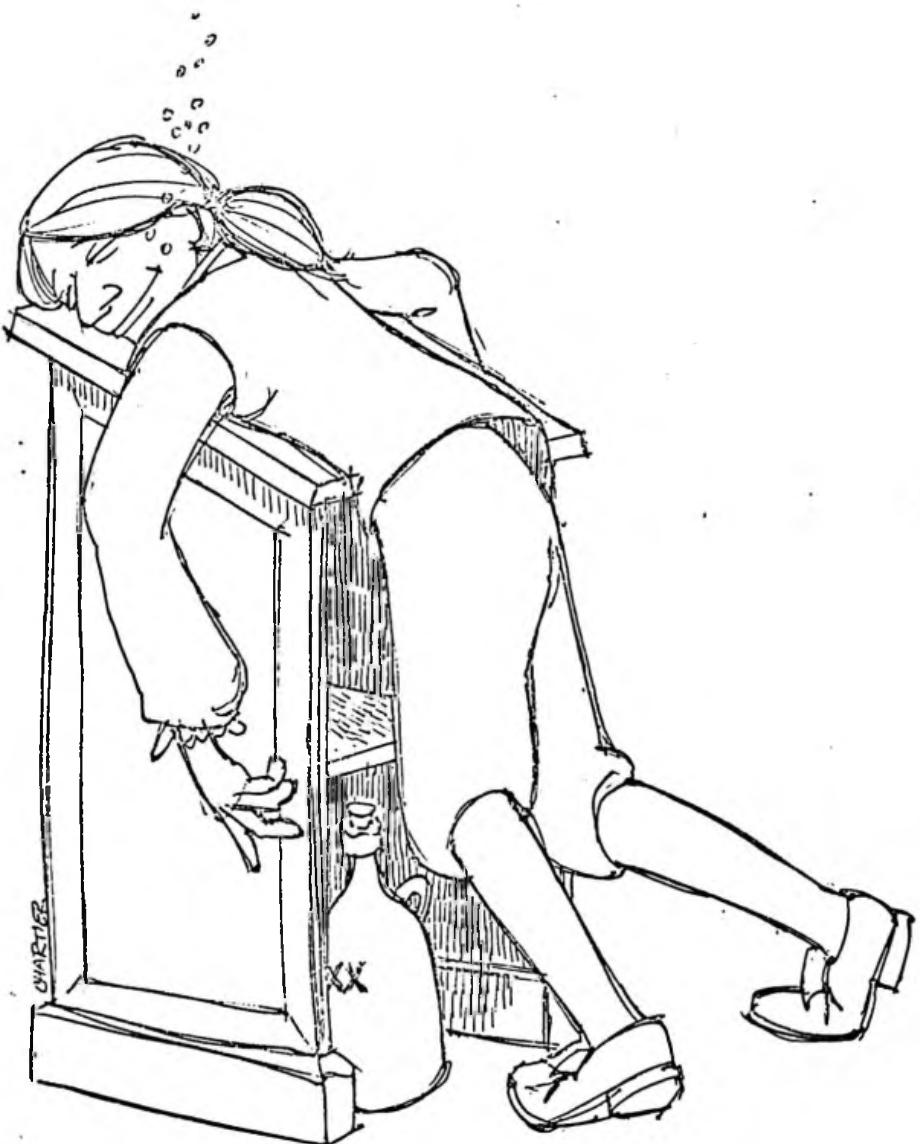
Certain examples of the swift hand of justice are recorded in the history of persons being flogged, branded with a scarlet letter, confined in the stocks, and hanged. Generally this type of punishment was a good chance for a meeting of friends and neighbors as well as a method of assuring all that the cause of justice and the laws of God were not being ignored in the newly settled areas. One story of justice going a bit astray is recorded in the book Town Meeting Country: It seems that a certain Dr. John Hallowell of Pomfret (noted in Miss Larned's history as once being accused of having the necessary equipment to counterfeit money) reported the death, by natural causes, of a certain young girl, noted for her beauty and charm. A few months later, however, her sister came forward and declared that the girl had died because the doctor had performed an illegal operation. She even suggested that a small body was thrown into the fireplace and named the son of a prominent Pomfret family as the father. Naturally, everyone in Pomfret was quite upset about the news and the doctor was sentenced to sit in public with a rope around his neck. Another trial was planned and the outcome seemed certain. Somehow things went astray and the doctor escaped the Windham County Jail and fled to Rhode Island. Apparently his whereabouts were known to the authorities, but the doctor was never remanded to face his scheduled trial. He spent the remainder of his life in exile, practicing medicine in Rhode Island.

Another example of justice was later recorded in the trial of Miss Prudence Crandall. Found guilty in the lower courts, the decision was later reversed and the State of Connecticut, to make up for the injustice done Miss Crandall, provided her with a pension of some \$400 a year in her home in Kansas.

MR. DODGE

Another Pomfret story concerns the activities of Mr. Dodge, a Harvard graduate, and minister of the Reformed Church in Pomfret. It seems that Mr. Dodge was sent to Pomfret to replace the aging minister, Mr. Putnam. Mr. Dodge soon gained a wide following due to his good humor and promise of salvation on Sundays rather than hell-fire and brimstone. Mr. Dodge was deemed unacceptable to the conservatives of the established church, but soon his popularity led to the formation of a separate church. All went well for some time and his congregation grew. He was noted for his good humor and love of drink, the cause of his final downfall. He seems to have developed an increasingly strong desire for liquor acceptable to the members of his congregation, until one Sunday "rising to speak he fell upon the pulpit overcome with drunken sickness, falling forever from his high estate."

The congregation was most merciful and pleaded with Dodge to reform and remain as their pastor. He could not abstain and finally had to leave Pomfret. The last trace of Dodge is reported in an incident involving a "Dodge the Babbler" in Glastonbury, who had an affidavit sworn out against him for railing against the system of paying ministers. Apparently this poor soul died in 1806, an unreformed drunk.



TEMPERANCE MOVEMENT IN WINDHAM COUNTY

Under the initial impetus of Mr. Samuel May, the temperance movement in Windham County gained many followers. Drunkenness was a wide spread problem and most towns could find numerous examples of the evils of drink. According to Miss Larned, initially the Pomfret Moral Society through ministers and prominent citizens expended a great deal of effort in trying to convince men not to drink. But, according to the Thompson historian, "Men denounced drunkenness and kept on drinking." Temperance resolutions were passed, but often the signers celebrated their success and moral decisions with a few glasses of grog following the meeting. Thus things got off to a rather hypocritical start and useless effort until it was decided that all drinking of liquor must stop completely. Fuel was added to the fire by an incident in Killingly. It was the custom for school masters at the closing of school each year to treat all the students to a little party at which liquor was plentifully served. Three sons of Mr. William Fisher, partook of the festivities until all three were so drunk they could not stand. The youngest child had consumed so much that he was apparently near death. The father was outraged and so vocal in spreading the news of the incident, that righteous indignation set in and school masters were forbidden to continue the customary closing practices. A big blow had been struck in Windham County for temperance.

Temperance societies were started in 1828 and great steam was added in the reform of one Daniel Frost of Canterbury. Frost apparently was a prominent man and no one suspected that he had a problem with the rum, gin and brandy he typically served at his home on Sundays to fellow church-goers. His conversion was so complete that he swore off liquor forever and began serving his Sunday guests glasses of cold water. His personal zeal led him to give up his legal practice and devote all his time to the temperance movement. Other impetus was gained as women joined the movement and formed societies of their own and as Yankee frugality came to the fore with the realization that it would save a great deal of money if drink was outlawed and the custom of giving alcohol to workers was stopped. Mr. Frost gained converts all over Windham County and record of only one major difference of opinion is extant in Miss Larned's accounts. At the time of temperance zeal, Eastford was part of the town of Ashford. It was determined that the meeting house in Eastford had to be moved down a steep hill and a great crowd gathered with men and oxen to carry out the difficult task. The leader of the workmen demanded of Esquire Bosworth the customary drink and Bosworth, a temperance man, refused. The men with the oxen and the citizens of the town became quite angry with each other and the workmen decided to go home and leave the meeting house perilously hanging. All would have ended badly had not temperance zeal been high. Abington abstainers came to the rescue and accomplished the rest of the task without a drop to drink.

The final mementoes of the temperance zeal of the 1820's was the effort to suppress the issuance of liquor licenses. Efforts to get persons to sign the pledge to abstain were still continued, some still being circulated in some Protestant churches in the region in the 1950's, and it was decided that in each school district in Windham County, one person would be responsible for circulating the petitions and getting signatures.

CHURCH OF BACCHUS

One notable alternative to the fervor of the Temperance Movement in Windham County was the Church of Bacchus, founded by Ephriam Lyon of Eastford. The story goes tht Mr. Lyon positively loved to drink hard cider and became quite a celebrity around Eastford. Temperance people, ministers, neighbors, and probably poor Jerusha, his wife tried to dissuade Ephriam from his chosen course, but to no avail. He rather liked all the attention his drinking attracted. Being particularly interested in his cider one morning, Ephriam decided not to attend church, but to sit alone and rock and sample cider on the front porch. As he sat there, he suddenly had a bright idea. He would start his own church, the Church of Bacchus, and name himself high priest. The purpose of the church would be to celebrate the joys of alcoholic consumption. His membership would be drawn from all residents who were reputed to occasionally consume too much. Ephriam decided that he would record the names of his communicants in his black ledger, never bothering to ask those recorded whether or not they wanted to join. Pretty soon, the list had swelled, often to the chagrin of persons who did not wish to publicize their habit. Dismissal from the Church of Bacchus was possible only if one accepted temperance and disavowed drink forever. The high priest liked to travel around and visit the cider barrels of his communicants and meetings were periodically held to celebrate the tenets of the church, national holidays, local holidays and of course, the birthdays of all members.

Poor Ephriam kept up his pace until the age of eighty-two, when he strained himself lifting a barrel of cider and died three days later. The church died with him.

WINDHAM COUNTY IN THE 1850-60's

During the 1850's and 60's the area was quite prosperous owing to the extensive development of industry. The businesses were run by steam or water power and included both the small, often one-man operation of grist and saw mills, and the large industries of cotton and textile manufacturing. The development of large stone and brick cotton mills seems to mark the increasing importance of the railroad and the rapid influx of money that brought wealth to the East from the discovery of gold in California.

The mill workers at this time were apparently descendants of early farmers and settlers of the area. The French-Canadian element was prevalent in the mill villages, but was not numerous. Irish immigrants were more numerous and found in many lines of work.

Mill employment at the time was quite strenuous; based on the hours of work. The cotton mills typically operated on a sixty-nine hour week with work on Saturdays until 3:30 in the afternoon. During the short daylight months, the mills were lighted by fish oil lamps. Family life generally centered around the mill community, typically composed of many two-family dwelling units built of brick or stone. Few amusements were provided to the people as little time was available. The factories recognized four holidays per year and generally they represented the prime moments of recreation. The three principle manufacturing towns were Putnam, Danielson, (then Danielsonville) and Willimantic.

By the beginning of the Civil War, the railroad had increased in importance. The line that ran through this region, the Norwich and Worcester Railroad, brought troops from Connecticut to conflicts in the South. Initial optimism that the war would last only a few months was dissipated by the Battle of Bull Run. Large numbers of men were needed after the battle and the Eighteenth Connecticut Regiment was recruited in Windham and New London counties. The war dragged on and interest changed from general concern about the causes and outcome of the war to limited discussion of important battles. Ministers were required to take on the new role of preaching funeral sermons for the dead and comforting the bereaved.

The war had a definite affect on industry in that mills operated on shortened hours and stopped for some weeks in 1864. When the war ended, many of the small industries that had co-existed so prosperously with large firms were closed. The introduction of machinery rendered obsolete the hand processes of small companies and other establishments such as small cotton mills, were absorbed by larger firms.

The close of the 1860's brought a new form of entertainment in the increase of lecturers brought to the public halls of the area. People wanted to forget the war and attended in great throngs to hear the addresses of authors, poets and other men of letters. In industry a depression was experienced in 1873 and in general, the building of new firms was less evident than before. The clearest indication of the effect of industrialization and the resulting urbanization is noted in the decline of population in the rural areas. While Thompson, Killingly, Plainfield and Putnam increased in population from the beginning of their industrialization period (1810) a decline in population is noted in the neighboring rural towns.



THE TEN TOWNS IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Surprisingly enough, there is a great deal of information on the early history of the ten towns. After the 1880's however, little is available. Even the histories published in the twentieth century touch only briefly on the present. It seems as if interest in the growth or change in the area is relatively low. Perhaps this is easily explained by the fact that the past is much more romantic and that before we had telephones, conversation was somehow more memorable, more wise. I do not know for sure what has caused the present gap. It could be that the work is now at our command and we are more interested in the problems of war, famine, and political ideology than in the past.

The most striking fact about this study has been the increasing realization that many things have been lost. Institutions have been lost in the form of the church. Each town history is marked by the construction of a meeting house, not called a church, and the dismissal of a minister. The religious fervor of the 1720's seems a bit strange and leads one to wonder how or why the early residents of Northeastern Connecticut became so involved in a God that they apparently viewed as the wrathful spirit of the Old Testament.

The second most startling conclusion drawn from a study of early Connecticut is that all human functions were community functions. We did not bury our dead in scattered portions of the vast wilderness. We designated certain areas, maintained them, and shared the grief of others in the historical vestiges of grave markers and simple dates on lichen covered stone. We chose pillars of the early communities as our leaders and expected them to husband the affairs of the town as closely as they guarded their own private fortunes. We moved very much as communities. Schism was a more serious threat than natural catastrophe and the ideas and opinions of all persons of good standing were elicited in the form of town meetings.

A certain character seems to be revealed. It is not perhaps the prototypic characterization of the Yankee that we see as much as it is the spirit of accepting some authority, toleration of others and a clear belief that progress was to be made collectively, not individually. The history of Windham County is filled with discussion of movements and societies being formed. The individualism of the isolated farmer is, of course, evident, but it is not the individualism of stoic disassociation from others. Certainly politics, religion and a common ancestral heritage were totally intertwined, but these people seemed to know just exactly who they were and where they were going. They took care of themselves and their families first, but they also concerned themselves with their neighbors, poor unfortunates and shared fully the ups and downs of the expanded community. The character of the resident has changed grudgingly, perhaps more as a result of the type of work done than the emotional bond felt toward the land and its people. Each birth, each death, each success or failure is still a communal experience to some extent. Perhaps more than anything else, more than the monikers of "Yankee" and "Town Meeting Country", the basic character of the region is expressed in the nature, concept, and action implied in the early sense of community.

FAMOUS PERSONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE NORTHEAST REGION

It is extremely difficult to include bibliographic sketches of all the famous people associated with the area. The following list was taken from Burpee's The Story of Connecticut and is presented here with some additions as a brief start. As has been noted, other sections of this study relate the stories of some of the people mentioned in greater detail. It is hoped that at some time this list will be brought up to date to include the later notables of the ten town area.

- I Henry Chandler Bowen (Woodstock) - Editor and Publisher; founded the "Independent" in 1848 and established Roseland Park, Woodstock
- II Edward A. Bradford (Plainfield 1813) - Chief Justice of Louisiana
- III Dr. Mason Fitch Cogswell (Canterbury 1761) - Founder of the Hartford School for the Deaf
- IV Caroline Fairfield Corbin (Pomfret 1835) - Writer and suffragist
- V Manasseh Cutler (Killingly 1742) - Founded Western Reserve
- VI Judah Dana (Pomfret 1772) - Senator from Maine
- VII Nathan F. Dixon (Plainfield 1779) - Senator from Rhode Island
- VIII General Moses Cleveland (Canterbury) - In 1796 on an expedition sponsored by the Connecticut Land Company, he surveyed and settled the Western Reserve. In the same year, he planned and founded the present City of Cleveland, Ohio.
- IX General William Eaton (Woodstock 1764) - Commander of the Tri-politan War
- X Anne Hall (Pomfret 1792) - First woman member of the National Academy of Design
- XI William Torrey Harris (Killingly 1835) - U. S. Commissioner of Education
- XII Abiel Holmes (Woodstock 1763) - Historian
- XIII Ellen Douglas Larned (Thompson 1825) - Local historian and genealogist; much of her work has been used as reference material for this report
- XIV Flavel S. Luther (Brooklyn) President of Trinity College
- XV General Nathaniel Lyon (Eastford) - First officer to fall in the Civil War
- XVI Dr. George McClellan (Woodstock 1796) - Founder of Jefferson Medical School
- XVII Colonel Samuel McClellan (Woodstock) - Colonel of the militia
- XVIII General George B. McClellan - Civil War -(Woodstock)
- XIX Commander Charles Morris (Woodstock 1784) - U. S. Navy
- XX Jedidiah Morse (Woodstock 1761) - Geographer
- XXI Dr. Roswell Park (Pomfret 1852) - Surgeon and writer
- XXII Israel Putnam (Pomfret) - Noted hero of the Battle of Bunker Hill, served in French and Indian War and distinguished himself in the legend of the "Wolf Den"
- XXIII Charles L. Tiffany (Killingly 1812) - New York Jeweler
- XXIV Ithiel Towne (Thompson 1784) Architect
- XXV William Durkee Williamson (Canterbury 1779) - Judge, Congressman, Governor of Maine

CENSUS BY RACE - 1756 - AVAILABLE IN 1949 STATE MANUAL

Canterbury	1240	white	-	20	black
Killingly	2100	white			
Plainfield	1751	white	-	49	black
Pomfret	1677	white	-	50	black
Woodstock	1336	white	-	30	black

	CENSUS		1790	1790	1790	1960				
	1790	1800	1810	1820	1830	1840	1850	1860	1870	
Brooklyn	1324	1202	1200	1264	1415	1488	1514	2136	2354	
Canterbury	1881	1812	1812	1984	1880	1791	1669	1591	1543	
Eastford	--	--	--	--	--	--	1127	1005	983	
Killingly	2166	2279	2512	2803	3257	3685	4543	4926	5712	
Plainfield	1713	1619	1738	2097	2289	2383	2732	3665	4521	
Pomfret	1769	1799	1905	2042	1978	1868	1848	1673	1488	
Putnam	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	2722	4192	
Sterling	--	908	1101	1200	1240	1099	1025	1051	1022	
Thompson	2267	2341	2467	2928	3380	3535	4638	3259	3804	
Woodstock	2445	2463	2654	3017	2917	3053	3381	3285	2955	
Total	13,565	14,423	15,389	17,335	18,356	18,902	22,477	25,313	28,574	

	1880	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	
Brooklyn	2308	2628	2358	1858	1655	2250	2403	2652	3312	
Canterbury	1272	947	876	868	896	942	992	1321	1857	
Eastford	855	561	523	513	496	529	496	598	746	
Killingly	6921	7027	6835	6564	8178	8852	9547	10,015	11,298	
Plainfield	4021	4582	4821	6719	7926	8027	7613	8071	8884	
Pomfret	1470	1471	1831	1857	1454	1617	1710	2018	2136	
Putnam	5827	6512	7348	7280	8397	8099	8692	9304	8412	
Sterling	957	1051	1209	1283	1266	1233	1251	1298	1397	
Thompson	5051	5580	6442	4804	5055	4999	5577	5585	6217	
Woodstock	2639	2309	2095	1849	1767	1712	1912	2271	3177	
Total	31,321	32,668	34,338	33,595	37,090	38,260	40,193	43,133	47,436	

BROOKLYN

Named 1752, brook line (Quinebaug River);
A society, 1754; Incorporated from Canterbury
and Pomfret, May, 1786

An unnamed society was formed in 1731 from parts of Pomfret and Canterbury. The story of Mortlake is included in the section on Pomfret, but in 1732, the southern part of Mortlake was added to the new society. A meeting house was started in 1733 on the present Brooklyn Green. It was called the Second Church of Pomfret and the area was commonly known as Mortlake. At first little progress was made as Pomfret and Canterbury were not interested in helping the new society. Petitions for township were advanced and denied by the General Assembly, but Pomfret was interested in getting rid of the newly added parish of Mortlake. Finally the people in the northern part of Canterbury and the southern part of Pomfret appealed to be annexed to Pomfret. By 1752, Mortlake joined the society which was named Brooklyn.

Once the sections of land were joined, the society began to prosper. Schools were improved and with the return of General Putnam, things began to look up. Putnam opened a tavern and visitors from other areas were soon attracted. Another citizen, Colonel Godfrey Malbone, took up residence after much bad luck in Newport, and established an Episcopal Church. Malbone excited much interest in the area as he (apparently) was a Tory and held slaves. The construction of his church was initiated when Malbone refused to pay taxes for the Congregational Church. Both churches were completed in 1771, with Putnam the most prominent member of the Congregational Church and Malbone heading up the Episcopal Church. Both men were reported to be enemies, with the happy historical note that the families were eventually united by the marriage of Israel Putnam's son Daniel to Malbone's niece.

The first town meeting was held in Brooklyn in 1786, the year the town was incorporated. Apparently the population was small with only seven homes in the village and the population remained a problem for some time as Brooklyn experienced a loss as indicated in the census of 1800. Schools received some attention, but the attempt to form an academy failed. Some industry developed because of abundant water power and by the 1800's, Brooklyn was the site of the manufacture of pottery, potash, silver and linseed oil.

Colonel Putnam died in 1790 and a full military funeral was held. Stories regarding the hero fill volumes, but need not be related here.

The last public hanging was held in Brooklyn in 1835 on Prince Hill. The condemned man, Watkins, noted that an enormous crowd was hurrying to watch the execution and supposedly remarked, "Why is everyone running? Nothing can happen until I get there." Estimates of the crowd that gathered are variable, but apparently the crowd enjoyed the spectacle so much that it was decided to stop public hanging all together.

Other improvements that mark the progress of Brooklyn include:

the founding of a post office and a library;
the establishment of a health committee in 1810;
county seat status from 1818 to 1888;
the publication of the Independent Observer and County Advertiser
in 1820;
the incorporation of the Windham County Bank in 1888; and
the formation in 1826 of the Windham County Mutual Fire Insurance
Company.

The Brooklyn and Windham Turnpike was constructed in 1826. The Windham County Agricultural Society was incorporated in 1821 and is still in existence, operating the Brooklyn Fair, the oldest agricultural fair in the United States.

One resident of Brooklyn often mentioned in histories of the town is Mr. Samuel May, pastor of the Unitarian Church. Mr. May is generally noted as being a relative of the author, Louise May Alcott, but his story reveals much more about the intellectual climate of the early 1800's than can be known through mere mention of his niece.

Mr. May apparently did a great deal for his congregation, the town and county in the years of his ministry. In 1826, he started the "Windham County Peace Society" and turned his energies and acquaintances to the task of collecting funds to disseminate information to stop war. The society was quite successful and a short time later, Mr. May turned his interest to the cause of temperance. He immediately destroyed all intoxicants in his household and set about conducting a survey of the town to determine the dangers and involvement with liquor. Convinced that Brooklyn indeed had a problem, he spread the work from his pulpit and soon the cause was widely accepted. Temperance societies sprang up all over Windham County and many signed pledges disavowing drink forever. In most towns, liquor consumption became an issue of great interest and progress was determined by the number reformed in each town. The customary practice of offering alcoholic refreshment to visitors soon passed out of fashion and annual conventions were held with representatives from each town coming to report on temperance.

Mr. May, successful now on two points, turned his attention to the school system in Brooklyn. Finding it deficient, he sent out invitations to other towns in the State to send representatives to an educational convention to be held in Brooklyn in 1827. The response was good and the suggestions and discussions that resulted at the convention soon reached much of the State. In Windham County an organization, the Society of the Friends of Education for Windham County, was formed with representatives from most of the towns.

The causes of peace, temperance and education, were soon followed in the career of Mr. May with the abolition of slavery. He immediately convinced his congregation of his views and became a great defender of Miss Prudence Crandall of Canterbury, who was tried in Brooklyn for running a school for black girls. In addition to his duties as minister, he also served as a newspaper editor to "The Liberal Christian" and "The Christian Monitor." Mr. May was greatly respected in the town and throughout the County, but apparently he made few advances in Unitarianism. When he finally decided to leave Brooklyn, his causes and societies continued to flourish.

CANTERBURY

Settled in 1690; Set off from Plainfield
October, 1703; Named for Canterbury in Kent

The early days of Canterbury are marked by land disputes. The area west of the Quinebaug River was claimed by two prominent men, Winthrop and Major James Fitch. The source of their conflict is described in the section on Indians. The first settlement is marked by the arrival of Fitch and his family in 1691. Fitch was a rather illustrious resident of the area and a great land speculator. His reputation and known hospitality made his presence very important and led to the building of a road connecting his plantation and the town of Windham in the early years. Fitch called his property "Kent" but it was known as Peagscomsuck.

Canterbury at this time was part of Plainfield and included with it in the County of New London. Problems of land disputes and the natural division posed by the River made the two communities quite separate and when a church was erected on the Plainfield side of the river, it was decided to create the town of Canterbury on the west side in 1703. At the time of its incorporation, Canterbury had a very small population and was relatively poor due to the rocky land and the early transfers that forced many settlers to pay several times for their land. However, by 1705, land was given for a meeting house and although the residents were too poor to immediately begin construction, they seemed to have an optimistic view of the future. By 1711 the church was constructed and the services of the Reverend Samuel Estabrook were engaged. The fortunes of Major Fitch seemed to decline and the legislature moved against some of his attempts at more land speculation in the area north of Tolland.

The first town meeting was held in 1717 and it was voted to build a highway connecting Norwich and Windham. An epidemic in 1726 robbed Canterbury of Major Fitch, the new minister and his wife. That same year Canterbury was added to Windham County. All seemed to be moving along reasonably well until 1740, when the town experienced a religious revival. From historic description, the revival seems to have taken the form of a type of jubilant holy rollerism, with great bursts of chanting, singing and exhortation found not at all acceptable in the established churches. Quite a stir seems to have developed with the end result being a division between the original group and a new group, referred to as the Separatists. The First Church of Canterbury was diminished in number and the Separatists enjoyed great popularity for some time. The First Church engaged the services of one James Cogswell, who as was the custom, began instructing pupils, one of which happened to be Benedict Arnold.

In 1747 Canterbury became part of the Probate Court that included other towns in Windham County and led to a burst of prosperity in Pomfret. Little change is noted at this time in terms of population as few new settlers came to Canterbury.

Further religious division occurred within the town when the Westfield Church was founded in 1770. Much bad feeling is indicated between the original First Church and the newly formed Westfield Church. However, diminution was coupled with appeasement and the First Church began to actively solicit the return of some of the Separatists to the fold. Attempts to rejoin were quite successful and by 1788 about 30 of the most prominent Separatists had returned to the original church.

Transportation across the Quinebaug was a constant problem. Numerous attempts at bridges and dams were thwarted by the rising water and ice floes of the Quinebaug. One bridge was swept away in 1728 and another was downed by ice a few years after its construction in 1733. A dam constructed in the 1760's caused much opposition as the residents of Canterbury were most interested in the annual ascent of the shad in the Quinebaug River.

Opposition to highway construction in the twentieth century has some parallels in Canterbury history. Turnpikes were constantly opposed and the construction of a turnpike from Norwich to Providence caused much ire in Canterbury. However, an ancient highway of sorts had always existed running north and south through the Westminister section of the town.

Education was a frequent consideration as the citizens of Canterbury devised quite soon a system of school squadrons. The town was divided into squadrons and teaching was carried on for three months each year. In 1812, a school society was formed.

PRUDENCE CRANDALL

The entire topic of education brings up the most illustrious story of Canterbury history. In 1831 a "young girls boarding school" was opened by Miss Prudence Crandall. The school gained immediate acceptance and soon the most prominent families were sending their daughters to Miss Crandall's school. Great success was greeting her endeavors until she admitted a black girl as a day student. Righteous indignation followed her actions, but Miss Crandall was seemingly a good match for the prominent town fathers. Filled with abolitionist zeal, Miss Crandall refused to accept the pleas from the residents of Canterbury and decided to dismiss all the white girls from the school and reopen it as a school for black girls. The citizens tried to change her mind but again Miss Crandall refused. She next advertised for students. The town became so incensed that the ten or twelve little black girls who made the journey to Canterbury were viewed as being ready to "scatter fire-brands, arrows and death among the brethren of our own blood." Cruel words turned to acts of violence as the well of the school was vandalized and stones and mud were thrown at the house that served as Miss Crandall's school. Finally she was arrested and placed in Brooklyn jail for the night preceding her trial. Her internment raised considerable sympathy for her cause and her person and she gained support throughout the surrounding area. At her trials in the county and superior courts, she was found guilty of breaking the law, but in the court of errors, the previous decisions were reversed. In her absence, Miss Crandall's sister continued the work of the school until the house was set on fire and armed men smashed all the windows. Found innocent and freed, Miss Crandall married and now Mrs. Calvin Philleo, moved to Kansas.

Later action to appease the wrong done to Prudence Crandall was the provision of a pension of \$400 a year given her by the State of Connecticut.

Other important dates in the history of Canterbury reflect the growth of the town; in 1703 a corn mill was established on Rowland's Brook. Later a tannery, a cooperage, saw and grist mill and particularly cloth dressing and hat manufacturing added to the industry of the town. By 1825, the Packerville Baptist Church was founded and in 1830, a fire engine company was organized. Continued membership in the Masonic Order is indicated in the establishment of the Moriah Lodge in Canterbury in 1790.



EASTFORD

Named as East parish of Ashford, 1777;
Incorporated from Ashford May 1847

Eastford was originally part of Ashford and included the territory turned over to Major Fitch by Owaneco in 1684. In 1695 the first land in the east section of Ashford, now Eastford, was laid out and the first settler, John Perry, settled there in the southern part of the present town. As time passed, the east and west parts of Ashford grew and remained quite separate in their affairs due to distance and bad roads. Legally they remained a single entity for some seventy more years. Eastford was forced to develop some services of its own and in 1739, established its own school. A request was placed before the General Assembly to make Eastford and Ashford separate parishes, but the request was not granted until 1777. In 1779 construction of a meeting house was begun and by 1820, Eastford was anxious to become a separate town. Ashford was opposed to this move, probably because by this time Eastford was quite prosperous and incorporation was blocked.

Industry began to flourish early in Eastford. There was a cotton factory in Eastford and mills were located in Phoenixville. Employment was abundant and a rather high level of prosperity and social life was enjoyed by the residents. Education was handled by one schoolmaster, who for a very long time kept the school terms in Ashford and Eastford. Temperance became quite popular in Eastford, with the notable exception of the Church of Bacchus, started by an Eastford resident and described in the section on Temperance Movements.

A notable Eastford resident was General Nathaniel Lyon, a farmer's son, a graduate of West Point, and the first officer to fall in the Civil War. Lyon was in charge of the arsenal at St. Louis and drove Governor Jackson from that city in a successful encounter at Dry Springs. When Lyon died he left about \$30,000 in his will to the government to be used to move the war forward. Some of the personal possessions of General Nathaniel Lyon were stored in the "Castle", a home built by Squire Bosworth, another important resident of Eastford.

In 1847 Eastford became a town with the basement of the Methodist Church being used as the place for town meetings. Industry continued to flourish and a factory for the manufacturing of woolen stockings was located in Phoenixville. The history of the town reveals that a number of important early settlers are still represented by their descendants in the town today. Eastford still a prosperous town, seemingly has changed little in the succeeding years.

Two rather interesting characters are outlined in the Lincoln study of Windham County that reflect the general concerns of the time: One character, Lizzy Smith was crippled as a child. As a result, she never grew and was confined to a litter for the rest of her life. Her infirmity, however, seemed to have been no deterrent to activity as she was the comforter of the town and was frequently taken to the homes of bereaved persons as a great boon to all. Lizzie was uplifting in her faith and she is contrasted with the town "infidel", a certain Timothy Backus, who enjoyed arguing against the teachings of the Bible. Apparently both persons were well known in the town and added much in terms of local conversation.

KILLINGLY

Township grant May 1708; Named for
Killingly Manor, Pontefract, Yorkshire

Killingly, the ancient area of the Whetstone Country, was organized in 1708. Apparently there was little at first to attract settlement in Killingly, but due to the fact that it was owned by the Connecticut colony and not by individuals or corporations, the land was used by the state as payment to creditors. When possession of land was colonial, it was generally used to acknowledge military and civil services and thus the early settlers of Killingly land were prominent Connecticut men.

Major James Fitch and Captain John Chandler were the first to take land grants, and found that settlement would be difficult due to hostile Indians and extreme terrain. The first white settler was Richard Evans, who in 1693, settled on a 200 acre tract. His land included the north part of Killingly in the present town of Putnam. Additional settlement was slow, but the lure of obtaining turpentine from the abundant woodlands began to attract others. By 1691, Killingly was connected to the outside world by a road connecting Providence and Woodstock.

Evans improved his holdings and settlement began in 1707 south of Lake Mashapaug (Alexander's Lake). By 1708 the need for town government was evident and the name of the town was changed from the Indian, Aspinock, to Killingly. Some progress was made, but poor roads were a constant problem and a meeting house was not constructed until 1715. In 1720 the first white settlers came to South Killingly.

By 1726 Killingly was part of Windham County. The north settlement of Killingly was called Thompson Parish, which in 1785, became a separate town.

Religion and taverns seem to be the ear-marks of Killingly progress for some time, with a little improvement in roads and bridges as another important consideration. Killingly prospered and grew and due to interest in western lands, a citizen from Killingly encouraged other Windham County residents to move to Ohio and establish the town of Marietta.

Industry flourished and in 1809, Mary Kies of South Killingly obtained the first patent issued to a woman in America for "weaving straw with silk thread." There is some indication, however, that Mary Kies did not prosper materially from her patent rights. The measure of prosperity, despite the depression in industry that followed the War of 1812, is attested to by the fact that Killingly by 1840 had the largest population and perhaps the greatest industrial development in all of Windham County. The coming of the railroads increased the growth of the town.

One particularly interesting story about the settlement of early Killingly is related by Miss Larned. The first white settlers in South Killingly, Jacob Spaulding and his family, experienced considerable difficulty with the Indians. At one time, Jacob made the trip to the grist-mill in Moosup, a journey of some five miles, that required him to stay overnight at the mill. The family had been short of food for many days and Mrs. Spaulding had made meal after meal out of a large beef bone. As night came on, Mrs. Spaulding could hear Indians outside the house prowling about in the dark. She had already paid them a small portion of food that day and was not about to give them any more. She waited until she heard one of them climbing about the window and grabbed the beef bone and threw it out of the window with all her might. Her aim apparently was quite good as the howling Indian fell to the ground and disappeared into the night. Whether she bothered to retrieve the bone or not, is lost to conjecture; however, the apparent fortitude of the Spauldings led to some final working arrangement with the Indians.



PLAINFIELD

Settled in 1689; Name is descriptive;
Authorized 1700

Plainfield was laid out in the Quinebaug Country in 1699. At the time of its formation, claims to the land were conflicting. Two prominent persons, Major Fitch and Winthrop claimed portions of the land. Originally the land had been conveyed to Fitch by the son of Uncas, Owaneco, as payment for the burning of the prison in New London by some of his men. Winthrop's claim was seemingly even less clear. As a result of the conflicting claims, no one was particularly interested in settling on the disputed land. When settlement came, it was largely in the area south of the present town of Plainfield.

In 1698, the name of the town was changed from the original, Quinebaug, to Plainfield. Progress was hampered immediately by Indian disputes and all settlers in the area were required to remain in their areas and serve as defenders of the town. By 1705 and 1706 roads were laid out and a bridge was constructed over the Quinebaug River. Land disputes with Canterbury continued and there is evidence of some wildlife problems as bounties were paid for blackbirds, apparently because of the threat posed to corn crops, and for rattlesnakes and wolves. Further problems arose when an epidemic broke out in 1725, killingly twenty-five persons, among them some of the most prominent residents of Plainfield. By 1726, Plainfield was accepted as a part of Windham County.

The religious revival of 1742 reached Plainfield and stirred both whites and Indians in much the same manner as in other Windham County towns. Separatists grew up and dissension was rife. The problems of the French-Canadian displacement from Acadia was dealt with by Plainfield, seemingly the only town in Windham County to have taken such action.

Plainfield Academy founded in the 1770's was quite successful and was one of the three incorporated schools in Connecticut. In 1797 a post office was opened, the third in Windham County, and a poorhouse was built. The industry, grown-up along the river, operated during the War of 1812 with some decline in the succeeding depression.

By the 1800's manufacturing was expanded and four small manufacturing villages had grown up within the town of Plainfield. One village, Wauregan, was viewed as a "model village" with a Congregational Church and an established library. Although this reference to a "model village" is not clear, apparently the mill supervisor was quite strict and in comparison to other mill villages, Wauregan was a shining light. The added prohibition of liquor in the village of Wauregan, might be the needed clue.

The woolen industry added much to Plainfield when it was established in the first half of the nineteenth century. Many of the names of small settlements within the town of Plainfield can be traced to the early operators of the woolen industry. Almyville is named for Samuel Almy, the owner of a woolen mill until 1875. The mills were commonly constructed of stone and were first lighted by electricity in 1886. The next mill operated for the production of woolens was located in Central Village. It was known as the Plainfield Woolen Company and operated until 1918 when it was sold and the name was changed. One is immediately impressed with the size of these early industrial operations as some of them operated as many as forty looms. They were the prime source of employment for the area and have left an indelible mark on the history of Plainfield.

The decline of the textile industry in the twentieth century has changed the economic base of the area and left a big gap in terms of employment and social activity. The present town hall of Plainfield was a former community center, designed for recreation purposes for the employees of the mill as well as citizens of Plainfield.



Settled in 1705; Names May 1713 from
Pontefract in Yorkshire

Pomfret originally belonged to Owaneco and was transferred to Major Fitch in 1684. Settlers in Woodstock became interested in the land and purchased 15,100 acres in 1686. By the summer of that year, the Mashamoquet or Roxbury Purchase of 1500 acres south of New Roxbury (Woodstock) on the Mashamoquet was laid out. The land was approved in a patent of township and 5,750 acres were sold by Fitch to John Blackwell. His property included some of the present parts of Pomfret and the area called Mortlake. Mortlake, now part of Brooklyn, was designated as a manor although it remained untouched and uninhabited for thirty years after the sale. Blackwell had bought the land as a colony for English and Irish dissenters, but as it turned out, a colony was not needed when religious freedom was granted under William and Mary.

Immediate settlement of Pomfret was delayed by Indian troubles, but in 1694 the first white settler, Captain John Sabin bought 100 acres from Fitch. Another settler, Benjamin Sitton purchased land in 1698. In 1700 an important settler arrived in the person of Ester Grosvenor. Stories are related of her personal courage and great ability in treating the sick. For many years she was the sole source of medical aid to the early inhabitants of the town.

With settlement a saw mill was constructed in 1707 on the Mashamoquet and a grist mill was constructed a few years later. By 1710 a military company was formed and in 1713 residents petitioned for incorporation as a town. Pomfret continued to enjoy good fortune and eagerly sought to have Mortlake after Blackwell sold the manor to Jonathan Belcher. No agreeable arrangement could be made and the land south of Mortlake was divided between Canterbury and Pomfret in 1714. In the same year a meeting house was constructed and the western part of Pomfret was laid out to include what is now Abington. Roads were opened and in 1722 Captain Sabin and his son built a bridge across at the present Cargill Falls. In 1723 schools were established and later additional schools were added to serve the needs of children in outlying areas. Mortlake remained a problem as its residents were apparently "lawless and disagreeable". Mortlake wanted to become an independent town, but the General Assembly refused to grant their request.

TROUBLE WITH MORTLAKE

Problems with Mortlake took several different forms. One situation involved a tenant of Belcher's who died and left a wife and "idiot" son of seventeen. Peter Davison was troublesome and apparently considered dangerous and finally his mother appealed for help as they were both starving to death. She went to the Pomfret Selectmen and asked for aid. A town meeting was held and it was voted not to help them. Peter was carted from place to place by his poor mother in an attempt to solicit some charity. She appealed to Norwich and her pleas were again refused until both towns were required to appear in court to explain their failure for support. Elaborate defenses were prepared and Pomfret's representatives Sabin and Grosvenor, were paid to defend Pomfret's stand with money that had previously been set aside for schools and meeting house repairs.

This financial arrangement partially explains the gap in Pomfret history of not providing for schools until the 1720's. Pomfret's stand was inspired more by the belief that the concept of a town was practically sacred and if one was not a resident of a town, no benefits could be enjoyed, rather than any definitive lack of compassion. Any-way, poor Peter was finally handed over to Windham County officials, but one year later, he was returned to Norwich.

The next problem with Mortlake involved the church. Although the residents of the manor did not want to become part of any town, they did want a church. They began construction of a meeting house and the neighboring towns began to think that Mortlake was finally coming around to their way of thinking. They were wrong again, however, as Mortlake soon hired a minister who had not been approved by the Windham County Consociation of Congregational Churches. Despite the insistence of the group, the Mortlakers refused to get rid of their unapproved pastor and now the towns became really angry. Finally Belcher was convinced to sell his property and the manor became the possession of new men who believed in town government.

Pomfret grew in numerous ways and in 1759, eight Pomfret men were graduated from Yale. Many of them returned to the town to pursue their careers and added much to the general well-being of the area. The presence of Colonel Putnam, returned from the French and Indian War, added prestige to the town as many travelers and soldiers deliberately stopped on their journeys to visit the hero at the tavern he established in the Brooklyn Parish. Material prosperity was gained in the formation of a legal district for probate court. The towns of Pomfret, Woodstock, Ashford, Mortlake, Union and the two north societies of Killingly were joined together in the district of Pomfret. Due to this legal distinction, much business was generated in Pomfret and a post office was established in 1795.

Industry by the end of the eighteenth century was more evident in Pomfret than at the present time. Numerous stores and manufacturing concerns served the immediate needs of the townspeople and much was sold in other towns. A schism occurred within the church due to the presence of a popular minister, but it was eventually straightened out and people returned to the First Church of Pomfret. As now, taxes were quite high in Pomfret due to the construction of a turnpike through the town. The Pomfret Manufacturing Company was a prosperous industry and a "Moral Society" was formed in 1812 to advocate temperance. It was called the "Connecticut Society for the Preservation of Morals" and is discussed in detail in the section on temperance movements.

Other important dates in Pomfret history include: the formation of a Ladies Library in 1813 in Abington, the first and oldest library of its kind in the State, still in continuous operation; the formation of an agricultural society in 1809; the addition of a Sunday school in 1819; the organization of the Episcopal parish in 1828; the formation of a Second Advent Church in 1840 and the construction of a town house in 1841.

Some historians indicate that by 1820 Pomfret had begun to decline due to the change in the probate system and the establishment of post offices in other towns. However, the discussion of Pomfret in the twentieth century seems to belie this assumption.

Pomfret, by the turn of the century, was in a new period of prosperity. It had become a fashionable residential community, many of the new residents being originally attracted to the town by the presence of the Ben Grosvenor Inn. The influx was due apparently to the reputation Pomfret attained as early as 1790 as a summer resort. Fashionable and notable persons from Newport, Providence and other bastions of society moved to Pomfret, settling most especially on Pomfret Street. Apparently it was a joke at that time to refer to that section of Pomfret as "Pucker Street", the joke having lost something in the passing years.

The Ben Grosvenor is traditionally credited as the place where the Mormon Bible was composed by a Rev. and Mrs. Spaulding. The Spauldings wrote the Bible in either Pennsylvania or Pomfret and Mrs. Spaulding loaned it to a Joseph Smith who apparently never returned it, much to her chagrin.

Some very large estates were built in Pomfret at this time. Numerous histories include detailed descriptions of the estates and their owners, but only two will be considered here, as they were the most famous. These two were called "Glen Elsinore" and "Courtlands", the homes respectively of Mrs. Randolph Clark and Mrs. Courtland Hoppin. Both were characterized by broad lawns and elaborate gardens. The extent to which the owners went to make their estates truly showcases cannot be denied even in their present state of relative disrepair in the 1970's. Glen Elsinore is now owned by the Catholic Church and operated as Sacred Heart and Courtlands is owned by the Jesuits as St. Roberts Hall. Both estates in 1972 are apparently for sale.

Schools in Pomfret have been a major attraction. The Pomfret School was established by Edward Peck in 1896 as a preparatory school. The Rectory School opened in 1920 as a school for younger boys and was originally established at the "Four Acres". A school for girls had been operated at Hamlet Lodge, now the residence of the Butler family, for a few years until it was closed in 1910. Another school of note was operated in Pomfret by Dr. Roswell Parks. It was located north of the present site of Christ Church. Among the students at Parks' school was the poetess, Louise Chandler Moulton and the artist James Whistler. Whistler lived in Pomfret for about three years after the death of his father. He and his mother resided in a house near the former site of Parks' school. The only comment about Whistler while he was attending the school that is extant is that the "teacher never got the better of him." The poetess, apparently writing even as a child, had a speech impediment that made her lisp, so when her poems were recited, she generally asked one of her classmates to do the reading.

Anne Hall of Pomfret became a famous painter of children and was elected to the National Academy of Design, the first woman to be so honored. Another Pomfret artist was Hannah Thurber Fairfield, a portrait painter, whose works hang in the National Academy. Dr. Joseph C. Hoppin was a noted archaeologist, Mr. Frank B. Tarbell was a writer of scholarly works on Greek and Roman art, Dr. Grosvenor Goodridge, was the author of scientific and medical treatises, Mr. Lawrence Perkins was the publisher of a volume of war sketches, Mrs. T. Morris Murray did a translation of Dante, Bertram Goodhue was a distinguished architect, and Beatrice Stevens an illustrator and painter became a Pomfret resident.

PUTNAM

Incorporated from Pomfret, Thompson, and
Killingly, May 1855; Named for Israel Putnam

Putnam is the newest town in Windham County. Before 1849, Putnam was called Pomfret Factory. Later, from 1849 to 1855, Putnam was known as Quinebaug. Early important dates in the history of Putnam reflect its expanding industrial base: in 1722, the first bridge was built across the Quinebaug below the falls by John Sabin of Pomfret; in 1730 David Howe erected a grist mill; in 1806 Ozias Wilkinson and sons started the first cotton mill in Connecticut and called it Pomfret Factory. It was the third cotton mill in the United States and was begun with an investment of \$25,000 for 1000 acres and the privilege of starting a mill.

By 1849 Putnam wanted to become a separate town, but when the proposal was brought to the General Assembly, it was refused as land and inhabitants would have to be taken from the neighboring towns. The struggle went on for six years with victory becoming imminent when the name of the area was changed from Quinebaug to Putnam. By July 1855, Putnam was incorporated as a town. The following figures represent the changes that occurred in the other towns in terms of land and inhabitants taken to form Putnam:

- Nine and one-half miles and 1876 inhabitants from Thompson
- Seven and one-quarter miles and 275 inhabitants from Killingly
- Three square miles and 168 inhabitants from Pomfret.

Early immigration to the area is discussed in the section on new settlement, but the arrival of the first French-Canadian family in Putname is recorded in several histories. The family of Peter Donough (a.s.a. Denault) came to Putnam in 1843. His large family and inability to speak English excited much comment in the community. More families arrived in 1848 when three new factories were constructed and labor was needed. At first many of the French-Canadians came to make money and then returned to Canada. As time went on, however, many became permanent residents and the need for a Catholic Church became evident. The first church of this sect was started in 1859 by Reverend William E. Duffy. Little progress was made until the arrival of Reverend Eugene J. Vygen, a Belgian. The rapid increase of the French Catholic and the Irish population made him decide that something had to be done. He immediately purchased land and established a Catholic cemetery and built a rectory. He wanted to construct a church and decided to return to Europe to study about church architecture. He returned to Putnam with definite plans and construction was begun. The church was described as a beautiful edifice: "The altar was a 'gem of art' adorned with angels wrought in Munich of the highest order of art, ideality and beauty." Unfortunately the structure burned to the ground and all was lost in 1875.

Simultaneous with the development of a Catholic community was the construction of other churches. In 1843 the Baptist Church was erected. The first and second structures, both wooden, burned and were replaced with the present stone structure. The Congregational Church was organized in 1848 and the present building was constructed in 1870.

Putnam prospered in many ways with the continued construction of new manufacturing concerns. Many of them were financed by larger companies from Providence such as Wilkinson, Rhodes, Ballou, Morse and others. Some of the mills were stone and residential development occurred near them.

In terms of education, Putnam demolished a wooden school and built the Israel Putnam School in 1901. Land for the High School was donated by a mill owner, George M. Morse and at one time, Putnam was also the site of a Trade School. Other than the homes associated with the Pomfret Manufacturing Company and Morse's, there were few residential homes in Putnam in 1855.

The coming of the railroad increased activity in Putnam, which coupled with the water supplied by the Putnam Water Company, provided many services to residents and manufacturing concerns alike. A new bridge was constructed in 1870 to meet the needs of increased traffic. All in all, Putnam history seems to parallel that of other industrial towns with new commercial activity, improved schools and transportation, and the formation of many social and civic organizations. One organization, the Women's Relief Corps. gave the town the monument that stands at the corner of Grove and Ring Streets as a memorial to the men of Putnam who fought in the Civil War. The "Oldest Killingly Burying Ground" was restored through the efforts of the D.A.R. In 1850 Grove Street Cemetery was formed.

PUTNAM HEIGHTS

Putnam Heights was once the center of business when stage-coaches following the "Pike Road" were flourishing. There were two inns on North Killingly Hill and two more close to the common which was surrounded with six or seven stores and shops. One shop, Rawson's, manufactured fine furniture. A dry goods store was patronized by residents of the surrounding towns. The church, located on the highest point, was designed by Elias Carter and patterned after the work of Sir Christopher Wren. Military exercises were held on the common in front of the church.

Putnam Heights began to decline as a center after the Civil War when population and business was attracted to the city of Putnam, incorporated formally as a city in 1895. Many citizens from Putnam Heights have found service in local, state, and national affairs. The Putnam Heights Church is no longer in active use, but occasional services are held there in the summer months.

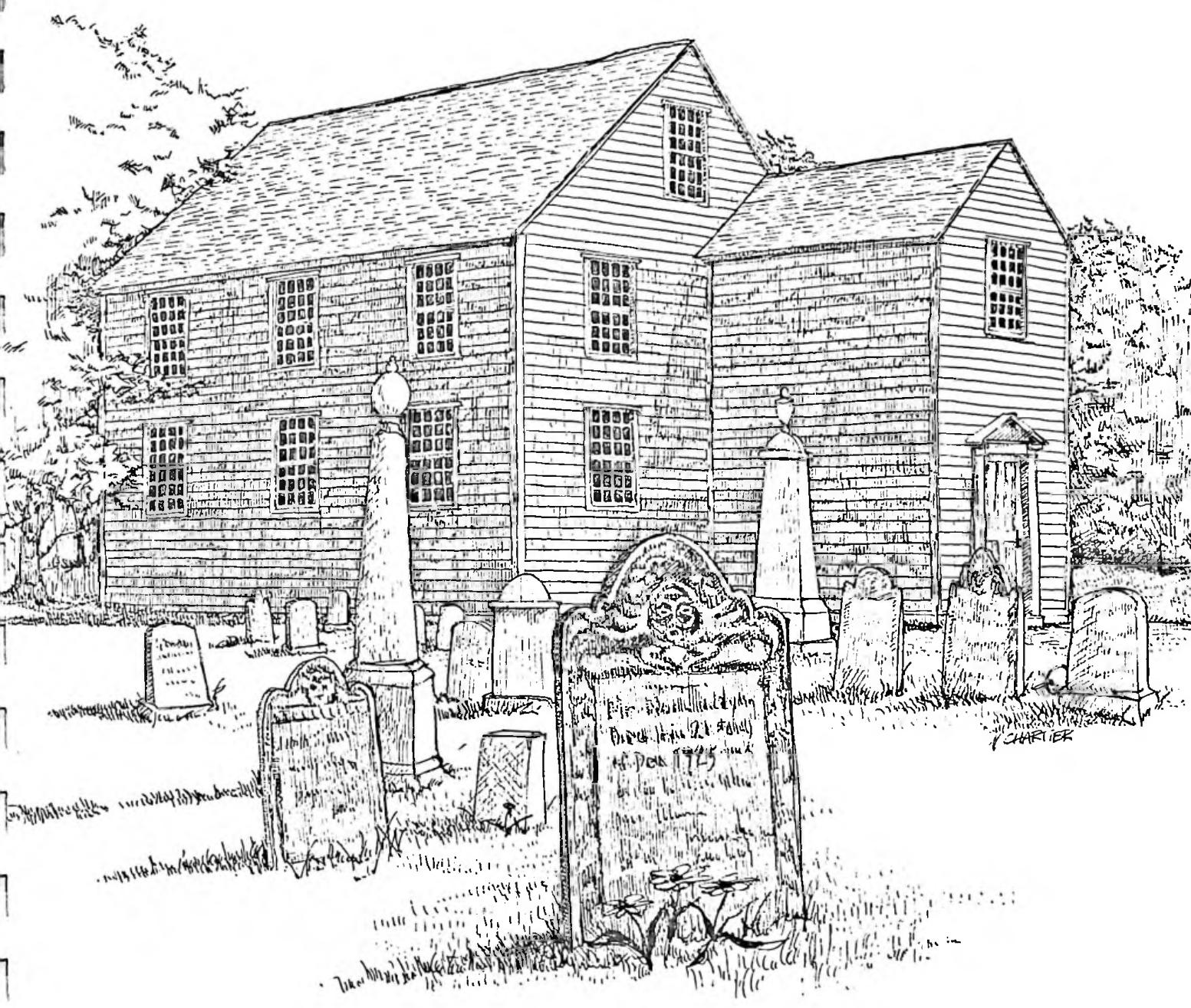
STERLING

Incorporated from Voluntown May, 1794;
Named for Dr. John Sterling

Sterling, originally part of Voluntown, was part of a barren uninhabited strip of land along the Rhode Island-Connecticut border. The English war volunteers in 1696 asked that they be provided with land as compensation for their services. Unfortunately most of the good land had fallen into the hands of various individuals and what was left, a narrow strip, later divided with the north half becoming Sterling and the south half, Voluntown, was all that Connecticut could give. In 1706 the land was laid out and promised to a long list of persons. One hundred and fifty lots were designated, but due to the poor quality of the land, little settlement was made. For some time the residents of early Sterling were not really part of any town and generally attended functions in Plainfield. Plainfield thus suggested that this north section be made part of her territory, but the request was denied and the section became part of Voluntown. A small area remained part of the Colony.

In 1720 a temporary minister was secured and the following year, Voluntown was recognized as a town. The selection of a permanent minister Mr. Dorrance, in 1725 caused problems for the town. Mr. Dorrance was a Scotch-Irish Presbyterian, and had been accompanied by several families of the same extraction. The Presbyterian Church he established was the first and for quite a while the only one of that sect in Connecticut. The older families, typically not approving or impressed with anything novel or foreign, reacted strenuously against the decision of the town. A dispute arose between the residents of Voluntown and the surrounding towns, who absolutely refused to accept the new minister and did not attend his ordination. The construction of a meeting house became another problem for the residents as the site chosen at Sterling Hill was unacceptable to many. Controversy seemed to follow controversy and the town next suffered extreme privation in 1725-26. Food was scarce and many of the poorer families suffered terrible hardships. However, the town recovered and by 1732 provision was made for education.

The extreme length and narrowness of the town made annexation and the formation of two towns quite practical. In 1793 such action was proposed and in 1794, the northern part of the town of Voluntown became Sterling. The name was chosen for a temporary resident of the town, Dr. John Sterling who promised to donate a library for the honor of having the town named after him. Sterling had a population at the time of incorporation of about 900 and the industrial advantage of good water power. Improvements were undertaken and roads were constructed. Meeting houses were built and ten school districts were maintained. An academy and a tavern as well as private homes soon grew up around the meeting house as a small town center. The promised library from Dr. Sterling never materialized, but private contributions soon secured such a facility for the town.



LE

In the nineteenth century a factory was constructed in Sterling and when it burned, a larger factory was built by Samuel Ames. By 1818, his factory was one of the largest establishments in the State. The construction material for the building and the homes associated with it was stone, quarried from "Devil's Den Chimney." The American Factory, built on the Quanduck, manufactured processed cotton and other business dotted the area. The entire town seemed to be prospering as transportation improved and population expanded.

The Sterling Company was quite innovative in its use of chlorine for the bleaching of cloth and much credit must go to Mr. William Pike for his experiments with the production of pyroligneous acid from wood. The materials of citric and pyroligneous acid, sugar of lead, tincture of iron, naptha and charcoal were produced in two factories in Sterling. The coming of the railroad made the distribution of these materials much easier and contributed to the economic base of Sterling.

Oneco was placed in prominence by the construction of a cotton mill there in 1830. Apparently it was known by various names until the name Oneco was determined by some of the businessmen who operated granite quarries. The quarries produced considerable profits for their owners and apparently there was speculation that much valuable ore could be obtained in Oneco. Many of the homes and public buildings in the area are built on foundations of granite quarried in Oneco. No indication is given as to the decline of the quarrying interests in Oneco, but at the present, little activity of that nature is evident.

THOMPSON

Named in 1730 from its chief owner,
Sir Robert Thompson; Incorporated
May 1785

Thompson for a long time was known by the Indian name, Quinnatisset. In 1684 farms were designated and then the area was ignored for about thirty years. The Old Connecticut Road, cutting across a portion of the area, was the only form of civilization. Evidence indicates that the first white settler was an anonymous squatter, followed by the first recognized white settler, Richard Dresser, in 1707. Settlement was difficult due to Indian troubles and boundary disputes and the great number of reported wolves and bears. Thompson finally became part of Connecticut and Edward Morris was its first settler under its Connecticut affiliation. Morris was apparently quite ambitious as he made friends with the Indians, enjoyed the honorary title of Governor, and built several bridges. By 1726 there were thirty families living in the Quadic area and attempts were made by Killingly to annex this territory.

For a long time major improvements were not made by the Quinnatisset residents as it was easier to use the facilities of schools and churches provided by Killingly and Woodstock. Petitions to the General Assembly resulted in the formation of Thompson Parish, part of Killingly. Under parish status, Thompson began to thrive with the organization of a military company, schools and the construction of a pound in 1735. Killingly built several roads and the parish shared fully in the affairs of the town. Soon the Thompson Parish became more populous and more prosperous than the town of Killingly. The religious revival of 1741 affected Thompson in the formation of the Six-Principle Baptist Church which later lost members to the new Separatist Church. The influx of population, however, managed to keep most of the churches prosperous.

The 1760's found Thompson much better off than the other societies. School districts were changed, a popular tavern was established and in the decade that followed, new roads, a Baptist meeting house, and a bridge were constructed. Some Thompson residents decided to move westward, but the new population influx rapidly made up any loss. After the French and Indian War, Thompson petitioned the General Assembly to become a town, but the decision was deferred. Killingly was opposed to the incorporation of Thompson, but in 1785, it was granted.

After the Revolution there was a business decline and a ship, the Harmony, was constructed by the residents of the South Neighborhood section of Thompson. The ship operated between Providence and the West Indies and brought merchandise and commodities to the residents of Thompson. For their great business success, the South Neighborhood section became known as District I, or the leading district. Turnpikes added to the success of Thompson as the town was directly connected with Hartford, Providence and Springfield. The churches and schools improved and new forms of activity brought increased prosperity. Business spread to Thompson Hill, Grosvenordale and a settlement grew up on Brandy Hill, so named apparently because a cart of brandy tipped over and was spilled on the road. Migration carried Thompson people to Vermont, New York, Ohio and the South.

Thompson Manufacturing was formed in 1811 and built of bricks manufactured in West Thompson. Quaddick factory in 1813 made hats and other concerns flourished with transportation improvements. In later years, Masonville, New Boston and Mechanicsville grew up due to industry. A bank opened in Thompson in 1833. Lawyers were attracted to the town and a newspaper was published for some period of time. Fire companies, a high school and a temperance movement all sparked activity.

By 1850, Thompson was the most populous town in Windham County. Population growth was evident in the settlements of Wilsonville, New Boston, Quadic and West Thompson. Thompson Hill became a residential area. In later years, Thompson contributed much. Miss Ellen D. Larned, the noted historian of Windham County was a Thompson resident and must be credited with being the greatest of all the historians who have focused their attention on this area. Her clear prose and great attention to detail are clear indication of the depth of her intellect and concern for truth. Without the work of Miss Larned, little would be available in terms of history, legends, names and dates for the fifteen town area.

WOODSTOCK

Settled as New Roxbury, Massachusetts, 1696; Named in 1690 from Woodstock in Oxfordshire; Annexed to Connecticut 1749

In the 1650's Roxbury, Massachusetts became too crowded, at least in their sense of the word, and the citizenry began to look for new areas of settlement. A town meeting was held and it was decided that if thirty persons would move to a new territory, the town of Roxbury would loan them 100 pounds for their expenses. Their plans were interrupted for a few years, but in 1683 a petition of purchase was made to the Court of Massachusetts for a tract of land seven miles square in the area of the Wabbaquasset Country. That same year, thirteen Roxbury residents set out to look at their new purchase and by August, thirty families had moved to the settlement called New Roxbury.

The early band of settlers knew what needed to be done and with a great deal of efficiency and organization, a planned community was laid out. The necessary facilities were established first - a saw mill, a quarry for hearthstones, a clay deposit for chimney bricks, and 10 acres reserved for the pastor. The settlers were next divided into three groups to occupy three specific areas and lots were drawn. The seven oldest men in the band oversaw the distribution. First, home lots were drawn. They were ten to twenty acres in size. Next, woodlands and meadows were distributed. "Records show that some time during the autumn one man was told he would be given 15 acres of home lot, 15 acres of upland, 30 acres of meadow, and 100 acres of woodland, if he would build a grist mill..."

In 1690 the colony was incorporated as a town. The minister was provided for; a town pound, and two warehouses were built. All homes were required to be equipped with fire ladders. Indian protection was organized and a school master was hired. All of this was accomplished very early in Woodstock history. As a result of this orderly pattern of development, settlement of surrounding towns was much easier. The early settlers of Pomfret thus could go to Woodstock for many services. In 1691 the meadow lands of the town were divided among forty landowners. Each owner received some parcels of good land and some bad. In 1693 a town clerk was appointed and the first store was opened. It is important to note that the position of town clerk was filled and he was a careful recorder of early Woodstock history.

In 1694 a meeting house was completed. All was not going well, however, as there was little in-migration, transportation was poor, and the land was not being developed very rapidly. The town fathers were a bit worried, but soon things began to change and the town prospered. The burying ground was fenced in by 1703, a sexton was hired, his salary to be based on the age and size of the person he was required to bury, and in 1710 two schoolhouses were authorized. In 1721 a new church was founded with the pews undemocratically allotted to persons on the basis of their social standing and wealth.

Some historians note that most towns on the upswing seemed to have disputes with their established ministers. Woodstock was no exception and the poor center of all attention was Mr. Dwight. Mr. Dwight was annoyed when the town was remiss in paying his salary. To keep his family going, he meddled in the temporal and began to speculate in land. Finally things became too much for the residents and Mr. Dwight was called before the town and ordered to stop dabbling in the earthly matter of money-making. He didn't take their warning very seriously and continued on a limited scale his previous business. That probably would have passed unnoticed had not Mr. Dwight further annoyed the residents of Woodstock by introducing the singing of "regular tunes" in the church. The conservatives were not about to accept this innovation and a town meeting was called to discuss the problem of Mr. Dwight. Poor Dwight came out of the battle with the worst part of the deal. He was dismissed from the service of the church after thirty-six years of ministration to the congregation. Mr. Dwight was quite shocked at their decision, but he left Woodstock and nothing more is noted about him. He was replaced by Mr. Amos Throup.

Woodstock in the nineteenth century was actively involved in the causes of temperance and abolition and voted to forbid the sale of liquor in the town for all purposes. Some industry was evident; shoe manufacturing in Woodstock Valley and West Woodstock; a tub and pail factory in Woodstock; and the necessary saw and grist mills and other small business throughout the town. Celebrations in Woodstock have become famous with the great Fourth of July celebrations held at Rose-land Park and the great political and other anniversary gatherings of renown throughout the State. The Woodstock Fair, still a yearly celebration, has been a success since its opening.

Woodstock has contributed much to the area most especially in the famous persons of Woodstock birth who have found service in all walks of life.

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NOTES

1. Larned, Ellen D. p.2
2. Webster, Clarence p.14
3. Rotival, Maurice and Associates, no pagination
4. Ibid
5. Ibid
6. Larned, Ellen D. p.6
7. Lincoln p.26

ERRATA AND ADDITIONS

Information supplied through the courtesy of Harry Chase, Pomfret Center, Connecticut.

- I. The artist's conception on the cover is taken from early photographs. Additional information regarding the treatment of oxen reveals that the farmers generally carried whips to snap in the air for guiding the animals and that they stood on the left side of the oxen, to direct them into the ditch when approached by others on the road.
- II. On page 5 - the turnpike ran from Thompson through Coventry to Hartford. The road was surveyed in 1724 and built in 1760. Also, Israel Putnam who came to Pomfret in 1739 was told by Israel Bissell of the skirmish in Boston. Putnam went to Lebanon, Connecticut to discuss the situation with Trumbull and then proceeded to the battle. The present Route 169 that passes the early Putnam residence was surveyed in 1733 and built in 1801.
- III. On page 13 - it should be noted that the first mills in Connecticut were in Pomfret, now Putnam, on the west side of the Quinebaug River. Killingly not Danielson or Danielsonville should be credited as being the chief town for the manufacture of cotton cloth at that time. Killingly remained the leader until the embargos of the War of 1812 slowed down the operations. There was a great deal of industry on the Whetstone Brook.
- IV. On page 16 - it should be noted that William Torrey Harris was the second Commissioner of Education and established the first kindergartens in the United States. In 1886 Connecticut passed a law to have kindergarten for children over 3 years of age and under 7. Jedidiah Morse was a geographer in 1784. Anne Hall was the first American-born artist. Mary Kies of Killingly received the first U. S. patent granted to a woman. Dr. Albience Waldo of Pomfret was the president of the Windham County Medical Association from 1791-1794 and gave the benediction at Putnam's funeral.
- V. On page 19 - the discussion of Samuel May should include the note that May was a friend of William Lloyd Garrison who was married in May's parlor.
- VI. The discussion of Prudence Crandall should indicate that in 1833 when she left Connecticut she apparently journeyed to Chicago before settling in Oak Falls, Kansas, where she died.
- VII. Page 25 - should include Emaline Jones of Danielson, the first woman dentist in the United States. Emaline studied in Winsted, Connecticut and practiced for forty years in New Haven.
- VIII. Page 26 - should note that Wauregan had the second cotton mill in Connecticut.
- IX. Page 30 - should be changed to note that the Mormon Bible story takes place at the present site of Spring Farm in Pomfret, not at the Ben Grosvenor Inn. Newspaper accounts of Mrs. Spaulding's story of the theft of the Mormon Bible suggest that agents of Brigham Young had the copies stolen to avoid any possibility of discrediting Young's claims for the origin of Mormonism.