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Colonial Connecticut



By *Elizabeth*
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OF MARIETTA, OHIO "

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Introduction

THIS is the fifth study of the colonial period prepared and published by the Colonial Dames of America in the State of Ohio, for use in the seventh and eighth grades, to help teachers and pupils to a clearer understanding of this important period of American history.

The first four studies—Virginia, New York, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island, were written by Mrs. Mary D. Phillips. Miss Julia E. Hickok takes up and carries forward the work which Mrs. Phillips left upon her removal from the State, following the completion of the Rhode Island monograph. Miss Hickok follows the high standard set by her predecessor—a standard of simplicity and clearness, of vivid statement, with the selection of the larger and more essential features in the life and thought of each colony, thus making clear their individual contributions in the making of America.

What was the central idea for which Connecticut stood? In many respects its history was like that of Massachusetts and Rhode Island, but the distinct contribution which this colony made was "The First Written Constitution in History, Creating a Government," the Federal Constitution following the Federal principle developed in Connecticut. "The Birthplace of American Democracy" is Hartford. This colony, also like Rhode Island, stood for absolute freedom of thought and its expression. The story of such a colony is well worth careful study,

I wish to express renewed appreciation for the work of the society which has made such a study possible for the pupils in the schools of this and other cities.

RANDALL J. CONDON,

Superintendent of Schools.

Cincinnati, Ohio,

June seventeen, Nineteen-seventeen.

Colonial Connecticut

CONNECTICUT is farthest southwest in the group of six states called New England. In shape it is an irregular oblong lying north of Long Island Sound and south of Massachusetts, with Rhode Island on the eastern border and New York State on the west. Its area is 4990 square miles, more than half the size of Massachusetts. The Connecticut River crosses the central part of the state, from north to south, in a valley some twenty miles in width. East of this valley are low hills and smaller valleys traversed by other streams; a land known to the first settlers as the Pequot Country. The western portion of the state is rugged, with higher hills rich in minerals.

When the Plymouth men were struggling to hold their place on the shore of Massachusetts, and Boston was in its beginnings, this territory to the south and west was inhabited only by Indian tribes. From the discoveries of the Cabots in 1497, England had claimed this unexplored western land and had included it in the grant to the Plymouth Company; but no effort had been made toward its settlement.

Adrian Blok, a Dutch sailing master, is said to have gone up the Connecticut River, in 1614, as far north as the present site of Hartford.

It was not, however, until 1633, that stories of this fertile valley came to the ears of the Plymouth settlers, in the report of an adventurer, John Oldham, who had penetrated the forests, partly explored the country and returned to Massachusetts Bay.

In October of that year, a small ship under Captain William Holmes was sent around by sea to the mouth of the Connecticut River and sailed as far as Hartford. Here the Dutch had already established a fort, whose soldiers challenged the Plymouth captain and threatened to fire upon him. But Holmes was both brave and stubborn; he had been sent up the river and up the river he meant to go.

The vessel pushed on a few miles farther to the place where Windsor now stands. There the crew built a trading-house, raised the English flag and left a few men to hold the place. Their intention was both to prove England's right to the territory and to establish with the Indians a profitable trade in furs. The next winter Governor Van Twiller of New Amsterdam sent a force of seventy men to drive out the English. But finding the task of dislodgment too difficult, the Dutch retreated to their Hartford fort, which they held, cut off from their own people, for twenty years. The Dutch Governor attempted also to build another fort at the mouth of the river and was again defeated. For the English, obtaining grants from the Council of New England, quickly founded Saybrook, named for Lord Say and Sele and Lord Brook.

Meantime matters had been coming to a crisis in certain Massachusetts towns. The policy of government was strict and narrow, none but church members might vote or hold office. This and other restrictions led to discontent and made some of the people wish for a change. Especially indignant were the three towns of Dorchester, Watertown and Newtown (now Cambridge). After sending protests to Boston and finding no relief, these citizens determined to establish for themselves a freer government in some new home.

As early as 1634, tradition says, a few families from Watertown had made their way to the place where Wethersfield now stands. It is certain that in the summer of 1635 a party from Dorchester, following John Oldham's trail, came to reinforce the fort at Windsor. In October of the same year, sixty pilgrims, including women and children, came from Newtown through the wilderness and settled near the Dutch fort at Hartford. Winter overtook these pioneers before they were prepared for it and the cold was unusually severe. By the middle of November the river was frozen, ships bringing supplies were forced to turn back, and famine fell upon the new settlements.

Cattle died and the settlers themselves barely kept alive by eating nuts and acorns. Seventy men walked down

the frozen river and found at Saybrook a small ship jammed in the ice and abandoned. With great effort they cut her adrift and steered their course back to Boston. A few others from the settlements walked the whole distance, through deep snow, overland to the Coast. The rest stayed on, defying starvation, and managed to live through that dreadful winter of 1635 and 1636.

The next summer brought relief. For, in June came the whole congregation of the church at Newtown, headed by their pastor, Rev. Thos. Hooker, and their teacher, Samuel Stone.

Palfrey's History of New England thus describes the journey. "A hundred people, of both sexes and all ages, took advantage of the pleasantest of New England months to make their emigration. They directed their march by the compass, aided by such local information as they had derived from previous explorers. Their herd of a hundred and sixty cattle, which grazed as they journeyed, supplied them with milk. They hewed their difficult way through thickets, and their simple engineering bridged with felled trees the streams which could not be forded. Tents protected them from the rain and sheltered their sleep. Early berries which grew along the way, furnished an agreeable variety in their diet, and the fragrance of summer flowers and the songs of innumerable birds beguiled the weariness of their pilgrimage. It occupied a fortnight though the distance was scarcely one hundred miles."

Dr. Benjamin Trumbull, who wrote a history, between 1790 and 1800, having conversed with many aged descendants of these pioneers, also says,

"The adventure was the more remarkable, as many of this company were persons of figure, who had lived in England, in honor, affluence and delicacy, and were entire strangers to fatigue and danger."

Later, the congregations from Dorchester and Watertown, having sold their homes to newcomers from England, came themselves to Windsor and Wethersfield.

By the following spring there were about eight hundred English settlers in Connecticut. And it must be remembered

that these first settlements were made by church organizations, who came seeking not wealth but civil liberty and popular government.

For a year, these new towns were governed by a Board of Commissioners from Massachusetts. But in 1637 representatives from Hartford, Windsor, and Wethersfield, met in a General Court held at Hartford to form a separate government. They brought with them these new names ever since retained for the settlements which had previously been called after the home towns in Massachusetts.

This General Court may be said to mark the beginning of Connecticut as an independent colony. Springfield, settled about this time by people from Roxbury, was for some years claimed by both Massachusetts and Connecticut and was represented, at first, in the General Court at Hartford. But the boundaries were decided in 1641 and Springfield henceforth belonged to Massachusetts.

Connecticut always maintained that all authority and the choice of governors belonged to the people. Rev. Thos. Hooker was chiefly responsible for the Constitution adopted in 1639 by the freemen of Hartford, Windsor and Wethersfield.

This was the first written Constitution, in history, creating a government. For the compact signed in the cabin of the Mayflower simply limited the powers of government but did not create it; while the same may be said of the old English Magna Charta. Our present United States Constitution drew much of its form from this early Constitution of Connecticut.

It established a federation of towns for self-government. It has no reference to Great Britain or to any power outside of Connecticut. And it does not insist that a man must be a church member in order to vote.

The first governor, chosen in April, 1639, was John Haynes.

But while things were moving thus smoothly for the Connecticut Colonists among themselves, they were plunged into an Indian war. Three years before Rev. Thos. Hooker and his company reached Hartford, a party of Dutch traders

sailing up the Connecticut River had been murdered by the Pequots. In 1636, John Oldham, sailing on Long Island Sound, was captured and killed. Governor Vane of Boston, demanding satisfaction, took revenge by ravaging Indian camps and burning wigwams. This still further enraged the savages. All through the winter of 1636 and 1637 the Connecticut towns were in danger and alarm. "Men going to their work were killed and horribly mangled. A Wethersfield man was kidnapped and roasted alive. Later ten people from the same town were massacred and two girls carried off."

In despair the colonists appealed for help to their Massachusetts neighbors, raised among themselves a little company of defenders, and added the support of several hundred friendly Indians from tribes eager to be revenged upon the Pequots. John Mason and John Underhill, experienced captains, were put in command. Their motley army advanced to the Pequot fort, where is now the town of Stonington. As they drew near, the courage of the Indian allies began to fail. One after another stole away to the rear leaving only seventy-seven Englishmen. These must besiege a strong fort defended by a palisade of tree trunks without and by seven hundred Pequots within. This area of two or three acres was crowded with wigwams. The attack, made before dawn, was a surprise, and the panic-stricken Pequots tried in vain to escape through the two gates guarded, respectively, by Mason and Underhill. The English threw blazing torches over the palisade, setting fire to the village of wigwams; whereby many Indians perished in the flames.

This battle lasted but an hour. The English lost but two men although some twenty others were wounded. Of the Pequots only five escaped. Sassacus, their chief, who had stirred up this hostility, was among those who fled. He was overtaken and killed by the Mohawk Indians, who sent his scalp to the Governor at Boston.

The Pequot nation had long been a terror to the other Indian tribes. Now that it was destroyed, the fear of its

conquerors fell upon the savages and for a generation the New England colonists had rest from Indian attacks.

The Pequot war was ended in the early summer of 1637. The safety of travel and of living thus assured brought new colonists into the Connecticut Valley. A year later, the town of New Haven was founded by Englishmen coming mostly from the city of London, where their minister, Davenport, had been a clergyman of the Established Church. Some of the party were from other parts of the country, as Yorkshire, Herefordshire.

Connecticut settlers always paid the Indians for their land. But the price given for the County of New Haven is said to have been "one dozen each of coats, spoons, hatchets, hoes and porringers; two dozen knives and four cases of French knives and 'Sizers' to one tribe and a dozen coats to the other," with promise of protection against their enemies and the right to hunt and fish on the territory thus sold. Not an expensive territory, in view of its value; but the Indians seemed satisfied.

In 1639, this New Haven colony divided to settle Milford. At almost the same time newly-arrived English immigrants established Guilford. Stamford became a settlement in 1640.

In 1643, six towns—New Haven, Milford, Guilford, Stamford, Southold and Branford—united to form the Republic of New Haven. Each village was to be independent, but only church-members might vote. Government in each town was vested in seven magistrates called "Pillars of the Church." The rules of living enacted by these officers have been known as the "Blue Laws." But many of the often-quoted statutes, such as that "No woman shall kiss her child on the Sabbath," are the exaggerations of a writer who, a hundred years later, wished to jeer at the sober Puritans.

The migration of Puritans from England to the colonies—at least in any organized bands—ceased after 1649. The population of New England, at that date about twenty-six hundred, had come for the most part in the reign of Charles I, 1625 to 1649. This migration is accounted for

by the intolerance and cruelty of that monarch. It ceased because the Puritans in England then made a stand for freedom and gave their support to Cromwell. King Charles was dethroned and beheaded and under the Commonwealth of England it was no longer necessary to seek new homes. The colonists in the new world were left to become united and "Americanized."

The Connecticut men, as we have seen, came chiefly from Massachusetts and were of the best middle class in England. There they had been clergymen, lawyers, teachers, country-squires, artisans and agriculturists—industrious folk who could not tolerate idleness or disorder. They had, now, a few servants, including some negro slaves, Indian prisoners, Indian women of the friendly tribes, and white apprentices. The latter class, few in Connecticut, were called "redemptioners" because they promised to serve only until their wages "redeemed" or paid the cost of their voyage from England. Life in the colony was not easy. The New England winter especially was hard to endure; for cut off, as they were, from outside help, through impossibility of travel in the snow, the colonists often suffered for lack of doctors and surgeons.

The log houses were cold; only a kitchen-fire blazed on the hearth. Unplastered walls were such poor protection that water and ink sometimes froze in the same room with the fire; while in the unheated churches the Communion bread often froze to its plate.

Begging and drunken Indians lurked about the settlers' doors; hungry wild beasts made it unsafe to go far from home even had roads been passable. Each household depended upon itself both in work and play; for the stern religious views of the time forbade most forms of amusement. Quilting parties and husking bees enlivened the milder season and between services on the Sabbath there was opportunity for visiting and politics.

Within the home the furniture was simple. Beds, "settles," chairs, and tables, were of home manufacture. The housewife carded her own wool, spun her own flax, and moulded her own candles. A "tin-kitchen" roasted

venison before the wood-fire, potatoes were cooked in the ashes, and the kettle of mush or hominy hung on a crane over the blazing logs.

Connecticut later became famous for its manufacture of clocks; but in these early days they were rare. In 1780 a clock cost one hundred dollars and was a luxury beyond the reach of most people. But there were hour-glasses to time the cooking. If it were necessary to measure minutes, a hymn could be sung; one verse of eight lines chanted slowly, was just long enough to boil an egg.

Community laws entered largely into private life. Connecticut forbade any man to smoke tobacco before strangers, either in his own home or elsewhere. Two men were forbidden to smoke together and no one must light pipe or cigar on the Sabbath within two miles of the Meeting House. A man might smoke once only in a journey of ten miles; never more than once a day and never in another man's house.

The rules for Church-going and for behavior in public were equally particular and strict.

It is sometimes said of the Pilgrim Fathers that "They came to a new world in order to worship God as they pleased and to prevent other people from doing the same." This statement is unfair to their ideals. They did wish to establish a Christian State. Perhaps they had small knowledge of what we call religious liberty. But they tried to lead godly lives and to drive out from their community all forms of sin. Righteousness was above personal rights. Their liberality, too, was in advance of that then practiced in England. Connecticut led her sister colonies in freedom of thought; for here, except in the Republic of New Haven, freemen, whether church members or not, had the right to vote. Quakers, so cruelly persecuted in Massachusetts, were tolerated or at most merely fined, in the Connecticut towns. And while the Congregational Church was that established and upheld by New England Colonies, Connecticut early in the eighteenth century allowed the formation of other church societies and protected them by law.

On the whole, these colonists were men of unusual

uprightness and ability. One of their ministers said in an election sermon; "God sifted a whole nation that He might send choice grain into the wilderness"—more nearly exact truth than are many compliments.

The principle of federation continued to grow in favor. In 1643 was formed a league of four colonies—Massachusetts, Plymouth, Connecticut, and New Haven—for it must be remembered that the last two were as yet distinct—called the United Colonies of New England. This league, including thirty-nine towns, was formed chiefly for defence against encroachments of the Dutch. For the next ten years there were disputes and controversies with the governors of New Netherlands. There were fears of a Dutch and Indian war, especially when conflict between England and Holland broke out in Europe. New England in her loyalty, threatened to sweep the Dutch from Manhattan Island. A small army was raised and an expedition planned, when news came that England had made peace with Holland and wished no interference from the colonies.

Great changes, meantime, had occurred in the Mother Country. For eleven years after King Charles I was executed by act of Parliament, England was ruled as a Commonwealth, under Oliver Cromwell and his son. Then in 1660 Charles II was restored to the throne of his father. Two members of the Council who had condemned Charles I to death fled for their lives to New England. They were Edward Whalley, cousin of Cromwell, and William Goffe, major-general in Cromwell's army. These "regicides" were kindly received by the New Haven people and hidden from the King's detectives. Thrilling stories are told of their hiding in caves, in cellars of the colonists, and once even under a bridge while their pursuers galloped across. For two or three years they were thus protected until the King's officers grew discouraged and gave up the hunt.

New Haven not only shielded these "rebels" but failed for more than a year to recognize the restoration of Charles II. But the Connecticut Colony had been prompt to acknowledge the new King.

When, therefore, in the summer of 1661, young John Winthrop was sent to England to ask for a Connecticut Charter, similar to that already enjoyed by Massachusetts, the King received him graciously and granted liberal terms. This Charter is dated April 23, 1662, and under its provisions Connecticut was governed for more than a hundred and fifty years.

In order to punish New Haven, the King suppressed it as a separate colony and annexed it to Connecticut—probably thinking also that by giving Massachusetts a strong rival he could vex that troublesome part of his overseas dominion. New Haven strongly objected to the union but was finally forced to yield.

What was intended as a repressive measure really strengthened the growing colonies. In spite of differences among themselves and with their neighbors, they grew and prospered until there fell upon them the next great Indian war, known as King Philip's War.

For thirty-eight years, since the Pequots had been so fearfully punished, there had been outward peace between the white men and the Indians. The latter, however, saw with secret alarm and hatred that the English were encroaching more and more, taking possession of their lands and crowding the tribes back into the wilderness. Education and religious training were offered them by white teachers and missionaries, but even these gifts were viewed with distrust and misunderstanding. Guns and ammunition were better understood. These the Indians eagerly accepted and thereby strengthened themselves for the conflict. "Fire-water," too, as they called the liquor obtained from traders, added to their natural cruelty. When Philip, whose Indian name was Metacom, became chief of the Wampanoags, it was easy for him to find a pretext for attack.

The war began in Massachusetts in the summer of 1675 and soon spread to the Connecticut Valley. Massacres followed and within a few weeks, Northfield, Deerfield and Bloody Brook saw desperate acts of murder and outrage. When the Narragansett tribe threatened to join their breth-

ren the Federal Commissioners at Boston felt that it was time for strong measures. A thousand men under Governor Winslow marched against the faithless Narragansetts and near Kingston, Rhode Island, completely overthrew them. In this battle Connecticut had three hundred men. For though the war was waged for the most part outside her borders, she did her full share in its support and felt her full share of anxiety and alarm.

King Philip was killed by an Indian bullet; his head was cut off and sent to Plymouth, where stuck on a pole it was displayed on the village green, the church bells calling people to a service of thanksgiving over the capture of their foe. This was natural rejoicing but its methods hardly accord with our present ideas of Christian brotherhood.

King Philip's War was the last Indian uprising of any strength in New England. Later the French had the savages as allies in frontier raids; but as a separate foe, we hear no more of the cruel Red Man.

In the year that King Philip's War began, word came to Connecticut that Governor Andros of New York was coming to aid the colonists against the Indians. Long Island, which seemed, by nature, to belong to Connecticut, had recently been transferred to New York by a patent from the King. There was, therefore, no kindly feeling toward New York's proffered aid; it looked too much like further encroachment. Captain Bull, commanding officer at Saybrook, was ordered to say "that the colony had taken all precautions against the Indians." If Governor Andros wished to visit the firing line he might do so; but no strange soldiers should be landed on Connecticut soil. All that Andros accomplished was to read his commission. And when the Hartford Court heard of that, they said merely, "We wish he had been interrupted."

This hint bore fruit when, eighteen years later, another New York Governor, Benjamin Fletcher, arrived at Hartford with royal order to take charge of New England militia. He was not allowed to read his credentials. Captain Wadsworth ordered the drums to beat and there followed "such a roaring of them that nothing else could be heard."

Twice Governor Fletcher attempted to read; twice he was drummed down; at last, after a threat from Captain Wadsworth to "make the sun shine through him" if the drummers were again interrupted, he gave up the effort. This incident shows the Connecticut spirit—a spirit of courage and loyalty that would endure no trespass on colonial rights.

King Charles II had planned to send over a viceroy to curb this spirit of independence. But as he was about to carry out his plan he was removed by sudden death in 1685. His brother, James II, who succeeded to the throne, was more crafty than Charles and hardly less vicious. He sent back Sir Edmund Andros, ex-governor of New York, as governor of New England, with orders to take away all royal charters and abolish self-government.

In October, 1687, Andros went in person to seize the charter of Connecticut. He appeared one evening before the Assembly at Hartford to enforce the King's demands. While he argued and threatened, the candles were suddenly blown out. When, after some delay, they were relighted, the charter was nowhere to be found. Captain Wadsworth had taken it away, under cover of the darkness, and had hidden it in a hollow oak. This tree, known thereafter as the Charter Oak, no longer stands. But the precious document may still be seen in the State House at Hartford. Although Connecticut thus saved her charter, she was obliged, for a time, to submit.

Andros became governor of all the northern colonies from what is now Maine to Delaware. For about two years the people fretted under his tyranny and would not have endured it much longer, had not a change in English politics come to their aid.

Early in April, 1689, young John Winthrop returned to Boston bringing news of the revolution in England—the landing of the Prince of Orange and the overthrow of King James II. Then the colonists arose and summoned Andros to surrender. He refused and, dressed in woman's clothes, tried to run away. But the people of Boston were too quick for him; he was arrested and thrown into prison.

Five weeks later came the order to proclaim William and Mary, King and Queen of Great Britain and the colonies. New England obeyed with great rejoicing; for it was believed that, at last, self-government was assured for all time.

The Charter of Connecticut was now restored to its authority and continued in force until the present State Constitution took its place, in 1818. For almost a hundred years after this restoration of her charter, Connecticut had peace in which to cultivate the land, establish schools, and grow into her reputation as "the land of steady habits."

A college was felt to be necessary, and as early as 1647 the New Haven authorities had been ordered, by the general Court, to set aside a lot for such an institution. But Massachusetts declared that, since there was hardly enough money to support Harvard, to attempt two colleges would be to ruin both. In 1698 the matter again came up, ten trustees were chosen, and it was decided to call the new college "The School of the Church." Objections were made to this name. Therefore the plan of having the church control the college was given up.

But in 1700 the trustees held their first regular meeting at Branford. Each man—and they were all ministers—laid upon a table his contribution of books, with the remark "I give these books for the founding of a college in this colony." Only forty volumes in all, but they were the beginning of Yale University.

Saybrook was first chosen as the place for the new college and in 1702 a degree was there conferred upon Nathaniel Chauncey, the first graduate. For various reasons removal was thought best, and in 1716 New Haven was chosen as the site.

English friends of education had throughout these years been sending over books and money for the college. At the first New Haven Commencement in 1718, the University was named for one of its benefactors, Elihu Yale.

In the early years of the colonies there was popular sentiment against the public education of girls. It was believed that, according to St. Paul's injunction, women should "learn at home." It is therefore to the credit of

Connecticut to have established, at Middletown in 1780, the first school exclusively for girls. Classes were held in the evening, in the subjects: Grammar, Geography and Composition. Only at a later period were girls admitted to the public schools.

Connecticut had many domestic troubles. One difficulty came from the scant supply and changing values of money. The little gold and silver brought from England was soon insufficient. For trading with the Indians "wampum" was used and later became common currency among the settlers themselves. Wampum was made from shells cut and polished into beads. Three dark colored or six white beads equalled an English penny.

Other things passed as money or were given in trade:—such as animals, grains and vegetables, codfish, bullets, and even nails—the last being often thrown in for small change. These various substitutes for money fluctuated in value. Also the gold and silver coins still remaining were often "clipped" or plugged, so that a good deal of figuring had to be done in every bargain.

In 1709 money had so diminished, while taxes and debts had so increased, that the General Court of Connecticut issued paper money, which is merely a promise to pay in gold or silver. It was several times needful to resort to this doubtful way of lifting financial burdens which seemed in the end to grow only heavier. Yet the paper notes were finally redeemed and the credit of the colony was preserved.

England, meantime, was at war with France. And as Canada, on the New England border, was settled by Frenchmen, the colonies were naturally drawn into the conflict. Connecticut's part was to promise troops if needed by any of her neighbors. She gave substantial help in Queen Anne's War which broke out in 1702. In 1709 she sent several hundred men to help in the attacks on Quebec and Montreal and also on Nova Scotia. And in successive years she helped generously to win Canada for the English.

Then there was peace for nearly thirty years until England declared war against Spain. Again Connecticut furnished soldiers—a thousand this time—who went to the shores

of Spain. Only a hundred came back, while the money loss was so great that more paper bills became necessary.

In 1754 began what is known as the French and Indian War; for France had joined in the struggle over seas, while in the colonies Indian tribes allied themselves with French settlers.

Connecticut equipped a small man-of-war and sent it with eleven hundred men to help take Louisburg, Nova Scotia. For the battle of Lake George a thousand men were sent from Connecticut and it was their commander, General Lyman, who led the fiercest of the fighting.

Israel Putnam was another Connecticut man who distinguished himself in the French and Indian War as also, later, in the Revolution.

Year after year there was demand for fresh troops until it seemed as if the resources of the colony were exhausted. But the call for men was never refused.

In spite of war and money troubles, Connecticut had grown and prospered. In 1680, a report to the home government stated that there were thirty towns; many buildings "of wood, stone or brick—forty foot long and twenty foot broad and some longer." The population of the colony was between ten and twelve thousand—about three persons to a square mile. In 1700 these figures had nearly doubled.

There was indeed such growth that new colonies began to reach out west and south. Migrations began and many questions arose over boundaries. Massachusetts, in return for Connecticut's straightening the eastern line between the two colonies, gave to her neighbor a tract of western land. This was in the territory afterwards called Vermont. It was sold by the General Court to private purchasers, but as soon as the new owners tried to settle their lands, they found themselves in a dispute involving New York, Massachusetts and New Hampshire, all of whom claimed the country. Besides this, the ignorance and greed of English Kings gave overlapping grants to relatives and favorites and led to honest differences of opinion as to boundaries. Some of these differences it took a century to settle.

Yet at the beginning of the Revolutionary War, despite losses and migrations, troubles at home and abroad, Connecticut was a thriving, well-established colony, favorably known among the thirteen for integrity, industry and a spirit of true democracy.

When the Stamp Act was passed by the English Parliament, the Connecticut General Assembly, through its agent in London, was first to protest, insisting firmly on "the right of the colonies to tax themselves and the privilege of trial by jury—rights they could never recede from."

A special agent, named Ingersoll, was sent to London to remonstrate in person. He accomplished nothing, but by Benjamin Franklin's advice had himself appointed stamp agent for Connecticut, to collect the hated tax. On his return he found the colonists much excited. Sermons were preached against the Stamp Act and officers were ordered to pay no heed to it. Bands of men calling themselves "Sons of Liberty" were forming in all the towns. These men were waiting for Ingersoll and a thousand of them escorted him from New Haven to Hartford forcing him to resign his office as Stamp Agent.

In 1769 Jonathan Trumbull became governor of Connecticut and held office until the end of the Revolution. He was a close friend and advisor of Washington and it was from the latter's playful way of addressing him that the name "Brother Jonathan" came to mean the United States.

Throughout the stormy events which followed the "Boston Tea Party" Connecticut was prompt to furnish money, men, and sympathy. It was a party of Connecticut volunteers who roused Vermont and led in the capture of Ticonderoga.

Israel Putnam, even before this time, had proved the valiant spirit of his colony. He was plowing in his field at Pomfret when word came of the battle of Concord and Lexington. Dropping the plow where it was, he mounted the plowhorse and galloped off to the governor's house for orders sending him to Boston. He rode without dismounting, for eighteen hours, and was soon in command of a company. At Bunker Hill, Putnam's men held the rail

fence until the whole army was in retreat and then tried to turn the others back.

It is said that in General Washington's army which besieged New York—some 1700 men—more than half were from Connecticut. The battles of the Revolution were chiefly outside the boundaries of this colony, but her generosity and loyal support of the cause contributed largely to success. At home, those who could not fight, were given employment in casting bullets and in gathering provisions for the troops. There were few Tories in Connecticut and those few were invited to move elsewhere.

Connecticut has had, also, a large share in the affairs of national government and the development of other states. From a census taken about the middle of the last century, it appears that one county alone gave birth to "thirteen United States Senators, twenty-two representatives from New York, fifteen supreme Court judges in other states, nine presidents of colleges and eleven governors and lieutenant governors of states."

The important differences which characterized Connecticut as compared with other colonies have been tabulated as follows:

- 1st. Development of the town system and the principle of local government.
- 2d. The first written and democratic constitution.
- 3d. Comparative freedom from British control.
- 4th. First practical test of federation.
- 5th. First organized effort toward western colonization.
- 6th. Individual development of manufacture and productive industry.

Connecticut has in her history no large element of romance or of stirring incidents. It is the story of steady growth; simple, sturdy virtues; above all, of true democracy.

Her contribution to the Union may be summed up in the words of her historian, Alexander Johnston:

"The birthplace of American democracy is Hartford. It was the privilege of Connecticut to keep the nation of

federal relation alive until it could be made the fundamental law of all the commonwealths in 1787-89. In this respect the life principle of the American Union may be traced straight back to the primitive union of the three little settlements on the bank of the Connecticut River."







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