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TOWN HALL ACROSS WEPAWAUG RIVER



# HISTORY OF MILFORD CONNECTICUT

1639-1939

COMPILED AND WRITTEN BY THE  
FEDERAL WRITERS' PROJECT OF THE  
WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION  
FOR THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT

1939

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by  
THE MILFORD TERCENTENARY COMMITTEE, INC.

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PRESS OF  
BRAUNWORTH & CO., INC.  
BUILDERS OF BOOKS  
BRIDGEPORT, CONN.

## FOREWORD

In August, 1939, Milford, the sixth oldest town in Connecticut, will celebrate the three hundredth anniversary of its founding. In preparation for this anniversary, the citizens of the town, on November 9, 1936, authorized the Selectmen to appoint a Tercentenary Committee to formulate and carry out plans for an appropriate observance of this important event in the life of the town.

Although the outstanding facts concerning the settlement of Milford and its history, growth and development are well known to many of the present generation, no attempt had ever been made to compile those facts into a historical work dealing with Milford alone. Many excellent historical sketches and papers concerning the town and its people have been written from time to time, and Milford has always had its place in the chronicles of Connecticut and of New Haven Colony, but no complete history of Milford, assembling into one volume a systematic account of events affecting the town, had ever been written and published.

The definite need, indeed positive demand, for an authentic history, which should cover the three centuries of the town's life, prompted the Tercentenary Committee to undertake the preparation of this book as one of its first and most important projects. As a part of this Tercentenary observance, there could be no more appropriate gift for the Milford of the Present to hand to the Milford of the Future than an accurate account of the Milford of the Past.

The Tercentenary Committee was fortunate in obtaining the services of the workers and writers of the Federal Writers' Project of the Work Projects Administration, first,

## FOREWORD

to do the vast amount of necessary research work; then, to assemble the material, discriminating between fact and fiction; and, finally, to compose and complete this first History of Milford.

The Committee expresses the thanks of the townspeople to the Federal Writers' Project for this valuable contribution to the Milford Tercentenary.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Omar H. Platt," with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Chairman of Milford  
Tercentenary Committee.

July 1, 1939.

## PREFACE

On this Tercentenary, the people of Milford have reason to be proud of the length and serenity of their history. In writing this brief account the Federal Writers' Project has made use of Lambert's *History of the New Haven Colony* written a hundred years ago, of Barber, of Trumbull, and of the various works mentioned in the Bibliography. Mostly, however, we have followed the lines of the Town Records which constitute an unusually full and valuable body of information concerning events in Milford from the time of its founding. Here in gnarled authenticity, in sometimes refractory spelling, is revealed the sturdy grain of the ancestral stock. The things which they took care about in their town meetings, their interests, their judgments are matters of concern and precedent to their grateful descendants and to all who live in Milford and are susceptible to its traditions. There could be no more fitting act of commemoration than to remove their words from the crumbling edges of the original volumes and to publish them for the use of historians. Few towns can have such important material to offer the legal scholar, the historian, and the antiquarian. It is greatly to be hoped that a memorial volume may be brought forth containing the Town Records from 1639 into the 19th Century, as well as selected deeds, land records, and other documents of prime importance. If the writing of this history should pave the way for such a publication, it will have served perhaps its most useful purpose.

The Federal Writers' Project wishes to thank the citizens of Milford who have given us this opportunity and have helped us to live up to it. In particular, thanks are due to



## PREFACE

the Tercentenary Committee, Inc., and its committee on publication, who have been of all possible assistance to us in this work. The following Milford residents, under the chairmanship of the Reverend Roy M. Houghton, composed the committee on publication: Norman S. Buckingham, Frederick S. Gorham, Mrs. Morris W. Abbott, Mrs. C. Robert Chase, Miss Annie D. Nettleton, Mrs. H. Franklin Norton, Mrs. Frederick M. Smith.

We are indebted to Mr. Paul Reilly of the Federal Art Project for his pen-and-ink drawing of the Old Academy; to the Yale University Press and Prof. Leonard W. Labaree for a map cut; and to Mr. J. Frederick Kelly, who has read the section on Old Houses and Churches.

The following members of the Federal Writers' Project contributed to the making of this book: the Milford staff of C. Lay Roosevelt, Supervisor, Walter Carleton, the late Joseph B. Carroll, Byron A. Guthrie, and Louis R. Tierney; the State editorial staff of William H. Garrigus, Virgil Geddes, Iveagh H. Lewis, and Grace T. Shailer; Elmer D. Keith, architectural editor; Russell Platt, who made the index and bibliography, and Harry Terrill; William T. Stack, photographer; Albert Macmullan and Arnold Kriger, map-makers.

July 4, 1939

JOHN B. DERBY, State Director

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## CHAPTER ONE

### A LITTLE REPUBLIC

1639-1643

In the summer of 1637, when the Connecticut and Massachusetts militia were pursuing the remnants of the Pequot tribe along the Connecticut coast, most of the soldiers were interested only in the whereabouts of the Indians, but Sergeant Thomas Tibbals noticed the region about the mouth of the Wepawaug (Wepowage) that is today Milford, and appraised it as an ideal spot for a settlement.

The river wound through meadow and woodland, spilling its waters, by way of a deep, rocky gorge, into a long arm of the sea. Though not navigable above the gorge, the stream was large enough to furnish abundant water for livestock and the necessary power for turning mill wheels. A half mile farther to the east was another small stream. Their two inlets almost completely surrounded a triangular neck of land. The inlet of the Wepawaug River formed a natural harbor for more than a mile upstream, sufficiently deep to permit the entrance and anchorage of vessels. The other inlet, very shallow and at low tide a wide expanse of mud and marsh, formed the mouth of the East (Indian) River, later the eastern boundary of the settlement. The shore line with its sweep of curving beach extended westward from the mouth of the harbor to the Housatonic River. A long narrow peninsula at the extreme west, now Milford Point, had been for many years the site of a large Indian village and the scene of many an Indian oyster feast. The shells were scattered thickly over nearly twenty-four acres.

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A mile and a half southwest from the mouth of the harbor, an island of about fourteen acres, partly wooded and partly open meadow, rose from the sea; a rocky bar awash at half-tide connected it with the mainland. The beaches abounded with clams; the harbor and the East River, with blue crabs; and the waters of the Sound, with lobsters and fish of many kinds.

Game was plentiful in the surrounding forests. There was an abundance of both hard and soft woods—oak, chestnut, butternut, hickory, maple, red cedar, hemlock, and elm. Wild beach plums, growing in profusion along the shore, offered fruit for preserves and jelly.

Who were the first settlers in Milford? Where did they come from? During the reign of Charles I, increasing numbers of people were migrating to New England because they were no longer willing to accept the tenets of the established Church of England, and had been persecuted by the prelates of the English Church for their non-conformity. In May, 1637, the *Hector* sailed from London to Boston, carrying a company gathered by John Davenport and Theophilus Eaton of London. Five weeks later another ship arrived with a group headed by Peter Prudden, a native of Hertfordshire. Among the original Milford settlers known to be of this company were Edmund Tapp, James Prudden, William Fowler, Thomas and Hannah Buckingham, Thomas Welch, Richard Platt, Henry Stonehill, and William East, all from Hertfordshire. The new arrivals stayed in the Massachusetts Bay Colony for almost a year, and were considered such desirable colonists that efforts were made to induce them to settle there permanently.


Davenport and Prudden, however, desired to establish their own colony, and when the potentialities of the region at the mouth of the Quinnipiac River in Connecticut were verified by an expedition made in August, 1637, by Eaton

## A LITTLE REPUBLIC

and several others of the Davenport company, they decided that was the place to found their colony. Seven of Eaton's group stayed through the winter to hold the territory for the others. In April, 1638, Peter Prudden and a number of his followers sailed with the Davenport group from Boston, bound for the Quinnipiac.

From April, 1638, to the fall of 1639, the Prudden group was a part of the New Haven Colony. A separate allotment, known as the Hertfordshire section, was granted to them. They cleared the land, built houses, and planted crops.

During the summer of 1638 Mr. Prudden preached at Wethersfield, and there attracted a devoted following, many of whom wished to found a new settlement where he would be their pastor. This crystallized the movement to found a separate colony among the Hertfordshire group in New Haven.

Of the original settlers of Milford, Thomas Tapping, Robert Treat, John Sherman, Thomas Tibbals, John Fletcher, George Hubbard, Richard Miles and Andrew Benton were Wethersfield recruits. Zachariah Whitman, Benjamin Fenn, and Thomas Sandford, from Dorchester, Massachusetts, and John Astwood, John Peacocke, Thomas Baker, Jasper Gunn, John Burwell, and Thomas Uffot from Roxbury, joined the Prudden group and went to the mouth of the Wepawaug. The Milford Colony was thus a settlement of Mr. Prudden's followers, recruited from towns in England and New England where he had preached, and held together by personal devotion to their leader. 

Sergeant Tibbals suggested the region about the mouth of the Wepawaug River, ten miles west of New Haven, for their plantation. On February 12, 1639, Edmund Tapp, William Fowler, Benjamin Fenn, Zachariah Whitman, and Alexander Bryan from New Haven, journeyed to the Wepawaug and purchased land from Ansantawae, a

## HISTORY OF MILFORD

sachem of the Paugusset Indians who had a village on the banks of the river. The price was six coats, ten blankets, one kettle, twelve hatchets, twelve hoes, two dozen knives, and a dozen small mirrors.

The tract bought was bounded by the East River, the Housatonic River on the west, the Sound on the south, including Poquahaug (Charles) Island, and by the "two mile Indian path that goeth to Paugusset (Derby)," on the north. The location of the "two mile" path is a matter of conjecture.\* A study of the boundaries and acreage in subsequent purchases of land for Milford indicates that the northern boundary of the original purchase was the road which today leaves New Haven by way of Fountain Street, passes through the lower part of Woodbridge, and runs west to meet the

\* In his *History of the New Haven Colony* (1838), Edward R. Lambert does not attempt to locate that two mile path in any way. "The first purchase was made of the Indians on the 12th of February of that year (1639). It comprehended the tract of land lying between the East river and the Housatonnuc, and the sea with the Island south, and the two mile Indian path to Paugusset (Derby) north."

In his *History of Connecticut* (1797), Dr. Benjamin Trumbull says, "They first purchased of the Indians all the tract which lies between New Haven and Stratford river, and between the sound on the south, and a stream called two mile brook on the north which is the boundary line between Milford and Derby. This tract comprized all the lands within the old town of Milford, and a small part of the town of Woodbridge."

Trumbull does not use the two mile Indian path as the boundary, but a brook called Two Mile Brook. This is a much more definite boundary, as the Two Mile Brook is still in existence, and is located in the western end of Orange.

Edward L. Clark of Orange has traced the path or road as follows: "It extended from the northwesterly section of New Haven, perhaps over what is now called Long Hill, past the house of Newton J. Peck, to a point now within the present limits of the City of Ansonia, thence in a southwesterly direction until it reached that section of Derby formerly called the 'narrows.'" This road would go through the lower part of Woodbridge.

The two mile path, according to Lambert, is used as a boundary in three different purchases of land. In the first purchase, 1639, it is the northern boundary; in the second, 1655, the eastern boundary; and in the third, 1685, the southern boundary.

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Two Mile Brook. From this point to the Housatonic River the brook served as a boundary. The first purchase included nearly all of the present towns of Orange and Milford, and part of the town of Woodbridge.

Deeding the land to its new owners was effected with the old English "twig and turf" ceremony. After the customary signing of the deed by both parties, Ansantawae was handed a piece of turf and a twig. Taking the piece of turf in one hand, and the twig in the other, he thrust the twig into the turf, and handed it to the English. In this way he signified that the Indians relinquished all the land specified in the deed and everything growing upon it. The Paugusset Indians sold the Wepawaug land in the hope that they would enlist English protection against the Mohawks, who were continually raiding their territory.

Title to the region was based solely on land purchase from the Indians and not upon any grant from the English Crown. The later purchases of 1655, 1659, 1660, and 1661, rounding out the boundaries of the settlement over a period of six years, were also made directly from Indian possessors.\* As Isabel M. Calder, in her recent *History of the New Haven Colony* points out, "The hodge-podge of Indian deeds by which the greater part of the lands of the colony were held would have received no recognition outside of New England, and would never have stood the scrutiny of an English Court of law."

Several months of planning and labor followed the purchase of the Wepawaug land before the settlers took actual possession of their new home. On August 22, 1639, while they were still living in New Haven, those intending to move to Wepawaug met in council in Robert Newman's barn and formed the First Church of Milford. The organ-

\* These purchases are referred to in an Indian deed of 1682. See *Appendix*.



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ization followed the plan adopted by the New Haven Church that same day. "Seven Pillars" were chosen as the governing body, the idea being derived from the Scripture, "Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars." The "Seven Pillars" of the Milford Church were Peter Prudden, Zachariah Whitman, William Fowler, John Astwood, Edmund Tapp, Thomas Welch, and Thomas Buckingham. Upon them rested the responsibility of examining and passing upon the qualifications of all members.

As part of the ceremony of organization, these men appeared before the council of the church, gave a detailed account of their religious experience, made a profession of faith, and ended by reciting the covenant, written by Peter Prudden.\*

The church was not only a dominating first cause for

\* This appears in the first book of church records in Prudden's own handwriting: "Since it hath pleased ye Lord of his infinite goodness and free grace to call us (a company of poor miserable wretches) out of ye world unto fellowship with himselfe in Jesus Christ, and to bestow himself upon us by an everlasting covenant of his free grace sealed in ye blood of Jesus Christ, to be our God, and to make and avouch to us to be his people, and hath undertaken to circumcise our hearts, that we may love ye Lord our God and feare him, and walk in his wayes; we, therefore, do this day avouch ye Lord to be our God, even Jehovah, the only true God, the Almighty Maker of heaven and earth, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; and we do this day enter into an holy covenant with ye Lord and one with another, through ye grace and help of Christ strengthening us (without whom we can do nothing), to deny ourselves and all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and all corruptions and pollutions wherein in any sort we have walked. And do give up ourselves wholly to ye Lord Jesus Christ, to be taught and governed by him in all relations, conditions and conversations in this world; avouching him to be our only Prophet and Teacher, our only Priest and Propitiation, our only King and Lawgiver. And we do further bind ourselves in his strength, to walk before him, in all professed subjection to all his holy ordinances, according to ye rule of the gospel, and also to walk together with his church and ye members thereof, in all brotherly love and holy watchfulness, to ye mutual building up one another in Faythe and Love. All which ye Lord help us to perform, through his rich grace in Christ according to his covenant. Amen."

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settlement, but also the controlling force in colonial government, education, and social life. The leaders in the church were the leaders in civil affairs. Except for allegiance to the English Crown, which did not weigh too heavily upon the Fathers, they acknowledged no authority but the word of God, and "combined into a little republic." Their constitution was the Scriptures.

Prolonged discussions had occurred as to whether or not voting and office-holding should be confined to church members. The policy of excluding non-members from civil rights was finally adopted. The first General Court (town meeting), held on November 20, 1639, granted forty-four church members the franchise as "free planters." Following is the list taken from the town records:

Zachariah Whitman	Henry Stonhill	Thomas Lawrance
Thomas Welsh	Nathaniel Baldwin	Thomas Samford
Thomas Wheeler	James Prudden	Timothy Baldwin
Edmond Tappe	Thomas Baker	George Clarke, Jr.
Thomas Buckingham	George Clarke, Senr.	John Burwell
Richard Miles	George Hubburt	Henry Botsford
Richard Platt	Jasper Gunn	Joseph Baldwin
Thomas Topping	John Fletcher	Philip Hatly
Mr. Peter Prudden	Alex. Bryan	Nicholas Camp
William Fowler	Frances Bolt	John Rogers
John Astwood	Micah Tomkins	Thomas Uffott
Richard Baldwin	John Birdsey	Nathaniell Briscoe
Benjamin Fen	Edmond Harvy	Thomas Tibballs
Samuel Coley	John Lane	John Sharman
John Peacocke	William East	

The following persons are recorded immediately after, but not as free planters.

Robert Plum	John Baldwin	William Brookes
Roger Terrel	William Slough	Robert Treat
Joseph Northrupp	Andrew Benton	Henry Lyon

Lambert adds the name of John Fowler to this second list, but the name does not appear in the town records.

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The following is a list of the principal after-planters, with the year of their settlement in Milford:

Henry Allyn *	1645	Jonathan Law	1664
Edward Adams	1646	Simon Lubdell	1645
Joshua Atwater	1655	Miles Merwin	1645
Joshua Ashburn	1650	Miles Moore	1646
Hants Albers	1645	Jonathan Marsh	1649
Thomas Andrew	1673	Thomas Mecock	1658
Thomas Bayley	1646	Samuel Nettleton	1645
Thomas Beardsley	1647	Mr. Roger Newton	1659
John Brown	1648	Frances Norton	1660
Roger Betts	1658	James Prime	1644
Thomas Betts	1658	John Prindle	1645
Thomas Beach	1658	Joseph Peck	1645
Thomas Campfield	1648	Roger Pritchard	1653
Robert Denison	1645	David Phillips	1660
Gilbert Dalison	1647	Edward Riggs	1640
Charles Deal	1656	William Roberts	1645
Robert Downs	1660	Thomas Read	1647
Samuel Eell	1664	Joseph Sill	1648
Thomas Farman	1658	Richard Shute	1642
Nathaniel Farrand	1645	John Smith	1643
Samuel Fitch †	1644	John Stream	1646
John Ford	1646	John Stone	1650
Thomas Ford	1646	Vincent Stilson	1646
Stephen Freeman	1658	Peter Simpson	1654
John Fisk, physician	1695	Edward Turner	1651
Nathaniel Gould	1646	Henry Tomlinson §	1652
Joseph Guernsey	1673	Tho. Talmadge	1656
Thomas Hine	1646	William Tyler	1670
Richard Houghton		Edward Wooster	1651
Thomas Hayes	1645	Edward Wilkinson	1645
Richard Holbrook	1658	Thomas Ward	1657
Richard Hollingworth		John Waters	1658
Jonathan Ingersoll, joiner ‡	1698	John Woodruff	1685
Walter Joye	1650	Andrew Warner	1653
Jesse Lambert	1680		

\* Ancestor of Colonel Ethan Allen, the hero of Ticonderoga.

† Removed to Norwalk. He was ancestor of Governor Thomas Fitch.

‡ Came with New Haven Company. He was the ancestor of all the Ingersolls in this town and in New Haven. His son Jared was a lawyer, and located himself in New Haven.

§ Governor Gideon Tomlinson was a descendant of his.

|| He was ancestor of General David Wooster, of New Haven, who was killed at Danbury in 1777.

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The General Court declared: "The power is settled in the church to chuse persons out of themselves to divide the land into Lotts, as they shall have light from the word of God, and to take order for the timber." The town chose five men "for Judges in al civill affaires [who] Are to try al causes Between man and man as A Court to punish any offence and Sin against the commandments." The judges named were William Fowler, Edmund Tapp, Zachariah Whitman, John Astwood, and Richard Miles, all but Richard Miles being "Pillars of the Church." Until a body of laws should be established, the judges were "to observe and Apply them Selves to the rules of the written word of god."

With land purchased and church organized, the main body of planters migrated from New Haven in the late summer or early autumn of 1639.\* Lambert, who probably had access to documents which we do not possess, gives this account of the migration:

The body of planters moved from New Haven by land, following the devious Indian foot-path, driving their cattle and other domestic animals before them, while their household and farming utensils, and the materials for 'the common house' were taken round by water. Serg. Thomas Tibbals piloted the company through the woods to the place, 'he having been there a number of times before.' . . . . .

All safely arrived, the planters erected their common house at the head of the harbor, on the west side, and a few rude huts for temporary residence.

The second General Court was held in March, 1640, and the foundations of the settlement were laid. Since the settlers were in immediate need of a mill to grind their grain, the following vote was passed:

\* C. M. Andrews, *Colonial Period of American History*, vol. 2, pp. 158, 159 (note).



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It is Agreed between William Fowler and those of the Bretheren that he shall build A Mill and A house for it and to doe all the worke to her for Stones and Iron-worke and all other Materialls fit for her: and substantially done and to be goeing By the last of September. When it is finished the towne is to take it off if they will For 180<sup>l</sup> or else the Brethren Are to appoynt what towle he shall take: compareing the profits of the Mill, and the land Allowed, with the money disbursed.

In recompense, William Fowler was granted the land for a mill site on the Wepawaug River and was later given perpetual use of the stream. Mr. Fowler had taken upon himself no small task. He had to build a mill dam, erect the mill, have the iron fittings forged in New Haven, and find the proper rock from which to hew the millstones. The mill dam was built just above the rocky gorge through which the Wepawaug rushed to the harbor. The original millrace is still in existence, running under the present New Haven Avenue and into a pond which empties into the harbor. The mill, the first gristmill in New Haven Colony, was built just to the west of the raceway, and if standing today would be in the middle of New Haven Avenue, just east of the Memorial Bridge. The town's right to purchase the mill was never exercised, but the judges did establish the miller's fees which were to be three quarts of raw grain for every bushel brought to be ground. A sawmill, built soon after on the other side of the millrace, was operated for only a short period.

Throughout the spring and summer of 1640 roads were made along both banks of the Wepawaug and of West End Brook and house lots were laid out facing the roads. Forty-one plots, long narrow strips of land, averaging three acres each, were staked out on the Wepawaug, and twenty-four on



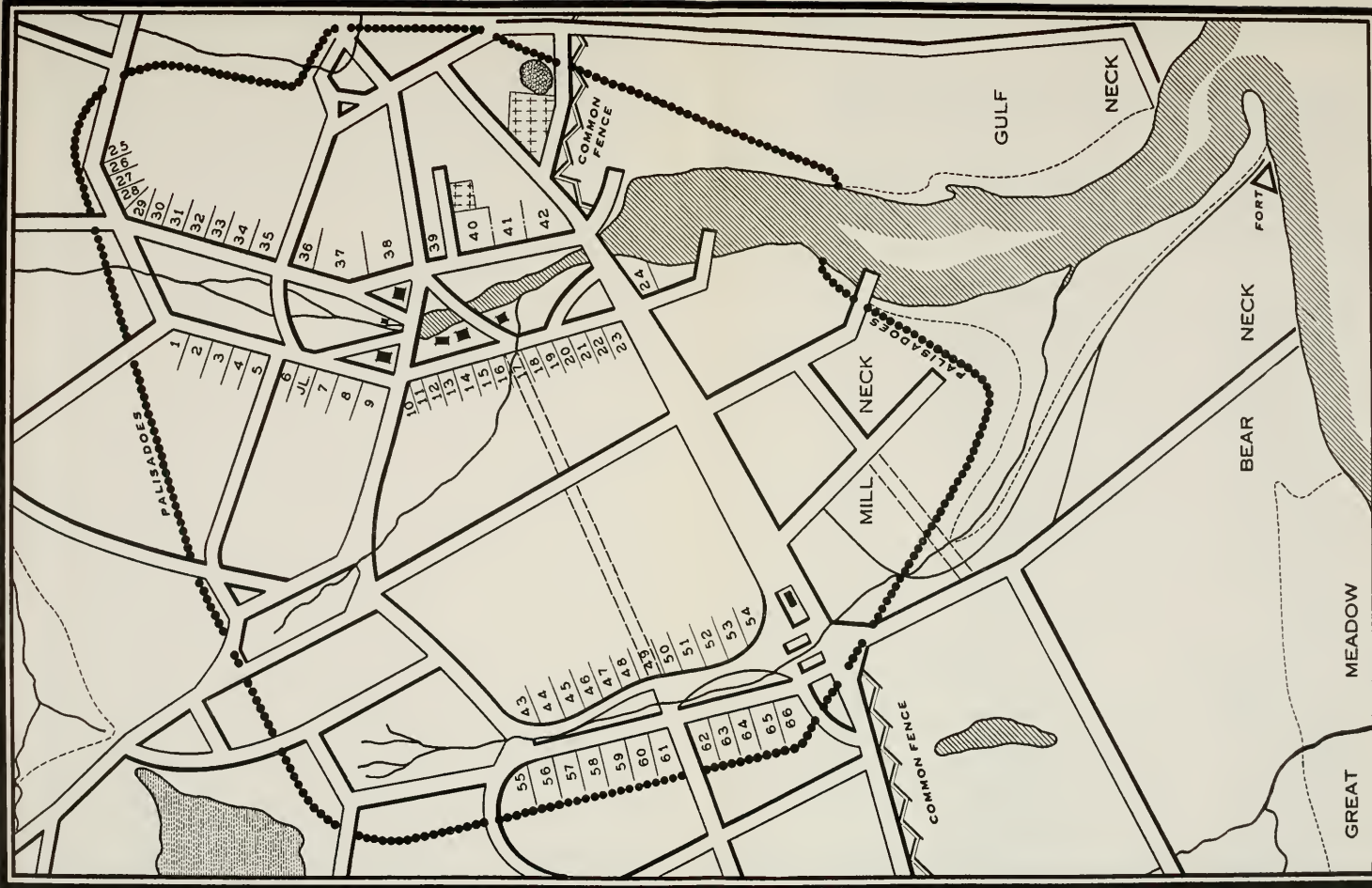
# PLAN OF THE ORIGINAL TOWN PLOT OF MILFORD (After Lambert)

a, part of fresh meadow; b, part of dreadful swamp; c. part of Eastfield common line fence; d, part of Westfield common line fence. First Congregational meeting-house against lot No. 9; second Congregational meeting-house against No. 38; Episcopal Church against No. 17; and Town House against No. 15.

The location of the house of each first planter, as they were recorded in 1646, is seen on the plan of the town, by finding the same number which is prefixed to the name of each individual in the following list. The exact quantity of land in the house lot of each person, is here placed against his name:

	a.	r.	p.		a.	r.	p.
1 John Astwood	7	2	0	34 Thomas Wheeler	3	0	0
2 Richard Baldwin	3	0	0	35 Mr. Edmond Tapp	7	2	0
3 Benjamin Fenn	2	11	3	36 Tho. Buckingham	2	3	0
4 Samuel Cooley	2	1	20	37 Robert Plum	5	3	0
5 John Peacocke	1	3	0	38 Richard Platt	4	1	0
6 Henry Stonhill	2	3	20	39 Thomas Tapping	1	1	20
7 Nathaniel Baldwin	3	2	0	40 Mr. Peter Prudden	7	2	0
8 James Prudden	2	0	0	41 Mr. Wm. Fowler	7	2	0
9 John Sherman	4	0	0	42 Thomas Lawrence	1	0	0
10 Thomas Baker	3	2	0	43 George Clark, Junr.	4	1	0
11 Stephen Freeman	2	0	0	44 John Burwell	2	0	20
12 John Fletcher	2	3	30	45 Henry Botsford	2	2	0
13 John Baldwin	2	1	10	46 John Smith	1	3	20
14 Frances Bolt	2	1	20	47 John Rogers	1	3	20
15 Micah Tompkins	2	1	20	48 Philip Hatley	3	3	20
16 John Birdseye	2	3	20	49 Roger Tyrrell	2	3	20
17 Edward Harvey	2	3	0	50 Nicholas Camp	6	1	20
18 John Lane	2	2	20	51 John Fowler	1	2	20
19 William East	2	3	0	52 Joseph Baldwin	2	1	20
20 Thomas Lawrence (sold to Wm. East.)	2	0	0	53 Thomas Tibbals	1	2	20
21 Thomas Sandford	2	3	0	54 Wid. Martha Beard	4	1	00
22 Timothy Baldwin	4	0	0	55 Thomas Campfield	3	0	0
23 Alexander Bryan	4	0	25	56 Thomas Ford	3	0	0
24 Jasper Gunn	0	3	0	57 William Roberts	3	0	0
25 Tomas Hine	3	0	0	58 John Smith	4	0	0
26 Henry Lyon	3	0	0	59 Thomas Bailey	3	0	0
27 John Stream	3	0	0	60 William Brookes	3	0	0
28 William Slough	3	0	0	61 John Brown	3	0	0
29 James Prime	3	0	0	62 Nathaniel Briscoe	3	0	0
30 Thomas Reed	3	0	0	63 Edward Riggs	3	0	0
31 Robert Denison	3	0	0	64 Andrew Benton	3	0	0
32 Zachariah Whitman	7	2	0	65 George Clark, Senr.	4	2	0
33 Thomas Welch	4	2	0	66 George Hubbard	4	2	0
				(sold to John Stream.)			





PLAN OF THE ORIGINAL TOWN PLOT OF MILFORD IN 1646



<http://stores.ebay.com/Ancestry-Found>

West End Brook. Each lot owner was required to build a substantial home within three years, or his land reverted to the town. The extent of each man's land was determined by the "rule of persons and estates," that is, by the relative size of his estate, by the amount he contributed to the initial general expense of the colony, the number of persons in his family, and his standing in the community. On these homelots, the settlers built their first homes and barns and made their first plantings. All the expenses incident to the running of the settlement were paid by a property tax.

Life in the little village during its early years was simple, though one of arduous toil. There were no extremely wealthy settlers, neither were there any who were very poor. No man asked any other man to do work which he himself was not able and willing to do. The majority were farmers, but every farmer had to be a "Jack-of-all-trades," to cut his own timber and mill it, to build his own house and barn and fences, and to make many of his own tools and equipment. Practically all of the food consumed by his family was raised on his own land or obtained by hunting and fishing. There were few skilled artisans in Milford, only one carpenter, George Clark, Sr., one cooper, Nathaniel Baldwin, and one tailor, John Baldwin. Not until 1643 did a blacksmith, John Smith, join the colony. Prior to that date, all forging had to be done in New Haven.

The first church services in Milford are believed to have been held in the "common house." The Reverend Peter Prudden served as preacher and pastor from the time of the organization of the church in August, 1639. Mr. Prudden had previously been ordained in England as a priest of the Church of England. His ordination as pastor of the Milford church took place in New Haven, probably because Milford lacked the proper building in which to meet. He was ordained by Zachariah Whitman, William Fowler, and Ed-

## HISTORY OF MILFORD

mund Tapp as instructed by the Milford church. The Reverend John Davenport, the Reverend Samuel Eaton, and the Reverend Ezekiel Cheever were present at the service.

Mr. Prudden was both leader and advisor of the little flock, taking a keen interest not only in affairs of the church but in everything that concerned the life of the community. There is no record that he ever received a salary. The people raised and gathered his crops and carted his firewood. He paid his taxes and, though exempt from regular military duty, kept his arms and ammunition in good order.

Extensive commerce with other ports was not developed until later in the century, but trade with the Indians dates from the earliest days of the settlement. One colonist was quick to capitalize on the value of the furs received in trade. "In 1640, Ensign Bryan sent a vessel to the Bay (Boston) laden with beaver, otter and other precious furs and in return brought back such goods as were needed by the planters for their own use and for trade with the Indians."\*

The third General Court met on November 24, 1640. Up to this time the cluster of dwellings had been called "Wepowage" from the Indian name of the river that flowed through the village. It was now voted to change the name to Milford and adopt as the official seal of the Colony the letters "MF." The need for a meeting-house for religious worship was urgent, so the Court instructed the five judges to let out and build a meeting-house thirty feet square "after such manner as Shall be Judged most convenient for the publique good."

Following the lead of New Haven which had adopted a standard of weights and measures to prevent the use of short weight by unscrupulous traders, the Milford court adopted

\* "Alexander Bryan of Milford, Connecticut, his ancestors and his descendants," By Charles Candee Baldwin. Cleveland, Ohio, 1889.



## A LITTLE REPUBLIC

the standard in use in New Haven and appointed Jasper Gunn, the town's first physician, sealer of weights and measures. A fine of five shillings was imposed for selling or buying from an unsealed measure. The administration of the five judges had been so satisfactory that, with one exception, they were again chosen to act in the same capacity until the following October. John Sherman was chosen to succeed Richard Miles.

Although the river was not navigable, it was too deep to cross except by fords, of which there were many. The crossing was easy for riders on horseback or in wagons, but the slippery "stepping stones" made it difficult for those on foot. During spring freshets the stream was not fordable. The Court, therefore, instructed the judges "to consider in what place, and after what manner, a bridge may conveniently be made over the mill [Wepowage] river, and let it out to be don with convenience and Expedition." A site for the church had already been selected about one hundred and fifty feet south of the present church building at the junction of West Main and West River streets. Nearby was a small island, suitable for the location of bridge piers. The bridge afforded easy access to the church for those living across the river, and successive bridges at this point have been appropriately called "Meeting House Bridge."

In 1641 a young surveyor of uncommon ability, Robert Treat, was called upon to assist in the laying out of the land. He was destined to become one of the most colorful and prominent figures in the affairs of New Haven Colony and later of Connecticut.

The original grant of homelots sufficed only for the first year or two, while the settlers were occupied clearing the land, building homes and barns, and raising crops. Soon a further division of land was demanded, and twice before 1643 additional grants were made in the outlying sections of

## HISTORY OF MILFORD

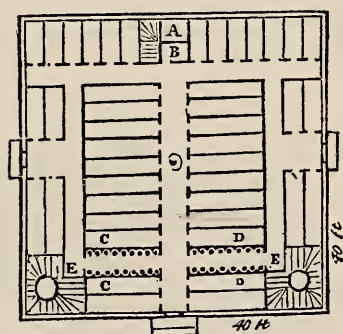
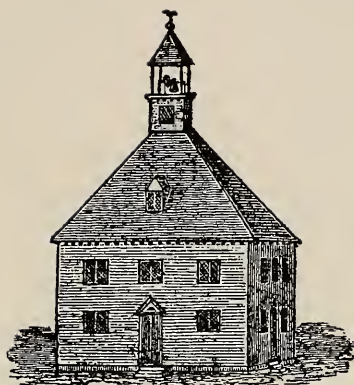
the purchase. The original plan of allotting acreage in proportion to a settler's wealth and importance was again followed.

As all of the land was not equally desirable, the lots were "sized" according to value; if a piece of land were rocky or a long distance from the homelot, the settler who received it was given a larger portion than the man who received a piece of well-watered, easily accessible bottomland. A map of Milford for this period would show the rectangular strips of each man's land-holdings scattered here and there about the settlement.

In this manner, two tracts, called Eastfield and Westfield, lying southeast and southwest of the village center, were allotted. The next division covered other lands south of the homelots and other sections to the north and east. A large tract of meadow, south of Westfield, called the Great Meadow, was also apportioned among the settlers and enclosed by a common fence. Each landowner was compelled to keep up that part of the common fence which bounded his land. Each section was marked with a landowner's initials on an end stake and a penalty of two shillings sixpence was imposed for failure to keep this initialed stake in place. The owner of a section of fence was required to repair any break within sixteen hours or pay a fine of five shillings. Certain designated individuals built and maintained gates instead of a specified footage of fence.

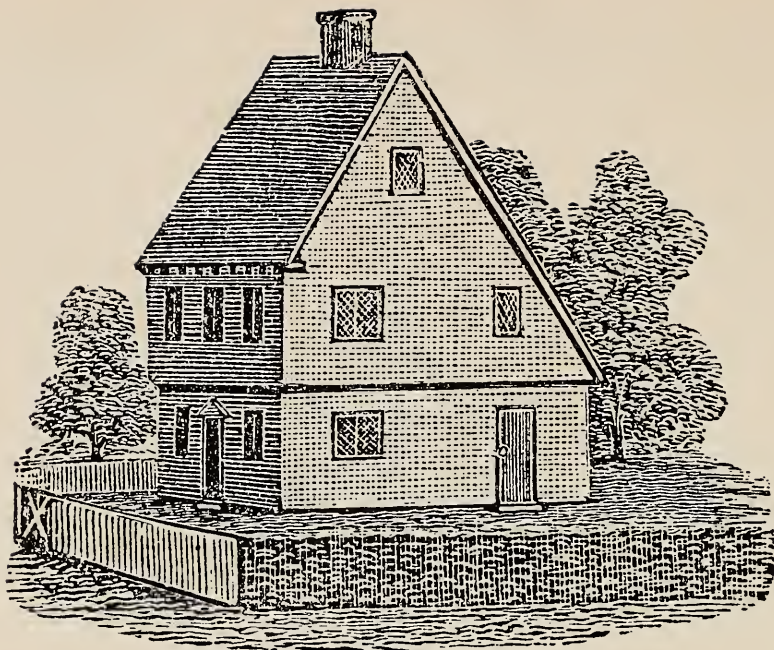
Early in 1641 the building of the meeting-house was begun. It was a two-story frame building, forty feet square, with a four-sided peaked roof, topped by a small turret. The structure was framed of huge timbers, and covered with clapboards. The single door was on the west side of the building. An aisle led to a high pulpit, in front of which was a place for the ruling elder. Below this, just behind the communion table, were seats for the deacons. Crude



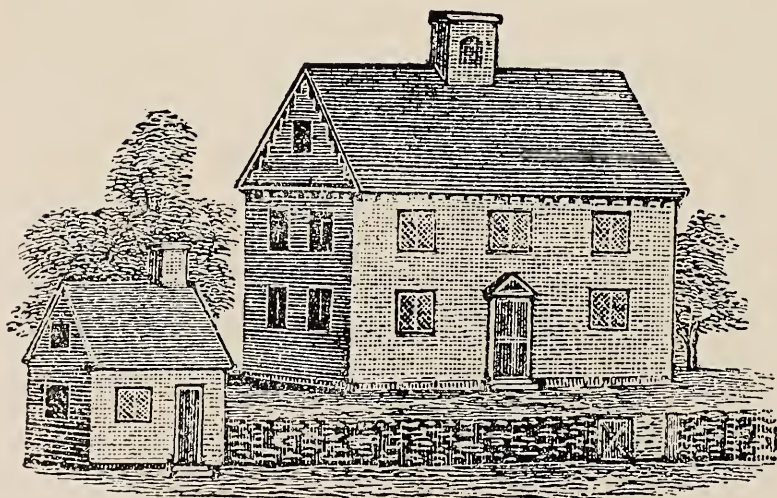


SOUTH VIEW OF FIRST MEETING HOUSE AND GROUND PLAN

A, the pulpit; B, deacon's seat; C, D, guard seats; E, gallery stairs.



ROBERT TREAT HOUSE



JONATHAN LAW HOUSE

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benches, each accommodating four or five persons, stood on either side of the aisle. Long benches flanked the side walls, and there were short seats on either side of the pulpit. No provision was made for heating the church in winter, except individual foot-stoves filled with live coals before the parishioners left home. As in other Connecticut churches of the day, there was no church bell. Rolling drumbeats called the settlers to church and to town meetings.

The long, tedious Sunday services, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, afforded a chance to exchange pleasantries and gossip. As outlying sections were settled, those who came from a distance brought lunches and spent the recess between morning and afternoon services visiting with their neighbors. During services, guardsmen in butter-nut-dyed homespun, wearing knee-breeches, long woolen stockings, and buckled shoes, with powder horn and bullet-pouch slung over their shoulders, and matchlock muskets in hand, were seated near the door, prepared to repel Indian attacks.

There is little on record about schools in the first few years. Higher education was important chiefly as preparation for the ministry. Ministers, usually the best-educated men in a colonial community, served as teachers. Jasper Gunn, credited with being the first Milford school teacher, in 1642 conducted a school at his house, near the "common house" at the head of the harbor; he was assisted for a time by the Reverend John Sherman.

In comparison with other towns Milford suffered few attacks from the Indians. The Milford Indians were friendly, but the Mohawks were so hostile that the planters lived in constant dread of them. In 1624 the Dutch had settled at New Amsterdam, and in 1633 had established a trading post on the Connecticut River at the present site of Hartford. The Dutch continued to claim all the interven-

## HISTORY OF MILFORD

ing land after the English were in possession of the territory. There were many disputes and minor clashes between the Dutch and the English and their Indian allies over the ownership of the region. To guard against surprise attacks from the Indians, and to be ready in the event of armed conflict with the Dutch, palisades, ten to twelve feet high, were built around the homelots, and for further protection the settlers organized a train band.

The band, commanded by Captain John Astwood, was composed of every able-bodied male citizen between the ages of sixteen and sixty. Members were required to train six times each year, or oftener, at the discretion of the authorities. Every male citizen over sixteen was ordered to have in readiness "a pound of powder, and two pounds of bullets or shott, and two fathoms of match, for a matchlock, on penalty of 5s. a month for such default."

Drastic regulations stipulated that

It is likewise agreed that no man shall either give or trucke with any Indian powder, shott, pistolls or any sort of gunns, sword, daggers, rapier, Iron Brass, or any other weapon or Ammunition as alsoe gold Silver, upon the paine of five pound loss and if any under goverment either Child or Servant Shall without their parents or master knowledge brake this order shall be liable to the whipp or any other sentence of the court.

For some time settlers in Massachusetts and Connecticut had urged the formation of an alliance of Massachusetts Bay, Plymouth, Connecticut, and New Haven Colonies, in order that they might more effectively resist Indian attacks and present a united front against the claims and encroachments of the Dutch. In May, 1643, this confederation of the New England colonies was consummated. Each colony kept its separate identity and government, but was bound to help

## A LITTLE REPUBLIC

the other members of the confederation in case of attack or invasion.

Milford was still a separate colony and not included in this confederation. The majority realized the advantages of joining the larger, stronger colony of New Haven and thus securing the protection of the New England Confederation. The town therefore applied for consolidation, but difficulties arose over the question of the franchise. The town had given full privileges in civil affairs to six persons who were not members of the church. This liberalism shocked the stricter Puritans of the New Haven Colony, and they refused to permit Milford to join with them, unless the six non-churchmen were disfranchised. Milford refused. A compromise was finally reached, whereby the six were allowed to keep their civil rights in purely local affairs and to vote for deputies to the General Court at New Haven, but were not permitted to vote for magistrates or to hold office "for the Combination." Milford also agreed to admit only church members as freemen in the future. Under this agreement Milford sent deputies, William Fowler and Edmund Tapp, to the General Court at New Haven on October 27, 1643, and thus voluntarily ended its existence as an independent colony.



## CHAPTER TWO

### MILFORD IN NEW HAVEN COLONY

1644-1665

During its first four years Milford developed from a wilderness, inhabited by wild animals and Indians, to a healthy, thriving village. The settlers had built dwellings, mostly of the "lean-to" type, with rent oak shingles and diamond-pane windows.\* The church, the backbone of every New England community, had been organized, the meeting-house raised, and Peter Prudden ordained and installed as pastor. Trade was established, mostly coastwise to the eastward, although a few voyages are reported to have been made to far-off Virginia. The Fowler gristmill was busily engaged in converting the harvests of corn, buckwheat, and rye into flour and meal.

The town founders welcomed newcomers to the community, but they were careful to see that only those who had the proper qualifications were admitted. Applicants for residence had to present credentials of good character and godly life. They were required to join the church and to possess sufficient property to insure the town that they would not become public charges. Once admitted, the newcomers were granted land on equal terms with the other planters.

The early settlers were mostly farmers. Their first con-

\* This is Lambert's description of the early houses. Probably only the better houses had glass in their windows at this time. The earliest houses built by the pioneers had oiled paper in place of glass for windows.

## MILFORD IN NEW HAVEN COLONY

cern was to provide food for the community. As more land was cleared and the planters managed to produce a food surplus, artisans were in demand to meet other requirements of the town, and they were encouraged to come to Milford. Since the town was without anyone who knew the art of dressing skins and hides, Edward Adams was urged to learn the tanner's trade and to follow it in Milford; as an inducement, he was granted on March 16, 1646, two acres of land in Mill Neck, with a proportionate piece of meadow land. In December, 1652, Henry Tomlinson, a weaver, made application for a homelot so that he might settle in the town and follow his trade. In return for agreeing to set up a weaver's shop, the town granted him a plot of land from the "elders' lot," with the proviso that if he should move away, he would surrender it to the town. He was also granted some farm land. A second tanner, Miles Merwin, set up his business in Milford in 1654, the town granting him an acre of land on the west side of Dock Lane, next to Alexander Bryan's warehouse.

Fowler's Mill continued to hold a prominent place in the simple economic life of the town. In the fall of 1645, when a freshet partially destroyed the mill, the town, realizing what a loss this meant to the community, voted at a meeting held on December 22:

. . . that all the town shall help Mr. Fowler to repair the mill, and he is to call for them everyone a day, till he have gone through the towne and these he is to have when he needs. If it goeth not thorow the town in one year the same is granted him till he hath gone through the towne.

The only gristmill in New Haven was destroyed by fire in 1662; during the rebuilding, the farmers brought their grain to Fowler's Mill.

Milford soon developed a thriving trade for so small a

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village. Alexander Bryan and his son Richard, the town's first merchants, who had been engaged in fur-trading with the Indians from the beginning of the settlement, carried on a rapidly growing commerce with Boston, New York, and the West Indies. The elder Bryan's reputation and credit standing was so high that his notes of hand passed as currency in Boston. He is said to have had as large a business as any merchant on the American coast outside of Boston.

In May, 1650, the town granted Alexander Bryan a plot of land for a warehouse site at the head of what is now Factory Lane. He erected a building, sixty feet long by twenty feet wide, on the west side of the lane at the corner of Broad Street. At the same time he built a wharf at the foot of the lane where his ships took on and discharged their various cargoes. In October, 1653, he offered to relinquish all right and title to the wharf, provided the town kept it in repair. The town accepted the offer and for many years this was the public wharf.

On December 13, 1655, the town granted Richard Bryan leave to build another warehouse, thirty by eighteen feet, near his father's. Sergeant East also was permitted to build a warehouse between Ensign Bryan's and the house of Miles Merwin, the tanner. These items indicate not only a growing trade in Milford, but also that the town regulated such details as the size and location of buildings to be erected.

The planters experimented with new crops. Charles Deal requested and received permission from the town, March 17, 1657, to purchase Poquehaug or Milford Island (Charles Island) from Richard Bryan, who had acquired the island from George Hubbard to whom it had been originally allotted. The town specified that he must use the island only for tobacco-raising, that he should not "sell or truck with either Indians, English or Dutch nor suffer any disorderly resort of meetings of seamen or others there." This is one



## MILFORD IN NEW HAVEN COLONY

of the earliest recorded instances of tobacco-raising in Connecticut by white men. The venture was a failure.

Local prohibition of trade with the Dutch resulted in the arrest in April, 1654, of Captain John Manning, charged with "trading with the Dutch and furnishing enemies of the Commonwealth of England with provisions."

Trumbull relates the story with some detail:

One captain Manning, master of a ten gun ship, had been apprehended for an unlawful trade with the Dutch, at the Manhadoes. While the affair was upon trial before the court at New-Haven, his men ran off with the ship from Milford harbour. The people completely armed and manned a vessel, with so much dispatch, that they pressed hard upon the ship before she could reach the Dutch island. The men, perceiving they must be taken, unless they immediately abandoned the ship, made their escape in their boat. The ship, thus left adrift, was recovered, and brought into Milford harbour, and, with all her goods, condemned as a lawful prize.

The Court at New Haven found Captain Manning guilty, fined him twenty shillings and costs, and ordered that his ship and all her goods be sold at public auction in Milford on "Tuesday next" at three o'clock in the afternoon. "By an inch of a candle he that offers most shall have her, and that the price as it shall fall, shall be paid in Beef, Pork, Wheat, pease, of each a like quantity, all of it good and merchantable and at current price as it goes at time of Payment." All the costs of seizure and auction were paid out of the proceeds of the sale, and twenty shillings was awarded to each Milford man who had taken part in the ship's capture.

In one instance the early Milford settlers resorted to agricultural control measures. A town meeting held November 27, 1645, "ordered that the major part of any quar-

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ter may make agreements between themselves for the Sowing of their crops, And the minor part to yeeld unto what they so agree, Or to bear all damages that may be by their decenting (sic)."

Raising hops for yeast and ale was another agricultural experiment. On April 22, 1652, the town granted Edward Worster "a peece of land up the Mill River about an acre or an acre more or less for an hopp garden which peece of land the town gave to the said Edward Worster according to his desire therein."

An early record shows an attempt at conservation of natural resources. So much timber had been destroyed by a fire set by the Indians in 1646, that by 1655 the planters feared a shortage of building material.

Upon Information given to the court of the great expense of timber . . . It is ordered therefore that no man that is not either a planter or A Covenant Servant for a year within the town of milford shall not hereafter fell any timber or make any Improvement Being felled for either pipe staves heading barrel staves or Shingles under the penalty of ten shillings fine to the towne of Milford for every tree.

Economic development through this period depended upon territorial expansion. When the first tract was purchased from the Indians, it seemed large enough for many years to come. But increase in population, together with an insistent demand for greater acreage, made necessary additional purchases from the Indians, and further divisions by action of the town.

A fourth division in 1646 granted to the planters all the land that was still available. In 1655, when the demand, "more land," was again heard, Mr. Fenn, Ensign Bryan, Sergeant Baldwin, and Sergeant East were appointed to act as agents in the purchase of additional territory. On June

## MILFORD IN NEW HAVEN COLONY

10, 1655, they bought from the Indians, for five pounds, the region between Paugusset and the "two mile path," giving the town more acreage to the north. By 1659 the population had increased to over five hundred, and again there were demands for more land. Robert Treat and Ensign Bryan negotiated with the Indians for the tract lying between the Indian River and the New Haven line, and extending from the New Haven-Derby path on the north to the Indian path to Oyster River on the south, and purchased it on December 20, 1659, for twenty-six pounds in goods. In 1660 Indian Neck, lying between the Indian River and the Sound, was bought, the Indians reserving twenty acres for planting ground, agreeing "to defend the land, with the swamps, timber, trees, and all the privileges, from the claims of any Indian whatsoever." This twenty-acre reservation was bought from Ansantawae and his son on December 12, 1661, for six coats, three blankets, and three pair of breeches. The town then sold it "by an outcry" for twenty-one pounds six shillings to Thomas Welch, for whom the point was named. This established Milford's territorial bounds as they are today, with the inclusion of the present town of Orange. The local Indians were granted the right to fish in their old waters, and protection was promised for Chief Ansantawae and his family.

Constant disputes over the boundaries of the grants made to the settlers accompanied the rapid division of the land of the community. "Boundary fixers" were in constant demand. To clear up the confusion, in 1646 the first map of the town was made, showing the location of each homelot, the name of the owner, and the number of the lot. In the same year laws were passed regarding the sale and transfer of property. Owners were forbidden to sell or transfer land to anyone not a resident, without first filing the name of the prospective buyer. If the sale was not approved within

## HISTORY OF MILFORD

twenty days, the town was required to buy in the property. Residents were allowed to transfer land among themselves without restriction.

On December 24, 1646, it was ordered by the General Court that every transfer of property, whether by sale, gift, or inheritance, should be recorded in a special book. The fee for recording the transfer was to be twopence, and twopence for a copy of the deed. Two months was the time limit allowed for recording a land transfer, with a fourpence penalty for failure to comply with the law. A report of land transfers was made by the recorder at each meeting of the judges, so that proper tax assessments could be levied. The record for December 24, 1646, reads:

. . . and he who is appoynted to enter the afforesaid lands, or Meadow, shall give into the next particular court, after such Allianations Exchanges or gifts, a copie of such allianations, exchanges or gifts, as have been before, that accordingly the court may levie, or dispose such rates as are due upon the right and proper owner of the land, from time to time, and may cause the treasurer to require, that which is Just upon every man . . .

Thus the early court of five judges was not only the first board of selectmen, as the body is known today, but also the first board of assessors.

Communication between Milford and other colonies was usually by way of the old Indian trails. Within the town, instead of first laying out roads, and then apportioning land with reference to the roads, the land was laid out first. The planters then made their own paths or wagon tracks to meet their needs, using Indian trails as much as possible. Broad Street was originally forty rods wide, with the land between it and the harbor left in common as a drill ground for the train band. While the opening up of roads and paths was

## MILFORD IN NEW HAVEN COLONY

left largely to the planters to suit their own convenience, in one instance the town took a hand in the matter. On February 7, 1643:

It is Agreed that a footway to the meeting house (shall be allowed and mayntayned with Convenient Stiles) from the west end. The Stiles to be maintayned by bro: Nicholas Camp at the west end, and by bro: Thomas Baker at the meeting house for the outside Stiles, and for the Inward fence each man shall maintayne their severall Stiles in the most convenient places.

The building of more bridges across the lesser streams and the establishment of a ferry across the Housatonic River facilitated communication. When Milford joined the New Haven Colony, there was but one bridge across the Wepawaug River, the "Meeting House Bridge." At certain times of the year the journey to the mill was difficult for those living in the West End. To benefit these planters, Fowler built a wooden bridge over the river on the site of the present Memorial Bridge. The town assumed responsibility for maintenance of the bridge in 1648.

Beyond the Indian River lay the section of land purchased in 1659. Planters in this region found the Indian River impassable at high tide. In 1662 the building of the Indian or Great Bridge on the Burwell's Farm road made the region more accessible.

Beyond the Housatonic River to the west, a settlement, Cupheag, later named Stratford, was founded in September, 1639. On May 18, 1648, Roger Ludlow, in behalf of Moses Wheeler of Stratford, petitioned the General Assembly for a charter to operate a ferry between Milford and Stratford. The next court sitting at Fairfield granted the request, and the ferry started in 1649 or 1650 with a flat-bottomed scow for the transportation of animals and a



## HISTORY OF MILFORD

canoe for foot-passengers. The fare was a halfpenny for a person and twopence for a horse or beast. Milford had no part in the operation of the ferry for many years.

To improve communication between the towns of the New Haven Colony, on May 25, 1653, the General Court ordered that:

twelve horses shall be kept in the five townes in this jurisdiction that are upon the maine, vizd: foure at Newhaven, two at Millford, two at Guilford, two at Stamford & two at Brandford; with sufficient furniture for travell, and to bee allwayes in a readines as the publique occasions of the cuntry may require; and for the hire of the horses, the owner shall have from Newhaven to Connecticote tenn shillings, from Millford to Stamford ten shillings, from Newhaven to Millford two shillings eight pence, or foure pence a mile, according as it is usually accounted. The charge of keeping the horses is left to every towne to consider; the hazard of the horse to be upon the owner, but the charge of hiring men, whether messengers or others, to bring horses backe againe, to bee at the publique charge, as the authority of the place from whence they are sent shall agree with them.

By 1645 the "common house," which was still used for town meetings, was not large enough to accommodate all who were entitled to attend. In that year a larger structure was erected on approximately the site occupied by the present municipal building, and was called the "East Town House." This building was used not only for town meetings, but also for the sessions of the first public school. After the erection of the new town hall, the "common house" became guard quarters until June 22, 1648. Then it was sold for twenty-one shillings to James Rogers for use as a warehouse.

The church strengthened its organization by the election of two new officers. Zachariah Whitman, one of the "Seven



## MILFORD IN NEW HAVEN COLONY

Pillars" was "pitched upon" as presiding elder of the church in January, 1645. On January 26 he was ordained with solemn ceremony by a council composed of the elders and messengers from the churches of New Haven and Stratford. The office of deacon went unfilled for a time because the church could not decide between Benjamin Fenn or George Clark, Jr. Fenn was finally chosen and installed in 1647.

In 1646 the Indians went on the warpath and tried to burn down the town by setting fire to the countryside. Fortunately the settlers managed to check the fire at the swamps that lay to the west and north before any damage was done to the palisades, but much valuable timber was destroyed. After this evidence of Indian hostility, sentries were posted along the entire line of palisades. Each household was required to furnish one watchman, who did sentry duty every fifth day. The planters did not venture outside the palisades, except in armed parties. While at work on the farm one of the men would stand guard against a surprise attack. In spite of the hostility of the Indians there is no record of any fatalities in Milford at any time due to Indian attacks. Nevertheless, the whole colony of New Haven lived in constant fear.

In the summer of 1648 the Mohawks, who had been quiet for some time, attacked the Milford Indians in an attempt to capture their fort on the Housatonic River, but were driven off with heavy losses. The story goes that one of the settlers had sighted the invaders hiding in a swamp about a mile from town, and had warned the Milford Indians that the Mohawks were waiting to make a surprise attack on the fort by night. Thus prepared, the Milford Indians were able to meet the Mohawks with such war whoops and volleys of arrows that the enemy fled, leaving behind many dead and several prisoners.

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<http://stores.ebay.com/Ancestry-Found>

One of these Mohawk captives was tied to a stake on the salt meadows and left to die. He was found unconscious the next morning by Thomas Hine, who released him, fed him, and put him ashore on the other side of the Housatonic River. For this act of mercy the Hine family were ever after venerated and respected by the Mohawks.

It is a tribute to the hardness of the settlers, and perhaps to the skill of Dr. Jasper Gunn, that there were no deaths in the community for the first five years. The first death, that of Solomon East, the year-old son of William East, occurred on June 18, 1644. The first death of an adult was that of Sarah, wife of Nicholas Camp. "She had twins on the second of September, 1645, and was doing well till the night of the fourth, when she was taken very ill with a cold. She died on the sixth (being the last day of the week) in the morning and was buried the evening after, in the garden of Mr. Peter Prudden, Pastour." Mr. Prudden's garden, used as the first burying ground, was situated about a hundred feet east of the former residence of Samuel L. Baldwin now the home of Dr. DeWitt B. Nettleton on Prospect Street. John Astwood, one of the original "Seven Pillars" and one of the first five judges, died in 1654 while in England on a mission for the colony.

The town was deeply grieved in July, 1656, by the death of its beloved pastor, the Reverend Peter Prudden, at the age of fifty-six. For almost seventeen years he had been the leader and advisor of the little flock. Cotton Mather paid the pastor a tribute which has been inscribed on a tablet, erected in the Church of Christ in Milford by Prudden's descendants.

Peter Prudden—Founder and Pastor of this Church from its establishment in 1639 till his death in 1656.

I am sure 'tis a blessed child of God whose name is before us; who besides his other excellent qualities

## MILFORD IN NEW HAVEN COLONY

was noted for a single faculty to sweeten, compose, and qualify exasperated spirits, and stop or heal all contentions—whence it was that his Town of Milford enjoyed peace with truth all his days.

He continued an able and faithful servant of the churches until the 56th year of his age when his death was felt by the colony as the fall of a pillar which made the whole fabric to shake.

The First Church of Milford remained without a settled pastor from the time of the death of Peter Prudden in 1656 until 1660. The congregation finally agreed upon the Reverend Roger Newton of Farmington, who was "received" July 29, 1660. Of his ordination it is recorded:

Aug. 22 of the same year, he was ordained Pastour with praise and fasting and ye layeing on of ye hands of Zach. Whitman, Elder, John Fletcher, Deacon, and Mr. Robert Treat, Magistrate—though not as magistrate and deacon, but as appointed by ye church to assist ye Ruling Elder in ye layeing on hands in ye name of ye church.

The town government kept a regulatory finger upon the tavern and inn, where travelers and their mounts sought accommodation and townsmen gathered of an evening to discuss affairs over a mug of ale. Milford had been without a tavern until June, 1654, when Henry Tomlinson, the weaver, made application to the judges for permission to open an "ordinary." The town was both willing and anxious to grant the request, but neither Tomlinson's house nor its location was suitable for the venture. On West Main Street, then the main road through the town, was a house near the present "Grey Court" apartments owned by Richard Bryan that was better situated for the purpose.

Tomlinson opened the tavern late in 1654, but his inn-keeping was not to the satisfaction of the town. He served

## HISTORY OF MILFORD

meagre and unappetizing meals and overcharged his customers. Furthermore, he allowed the young people of the village to congregate there to dance and play cards. In 1655 the town sold the property back to Richard Bryan and William East, with the understanding that they maintain it as a tavern. Since Tomlinson refused to give up the property, claiming it as his own, a court order was necessary before he could be evicted.

This non-conformist community was sympathetic to Cromwell's rebellion and gave protection to two of the regicides, William Goffe and Edward Whalley. After the Restoration they had fled from England to escape arrest and execution, arriving in Boston on July 27, 1660. When it became dangerous for them to remain any longer in Massachusetts, the two left secretly for New Haven, arriving there March 7, 1661. The Reverend John Davenport welcomed them and hid them in his house until April 30. In May agents with warrants for their arrest left Boston for Hartford and New Haven, arriving in New Haven on May 13. Warned by friends, the regicides took refuge in hideouts near New Haven, moving frequently to escape capture when the search came too close. The most famous of these hideouts was Judge's Cave on West Rock, which sheltered the men from May 15 to June 11.

During the summer of 1661 the people in New Haven who had harbored the regicides became uneasy about possible dangers to the Colony because of their defiance of royal orders, and Whalley and Goffe went to Milford on August 19, 1661. Here they were given shelter by Micah Tompkins in his home on West River Street, on the site now occupied by the High School. A bronze tablet marks the spot where the house stood.

Their secret was kept so well that for more than two years only a few of the townspeople were aware of the

## MILFORD IN NEW HAVEN COLONY

regicides' presence. Benjamin Fenn knew their secret and was friendly to them. He was one of the two delegates from New Haven to the New England Confederation. When the commissioners of the Confederation offered a declaration at their meeting of September 5, 1661, urging a thorough search for Whalley and Goffe, and the punishment of their protectors, Fenn stayed away and refused to sign the declaration. The regicides remained in Milford until July, 1664, when they were again forced to flee; this time to Hadley, Massachusetts.

In 1662 Charles II conferred a charter upon the Connecticut Colony, with its General Court at Hartford, granting it all the territory of the New Haven Colony. This led Connecticut to claim jurisdiction over its neighboring Colony, and to invite all the towns within it to send deputies to the General Court of October 9, 1662. All but New Haven, Branford, and Milford accepted. Milford wished to join the Connecticut Colony, but New Haven and Branford bitterly opposed the union. The Reverend Davenport of New Haven and the Reverend Pierson of Branford were "jealous that a union would mar the purity, order, and the beauty of their churches and have an ill influence on the civil administration," and used all the power at their command to block the proposed consolidation.

Officially, New Haven still had jurisdiction over all the seceding towns and resisted the Connecticut claims to them. The struggle that ensued lasted almost two years. When Robert Treat was elected magistrate from Milford to the New Haven General Court on May 25, 1664, he refused the office because he was in favor of union with Connecticut. On March 12, 1664, King Charles granted his brother, the Duke of York, all the recently acquired Dutch settlement at New Amsterdam and most of the territory involved in the dispute between Connecticut and New Haven. On July 20,



## HISTORY OF MILFORD

1664, four royal commissioners with extraordinary powers arrived in Boston to inquire into the affairs of the New England Colonies, threatening their self-government.

New Haven and Branford still held out against the union with Connecticut which would have strengthened both colonies in any resistance to royal encroachments. At this point Milford grew impatient at the delay and, through the efforts of Benjamin Fenn and Robert Treat, severed all ties with the New Haven Colony and united separately with Connecticut. After months of further negotiations between New Haven and Connecticut, the differences of the two colonies were finally adjusted, and on May 11, 1665, New Haven gave up its independence and merged with Connecticut. By this act New Haven abandoned its adherence to the principle of absolute union of church and state. The ecclesiastical character of civil government was modified. Property rather than church membership became the basis on which the franchise was granted.



## CHAPTER THREE

### MILFORD IN THE CONNECTICUT COLONY

1666-1783

Milford in 1666 was an extensive township stretching nearly fourteen miles north of Long Island Sound, but with the community center still behind the palisades. Dwellings sprawled along the banks of the Wepawaug River and West End Brook, the little church sheltered a goodly multitude on the Sabbath, and the East Town House served as a public school. The town boasted three bridges, many miles of rough roads, a tavern, and several commercial establishments for preparing grains, hides, timber, and the necessities of life. Alongshore, wharves, warehouses, fish pounds, oystermen's huts, and heaps of shells testified to the industry of the planters who had found treasure in and beyond the sea.

Dissatisfaction was voiced by some men who had not approved of Milford's union with the Connecticut Colony, or who were displeased with the division of lands. These Milford residents had twice sent Captain Robert Treat to New Jersey to negotiate with the Dutch governor for a prospective settlement site. Accompanied by Benjamin Fenn and Deacon Gunn, the Captain was taken on a tour of inspection on the Governor's private barge to examine the harbor now known as Newark Bay. In the spring of 1666 Captain Treat and thirty pioneers from Milford, Connecticut, sailed into the Passaic River and settled at Four Corners, later called Milford. The Yankees bought practically all of the lands now included in Essex County

## HISTORY OF MILFORD

by giving the Indians 50 double hands of powder, 100 bars of lead, 20 axes, 20 coats, 10 guns, 20 pistols, 10 kettles, 10 swords, 4 blankets, 4 barrels of beer, 10 pairs of breeches, 50 knives, 20 horses, 1,850 fathoms of wampum, 6 ankers of liquor, and 3 troopers' coats. Milford, New Jersey, was christened Newark in 1667, in honor of the English home of the Reverend Abraham Pierson, of Branford, who was the spiritual leader of the party.

Robert Treat was the prime mover, not only in the founding of Newark but also in all phases of its early development. He played a leading role in the life of the town until 1672, when he returned to Milford where he had retained his property. Several of his children remained in Newark and took a prominent part in the affairs of that community. A statue of Treat, erected by that city, stands on his original homelot there.

Before his departure for Newark, Robert Treat had served Milford in many capacities—as its first surveyor, one of the five judges, captain of the train band, deputy to the General Court at New Haven, and later as magistrate of the Colony. When Winthrop secured a charter for Connecticut from Charles II in 1662, Treat, whose father and brothers-in-law were named as patentees, vigorously advocated the union of New Haven with Connecticut and refused election to the General Court at New Haven. After his return to Connecticut from Newark he was again active in Milford affairs and became one of the most distinguished men of the Colony. Appointed a major in the colonial militia in 1670 and a colonel in 1674, Treat was in command of the Connecticut forces in King Philip's War, and was second in command of all New England troops. His forced marches, resulting in timely arrivals at Springfield and Hadley, turned rout to victory and are credited with having saved those towns from destruction. At the

## • ROBERT TREAT •

THE DOMINANT SPIRIT IN THE SETTLEMENT OF NEWARK IN 1666  
CHOSE THIS SITE FOR HIS HOME.

IN RECOGNITION OF HIS SERVICES.

"THE NEIGHBOURS FROM MILFORD FREELY GAVE WAY  
THAT CAPTAIN ROBERT TREAT SHOULD CHUSE EIGHT  
ACRES FOR HIS HOME LOTT."

HE WAS TOWN MAGISTRATE, THE FIRST TOWN CLERK,  
ONE OF THE TWO DEPUTIES TO THE PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY,

AND IN THE GENERAL AFFAIRS OF THE YOUNG  
SETTLEMENT'S FOUNDATION BECAME A TRUSTED LEADER.

IN 1672 HE RETURNED TO CONNECTICUT  
AND LATER WON HONOUR ON THE FIELD OF BATTLE  
IN KING PHILIP'S WAR. HE WAS GOVERNOR FOR THIRTEEN  
YEARS AND WAS ONE OF THAT DAUNTLESS COMPANY WHO  
REFUSED TO SURRENDER THE COLONY'S CHARTER  
AND CONCEALED IT IN THE CHARTER OAK.

IN A LARGE DEGREE IT WAS HIS WISDOM IN COUNSEL  
AND FORCEFULNESS IN ADMINISTRATION

THAT MADE THE "TOWN ON THE PESAYACK"  
THE WORTHY FORERUNNER OF THE GREATER NEWARK.

ERECTED BY

THE SCHOOLMEN'S CLUB

ASSISTED BY THE PUPILS OF THE NEWARK PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
NEWARK, N.J., NOVEMBER 4, 1912

ROBERT TREAT TABLET



## MILFORD IN THE CONNECTICUT COLONY

Great Swamp Fight near Kingston, Rhode Island, where 3,500 Narragansett warriors were concentrated within the Indian fort, Treat's men assisted by Mohegan Indians gained entrance to the fort from the rear, opening the way for the assault of the Colonial troops. Of the 4,000 warriors and squaws within the fort only 200 survived.

Thereafter Treat served the Colony as governor and deputy governor for a period of thirty-two years. While governor, his tactful and shrewd delays and evasions of Andros' demands helped to preserve Connecticut's rights. When the impatient British Governor-General finally arrived at Hartford to demand that the charter be surrendered, it was Treat who courteously pleaded at such length that darkness fell, giving his associates an opportunity to extinguish the candles and whisk away the charter.

Despite his occupation with colony affairs, Treat was continually relied upon for guidance by his townspeople. He was frequently called upon to act as executor, trustee or appraiser and his name appears on the majority of land records between 1672 and 1700. Again and again he was called upon to settle boundary disputes between various towns and asked to arbitrate between ministers and dissatisfied parishioners. Robert Treat died July 12, 1710, and is buried in the Milford cemetery.

The Indian fort on the Housatonic, which had been attacked by the Mohawks in 1648, was burned down by boys in 1671. This wanton destruction angered the friendly Milford Indians, who protested to Benjamin Fenn and Robert Treat asking for redress. The guilty boys were arrested and fined ten pounds in the General Court at New Haven. The Indians rebuilt the fort, complained that as they had sold all of their lands they had no place to live and to hunt, and asked the white men to set aside a place for them. One hundred acres at Turkey Hill, in the western



## HISTORY OF MILFORD

part of North Milford, on the Housatonic River, were thereupon reserved for the exclusive use of the Indians. Ephraim Strong, Esq., Joseph Woodruff, Esq., and Colonel Benjamin Fenn were appointed to look after the land and to see that it was not encroached upon by outsiders.

Milford's part in the Indian wars was slight, but the train band was kept in fighting trim to meet possible attack and to furnish aid to other colonies when called for. Compulsory military training was enforced by means of numerous fines and penalties. Many men found that the drilling interfered with other occupations and would gladly have evaded the irksome duty.

Though none of the battles of King Philip's War in 1675 were fought in Milford territory, Milford men were mustered in the Connecticut quota. Following this war the townspeople ceased to feel the need of palisades, and Milford had little trouble with the Indians until 1700, when two houses were fortified—Prudden's house in the center of the town and George Clark's house in the West End. The settlers on Burwell's Farms had "liberty to fortify a place among themselves." On March 15, 1704, the General Court in New Haven passed the following ordinance:

It is ordered and enacted by this court that the civil and military commission officers of each town shall take all due care concerning the friend Indians belonging to their towns, and assign them their limitts to the intent that none of them be exposed or the enemies escape under the pretense of being friends and that the said officers do strictly charge said friend Indians not to move out of their respective limitts or bounds assigned them without order in writing under the hands of such officers as they tender their own safety and at their perill and all friend Indians are hereby forbidden to hold any communication with or harbor or conceal any of the enemy Indians, requiring



## MILFORD IN THE CONNECTICUT COLONY

them to seize and secure all such as may come among them, and to deliver them up to justice, and for their encouragement they shall have ten pounds for every enemy Indian they shall so seize and deliver up.

In May of the same year the Court decreed that

For the encouragement of our forces, gone or going against the enemy, this court will allow out of the publick treasury, the sum of five pounds for every man's scalp of the enemy killed in this Collony, to be paid to the person that does the service over and above his or their wages and the plunder taken by them.

When Captain Kidd, the pirate, cruised up Long Island Sound in 1699, according to legend he put in at Milford at about seven o'clock one evening, strode up the street, and boldly kissed a young lady. A letter found in the garret of one of Milford's oldest houses records this unexpected visit.

→ Aunt Prudence has told you of the visit from Capt. Kidd, from the craft wh. was seen to come in the harbour at 7 of the clock in the evening. He stayed in the house till in the early morning and sat all the night by the fire with Jacobeth and Thomas Welsh carrying himself in an uncivil and bold manner. I told Aunt Prudence that he will come to trouble in the sinful way, wh. he has done,—for Zachariah Whitman has told us all about him. I asked Jacobeth the next day if that Robert Kidd was to come in the town of Milford any more—for noe one will have him in this plantation. I want to tell you, cousin Thankful, what he did: when he came in the room he put his arms about my waiste, and kyssed me, wh. made Jacobeth laugh and Thomas Welsh cough. Jacobeth says that Capt. Bob is not so bad as the folks say, and that he was a little wild. But Aunt Prudence will not hear any good word spoken of him whatsoever, and has told Thomas Welsh what she

## HISTORY OF MILFORD

heard about him. I overheard Jacobeth say that Kidd was going on a long cruise, and that he had left some things with him. I am going to tell Aunt Prudence all about it, and find out what they are. . . . Your cousin, Patience Tuttle.

During the last quarter of the seventeenth century and to the end of the colonial period, Milford was still primarily an agricultural community. The thrifty Milford farmers had horses, cattle, pork, beef, mutton, flour, and corn meal, as well as furs obtained in Indian trade, barrel and pipe staves and fish to ship away in exchange for sugar, rum, and molasses from the West Indies, manufactured goods from England, and wines from France. The well-protected harbor was navigable for the good-sized vessels which tied up at the wharf to load and unload.

The need for ships in which to carry these goods made Milford a busy shipbuilding port. The first shipyard was built just east of Fowler's Mill, where the sloping banks provided a suitable place for building and launching. Another shipyard was later established between Factory Lane and the present Town Wharf, and still another on the banks of the Housatonic River near the ferry at the foot of Oronoque Road.

The first ship on record to be built and launched in Milford was a 150-ton brig, constructed for Richard Bryan in 1690 by Bethuel Langstaff. In 1695 Langstaff built a brig for Elisha Bennill of Boston. Richard Bryan added another vessel, the *Seaflower*, to his fleet in 1717.

From that time until 1820 many ocean-going and coast-wise ships were constructed for Milford, New York, and Boston traders. In 1762 the *Sarah Ann*, a 35-ton schooner, was built and launched by Jonas Green, captain and owner. The 57-ton sloop *Seaflower* and the 20-ton schooner *Nancy* built and launched in 1763, the 45-ton schooner *Easter* which slid

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down the ways in the local shipyard in 1764, the 18-ton sloop *Betsey*, and the 18-ton sloop *Seaflower*, all belong on the list of ships known to have been built and launched in Milford. During this period more than forty vessels, most of which were Milford-built, were owned and sailed by Milford skippers.

Interest in shipbuilding brought about an early attempt at conservation of Milford's natural resources. The timber used in the construction of the vessels was cut in the surrounding forests. To protect the supply the town voted on March 2, 1696, to prohibit

. . . all and every man from getting any sort of timber usefull for the building of any sort of boats or vessells fitt to goe to sea in, without the consent of the town or the major part of the selectmen of the town, . . . this above order not to extend to those vessels upon the stocks.

Richard Bryan and William East, business partners, both with warehouses on Dock Lane, still held their positions as the town's leading merchants. They owned two brigs and a sloop making regular trips to Boston and the West Indies. Business prosperity attracted new merchants, among them John Maltbee. In 1696 Mungo Nesbitt made application to become a resident of the town, was accepted, settled here and opened a trading business with New York. In 1714 Samuel Clark purchased Richard Bryan's warehouse, and continued to carry on the business. Peter Pierett, a wealthy Huguenot, built a wharf on the site of the present town wharf about 1730, and a few years later gave it to the town with the provision that it be kept in repair. One of his vessels returning from Bordeaux with a cargo of wine was wrecked in Fisher's Island Sound. This is the only record of a vessel lost by a Milford merchant, although a number of seafaring men who sailed from Milford lost their lives

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at sea. Another merchant, John Gibbs, opened a commercial trade with Holland in 1731.

One of the adventurous spirits of this period was Peter Pond, born in Milford on January 18, 1740. He early listened to the song of the bugles when in 1756 a few British survivors of Braddock's unfortunate adventure were quartered in the village and recruited colonials for the expedition against Crown Point. Young Pond enlisted, received a regimental coat, bounty money, and was forbidden to appear at his home again. Fortified by gingerbread and small beer, the young adventurer left for the Lake George and Champlain country by way of the Hudson Valley, campaigned for a year, experienced severe hardships, and returned to Milford in 1757. Again in 1758 some 18,000 British and provincial troops were in the field against Ticonderoga, and Peter Pond signed on for the campaign and fought French and Indians with the ferocity of a trained frontiersman. He was present at the slaughter of one war party of five hundred Frenchmen, witnessed the defeat of the British by an inferior force, but survived the disastrous campaign and returned to Milford. In 1759 another expedition against Fort Niagara was recruited; no Connecticut troops were included, but Pond repaired to Long Island and enlisted with the New York contingent. After this campaign the lad again returned to Milford where he passed the winter.

Veteran Pond received a commission in 1760 and joined the army at Oswego under General Amherst. The following year the adventurer made a voyage to the West Indies, returning to Milford to find that his father had gone to Detroit on a trading expedition and that his mother had died of a fever. For three years Pond remained in the little village, the only three years that he had spent in one place since his sixteenth birthday. Restlessness and desire for ad-

## MILFORD IN THE CONNECTICUT COLONY

venture again possessing him, he went to Detroit, traded for six years in many parts of the country, fought a duel, went into the West Indies trade, shipped up the Mississippi and the Missouri, traded in the Great Lakes region, and retraced his steps back to Lake Champlain and Montreal. Trader, organizer, explorer, Peter Pond's formation of a pool with Henry Cadotte and Joseph and Henry Frobisher in 1783 was his greatest exploit. This pool was the initial unit of the powerful Northwest Fur Company, comparable to the East India Company in financial strength and influence. Pond left the pool in 1787; the Hudson Bay Company absorbed the Northwest Fur Company in 1824. Peter Pond died March 6, 1807.

Together with trading and shipbuilding, other business activities in Milford expanded and became more varied until weaving and fulling of cloth, tanning of hides, brewing, harness-making, tailoring, building, blacksmithing, and cooperage were among the well-established industries.

To meet growing needs, on September 29, 1674, the town authorized the building of new mills.

It was propounded to the town by Major Treat, Elder Buckingham, Lieut. Fowler, and Thomas Hays to build a Fulling Mill and Saw mill in the Most Convenient Place near the Island in the Town and to have the Liberty to make use of all sorts of timber for the use of the Inhabitants of the Town, and that if they sell any sawen Timber out of the Timber it shall be of Timber taken upon their Own ground or purchase of other men—which was Granted to them by the Town.

On May 27, 1689, permission was granted to Timothy Baldwin, Captain Samuel Eells, and Samuel Couch to erect another fulling mill on Baldwin's property. This mill was built on Beaver Brook in the western part of the town,



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near the site of the reservoir of The Milford Water Company. These fulling mills were necessary because the homespun cloth of the time was loosely woven. The process of "fulling" was devised to wash away the grease and to thicken the material after weaving. The finished product was much superior in appearance and wearing qualities to the rough homespun that was produced by the hand looms.

On December 7, 1702, the town ordered Robert Treat, Elder Buckingham, Lieutenant Fowler, and Thomas Hayes to erect a gristmill near their fulling mill, and to provide two sets of stones, one for English and one for Indian grain, also a "good boul't" so that the men of the town could bolt their own flour. They selected a site at the rear of the town house, on the bank of the river.

On Rose's Mill Road, about a half mile from the New Haven Turnpike, on East or Indian River, are the remains of a mill that was built in 1707 by John Plumb, Sr. The first of several mills built on this site was a gristmill; in authorizing the building of the mill, the town required that Plumb complete the structure in twelve months and that he build a good causeway over the river "for foot, cart and horse, and to be always maintained in good repair."

Milford's only tide mill was built at the mouth of the Indian River just north of the present Gulf Bridge. At a meeting of the voters held February 18, 1714, the town granted the privilege of using the stream to any inhabitants who, within a period of eight days from the date of the vote, would sign their names to a copy of the grant. There were several provisions embodied in the franchise: the mill to be built within twelve months; the cost of erection to be borne proportionately by the subscribers; the grain of Milford inhabitants to be ground before that of outsiders; and any damages to the highway or meadows adjoining the Indian River to be made good. About forty names were signed to



## MILFORD IN THE CONNECTICUT COLONY

the grant and the mill was erected, but it never was a paying investment.

Oystering did not develop as an industry until about 1752. In that year some fifty oystermen lived through the winter at Milford Point in small huts banked with seaweed. The industry was considered of sufficient importance for the town to pass a law in 1763 which imposed a penalty of one pound, "lawful money," on anyone taking oysters from Milford waters between April and September. Those who were sick, however, were permitted to take oysters out of season, provided they obtained special permission to do so from a committee appointed to enforce the oyster laws. In 1767 the fine for taking oysters out of season was raised to five pounds, and at the same time the use of a rake or tongs was made unlawful. In 1768 the exclusive right to plant and take oysters in a limited area in Indian River was granted to "certain persons."

Fishing, especially in the Housatonic River, was an industry of importance. A dispute between Stratford and Milford over fishing rights in the Housatonic River was carried to the General Assembly in 1768, when Milford petitioned the Assembly to grant a certain section of the river for a fishing place to Israel Curtiss and others.

Milford did not differ much from the rest of New England in its attitude toward hired labor. There were a few negro slaves, and some indentured servants—persons who sold their services for a period of years, usually for passage money from England; but these two sources of cheap labor were never used as generally in New England as in the southern colonies. Marked class distinctions were not noticeable; everybody worked, and the social life of the town was democratic. Labor was scarce and wages relatively high. The housework was done by the women of the family, and farming by the landowners and their families.

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Milford grew rapidly during the latter part of the seventeenth century. Prior to 1666 only the Deacon George Clark house had been built outside the palisades. Others soon followed Deacon Clark's example. Samuel and Nathan Burwell, in 1690, started the settlement known as Burwell's Farms; in 1700 Richard Bryan, Jr., settled in North Milford, beginning a settlement that for years was called Bryan's Farms; in 1705 Joseph Wheeler settled to the north in the district still known as Wheeler's Farms. The town population had increased to about 800 by the beginning of the eighteenth century, and was 1,633 in 1756.

One of the old houses still remaining in Milford was built in 1750 by Garitt DeWitt, a rich merchant of Dutch extraction, who was so confident that the town would "build up" rapidly that he refused to put windows on one side, because he thought that "soon his neighbors' dwellings would close up the view." A line on an attic window pane of this house reads: "Patty Pond made a hoop-skirt in this room, 1782."

The East Town House or Town Hall, built in 1645, had become so dilapidated after eighty-nine years of service that a new and larger hall was erected in 1734. According to tradition, one night in the winter of 1757-8, when British soldiers were drinking and carousing in the building it caught fire and burned to the ground. The British government paid an indemnity of fifty pounds, and the money was applied toward constructing a new town house, the third in the history of the village. A town record of December 10, 1759, tells the story:

The Town agreed and voated to lay out the fifty pounds granted by the Government to buld a Town House.

The town agreed and voated that Mr. John Harpin Junr Should buld the Town house so far as the above

## MILFORD IN THE CONNECTICUT COLONY

sd fifty Pounds Shall go. Mr. Harpin is to have no reward for his Troble.

Agreed and voated that Mr. Robert Treat & Capt Joseph Woodruff should be a Committee to direct Mr. Harpin in the bulding of the Town house & to inspect his Acounpts and to curtail the Same if they think them to be Unreasonable.

Three new taverns were licensed during this period. John Camp opened the second "ordinary" in 1705 in a building on West Town Street. On the corner of West Main and High Streets stands an old house, gray from exposure to the weather and almost hidden from view by the large trees that fill the yard, which is credited with being the third tavern or "ordinary" in Milford, opened by Samuel Miles in 1710. In 1761 Peter Hepburn, ferryman, was granted the right to keep a public house and tavern at the ferry. From that time until the building of the present Washington Bridge in 1919, there was always a tavern at that location.

With town expansion came a demand for more bridges and roads. One over the Wepawaug was built in 1723. The town voted, December 9, 1723, "that there shall be a cart bridge over the pond from the point of land by John Fowlers to Samuel Oviatts." According to Lambert this bridge was located a short distance to the south of the Episcopal Church, crossing the river to a point called Blue Rock.

Construction of two bridges, one over the Mill River and the other over the East River, was voted December 10, 1764.

The Town agreed and voated that they wold have a Bridge bult ove the Mill River in the parrish of Amity in the Country Road from New Haven to Derby below Major Allins Saw Mill provided these Conditions be fulfilled that Major Allen Give the Sawing all the plancks for sd bridg and that sume

## HISTORY OF MILFORD

other person or persons Give all the timber for sd  
bridg and do the work of sd bridg by Highway  
Worke.

Further attention was given to the need for bridges in  
January, 1768:

Agreed and voated by the Town that the Serveyers  
Should buld a bridg a crosse the Gulle that runs be-  
tween the bridg against Capt Fenns and the Lain by  
Jehiel Bryans in the Most Conveniant place.

Agreed and voated by the Town that they would have  
a foot Bridg bilt a crosse the River against the House  
formerly belonging to John Baldwins in the Most  
Convenient Place.

A new layout of the road from Burwell's Farms to  
Oyster River, "right where the path now goeth toward  
Oyster River," was ordered in 1750. In 1756 the selectmen  
were ordered, "with others to assist," to lay out a highway  
to the Oyster Banks at Stratford Point (Poconoc or Milford  
Point) at the mouth of the Stratford or Housatonic River.

The General Assembly, in October, 1723, granted  
Zachariah Baldwin of Oronoque, in the township of Strat-  
ford, "liberty to set up a ferry at the said Oronoque, being  
about four miles northward of the ferry called Stratford  
ferry. The fare shall be the same as Stratford Ferry." The  
landing on the Milford side of the river was at the point  
where Oronoque Road goes down to the river bank.

As early as 1674 the town had taken the first step to-  
ward establishing a ferry house and boat on the Milford side  
of the Milford-Stratford ferry, when it sequestered forty  
acres of land for the purpose. The house was not finished  
until 1761, although repeated attempts were made in the  
intervening years to complete it. On December 10, 1759,  
a tax of a halfpenny on the pound was levied and collected

## MILFORD IN THE CONNECTICUT COLONY

“on all the poles and ratable estates” for “finishing the ferry house.”

A boat was provided in 1759, Peter Hepburn being the first Milford ferryman. The fare to be charged was set by the General Assembly, as follows: “Man, horse and load, four pence; led horse, two pence; footman, two pence; ox or neat kine, five pence; hog, one penny; sheep or goat, one half penny.”

It was about 1772 that the first New York to Boston stagecoach, carrying mail and passengers, stopped at Milford. The arrival of the stagecoach and the delivery of the mail at the inn was always an important event in the quiet life of the town.

From the earliest days funds for town use had been raised by a tax levied in proportion to the property ownership of the residents. In addition to taxation, Milford had a novel source of public revenue—the profits from a large flock of sheep owned by the town. The flock, numbering sometimes as many as fifteen hundred, was cared for by hired shepherds and pastured on “common land,” since sheep-grazing had proved ruinous to the pasture lands. To preserve the “common land” for cattle grazing, a special allotment two miles wide was made on January 11, 1675, as an exclusive pasture for the sheep.

The town records having become worn and fragile after ninety-six years of handling, it was decided in 1736 to have them transcribed by John Fowler, Town Clerk. The town desired that only those things that the clerk “might think necessary and proper” be included in the transcript. The result was the loss of some records. This may have seemed trivial at the time; but these lost records would now be of great value to historians.

A curfew law in 1759 instructed the sexton to toll the bell at “nine o’clock o’nights.” This local law was adopted



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because of an act passed by the General Assembly which imposed a severe penalty upon any person found after nine o'clock at night in a house where strong drink was sold, and a more severe penalty upon the owner of the house.

Milford women sometimes held town office. In January, 1768, it was

Agreed and voated by the Town that the widow Rebeckah Clark the profites of that Pound which Leiut. George Clark bult in the westend of the Town So Long as She Shall Keep the Same in Repare So that it answers the End for a pound.

The first ordinance relating to public health was passed in 1774, when smallpox broke out, and a pest-house, eighteen by forty feet, was ordered built.

Whereas the Small Pox is at Present in this Town and many persons are with it infectioned and the inhabitants are put in great Fear . . . Voted, to keep a constant watch around ye infected places at this Description and to punish all disorderly persons leaving without leave first obtained by the Authority of Selectmen aforesd.

Price-fixing to combat profiteering was adopted in 1777. Under date of March 27, Milford citizens voted, "that we do agree to abide by and Strictly to adhere to the Law of this State that Regulates the Prices of the necessities & Conveniences of Life, & that we will Prosecut every Breech thereof."

One of the town's problems that steadily became more important was provision for a school system. As early as 1696 an appropriation of thirty pounds was made from the treasury to support a school the entire year. The matter was left in the hands of the selectmen who were instructed to provide an able teacher. As the existing schools taught only the rudiments, a desire for more advanced instruction led

## MILFORD IN THE CONNECTICUT COLONY

the town on December 27, 1697, to appropriate thirty-five pounds

. . . to maintain a Latin School if it can be attained and the matter of a school and the providing of a school master is left to the Selectmen to act therein on the advice of the Honorable Governor and the Revd. Mr. Samuel Andrew and to see that the school is daily attended by a good master and by scholars that need learning.

Expansion to the westward by 1699 made necessary a school in the west end. The schoolhouse was erected on Beaver Road west of the present site of the Seven Gables Inn. The school in the east end, or the center of the town, was maintained throughout the year and the one in the west end during the winter months only. On December 29, 1718, it was voted to keep the two schools three winter months only, for that year.

During 1748 a petition was presented by Josiah Platt, John Merwin, and other residents of the section called East Farms or Burwell's Farms, which "prayed for a part of the school money." After lengthy discussion at a town meeting, the petition was granted "provided that the same be used for the schooling of children."

The Colonial Assembly early assumed partial responsibility for providing adequate schools for all Connecticut. In 1700 the Assembly passed a law that the constables in each town were to collect a special school tax. They apparently had difficulty in collecting, because on May 11, 1711, the Assembly provided that the above amount was to be paid to the towns out of the Colonial Treasury. On December 10, 1750, it was

Agreed and Granted by the Town that if the money granted by the Generall Assembly to the Town for the support & maintenance of a sufficient School, in

## HISTORY OF MILFORD

the Town with the forty shillings raised upon Every Thousand pounds in the Grand levy falls short in supporting and maintaining sufficient schools in the Town, that the Remainder thereof shall be paid out of the Town Treasury; always Provided that such a part of the money as shall be raised on any of the poles and ratable estates of any of the Inhabitants Either in the Parish of Amity, and the Bryans Farms, and Burwells Farms & the whelers Farms by any rate or rates & shall be by the School Committee in the Town, shall be Returned and Delivered to such Committee as shall be by Either of the Farms appointed to receive their proportion in each & Every of sd Farms if they do keep a school among them.

This item indicates that a common school was maintained in each of the districts by the year 1750.

In 1766 four schools were maintained in Milford during the "winter season." On December 8 of that year an additional appropriation was favored:

Granted by the Town a Rate of one farthing on the pound to be aded to the Town Rate and Gathered by the Same Collector and to be Drawn out by the Schools Committee and Improved for the use of the Schools as the publick Money was before.

The Reverend Samuel Andrew, a Harvard graduate and the third pastor of the First Church of Milford, found his flock divided and distracted when he arrived in 1685, but he soon united the various factions and served with distinction until his death on January 24, 1738. A town meeting of March 4, 1685, granted the pastor thirty-two acres of land as an inducement to settle in the parish, and also provided an initial salary of one hundred pounds, two-thirds in provisions. Reverend Andrew was one of the original projectors, founders, and trustees of Yale College, and served as rector pro

## MILFORD IN THE CONNECTICUT COLONY

tempore of the institution from 1707 until 1719. To assure personal supervision and instruction by this learned gentleman, the senior class of Yale College removed to Milford until a permanent rector was installed at New Haven.

The town still regulated many church affairs. The records are filled with items relating to such matters as allotment of land for the preacher's use, appropriation of money for his salary, tax assessments for church repairs and alterations, and penalties imposed for such offenses as changing one's seat in church.

The seating capacity of the meeting-house, erected in 1641, had been enlarged by the addition of galleries, but by 1727 it was no longer large enough to accommodate the congregation. In 1728, therefore, a new, larger church was built, eighty-four by fifty-four feet, and three stories high, with a tower and spire ninety feet high. A tax of seven pence on the pound was voted to defray the expenses of building the church; the profits from the town's flock of sheep were also used for this purpose. In 1729 the tax rate was raised to nine pence on the pound.

About 1740 the original bell placed in the new First Church cracked; in 1742 it was replaced by one weighing six hundred pounds, the old bell being accepted by the foundry as part payment. The old bell was brazed and sold to a society in Waterbury; later it hung in the belfry of the church at Salem Bridge and was considered the best bell in the State. Ebenezer Parmelee of Guilford installed a brass-wheeled clock in the First Church steeple, but payment for it was withheld by the residents for two years, "to determine if it was a good one." The clock was finally paid for, persons living in Amity not being required to contribute towards its cost "on account of the distance they lived from the church and could not see the clock anyhow."

In 1736 the Reverend Samuel Andrew, then eighty

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years of age, being somewhat infirm, the congregation wished to find a suitable person to act as his assistant. The majority of church members were in favor of calling Samuel Whittelsey, a tutor at Yale and son of the Reverend Samuel Whittelsey, Sr., of Wallingford, but a strong minority opposed him on the ground that he was not evangelical, and that he did not preach the gospel but rather a "system of morals." They accused Mr. Whittelsey of leaning toward the Arminian theory which espoused universal redemption, and the belief that man might fall from the state of grace but be regenerated by a renewal of faith, whereas the Calvinists rigidly adhered to the doctrine of the preservation of the saints, total depravity, and irresistible grace.

The debate over Samuel Whittelsey's ordination created such feeling that fists were doubled during the council proceedings, which lasted three days and nights. Finally, as many influential men, including Jonathan Law, deputy governor, and several ministers of the council, favored Whittelsey, a compromise was reached. The minority agreed to the ordination with the proviso that they would hear him for six months "with view to obtaining satisfaction with respect to his doctrines and manner of preaching, and that, if they did not in that time obtain satisfaction, that then the church and town should call and settle another man, whom they should choose, as colleague with Mr. Whittelsey to preach one-half the time." Samuel Whittelsey was thereupon ordained December 9, 1737.\* For the time being, the minority was placated and "continued to hear Mr. Whittelsey" for nearly two years. Occasionally they asked to have a minister of their own selection to preach on the Sabbath, but their requests were continually refused. "Becoming more fixed in their opinion of his unsoundness," the dissatisfied members finally asked Mr. Whittelsey to air their grievances

\* *Church Records.* Lambert gives November 9, 1738.



## MILFORD IN THE CONNECTICUT COLONY

before the church membership, but he declined. The next action is recorded as follows:

Two of their number waited upon the Reverend Association of that County in their session at Durham, in May 1740, for advice and council in their distressed and uneasy circumstances, and for answer were told that they had no advice to give. Thus did their Reverend Fathers in the ministry slight them in their distressed and afflicted state.

Another attempt to obtain a more acceptable minister as associate to Reverend Whittelsey was made at a town meeting in December, 1740, when the town was asked to consider the matter and to provide relief. The attempt was unsuccessful, as Jonathan Law, moderator of the meeting, was not pleased with the request and put it aside. The Calvinistic group then demanded that the church and town fulfill the agreement made at Mr. Whittelsey's ordination. The officials declined to act and advised the members that they had waited too long before making the request.

The rebuff was followed by an open break on November 30, 1741, when the minority group seceded from the First Church, professed belief in the Presbyterian faith, and announced their intention of organizing a separate assembly. On the first Sunday in December they held their first service at the home of George Clark, Jr., and on the last Tuesday in January, 1742, appealed to the county court in New Haven, where twenty-four Milford men were qualified as dissenters under the Connecticut Toleration Act of 1708. A few days later fifteen others were qualified.

The First Church refused to admit their right to form a separate society, and peace was not realized for many years. Ministers who were invited to preach to the dissenters were either fined, imprisoned, or expelled from the town. Benajah Case, A. M., a licensed preacher of the gospel in

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Simsbury, who preached to them at the home of George Clark, Jr., on January 17, 1742, immediately found himself in difficulties. Governor Jonathan Law issued a writ for Mr. Case charging him with violating a law of the Colony, "An Act for preventing disorders in the public worship of God." His trial, which lasted two days, created a sensation in the Colony.

The accused pleaded "Not guilty in the manner and form as complained of," and informed the court that in his opinion, "he had not been 'disorderly' on the Sabbath, because he had not transgressed the Law of his Lord and Master, Jesus Christ—inasmuch as he had not gone beyond the commission given by Christ to the faithful preachers of the Gospel." The Governor replied that he was not aware that the accused or anyone else had a commission to preach the gospel before being ordained, and advised Mr. Case that he was not on trial for violating the laws of Christ, but the Law of the Colony. Warning Mr. Case to "keep to the point," Governor Law said, "Your business is to prove the place where the meeting was attended to be a lawful place for such a meeting." Benajah Case unsuccessfully sought to vindicate himself and was sentenced to imprisonment in the county jail. Another preacher, George Whitefield, whom the dissenters wished to hear, was denied the use of the church by Reverend Whittelsey, and conducted service from the doorstep to what must have seemed a multitude, for a thousand people gathered to hear him.

"Presbyterians" were forced to contribute to the support of the First Church until released by the General Assembly in 1750. Not until 1760, when men of more liberal views became members of the Assembly, were the dissenters recognized as a legal society vested with the privileges enjoyed by other ecclesiastical societies.

The new society built a meeting-house in 1743, but had

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no regular preacher until May, 1747, when the Reverend Job Prudden, a great-grandson of the Reverend Peter Prudden, became its minister. He served the Second Church for twenty-seven years, until his death in 1774.

The Episcopal Church in Milford was formally organized and established in 1764. Services had been held intermittently since 1736 by missionaries from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. Dr. Samuel Johnson, of Stratford, the father of the Episcopal Church in New England, commenced holding services in 1737 at the various homes of the parishioners. Dr. Johnson left Stratford in 1754 to accept the presidency of King's College (Columbia) in New York, then recently chartered by royal grant. He held this position until 1763 when he returned to Stratford. During his absence Milford was served by various other missionaries. Donations of money, land, and materials, led to the erection of a church building in 1770; it was consecrated in 1775 as St. George's in honor of St. George Talbot, the principal donor of money. The following year, 1776, Dr. Johnson became the rector, preaching both at Stratford and Milford. By this time a more liberal attitude toward religion prevailed in New England, with the establishment of a new church society being taken much as a matter of course.

The first library in Milford, established in 1745, belonged to the First Church and was made up of books of sermons, copies of the "Saybrook Platform," a few books of travel, fewer of history, and still fewer of philosophy. The library was considered of such value and importance that everyone using the books was required to give a bond of 10 pounds as security.

Members of the Second or Plymouth Church established a second library in Milford in March, 1761, the "Associate Library," which was in existence until 1820. Like those of the First Church Library, the books were largely theological.

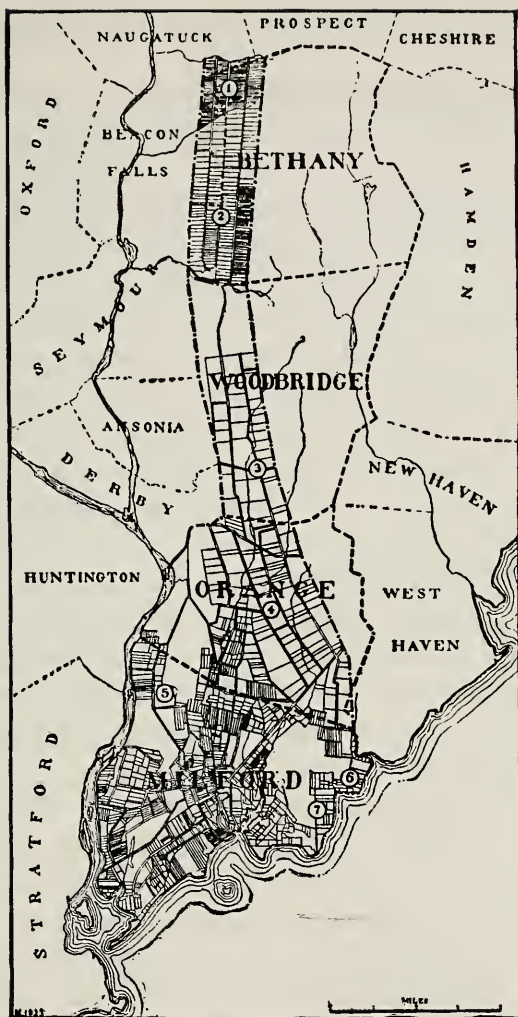
## HISTORY OF MILFORD

In 1685 Milford received a patent from Robert Treat, Governor of the Colony, confirming the title of the town to all the land within the boundaries of Milford. The Connecticut Charter, received from Charles II in 1662, had confirmed by royal grant the territorial rights of the Colony as a whole, but title to the lands held by the towns was based solely upon purchases from the Indians. When the Dominion of New England was established in 1685, and was placed under Governor Edmund Andros, threatening Connecticut with the loss of its charter, Governor Treat granted patents to all the towns in the Colony in order to safeguard their titles. Following Milford's receipt of its patent, a vote on January 3, 1686, confirmed and legalized all land grants made to individuals.

To settle a boundary dispute with Derby, Milford purchased, on the 17th of June, 1685, a narrow tract, about a mile and a third in width, extending northward about six miles, from the path between New Haven and Derby, and bounded on the north by Bladen's Brook.

On February 29, 1700, more land was bought. This addition, commonly called the "Two-Bit Purchase," was of a narrow strip, about a mile and a third wide, extending in a northerly direction, bounded on the south by Bladen's Brook and on the north by Lebanon Brook. Lebanon Brook is just south of Beacon Falls and flows into the Naugatuck River. Still another purchase, commonly called the "One-Bit Purchase," was made on the 23rd of February, 1702, extending north to Beacon Hill River at the Waterbury line. This tract was the same width as the two previous purchases, about one mile and a third, and was the last purchase of land within the patent bounds of the town.

The "Two-Bit Purchase" and the "One-Bit Purchase" differed from earlier acquisitions in that the purchase money was raised by voluntary subscription. Although the town



# GROWTH OF COMMUNITIES FORMED OUT OF PARTS OF MILFORD TERRITORY

..... Boundary of Milford at its greatest extent,  
1703-1784.

1. One Bit Purchase. Divided in 1769.
2. Two Bit Purchase. Divided in 1728.
3. Northrup's Farms, nucleus of Woodbridge.
4. Bryan's Farms, nucleus of Orange.
5. Wheeler's Farms.
6. Merwin's Farms } Nucleus of the
7. Burwell's Farms } Borough of Woodmont.





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authorized the transactions, ownership and control remained with the proprietors—that is, those who had subscribed the necessary funds.

The purchases of 1700 and 1702 having added territory not included in the patent of 1685, a committee, headed by Jonathan Law, was appointed, to draw up a new patent to confirm title to all lands then within the bounds of the town and to give the name of each landowner. The new patent dated May 22, 1713, was signed by Gurdon Saltonstall, Governor, and Abraham Wyllys, Secretary. The names of 235 freeholders or proprietors were attached.

In 1703 Colonel Robert Treat, with representatives of 111 Milford persons, had secured a patent to 84 square miles of New Haven County land at Weantinogue (Weantinock) at the surprising low cost of eight mills per acre. This area, together with Bridgewater and parts of Brookfield and New Preston, became the present town of New Milford, and received its name in October, 1703. The first settler, John Noble, came into the region from Massachusetts in 1707; the first town meeting was held in 1713 (a year after incorporation), all meetings prior to 1715 being held in Milford. Although the names of many Milford people are prominent in town affairs, only two Milford planters, Samuel Prindle and Isaiah Bartlett, were first settlers within the limits of New Milford plantation, an area that enjoys the distinction of being Connecticut's largest township.

New Milford, Pennsylvania, and Talmadge, Ohio, were settled largely by Milford pioneers, while many went to Greenwich, Durham, Newtown, and Watertown in Connecticut. Milford was also to contribute land as well as settlers to Woodbridge, Bethany, Orange, Derby, Seymour, and Ansonia townships.

With the growth of Milford and of the neighboring

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towns, disputes over boundaries arose. The boundary lines given on Indian deeds were vague, and as a result claims often overlapped. Milford became involved in disputes with both New Haven and Derby.

Three great chestnut trees formed a disputed corner boundary monument between New Haven and Milford townships; legend has it that these trees were known as the "Three Brothers." The area in dispute was supposed to be haunted by evil spirits. The quarrel was carried to the Governor of the Colony of Connecticut for adjustment, but a satisfactory decision was not rendered. The townsfolk thereupon agreed to settle their differences by physical combat. Elimination contests were held to determine the town championships in 1673, and the two champions battled beneath the "Three Brothers" from ten o'clock until sundown. The contest was even. Both towns agreed to include the chestnuts in their land descriptions. As this area from time to time came under the jurisdiction of nine different townships in the interchange of lands, the "Three Brothers" were as famous in Milford and New Haven as the "Washington Elm" in Wethersfield. The dispute with New Haven was finally settled and the boundaries agreed upon in 1674. Not until after several years of fruitless negotiation, however, was an agreement reached on the Milford-Derby boundary, the marks being set up in 1719.

In the dispute between Connecticut and New York over the boundary line, Jonathan Law, born in Milford in 1674, and educated at Harvard College, was a member of every commission named by Connecticut from the opening of the dispute in 1713 until the settlement in 1731. He was the only member continuously appointed. Law gave public service to the town in many capacities. He was in turn Clerk of the House, Judge of the County Court, Judge of the Superior Court, Chief Justice of the Superior Court for seven-

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teen years, and was made Governor of the Colony in 1742. He died in office November 6, 1750, at the age of seventy-six, having established an outstanding reputation as a counselor-at-law.

At the outset of the struggle for independence from Great Britain, Milford gave whole-hearted support to the measures adopted by the Continental Congress at Philadelphia. A committee of fifteen was chosen to enforce the recommendation of the Congress that "foes of the rights of British America" be ascertained and their names published, "so that they may be shunned and condemned as enemies of American Liberty."

Before the outbreak of hostilities, when the Boston Port Bill, enacted by Great Britain as a retaliatory measure to punish the colonists for the Boston Tea Party, was causing great hardship to the inhabitants of Boston because of the complete tie-up of shipping, Milford in the town meeting of November 29, 1774,

Resolved unanimously, that a subscription be forthwith opened for the relief and support of such poor inhabitants of the Town of Boston as are immediate sufferers by the Boston Port Bill.

In April, 1775, Captain Peter Pierett of Milford recruited a company of seventy-three Rangers from Milford and surrounding towns and, after the Lexington alarm, marched to Boston, where the company engaged in action during the siege. The muster rolls show an expenditure of one hundred and thirty-eight pounds, eleven shillings, four pence, for services rendered by this company of light infantry.

Feeling ran high between "Sons of American Liberty" and Tories; townsmen formerly living together as good neighbors became bitter enemies. Captain Stephen Stow, owner of pew number two in the Episcopal Church, attending

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service as usual one Sunday in 1776, was so enraged when the minister preached a sermon on the subject of "Loyalty to the King" that he arose and stalked angrily from the church. He never again attended services in that church.

Milford took an active part in the struggle for independence in contributing men, money, and supplies. The town did not escape the occasional raids from Long Island organized by Tories, Britishers, and renegades who traded with the enemy. Captain Jehiel Bryan and Captain Orlando Beach commanded the guard on the shore and they were so efficient that the British considered their capture imperative. One enemy officer with two men, having rowed across the Sound to Milford just at dusk, approached the Bryan homestead. With drawn sword, the raider entered, but upon meeting the doughty Captain Bryan in the hall he was so thoroughly trounced and shaken that he fled with his men, leaving the sword behind. Later, retaliatory fire was directed on some of the Bryan property near the shore, but the British missed their target by a wide margin. The sword remains one of the most valued relics of the Revolutionary War and is still in the possession of one of Captain Bryan's descendants, Mrs. B. T. D. Merriman.

Recruiting troops was started at once. Equipment was put in readiness, large guns were brought from New Haven, mounted on carriages and put in commission for coast defense.

On May 1, 1775, it was

Voted that the great Gunns be mounted . . .

Voted that the Gunns be mounted on Trucks

Voted that the Select Men be a Committee to take Care & provide for the mounting the Gunns . . .

Voted that the Select Men provide powder &c& every thing needfull respecting the great Gunns at the expence of the Town . . .



## MILFORD IN THE CONNECTICUT COLONY

Voted that the Select Men provide Guns, Bayonets & provisions for such as are called forth for the defence of the liberty of America & are unable to provide for themselves

Voted that a Minute Post be Supported in this Town at the expense of the Town, to be continued untill next monday under the direction of Ct Isaac Miles

Fort Trumbull was built at West Point and armed by a Mr. Herpin, of Milford, who received £95: os. 10d. for his services on February 11, 1776. The garrison at the Milford fort consisted of one company of twenty men, commanded by a lieutenant, an ensign, a sergeant, and a corporal. Benjamin Hine was appointed ensign. The soldiers-of-the line were paid but forty shillings per month. Companies of soldiers were also kept at Burwell's Farms and Poconoc Point.

On February 22, 1776, a law against wasting ammunition was passed:

Voted that Whereas at a time when our Sea Coasts are threatened with Invasions by our Enemies, a misuse of Powder may prove very prejudicial not only to the publick in general but to this Town. therefore Resolved that no Person or Persons whatsoever shall by Sporting or Fowling fire away any of that necessary Article within the limits of sd Town, upon Penalty of one Pound lawful Money for every Offence. The one half of sd sum to belong to the Person or Persons that shall Prosecute to effect the other half to the Treasury of sd Town.

On August 21, 1776, the town voted, "that the harbour of Milford be supplied with six cannon now at New Haven, if to be obtained." Under the same date it was voted

. . . that a Lieutenant, one sergeant and fifteen privates be detached from the company under command

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of Captain Thomson at Black Rock in New Haven and go to Milford and there to assist the inhabitants in building a fortification at the harbour in that place; and that the Selectmen of Milford have liberty, at the expense of said town, to take four of the colony's cannon from the furnace at Salisbury, viz; three nine-pounders and one twelve-pounder, if such are on hand or as soon as they can be obtained, and also one ton of shot suitable for said cannon, to be used in said fort till further orders from the General Assembly or the Governor and Council.

Included in the same day's proceedings was an item which read:

Voted and ordered Isaac Doolittle and Co., owners of the powder mill at New Haven, to deliver three hundred weight of powder into the hands of the Selectmen of Milford, taking their receipt to account with the Colony for the same.

Late in the afternoon of January 1, 1777, some of Milford's residents sighted a British man-of-war, flying a flag of truce, putting into harbor in the vicinity of Fort Trumbull. A heavy fog and waning light soon obscured the vessel from view, and it was never seen again. That same evening Captain Isaac Miles, who lived near the shore, heard the sound of tramping feet and many voices. He found his front yard filled with ragged, shivering men, most of them desperately ill. They were prisoners of war who had been set ashore from the man-of-war when it was discovered that they were sick with small-pox. With no thought for his own or his neighbors' safety, Captain Miles made hasty arrangements to shelter the men from the intense cold, and to give them such medical care as was then available. The two-hundred were housed in private residences until the town hall could be converted into an emergency hospital.

## MILFORD IN THE CONNECTICUT COLONY

Captain Stephen Stow, a resident, knowing full well that he was endangering his own life, offered to nurse these sick men. Dr. Elias Carrington volunteered his services as physician. Captain Stow made a will, put his affairs in order, bade farewell to his family and friends, and began his task of mercy. Within a month he and forty-six of his patients had succumbed to the dread disease. The full extent of Captain Stow's heroism can be appreciated only when it is considered that in 1777 little was known about fighting this plague, and its death toll was appalling. After a lapse of seventy-five years his heroism was suitably commemorated in Milford by a monument erected with funds appropriated by the State Legislature.

Provision for soldiers' families was made on March 27, 1777, when it was

Voted that a committee be chosen agreeable to the direction of his Honor the Governor and his Committee of Safety to provide for the families of those that have or shall engage in the Continental Service at the prices by law stated, they lodging or remitting money for that purpose.

In 1777 the British vessel *Swan* accompanied by three tenders arrived off Pond Point and landed a foraging party of about forty rifles. This hostile force approached the home of Miles Merwin in search of cattle and, finding that the farmers had driven their livestock away, spent about twenty minutes breaking glass, destroying furniture, and wrecking the interior of the Merwin house. Mistress Merwin ran from the kitchen with a baby under her arm and a copper pot in her hand; harnessing a horse, the brave lady drove to the village, beating her kettle to sound the alarm. The defense force gathered and came so promptly to the rescue that the British secured only two hogs and a few cheeses from the Merwin buttery.

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On September 22, 1777, it was "voted that the Selectmen for the time being be a committee to provide clothing for the Continental Soldiers agreeable to the requisition of the Governor and his Council of Safety."

On July 11, 1780, it was

Voted that the Town will give the sum of thirty pounds to each able Bodied Recruit, as an encouragement, that will Inlist into the Continental Service during the War.

Voted and granted the sum of six Pounds lawful Money to each able Bodied Recruit that shall Inlist for the Term of six Months into the Service of the united States either of the Militia or Troop of Horse.

Voted and granted the sum of twenty shillings per Month lawful Money to those of the Militia, Alarm List or Troop of Horse that have been, since the first of May, or shall hereafter be called to serve upon Tours out of Town.

Many Long Island patriots came across the Sound to reside in Milford during the Revolution; after the war a few Tory refugees from the village removed to Nova Scotia. Abraham Carrington of Milford, accompanied by his wife, embarked on the ship *Union* in 1783 for St. John, New Brunswick.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE EARLY NATIONAL PERIOD

1783-1848

"In this place there is but one Church, or in other words but one steeple, but there are Grist and Saw Mills, and there is a handsome Cascade over the tumbling dams." General George Washington thus described Milford in his diary, on October 17, 1789.

"Set out about sunrise and took the upper road to Milford it being shorter than the lower one thru West Haven. Breakfasted at the former . . . ,” the General wrote on November 11, 1789. On this occasion President Washington asked for a bowl of milk and some bread at Andrew Clark’s inn; the serving maid brought the order and with it a broken pewter spoon. Host Clark’s service tableware was not satisfactory to the distinguished guest, who requested a silver spoon. The innkeeper informed the General that the humble establishment afforded no such luxury, but that it might be possible to borrow a spoon from the household of the Reverend William Lockwood, next door. General Washington produced two shillings and sent the serving maid to get a silver spoon. The girl returned with a piece of Mrs. Lockwood’s wedding silver. After breakfast the President of the United States and General of the Armies sent his thanks to the minister’s wife and continued his journey toward New York.



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Other distinguished travelers passed through Milford during the early days of the Federal period. Some paused to refresh themselves and to admire the mill dam and the little community center. Many took away a pleasant memory of their brief visit, but others had cause to complain of the meager fare at the taverns, the rough highways, or peculiar regulations governing this independent village.

In the candle-snuffer belfry of the Second Church, the tithing man, Samuel Higby, drowsed on a sunny Sabbath day. Suddenly he sat bolt upright and through a cloud of dust sighted a carriage with postilions and outriders hurriedly approaching from the east. The guardian of the peace descended from his observatory and officiously halted the party. The gentleman in haste was Aaron Burr, Vice-President of the United States, who protested that he had business in Philadelphia demanding his immediate attention. In reply Higby said that "If the work of a man was of more consequence than the work of God, that was one thing; but he did not think so." He therefore sent Burr to the tavern to put up until sundown.

Milford people were ever reverent of the past and slow to accept change. A country lad once came down from Litchfield County to work for a Milford farmer, hauling grain. Along the road, a rock more than a foot in height bounced one wheel of the cart so violently that several sheaves of grain fell from the load. The lad proposed to the farmer that they remove the stone and make the passage smoother. "Well," said the farmer, "I'll think of it." After several minutes of thought, the farmer told the boy that his father had always driven over that rock, and that the removal of the stone was unwise. The obstruction remained in the wheeltrack.

During the years immediately following the Revolutionary War, Milford experienced a gradual change and read-

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justment in commerce and agriculture. Encouraged by the modest success of colonial traders who had prospered in coastwise, Caribbean, and European commerce, some businessmen sought profit and adventure on the high seas. Others turned hopefully toward the development of home industries and domestic trade.

Returning soldiers brought tales of bumper crops raised in the heavy loams of rich bottomlands in western New York and Pennsylvania. They viewed the limited agricultural opportunities in Milford with mild displeasure, remembering broader fields where the fences were of chestnut and not of stone, and they prophesied a granary to the west that would eventually flood New England with wheat, barley, and rye.

The older residents of Milford, men who owned the better lands, listening to these stories, realized that it was necessary to replace the trial-and-error method of farming by a more efficient system. More agricultural produce was being consumed at home by an increasing population. A steadier demand for livestock was developing and dairy products found a ready market, resulting in a trend toward forage crops for dairy and beef animals. Opportunities for employment in agriculture, however, decreased as former croplands were converted into pasturage and hayfields.

When the Secretary of State issued reports of the economic status of Connecticut in 1839 and 1845, Milford was listed as having only 150 men employed in agriculture, although the census of 1840 enumerated 2,455 residents in the township. These reports likewise stated that livestock, especially neat cattle and swine, together with hay, oats, and corn for fodder, were Milford's leading agricultural products. Profits in specialized agriculture were discouraging diversification. Connecticut farm land was increasing in value and could no longer be profitably utilized for bulk cropping.

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Connecticut's grain and flour came from the West by way of the new Erie Canal.

Privateersmen and skippers of letter-of-marque vessels, returning from the Revolutionary War, brought tales of great fortunes made in overseas trade. They had sold prize cargoes in Europe and knew the nature of foreign markets. Seeking an opportunity to obtain a foothold in commerce, they encouraged Milford shipwrights to lay the keels of staunch vessels to carry cargo, and secured financial backers. Between 1784 and 1824 some fifty ocean-going vessels were built and launched in Milford. During the War of 1812, Isaac Jones built privateersmen, and cargo and fighting ships, at his Milford shipyards.

American commerce suffered attacks from both the English and French during the Napoleonic Wars, and was seriously handicapped by the retaliatory measures adopted by the United States government culminating in the Embargo Acts of 1807 and 1809. The War of 1812, currency fluctuations, and the tariff of 1816, dealt successive blows to the shipping industry, and Milford suffered with other New England ports. The town's romantic shipping era came to a close with the failure of Pond, Baldwin & Company in 1814, the disastrous bankruptcy of Miles, Strong & Miles in 1821, and the closing of Pond, Fowler & Company in 1823.

Milford seafarers were further discouraged in 1843 when a torrential spring freshet burst several mill dams on the Wepawaug River and washed tons of mud, stone, and debris into the harbor and anchorage basins. Federal aid for dredging the channel was not obtainable, and the task was too great for local effort. Wharves and warehouses fell into disrepair, and the shipyards turned to the construction of an occasional schooner or sloop for oystermen or the fisherfolk who netted menhaden for the oil works and the fertilizer factory.

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Captain Charles Pond, trader, soldier, privateersman, and a younger brother of Peter, the "Soldier of Fortune," was among the many brave men of Milford who made shipping history. It was on the sloop *Schuyler*, commanded by Captain Pond, that Nathan Hale was ferried across Long Island Sound to Huntington in 1776 on the secret mission that ended in his execution as a spy. Afloat and ashore, Captain Pond was a gentleman unafraid. As a guest at a tavern in 1812, Captain Pond, recently returned from a European voyage, addressed the assembled Milford Grenadiers relative to the prospect of war:

Gentlemen, with your permission, I will give you something directly to the point. On my passage out I was boarded by a British frigate, and four of my seamen taken from me. On my arrival at Lisbon I learned that Sir Arthur Wellesley, Viscount Wellington, was there in command of the British forces. I hastened to his quarters and asked an interview as an American citizen. He received me very courteously, and I briefly stated my grievance, and in reply to his inquiry I frankly avowed my belief that a continuation of those offenses would inevitably lead to a declaration of war by my country. He asked what part of America I represented. I replied, 'I am a native of Milford, in Connecticut.' Our interview was brief. He looked disturbed, and, as we parted, he took my hand and said, 'Captain Pond, we are now engaged in war with France, but I have no fears of the result. I shall vanquish Bonaparte, nor do any of the complicated questions with Eastern powers trouble me, but heaven save us from a war with the United States so long as the Milford Grenadiers retain their reputed efficiency, discipline, and bravery.'

Captain Pond was vitally interested in Milford trade and in the welfare of the firm of Pond, Fowler & Company. He framed a petition to have the road from Wheeler's Farms



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extended in a direct line to Broad Street at a point near Wharf Lane, so that all traffic passed the company store. The road is now High Street.

When Captain Pond was seventy years of age (in 1814), the store was broken into by thieves who came ashore from a boat. He called his younger partners to confer about possible recovery of the goods. They were fearful but the Captain mustered two or three trusty followers and embarked in pursuit aboard the sloop *Sally*, setting a course toward the Long Island shore. Overtaking the robbers' sloop, the old man boarded her, subdued the crew, sailed home with the captive vessel, and legally advertised the conditions of his capture. He recovered all the loot and a sea-worthy vessel as well.

The Captain was elected Milford's representative to the General Assembly six times from 1780 to 1800. During the controversy over the separation of Orange from the township, the legislature appointed him chairman of the 1805 town meeting.

Adam Pond, the Captain's second son, at the age of twenty-one shipped out of New Haven on a vessel West Indies bound; on his return, Captain Pond gave the young man command of the *Theresa*, 80-ton burden. Out of Milford, February 10, 1804, the *Theresa* unloaded cargo at Augra Bay, Terceira, on February 25th and netted a profit. Taking on oranges and lemons, Captain Adam Pond made New York on May 3rd, and again realized a substantial profit. The embargo acts of 1807 and 1809 ruined trade, but the young man took command of a revenue cutter and remained afloat. During the War of 1812 Captain Pond commanded the *Sine qua non*, Milford-built privateer, and was fortunate to be in Bordeaux during the excitement of Napoleon's escape from Elba. Seventeen days out of Bordeaux, with a cargo of brandy, Captain Pond reached



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New York by sailing from blockaded Sandy Hook to the easterly entrance to Long Island Sound and thence westward to New York, with a brief stop at Milford to see his wife and spread the startling news. Dropping anchor at the foot of Beekman Street, he ran uptown with hair flying to tell the merchants about the "Escape."

Blockade running by sea, arms shipments to South America, and the smuggling of tobacco into Ireland were among the many exploits of Captain Pond. Once when he arrived off Montauk with a cargo of sugar and found the Sound blockaded at both entrances, his ingenuity was further tested. Putting in at Providence, the Captain discharged his cargo and hauled it overland to Haddam for reshipment to New York by water. The sugar cost him six cents a pound; he sold it for twenty-six cents.

Captain George Cogswell made eighty voyages between 1799 and 1844 to "all oceans." Commanding the Milford-built letter-of-marque schooner *David Porter*, 200-ton burden, he made an 1813-14 voyage to France. At Lorient (1814) he secured command of the 320-ton *Leo*, and sailed into the British Channel to capture three English vessels, a brig, a schooner, and a cutter, two of which he manned with prize crews and dispatched to America. Losing his foremast eighty miles from Lisbon, he went in for repairs and was captured by the English frigate *Granicus*; he was sent to Gibraltar, escaped, and made a precarious journey to New York. The Cogswell voyages, the marine traditions of the family, the saga of sturdy young George Cogswell who sailed on a Pond vessel, are all a part of Milford.

While overseas shipping was declining, manufacturing was developing as Connecticut's economic stand-by. At the time of the American Revolution, the colonies depended almost entirely on overseas markets for their manufactured goods and luxury articles. Imports from England ceased

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after the War of 1812, but a population increase in the new western settlements created a vast new market for eastern manufactures. Southern New England accordingly turned to manufacturing in order to supply domestic needs.

Carriages, boots, and shoes were among the earliest articles of manufacture. In 1830 the Beach Brothers established a carriage factory, east of the river at the Maple Street Bridge, which operated successfully for several years. These buildings were later used successively by Beecher and Miles, carriage manufacturers, the American Hat Weaving Company, and the J. H. Fisher Company, straw hat-makers. In 1833 a special town meeting voted:

That the selectmen be directed to lease to Canfield, Curtis and Company such site or sites upon the vacant commons westerly of the Mill Stream, between Jefferson's Bridge, (so called) and the Episcopal Church, for a term of 999 years . . . for carrying on the business of carriage making . . .

In 1836 the firm of Marshall and Ferris petitioned the town for ground south of the Episcopal Church to establish a carriage factory. The site was never used for this purpose, but Ferris Brothers did operate a carriage factory on Cherry Street for a number of years until it was destroyed by fire. In 1838 the firm of Rogers, Gardner and Davis tried the same business, indicating that Milford endeavored to become a carriage manufacturing center to replace the lost shipping industry. After 1800 the manufacture of horse-drawn vehicles became one of Connecticut's major industries. That Milford was not able to compete with other towns in this field very long is indicated by the statistics in the Secretary of State's reports on Milford industries for 1839 and 1845. The report for 1839 lists the value of carriages and wagons manufactured as \$75,000. In 1845, while the number of factories is listed as four, the total value of the output is

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given as only \$4,940 and the number of persons employed as only eight.

The making of boots and shoes was an important occupation in Milford during the first part of the nineteenth century. At one time it was the fourth shoe-producing center in the State. The 1839 report gives 700 pairs of boots, value \$3,500, and 50,000 pairs of shoes, value \$45,900, with 60 males and 30 females employed; the 1845 report lists 55,224 pairs of shoes manufactured, value \$41,706, and 2,135 pairs of boots, with 75 males and 100 females employed.

The boot and shoe industry was a handicraft, not carried on in large factories but in the homes of the workers outfitted as small shops. The cutting of the uppers was done on a large scale by the proprietors, and the materials made into finished products by the workers in their home shops. The following excerpt from the manuscripts of Nathan Stowe, a local resident, gives a picture of the shoe industry in Milford about the middle of the century.

It was the custom of the shoemakers to take out a 'seat of work' from New Haven, and, hiring seat room in a shop or home in Milford, place therein their 'kit' consisting of a cobbler's bench and tools, and being thus installed, begin the plying of their trade . . . The stock drawn consisted of the uppers, already cut, and soles and other materials in the rough. The journeymen had the seams stitched and the binding sewed on by women of the Town who did such work, and, when ready, he made them up and returned them to the employer and received in turn another 'seat of work'—to repeat the operation.

There were a number of other enterprises whose output was so small that their products were primarily for local consumption. In 1815 the Plumb mill site was sold to the

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Milford Marble Company, which began operating a plant for cutting serpentine limestone and marble. In 1825 the Milford Marble Company shipped "Verde Antique" marble to Washington, D. C. Three fulling mills and three carding mills are listed as of 1819, indicating that Milford was taking its part in the growing textile industry of the State. In 1845 there were three saddle, trunk, and harness factories, but the value of their manufacture is given as only \$3,000 and the number of persons employed as six. In addition there were manufactories of corn brooms, chairs, and cabinet ware. The gristmills and tanneries, started in early days, were operating to supply local needs. The town made a grant of one hundred and fifty dollars in 1843 to aid in rebuilding Fowler's Mill, after it had been partially destroyed by a freshet.

The westward migration of those Milford men who preferred to be independent farmers rather than factory workers contributed to the decline of Milford as an industrial center. The population in 1800 was 2,417; in 1810, 2,674; in 1820, 2,785; in 1830, 2,256; in 1840, 2,455; and in 1850, 2,465.

Oystering continued to hold its place as a local industry. Four ordinances passed at the opening of the nineteenth century indicate the possible exhaustion of the oyster beds. In 1801 the fine for taking oysters out of season was set at seven dollars; another ordinance of the same year specified that "anyone who obtained a license to gather oysters should first pay, or secure to be paid, to the committee or any of its members, the sum of 2 cents per bushel for every bushel specified in the permit." This permit, incidentally, was good for only a period of forty-eight hours from the time issued. In 1802 a law was passed prohibiting any inhabitant from taking oysters or clams for the purpose of vending or transporting them to anyone not a resident. Beginning with 1843, a number of instances are recorded where groups of

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individuals were granted the privilege of planting oysters in town waters and monopolizing the yield within designated bounds. The real expansion of the industry, however, came later in the century.

Shad-fishing in the Housatonic River afforded another seasonal occupation. Shad were caught by the thousands during April, May, and June. Between 1838 and 1840 as many as 12,000 fish were caught in a single day.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century road improvement became a matter of public concern. The cost of keeping in good condition roads connecting one town with another was met by a pay-as-you-go plan, and the tollgate turnpike came into general use. In 1802 a group of Milford and New Haven men, anxious to improve the condition of the Milford Turnpike as a profitable enterprise, applied to the State legislature for the right to incorporate as the Milford and New Haven Turnpike Company. The petition was granted. The charter of the Turnpike Company authorized tolls in return for improving and maintaining the highway. A tollgate was constructed about two miles west of the top of Allingtown Hill, and a gatekeeper was paid ten percent of receipts for his services. The rates were set by the legislature in the charter, which also specified these exemptions:

. . . that persons travelling to and from Public Worship, funerals or Society, Town or Freemen's meetings—Persons obliged to do military duty traveling to and from training—Persons going to and from Grist Mills with Grists and farmers who shall pass through the same to attend to their ordinary farming business, shall not be liable to the payment of said Toll—and provided that loaded and empty ox-carts with fellies of 7 inches in width; and loaded and empty waggons with fellies of 5 inches in width shall pay only one-half the rate of Toll affixed to each respectively.



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The rates specified were:	<i>Cents</i>	<i>Mills</i>
Each person and horse.....	4	0
Each Chaise, sulkey or chair with horse and person .....	12	5
Each 4 wheel pleasure carriage, driver and passengers .....	25	0
Each Stage and Driver with passengers.....	25	0
Each 2 horse loaded, or pleasure sleigh, driver and passengers .....	6	2
Each one horse pleasure sleigh, driver and passenger .....	4	0
Each loaded sleigh or sled.....	8	0
Loaded Ox-Cart or Waggon and driver.....	12	5
Empty Cart, or waggon and driver.....	6	3
Empty Sled, Sleigh, horse cart and driver.....	4	0
Every single horse cart loaded and driver.....	6	3
Horses, Cattle and Mules, each .....	1	0

The charter also specified that

. . . as soon as the aforesaid Toll shall reimburse to said Company their heirs and assigns, the Sums by them advanced in paying Damages and making and maintaining said Road together with an annual interest of twelve percent thereon, the said Road shall be discharged from said Toll.

The Milford Turnpike was maintained as a toll road until 1875, when the company returned its charter to the State and sold the toll gate property to the Town of Orange. The Derby Turnpike Corporation, organized in 1798, laid a toll road from New Haven to Derby through North Milford (later Orange). Tolls were charged on this road until 1897.

By 1800 the Milford-Stratford ferry had become inadequate to care for the traffic across the Housatonic River. Plans were made to replace the ferry with a bridge. A petition to incorporate the Milford and Stratford Bridge Company, later called the Washington Bridge Company, was presented to the General Assembly in April 1802, and granted in October of the same year. According to the char-

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ter specifications, the bridge was to have a thirty-two foot draw, and for eighty feet above and below the draw, piles and piers were to be constructed at which vessels could be moored while they were waiting to be warped through the draw. The bridge on the Stratford side was a causeway or crib made of wood and filled with earth and stone; the draw was on the Milford side. The bridge was to be lighted at night by two lanterns, "unless the moon shall give sufficient light."

Toll charges, set by the charter, ranged from ten cents, eight mills, to seventy-five cents, varying with the type of vehicle and animal crossing the bridge. No charge could be levied for opening the draw. When the company had received tolls amounting to the original investment, plus twelve per cent interest, the schedule was to be subject to revision.

When the bridge was ready for use, the ferry was discontinued, Joseph Hopkins, ferryman, being paid a sum of money to compensate him for his loss of revenue. He and his family were allowed to use the bridge free of any tax or toll. The town of Stratford, which had an interest in the ferry, was likewise compensated by the bridge company.

The people of Derby bitterly opposed the building of the bridge, as Derby was at the time a thriving river port enjoying a brisk trade with the West Indies. In addition to this, they had extensive fishing rights on the river. Traders from Derby objected to the bridge on the grounds that it was an unwarranted obstruction, and the fishermen, on the grounds that it would interfere with the run of shad. Their opposition proved unavailing.

In the spring of 1806 the break-up of the ice tore away part of the structure. The Derby objectors were so overjoyed at this disaster that they staged a celebration; but their rejoicing was short-lived. Since the bridge company lacked

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the funds to rebuild the bridge, the General Assembly gave permission to conduct a lottery which netted \$8,000. By 1808 the bridge was again in operation.

When old Captain Bartemy, an impulsive French ship-master from Derby, arrived off the mouth of the Housatonic River from one of his trips, with a cargo of rum, sugar, coffee, and molasses, and signaled for the opening of the draw to allow passage, the bridge sentinel demanded the skipper's papers as a pass to the port of Derby. The captain objected to such officious action and sent his men over the side to pry the draw open. Captain Bartemy's sailormen knew nothing of the mechanism of the draw. "Stand clear!" ordered the Captain, and the men scampered out of range as the skipper opened fire on the drawbridge with an old cannon loaded with nails and assorted scrap iron. When the last splinters had fallen, the bridge tender hastily opened the draw and Captain Bartemy sailed triumphantly up to Derby.

At the close of the Revolution, the pleas of the parishes of Bethany and Amity for local autonomy were finally granted. The Connecticut General Assembly in 1784 incorporated the two parishes as the Town of Woodbridge. Milford appointed a committee to meet with one appointed by the General Assembly for the purpose of "dividing the town stock" between Woodbridge and Milford. By an act of the Assembly in 1822 the section of Milford once called Bryan's Farms and later North Milford was joined to the parish of West Haven and incorporated as the Town of Orange. Thus Milford's boundaries were considerably contracted.

In the early nineteenth century many regulations were passed for the care of the poor and unfortunate. On January 18, 1802, it was

Voted, that the Selectmen be authorized and empowered to procure a suitable place for the reception of those that have or may become expensive to the Town,

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and to supply Materials for their employment and a suitable person to oversee and inspect their labor.

Milford's first poor farm was established on December 8, 1823. The town voted

. . . that the Selectmen be directed to purchase the Burwell house and land so called provided it can be don for a reasable [sic] compensation and provide as soon as may be to prepare said house for the reception of the Town Poor and to place them there any time in the course of the coming year and cause them all to be provided for in that place alone under the care of a proper Overseer who shall be allowed a reasonable compensation for their Trouble.

On December 13, 1824, it was voted:

. . . that the Selectmen be impowered to collect in monies belonging to the Town and appropriate it to discharge the Debt against sd Town incurred by the purchase of the farm at Burwells Farm not exceeding the sum of 600 Dollars.

. . . that the Selectmen have discretionary power to superintend the Farm at Burwells Farm for the ensuing year.

In 1825 the town purchased a hearse and a horse to draw it. Previously it had been the custom to carry the dead for burial upon biers borne by the pallbearers, the mourners and others of the funeral procession following on foot.

Milford's fire department dates from 1838. On May 28 of that year the Milford Fire Company, later the Arctic Engine Company, was organized by authority of the General Assembly. This company has functioned continuously to the present day as part of Milford's Fire Department.

The first meeting of the company was held in the home of Nathan Merwin on August 28, 1838, and Theodore Buddington was unanimously elected foreman to serve for

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the ensuing year. By-laws were drafted, and a slate of officers to serve with Buddington was elected. Each member agreed to contribute seventy-five cents toward the purchase of a fire engine.

On December 10, 1838, it was voted to purchase a fire engine and hose, and a tax of two and a half cents was levied on the grand list of 1838. A "goose-neck" type of engine was procured from New York, but was returned when it proved unsatisfactory. When another engine from New York also proved a failure, a group of local men, under the supervision of Mark Tibbals, decided to build a machine themselves.

In recognition of the fact that the duties of secretary of the company took time and effort, it was voted at the same meeting to pay him an annual salary of seventy-five cents. Meetings of the company were held in the homes of the various members until June 20, 1840, when a small building in the rear of the Town Hall was given over for their use; this was Milford's first firehouse.

With the establishment of a Milford Probate District by act of the State legislature in 1832, the Probate Court of Milford began to function. The personnel consisted of a judge and a clerk. The first judge was William Strong who served from 1832 to 1838, and in 1846, 1847, 1850 and 1851. The first clerk was David L. Baldwin who served from 1832 to 1842, from 1855 to 1863, and from 1865 to 1877, dying in office at the age of ninety-one.

Even before the close of the colonial period, the scope of the functions of the town government was being curtailed. Narrowing of town jurisdiction was most noticeable in education and in church affairs. Control of education was given over to the School Society, and church affairs and church support became matters for the various church societies to control. Both these changes were effected by the State government.



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In November, 1797, control of the town schools passed into the hands of the School Society, which was organized in that year in accordance with State laws. The first duty of the Society was to name officers to receive money due the town from the interest from the proceeds of the sale of the Western Reserve. The School Society continued supervision of the schools until superseded by a Board of Education on April 1, 1875. The details of school management were attended to by the school committees, with one committeeman for each school district. The committeeman was empowered to procure a suitable teacher and schoolhouse in his district.

Interest in education was at low ebb in the early part of the nineteenth century. This has been attributed partly to the fact that schools could be maintained from the State funds and from the small tuition fees charged per pupil, so that the towns felt little responsibility. The policy of providing only such educational facilities as could be secured without town taxation, and of leaving school administration to committeemen who were often unfit for their task, tended to produce a far from excellent school system.\* A receipted

\* Mr. Lambert, writing in 1838, gives this comment on education of the period:

The town is at present divided into ten school districts, and the public money received, by being expended in the most parsimonious manner, supports the several schools, about nine months in the year. There is in Milford a town school fund, raised by the sale of pieces of sequestered land, the annual interest of which is expended for schools, by being added to the money received from the State. The schools are as good, perhaps, as can be expected, for the wages paid the teachers. But if the town would raise annually, by a tax, a sum half as much as is received from the school fund, and add to it, and pay such wages as would engage teachers of scientific acquirements, and make it an object for them to instruct in reality, instead of having an inefficient form, the community would be greatly benefitted. But so long as a paltry pittance is grudgingly paid, so long the standard of the public schools will be depressed.

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bill dated December 12, 1836, shows the low cost of education at that time:

Mr. Ford Dr to Alma L. Williams \$2.57 cts.

Sir Elizabeths Tuition for 8 weeks at 14½ cts a week  
is 1 dollar 16 cts Nelsons is the same 1 dollar 16 cts  
the Tax for wood is 12½ cts each. Amount \$2.57 cts

District school teachers received very little for their services. Records of 1824 disclose an attempt to hire a Mrs. Betsey Fowler at "\$8½" per month. If she refused the offer, the committeeman was instructed to "obtain such teacher as his wisdom shall direct." In 1825 a school teacher's salary in Milford was \$25 per month, and in 1870, only \$30 per month.

The School Society, in 1828, voted ten dollars to each of the school visiting committee, "provided they visited all the schools throughout the year, and altered and arranged the school districts and gave consideration to establishing a high school by naming a committee to report on a plan for a school of a higher order if they in their opinion shall deem it proper and expedient."

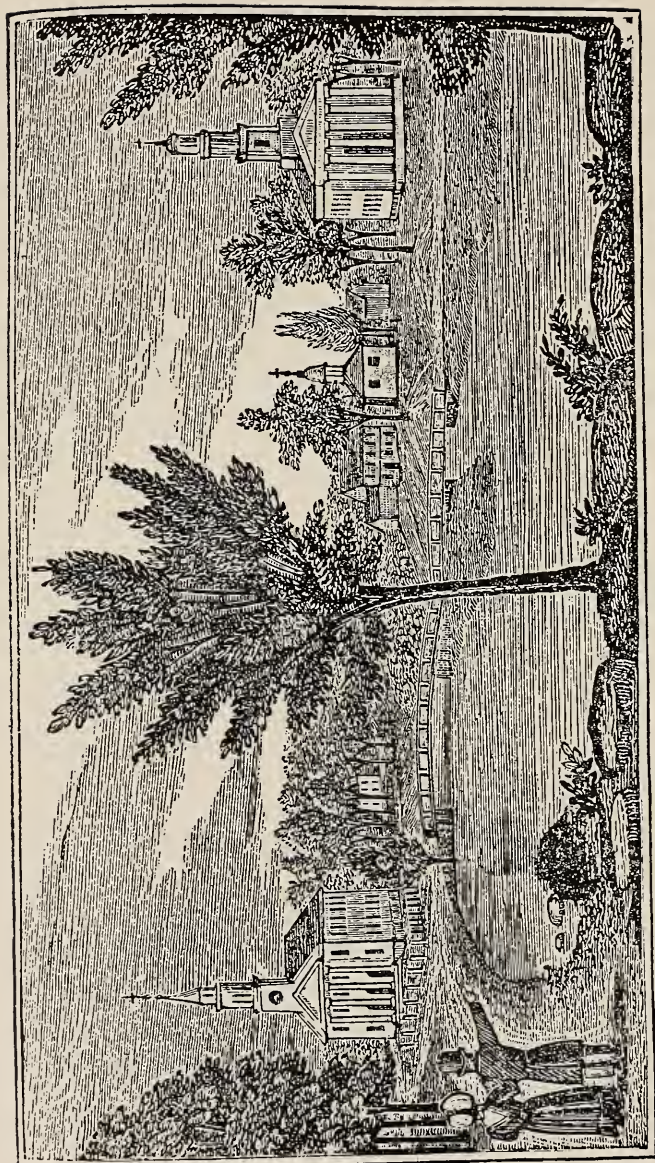
Because of the deficiencies of the public schools, a number of private schools were established to provide better educational opportunities for those who could afford to pay. The first of these was the Milford Academy, founded in 1797, which continued in existence until after the Civil War. Classes in the Academy averaged twenty students. In the early years there was only one book for the entire class, and this was passed around from scholar to scholar. The older students were seated next to the walls, the younger children occupied seats in front of them, and the teacher sat at a desk in the center of the room.

Another private school was conducted by the Reverend Bezaleel Pinneo, a pastor of the First Church, from 1800 to



MILFORD ACADEMY





TWO CHURCHES AND ACADEMY AND BRIDGE

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1845 in his home at West Main and West River Streets. The building, greatly remodeled, is now the home of the Weylister Secretarial Junior College.

On February 14, 1842, the School Society met to discuss establishment of a high school and reported:

Whereas education tends to strengthen the mind and enlarge the capacities to soften the heart, to endear the affections and to improve the manners and thus prepare its possessor for greater usefulness and happiness; and, as the law makes provision it is therefore voted; that we establish a school of higher grade according to the provision of the 9th section of the Common School Law.

A high school accordingly was established in the Town Hall, or "East Town House," where it was conducted until the present high school was erected in 1908. Students of both sexes from thirteen to sixteen years of age were admitted; those under thirteen were accepted at the discretion of the Board of Directors, while those over sixteen, and non-residents, were admitted upon paying a tuition of two dollars. No pupil from the public school was admitted for less than a term, and no one not entitled to public money was admitted for less than half a term. The school year was divided into two terms of twenty-two weeks each.

On April 8, 1844, the First School District voted to hire two teachers: "one to teach in the schoolhouse and Miss Tibbals to teach a part of the small scholars at home on the best terms the committee can obtain." This was the first graded school in the town.

Even before the liberals in Connecticut won their battle for religious equality incorporated in the Constitution of 1818 and thereby ended compulsory support for the Congregational Church, a broader attitude toward religion had been adopted by the average person. The First and Second



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Church Societies made their first attempt at cooperation on April 7, 1795, when they agreed to hold union services while the Reverend William Lockwood of the First Church was away, the First Society contributing forty-five pounds to the Second Society toward paying for the services of their pastor, the Reverend David Tuller. Another evidence of better feeling was seen in 1823, when through the generosity of the Episcopal Church Society, the First Society was permitted to hold its services in the Episcopal Church while its own meeting-house, which had been shown to be unsafe, was being razed and a new one built.

The growing indifference to religion that followed the liberalization of the church was perhaps a very natural development in an age absorbed in business and money-making. To combat this indifference, some of the churches resorted to revival meetings to stir up religious fervor and bring in new members. The first series of revival meetings on record for Milford were held by the Plymouth Church in 1797 and 1798. Methodist revivals occurred in 1835, and Baptist revivals in 1842.

Milford church records of this period contain numerous detailed reports of trials of members, both men and women, accused of such offenses as intemperance, violent language, lying, un-Christian spirit, and graver sins. At a trial, after witnesses had been called upon to testify for and against the accused, a vote of the church was taken to determine his guilt or innocence. If the vote was guilty, and if the offense was of a minor nature, the pastor was requested by the congregation merely to admonish the offender. If the accused were found guilty of a serious offense, he was excommunicated from the church by a vote of the congregation.

Four new church buildings were erected in Milford between 1820 and 1850; the new First Church in 1823, the Plymouth Church in 1834, the Methodist Church in 1844,

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and the Baptist Church in 1845. In each instance the building of the new church stood out as a major event.

In the history of the First Church the outstanding feature for the first half of the nineteenth century is the pastorate of the Reverend Bezaleel Pinneo, which lasted from 1796 to 1840. The inscription on his tablet in the meeting-house reads: "To the memory of the Reverend Bezaleel Pinneo, minister of God who rejoiced in 200 revivals, 323 baptisms, 2,400 marriages and 3,500 funerals. He died happy in the Lord." This church was not only blessed in the long pastorate of Mr. Pinneo, but apparently was free from the financial difficulties and troubles which bothered other churches. Since the First Church was the established church, and had been supported by town taxation until 1818, it had a decided advantage over those that had to support themselves by voluntary contributions.

The section known as North Milford applied to the State Legislature in 1804 for a charter to form a church of its own. In 1796 it had been permitted to put up a small building in which pastors from the First Church conducted services—six the first year, ten the next, and twelve annually thereafter. Although there was strong opposition from Milford as a whole to the formation of a separate church society in North Milford, the Legislature granted the charter in October, 1804, and the North Milford Ecclesiastical Society came into being. On March 4, 1805, the Reverend Erastus Scranton was appointed its first pastor. In 1842, since this church society had become part of the Town of Orange in 1822, it changed its name to the Orange Ecclesiastical Society.

The Episcopal Society for many years was harassed by financial difficulties, and in 1805 petitioned the General Assembly for permission to operate a lottery to raise \$2,500. In 1806 permission was granted to raise not more than \$1,500 by lottery. Not long afterwards considerable money

## HISTORY OF MILFORD

was spent in repairing the church, and it may be assumed that the lottery was successful in raising the necessary funds. Again in financial difficulties in 1831, the church voted on January 6 of that year.

. . . to rent the seats of the church to the highest bidders and to use the money thus derived for hiring a preacher—also to pay \$1.75 for a Prayer Book and \$2.00 to Reverend W. Judah.

In December of the same year it was voted to spend “not more than \$6.00 for a stove.”

The Episcopal Church building was moved twenty feet directly back (toward the river) in June, 1834, and a gallery built across the west end. Evidently contributions from outside sources assisted in this work for on November 20th it was voted

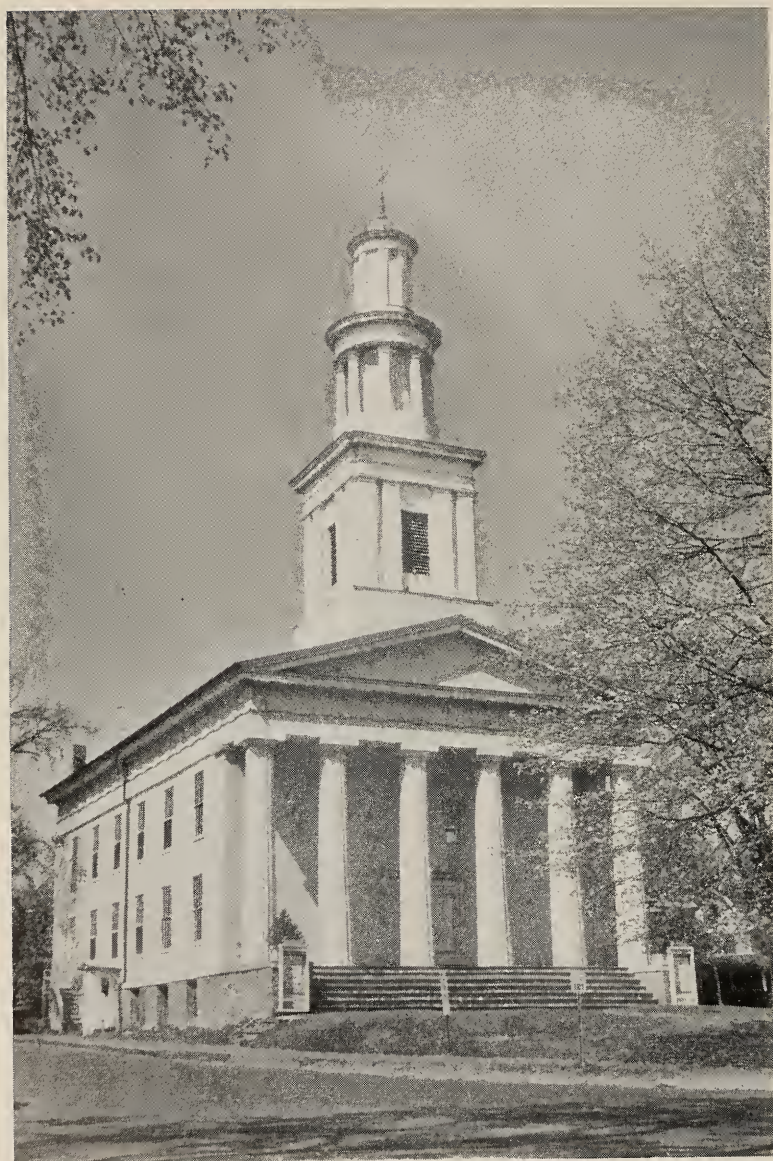
. . . that the thanks of this Society be tendered to the Episcopal Society at Stratford and also to the Episcopal Society at Bridgeport for their very liberal contributions in aid of the repairs of this church. And also to Mrs. Hoffman of Stratford for her donation to the Society of two silver cups for the use of our communion. Voted that the thanks of the Society be tendered to our brethren of the other denominations in this town for their donations in the aid of moving and repairing our church.

The early years of the Methodist Church in Milford were troubled ones. From 1789, when a group of the Methodist faith held its first services in a private home, until 1844, when the first small frame Methodist church was dedicated, the Methodists had no church home and no regular pastors. A Methodist Society was not formed until 1836. From 1835 to 1841 services were held in the “Bristol Shoe Shop;” then for a short time in the Baptist church. During the five years when meetings were held in the shoe-shop, the wor-



CHURCH OF CHRIST, CONGREGATIONAL





PLYMOUTH CHURCH



## THE EARLY NATIONAL PERIOD

shippers were frequently disturbed by the hurling of stones and other objects through the windows. It frequently became necessary to have a constable at evening services to maintain order. The building of the church in 1842 burdened the Society with a debt that lasted for years, and made it impossible to employ full time regular pastors.

A Baptist Church was organized in Milford in 1831, under the supervision of the Reverend J. E. Linsley of Stratford, with an initial membership of about twenty-five. Services were first held in the Town Hall. In 1832 upon the completion of the new Town Hall, the Baptist Society bought the old building for \$152. By 1845 the Baptist congregation had grown to such an extent that a new church was necessary. The old church (the former Town Hall) was moved to the corner of Daniel and River Streets, and a new church was erected on the old site. As the Town Hall was only about 150 feet distant, the architecture of the new church edifice was made to conform to it.

A United States post office was opened in Milford in 1796. William Durand was appointed the first postmaster, and the post office is said to have been operated in his home on Cherry Street.

With the establishment of the Federal Government, local military defense no longer occupied Milford's attention. The War of 1812 was unpopular in New England because of its injurious effect on shipping, and Connecticut's part was confined to the operation of privateers and letter-of-marque vessels. The militia refused to be sworn in under the Federal Government, and the State even threatened to secede from the Union.

Nevertheless, attachment to the old colonial train band persisted sufficiently to bring into being a number of temporary volunteer military organizations which seem to have existed primarily for parade purposes. The most colorful

## HISTORY OF MILFORD

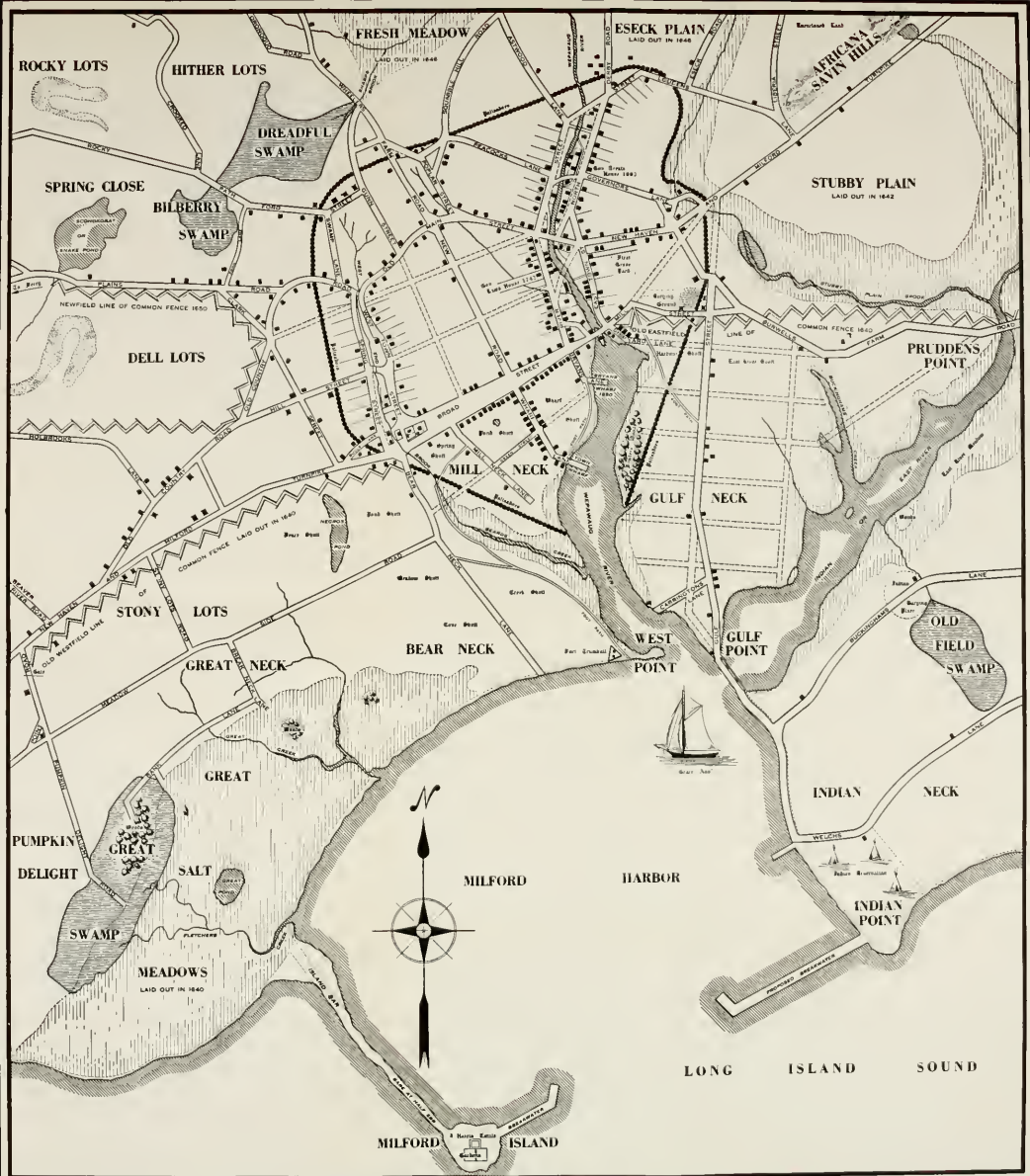
of these, and the one that endured longest, was the Milford Grenadiers, organized in 1796. It had an enlistment of some seventy men, not one of them less than five feet nine inches in height. In dress uniform of scarlet coat with buff facings, heavily decorated with gold braid, drab knee breeches with buckles, high tasselled boots, and a high plumed cap of red and buff, the Grenadiers were a resplendent addition to the State occasions at which they appeared. The company existed forty years, finally disbanding in 1836.

State-owned firearms were deposited with the various towns, and were kept and cared for by an agent appointed by the commanding officer of the militia. At a town meeting on December 9, 1839, it was voted that this agent be granted "a reasonable compensation for his services, in addition to what the State allows for keeping them (the firearms) clean." Items in the records of later years indicate that the care of these firearms was a burden, and steps were taken to rid the town of this obligation.

Edward R. Lambert, wishing to compile a history of Milford, requested permission in 1834 to examine the town records. A meeting of October 6, 1834, voted

. . . that the Petition of Edward R. Lambert, to have the privilege of examining and also to take from the Records of the Town, for the purpose of examining them in order to aid him in making out a history of said town; be granted.

Lambert's history of Milford appeared in 1838 in the volume entitled *History of the Colony of New Haven* and has been the standard work for the last century. His transcription and repairing of the town meeting records, which had become nearly illegible, was an additional service to the town.



MAP OF THE TOWN OF MILFORD IN SEPTEMBER 1835



## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY

1849-1873

Early in the morning of May 25, 1849, the silence of the Milford waterfront was broken by several pistol shots, and residents along Wharf Street flung up their windows in alarm. Samuel Tibbals, a descendant of the Sergeant Tibbals who guided the first settlers, was celebrating the start of his journey to the California gold fields. His "grubstakers," William G. Cornwall and Jonas French, were on hand to see him off and to remind him of the agreement that he must share with them every ounce of the yellow dust.

Many Milford men were members of the Brothers Mining Company of New Haven, one of the several gold companies promoted in the Elm City during "the Hungry Forties"; and with Tibbals, they owned a share in the bark *J. Walls, Jr.*, booked out of New Haven for a voyage around the Horn to San Francisco and the new Eldorado. Aboard ship, the adventurers called on the president of their little company to produce his books and give an account of his stewardship. This he was unable to do; the loss of their stake of \$1,500 was unexplained. Their total resources consisted of thirty picks, sixty shovels, a share in the bark, and abundant hope. Seven months out of New Haven, the bark raised the Golden Gate, and Milford was represented among the "forty-niners." A few letters from California eventually reached Milford, bringing news of prosperous diggings, and then no more was heard of the Argonauts.



## HISTORY OF MILFORD

Milford was being brought into closer contact with the rest of the world by means of improved communications. Most important was the building of the railroad; construction was begun in 1846 and the single track was completed in 1848. The first scheduled train left New Haven for New York on December 29, 1848. Milford was represented by William G. Mitchell who was a passenger on the first trip. The service was inaugurated with only four trains a day, two in each direction, and Milford was not included as a regular stop. The *New Haven Palladium* for March 8, 1849, stated that "The New York and New Haven Railroad inaugurated an accommodation train which will stop at all stations between Bridgeport and New Haven. This is a genuine accommodation to all people living along the road and will no doubt be deeply appreciated." The first locomotives were wood burning and required frequent replenishing with fuel. The huge piles of wood at each station were a familiar sight until 1859, when coal replaced the wood as fuel. The hard-riding, dusty little trains rushed along at the then incredible speed of twenty to thirty miles an hour.

Engineers having solved the mystery of bridge trussing, the railway construction alongshore crossed the broad tidal inlets and rivers and proceeded on a straight, economical, water-level, east-and-west route, linking the seaboard towns with New York City. Offshore, in Long Island Sound, unwieldy steamboats were operating on schedule between New Haven and New York, independent of the vagaries of wind and tide. Highway transport had improved with the breeding of speedier harness horses and the introduction of light, easy-draft vehicles.

A significant change in the community center of this period was the fencing of Milford Green in 1853. Public-spirited Levi Langridge and several associates petitioned the townsfolk for permission to fence the Green and

## THE MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY

agreed to perform the service at no expense to the town. Remembering that in 1846 New Haven had replaced the two-rail wooden fence around New Haven Green with an enclosure of masonry posts and iron railing, Langridge went to New Haven with Nelson Carrington and brought the second-hand fence on an ox-cart to Milford where it was erected and gave public service for many years.

Milford contributed her third governor to the State in 1853—Charles Hobby Pond, attorney and seafarer. He had been elected Lieutenant Governor in 1850 and again in 1852 and 1853. On October 13, 1853, Governor Thomas H. Seymour resigned his office to become minister to Russia, and Pond became Governor to serve out the unexpired term.

Recovery from the financial distress of 1837 inspired men to venture their savings in manufacturing and retail trade establishments to serve the 2,455 people residing in the community. The manufacture of straw hats became one of the major industries. In 1852 a straw hat factory was established by Nathan A. Baldwin and Elisha Flagg. Miss Mary Mills (later Mrs. Isaac Green) was brought from England to teach the workers to sew the straw braid. This business gradually expanded until in 1867-8 as many as seven hundred hands were employed.

Carriage-building continued for many years after the coming of the railroad. The Beecher and Miles Company, just north of the Jefferson Bridge, when running at capacity, employed several hundred men. Milford carriages are reported to have had an enviable reputation in southern and western markets. In addition to carriages, in 1868-9 Beecher and Miles manufactured a wooden frame, direct-drive bicycle similar to the present two-wheel bicycle.

The manufacture of boots and shoes continued to hold an important place in Milford trade, although the center of the shoe industry had shifted to Massachusetts. In 1852

## HISTORY OF MILFORD

Leonard Davidson introduced the sewing machine in the manufacture of shoes in a shop on West Main Street, and the hand-made method was abandoned for large-scale production. Albert A. Baldwin began the manufacture of high grade shoes on Golden Hill Street in 1855. From a small beginning the business prospered so that by 1865 the latest improved machinery was installed. Ten years later the company moved to a new building erected on Broad Street, which is now used by the Waterbury Lock and Specialty Company. In the building now occupied by Harrison and Gould, Inc., army shoes were manufactured for a time during the Civil War by the J. O. Silliman Company.

On May 5, 1873, the Milford Steam Power Company was organized. In the hope of attracting new industries to Milford, this company built a factory and rented space there. A number of firms have since used the plant, which has been occupied since 1906 by the Rostand Manufacturing Company.

A new industry started in Milford when the George W. Miles Company leased part of Charles Island in 1868 to set up a plant for the manufacture of fish oil and fertilizer from menhaden, a bony fish found in great quantities in the Sound. The Miles Company made a superior product and received many awards in both America and England for the excellent quality of their oil.

Shad-fishing in the Housatonic River continued to be an important occupation, but the pollution of the waters by sewage and refuse from the factories in Derby and Ansonia and other places farther up the river finally resulted in the disappearance of the fish.

By 1857 oystering began to assume the character of a major industry. In that year William M. Merwin experimented with planting oysters in the Gulf Pond. Because of the shallow water and the accumulating sediment which

smothered the seed oysters, the venture was a failure. Undaunted, Merwin placed a bed in the outer waters of the harbor. Once again he was unsuccessful because a severe storm ruined the entire set by washing sand over the beds. After three years of reverses, Merwin focused his efforts on oyster cultivation in deeper water. Although his neighbors and friends gave no encouragement, he went on with his experiments, and within a few years had developed a healthy crop of native oysters. This was the beginning of an industry which in later years, under the name of William M. Merwin & Sons (Dumond P. and Merritt W.), employed many hands and a large fleet of oyster boats.

An early "back to nature" movement, undertaken by eleven well-known local young men, in the summer of 1861, is recorded in a pamphlet that may be found in the Milford Public Library. Seeking health, tranquillity, and happiness, these lads secured a boat, a tent, and the use of a secluded stretch of beach owned by Daniel Buckingham, Esq., formed an association known as "The Buckingham Rangers," and pitched a camp in a well-screened grove. Living like Indians, detailing the ordinary tasks of camp life in an orderly manner, securing food from forest, sea, and stream, the boys proved their ability to subsist without the garb of civilization to cloak their sun-tanned, weather-beaten bodies. The youths obtained passing publicity and suffered no ill effects from exposure.

Following the attack on Fort Sumter, on April 12, 1861, President Lincoln's call for volunteers to fight to preserve the Union brought a prompt response in Milford. The town records tell the story of recruiting for the Civil War as follows:

At a special meeting of the inhabitants of the town of Milford, legally warned and held at the Town Hall on the 29th day of April, 1861, at 2 o'clock P.M. for

## HISTORY OF MILFORD

the purpose of making an appropriation for the support of the families of such persons as shall in obedience to the call of the President, volunteer for the defense of our National Government—also to make an appropriation for the encouragement of such persons as shall organize a military company in this town:

Voted that the sum of eight dollars per month shall be appropriated from the Town Treasury for the benefit of each unmarried man, and twelve dollars per month to the family of each married man together with a life insurance policy to the amount of one thousand dollars payable to his family during continuance in service, to all such as shall volunteer and be accepted in a Military capacity in obedience to the call of the General Government.

Voted that whereas a military company, properly organized and officered, shall be formed in Milford, numbering not less than 50 nor more than 64 privates—that the officers of said company be empowered to draw the sum of twelve dollars for each man from the town treasury, for the purchase of uniforms for said company, and that the said company be subject to the laws of this state.

Voted that a committee of three persons be appointed to organize the company just voted to be raised for the protection of this town and that the said committee be composed of Isaac T. Rogers, Nathan C. Smith, and John Burns.

Cash bounties were also offered by the town in an effort to stimulate recruiting during the early days of the war. The amount was originally set at one hundred dollars per man; later this sum was increased, indicating a gradual lessening of interest as the conflict dragged on.

Under date of August 2, 1862, is the following item:

Whereas the Governor of this State has called for six or more regiments of volunteers to constitute its quota



## THE MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY

of troops to assist the National Government in crushing a rebellion which is threatening its very existence, and—

Whereas the town of Milford owes it to itself, to the State and to the Country, to do her part in this great contest in which we are engaged and to furnish its full quota of men as soon as possible, therefor voted that the Selectmen of the town of Milford be and they are hereby authorized and instructed to draw this order on the Treasurer for the sum of one hundred dollars in favor of L. N. Beardsley and George Cornwall, 2nd, and as often as may be required, to pay said sum of one hundred dollars to each and every soldier who has or who may, within the next thirty days, enlist from this town into any of the Volunteer Regiments of Connecticut to serve the United States for the term of three years or during the war, under the late call of the President for three hundred thousand more troops, said money to be by the above mentioned L. N. Beardsley and George Cornwall, 2nd., paid to each volunteer, when he shall have been mustered into the service of the United States.

At the same meeting an amendment was passed adding fifty dollars to the bounty, provided the entire quota of the town was raised.

On August 30, 1862, each soldier who enlisted for the term of nine months was offered one hundred dollars and an additional one hundred dollars if the town's quota was filled.

A year later, on August 1, 1863, the bounty and the hiring of substitutes again came up for discussion, and it was

Voted, that the Selectmen are hereby authorized to pay out of the Town Treasury, as a bounty, the sum of three hundred dollars, to each and every resident of the Town of Milford who, having been duly en-

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rolled as liable to service under the Act of Congress, approved March 3rd, 1863, entitled 'an act for enrolling and calling out the National Forces and for other purposes' shall have been, or shall hereafter be drafted into the military service of the United States under said act—provided such person so drafted shall not be exempt by reason of the Second Section of said act, but shall be accepted into such service—or shall otherwise comply with the provisions of said act, by enabling the United States authorities to procure a substitute in his stead pursuant to the 13th section of the act aforesaid. Provided that any person who shall procure a substitute for less than three hundred dollars—such person shall only receive the amount paid to the substitute.

A total of two hundred and forty-five Milford men served with the United States forces. At the close of the war, the survivors returned to their homes in Milford and took up peace-time pursuits. The charter of the George Van Horn Post, No. 39, of the Grand Army of the Republic, now hanging on a wall of the Taylor Library, is dated at Hartford, April 15, 1871, and bears the following names, as original members: Oramel G. Abbott, Edwin B. Baldwin, John W. Buckingham, Edward W. Burleigh, Joseph R. Clark, Frederic Cornwall, Shirland H. Hitchcock, Charles L. Loueden, Silas L. Manse, and Thomas Williams.

Milford's part in the Civil War was not confined to action on the battlefield. Despite the cost in men and money, the town prospered by furnishing supplies. The difficulty experienced in filling its enlistment quota was undoubtedly due in part to the demand for labor to carry on wartime manufacturing.

Between 1850 and 1870 the town showed a slow but steady growth in population. The census figures for 1850 are 2,465 and for 1870, 3,405. The increase in popula-

## THE MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY

tion, though not large, compares favorably with that shown in other small towns in the State.

In 1868 Milford had one sawmill and five cider mills in operation, one broom shop, a sorghum mill, a shoe shop, a children's carriage shop, two fish-oil and guano factories, a box shop, two carriage shops, an oyster wholesaler, two straw hat shops, a "silver-plated carriage ware" factory, a hat presser, a hat dyer, two shoemakers, a marble cutter, a machinist, a cooper, a "manufacturer," ten carpenters and joiners, three hotels, a saloon, a sash and door shop, and a livery stable. Four seed growers and one gardener completed the industrial roster of the village.

Place names with the flavor of an earlier day persisted in Milford in 1868. Ten Pin Alley, Great No Lots Creek, Calf Pen Meadow, Pumpkin Delight, Squabble Hill, Bakers' Lots, Burnt Plain, Stubby Plain, Bow Lane, Frog Lane, Fence Shott, Pond Shott of Lots, Bilberry Swamp, Dreadful Swamp, and Spring Shott were a few of these.

A few changes in the general appearance of the town warrant mention. The Town Hall, built in 1831, was a plain two-story building. In 1848, to improve its appearance, a group of public-minded citizens headed by Wallace C. Wilcox added a cupola and bell to the building at their own expense. The Town Hall and the Baptist Church stood on a triangle of land formed by the Wepawaug River, River Street and West River Street. While the two buildings were similar in appearance, their location in relation to each other was not pleasing. A group of citizens, David L. Baldwin, John Smith, Hammond R. Beach and others, obtained permission to move the Town Hall north a short distance so that the fronts of the two buildings would be in line. This they did at their own expense. In appreciation of their public service, the lawn in front of the two buildings has been kept as a public green. The Baptist Society disbanded in

## HISTORY OF MILFORD

1865, and in the following year the town purchased the church building. Thus the whole triangle, with its two buildings standing side by side facing the green, became public property.

The Revolutionary War Memorial commemorating Stephen Stow and the forty-six patriots buried in Milford Cemetery was erected over their resting place in 1852. Built of Portland brownstone the monument is thirty-five feet high. The column, which consists of but two blocks of stone, has the State coat of arms and motto carved upon it. On the plinth the names of the unfortunate victims are carved, together with the story of their sacrifice. The inscription reads:

IN HONOR OF Forty-six American Soldiers who sacrificed their lives in struggling for the Independence of their Country: this MONUMENT was erected in 1852 by joint liberality of the General Assembly: the People of Milford and other contributing friends. Two hundred American Soldiers, in a destitute, sickly, and dying condition, were brought from a British Prison Ship, then lying near New York, and suddenly cast upon our shore, from a British cartel ship, on the first of January 1777. The Inhabitants of Milford made the most charitable efforts for the relief of those suffering strangers: yet notwithstanding all their kind ministrations, in one month, these forty-six died, and were buried in one common grave. Their names and residences are inscribed on the MONUMENT. Who shall say that Republics are ungrateful.

In 1848 the Milford post office containing about fifty letter boxes was located in John W. Merwin's store on Broad Street. When William Brotherton was appointed postmaster in 1854, the office was moved to the corner of Daniel and River streets. The new administration at Washington in 1861 brought a change in postmasters in Mil-

## THE MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY

ford. Thomas Cornwall, the appointee, moved the post office to the building on River Street now occupied by The Theron Ford Company, where it remained until the new Federal Post Office Building was erected in 1932.

On April 26, 1851, the Milford Fire Company changed its name to the Wepawaug Engine Company No. 1, and adopted new by-laws. Article nine reads:

Each member shall within thirty days after enlistment provide himself with a uniform—to consist of a Black Glazed Hat (termed a Sou'Wester) the rim to be five inches wide behind and two and one-half inches wide in front with the figure '1' painted white in front. The pantaloons dark and worn without suspenders. The shirt to be red flannel, collar to be four inches wide and the bosom to be buttoned on the right breast with three black buttons. The Foreman's hat to be white with black numeral. Under a penalty of 25 cents for each time the company may be called together and he neglect to be so equipped.

The appointment of a fire warden by the town officials on December 13, 1852, was at first decidedly unpopular with the members of the Wepawaug Company, as in their opinion the duly elected officers of the company were better qualified than any outsider. John K. Bristol was made fire warden to marshal the citizens and organize "Bucket Brigades." But on December 28, 1853, the company voted: "to procure and present to the Fire Warden of this town, a hat, a shirt and belt, symbolic of his office."

By 1854 the company had outgrown the little firehouse behind the town hall. On December 11 of that year the town voted to erect an engine house. The building was completed in the summer of 1855, and in September the Wepawaugs held their first meeting in it. On April 11, 1856, the company decided to change the style of its uniform



## HISTORY OF MILFORD

and to wear "the new style cap with red band and guilt buttons—and White Patent Leather Belts." At a meeting held August 29, 1857, a committee of five men was appointed to obtain a new fire engine, hose and other necessary apparatus. An engine was procured from the New Haven Fire Department on trial. After a successful demonstration, money was appropriated to pay for the engine. The newly acquired apparatus was first named "The Wave;" at a later meeting the name was changed to "The Arctic." The primitive engine had a pump capable of throwing no more water than an ordinary-sized hand pump. Additional by-laws were adopted by the Wepawaug Company on March 1, 1858, and its name was changed to the Arctic Engine Company No. 1, after the new engine. The company has kept this name ever since. Regular drills, maneuvers, and exercises were instituted on meeting nights.

Law enforcement in Milford was entrusted to constables elected annually. The original number was two, but by 1860 the number had been increased to seven. In the next few years a series of disorders impressed the town with the need for better protection and a regular police force.

On Lincoln's Birthday, in 1867, a prize fight at Milford Junction was followed by a free-for-all contest that caused a general disturbance throughout the entire township. Press comment about the lax enforcement of the law, threats of legislative investigation, and calls for assistance from outside the town to suppress lawlessness, followed.

Three years passed before quiet Milford streets again echoed to the shouts of a crowd of toughs who assembled, on April 12, 1870, to celebrate what was expected to be a lightweight contest on Charles Island. When only one of the fighters made his appearance, the promoters staged a contest between two lesser lights of the profession. In Milford streets, on April 11 and 12, windows were smashed

## THE MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY

and the populace was terrified as fight fans poured into the little village.

The county sheriff decided on immediate action. A special train at New Haven depot was loaded with five militia companies under command of Colonel Bradley and despatched to Milford. Captain Catlin and twenty-two New Haven policemen also joined the relief expedition. Nearly two hundred armed men departed for the scene of the combat; Governor Jewell ordered the Sheriff and his men to arrest every possible violator of the law, in an effort to stamp out prize fighting in Connecticut.

About a mile and a half from the Milford depot, the contingent detrained and proceeded to the scene of action. At double-time, the military advanced on the scattering sports-folk and after a flurry of combat, the crowd surrendered. Eighty-eight men were detained, eighty-one were locked up, but only seventy-four answered their names when they were arraigned the next morning and bail was set. Practically everyone managed to furnish bond and only a few of the less fortunate actually spent more than the single night in jail. The military disbanded, and Milford returned to normal and the replacement of broken window glass.

Later in the year 1870, the murder of Nathan Fenn, a merchant, by burglars discovered in the act of breaking into his store, created great excitement in town, and rewards were offered by both State and town for the arrest and conviction of the murderers. Resulting agitation for better police protection led to the selectmen being empowered on October 19, 1874 "to appoint two or more suitable persons from within or without the ranks of constables, as special police for the purpose of preserving order in our public streets for the night season." In 1875 it was voted "that our Police Force consist of two persons for the ensuing year—Resolved that J. R. Furman and Castelle O. Isbell, constitute said

## HISTORY OF MILFORD

force." Both of these men were duly elected constables and constituted the first salaried police force in Milford.

The custom of receiving bids for the support of the town poor still prevailed in 1849. Paupers were cared for at the town farm, the produce raised contributing to their support. On December 12, 1864, a committee of four was appointed to "make proper inquiry and report at a future meeting, some plan for building a suitable almshouse and also an estimate of the probable cost." The committee made its report on January 26, 1865, but nothing further is reported in the records.

The Milford Savings Bank was chartered in 1872 and commenced business in 1875 in the building now occupied by the Williams Real Estate Office on Broad Street. The beginning was very modest; a cigar-box in the safe of the treasurer was the first repository for the deposits of the customers. The bank's first president was Isaac T. Rogers; its first treasurer, Phineas S. Bristol.

The first newspaper to be published in Milford was the *Milford Telegram*; its initial issue was printed in 1873. Three years later the name was changed to *Milford Sentinel*.

Until the formation of the Board of Education in 1875, Milford retained its district school system. The high school, established in 1842, and the Milford Academy offered opportunities for secondary education. Although a State law abolished the School Society in 1856, and returned the control of the schools to the town, the Milford School Society continued to function until 1865, the last entry on its records being dated December 11 of that year.

Statewide agitation for better schools resulted in the establishment of the Board of School Visitors in 1854. Originally called the School Inspection Committee, it visited the district schools, examined the teachers and issued certificates,

## THE MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY

inspected buildings, and required that the committeemen administer school details properly. There were eight members on the Board of Visitors, of whom several were usually ministers. In 1862 the board appointed two "acting school visitors" to do all the actual visiting of schools and perform the duties and exercise the powers of the board, subject to its approval.

From 1797 to 1854 throughout Connecticut there were no town taxes to maintain the schools. Funds for their support were furnished by the income from school "funds," tuition fees and rate-bills. In 1854 the General Assembly passed a law that each town should levy a school tax of one cent on the dollar on the grand list. In 1860 this levy was changed to three mills; in 1866, to four mills; in 1868, to not less than one mill; and in 1869 it was specified that the rate was to be high enough to provide thirty weeks of school annually. In 1870 this law was changed so that thirty weeks of school were to be kept where twenty-four or more children were enrolled, but only twenty-four weeks of school, where there were fewer than twenty-four scholars.

Public school pupils in Milford frequently received a dividend from a surplus in the school fund either from public money or the fees charged the pupils for their education. On March 23, 1864, a sizable dividend was declared when each pupil received \$2.25 as his share of \$772.80 received from the Comptroller out of public funds and from other sources of revenue.

The free-school law was passed by the General Assembly in 1869, making it mandatory for towns to maintain schools by public taxation. The first compulsory attendance law was passed in 1872, requiring all children between the ages of eight and fourteen to attend school at least three months each year.

Evidence of early recognition of the need for school

## HISTORY OF MILFORD

playgrounds is found in the dispute between the Episcopal Church Society and the First School District Committee. The First District schoolhouse stood on the present site of St. Peter's Church Rectory. The Church Society erected a fence in 1857, presumably to keep the school children off the church premises. The School Society lodged a complaint against the church, claiming that the fence encroached on school land and cut down the children's play space. After considerable controversy, and an attempt to have the town remove the fence, the hard feeling subsided. In fact, the following resolution was passed by the School Board:

Voted that we do not regard the present railing erected by the members of the Episcopal Church around their lot, an obstruction or hindrance to the children using the same for a playground but rather as a protection to them in their play. We also regard it as an ornament to the place and a real benefit to those living in the vicinity as furnishing a pleasing view unobstructed by building, etc.

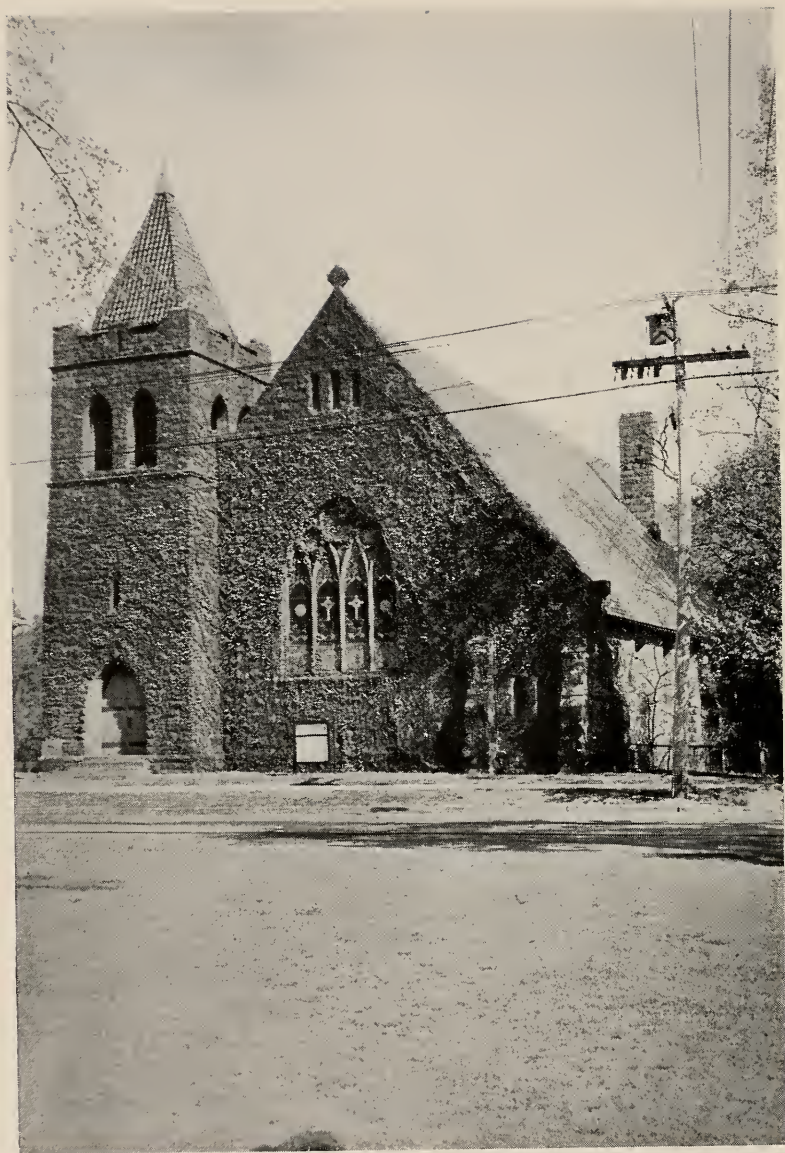
The Reverend George H. Griffin, a school visitor, in his report of a visit to the 12th District School on December 2, 1873, made the following notations: "Yesterday I examined Miss Ellen Sherman for the 12th District. All satisfactory, except the schoolhouse itself, the door of which is without a latch and the stove door off its hinges. Can you do anything about it?" Apparently the Board could, for on October 12, 1874, it notified the officers of the 12th School District that unless their school was repaired they would not receive any more money.

The little wooden schoolhouses operated under the old district school system were located in 1868 as follows: District 1, River Street; District 2, West Town Street; District 3, Gulf Street; District 4, Plains Road opposite the "Lily





ST. PETER'S CHURCH



MARY TAYLOR MEMORIAL M. E. CHURCH

## THE MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY

Pond"; District 5, West Main Street; District 6, "Wheeler's Farm," at the junction of Herbert Street and Wheeler's Farm Road; District 7, North and Walnut Streets; District 8, "Burwell's Farm," New Haven Avenue and Chapel Street; District 9, Governor's Avenue; District 10, Morningside Road; District 11, Beaver Road; District 12, Tory Park at the head of Seaside Avenue. Several of these have now been converted into dwellings.

The First Church was repaired and remodeled in 1859, and in 1868 it was enlarged and again remodeled, and a new organ purchased. In 1869 the Plymouth Church was extensively remodeled. While the First Church was being repaired, its services were held in the Plymouth Church, and while the Plymouth Church was being altered, its services were held in the First Church, in a spirit of mutual helpfulness.

The congregation of the First Church was saddened, in 1849, by the death of its pastor, the Reverend Bezaleel Pinneo. His pastorate had been one of the most noteworthy in the history of the church. Although not a Yale alumnus he had been prominently mentioned for the presidency of Yale College after the death of President Dwight. Because of the infirmities of age, he had not been active in his ministerial duties since 1840, but his interest in church affairs had never flagged.

The Reverend James D. Carder became the rector of St. Peter's Church early in 1848. He was a man of dynamic personality, and it was under his leadership and energy that the present church edifice was erected. The old wooden building had outlived its usefulness, and further repairs were unjustified. Dr. Carder raised \$1,500, and John Fowler contributed a like amount to build a new church. When the old building was torn down, material that could be used in the construction of the new church was salvaged. Dur-

## HISTORY OF MILFORD

ing the interval when the church society was without a building, services were held in the Town Hall. The cornerstone of the new church was laid in May, 1849; the building was completed in 1851, and dedicated on July 2 of that year by the Bishop of the diocese. At the dedication the name was changed from St. George's to St. Peter's. The brownstone used in the construction of the church was brought to Milford by boat from the famous quarries at Portland, Connecticut. The beams are all of native butternut. The building in Middle English Gothic style of architecture is one of the best examples of this type in New England.

The Baptist Church enjoyed only a brief period of prosperity after it began holding services in its new church built in 1845 on the triangular plot near the Town Hall. The congregation gradually dwindled until it had so few members that the church society was forced to disband in 1865. The few remaining members joined other denominations; the town bought the church building.

The Methodist Church in 1850 still had no regular minister, but relied on non-resident preachers. In 1852 the Methodist Conference supplied the church with a full-time pastor, the Reverend A. S. Hubbell. During his two-year pastorate decided progress was made, new members were acquired, a debt of \$900 paid off, and land on High Street purchased for a parsonage. During the ministry of his successor, the Reverend M. Olmstead, the parsonage was built.

The employment of Irish workers on railroad construction in 1848 brought a number of Roman Catholics to Milford. From 1848 to 1853 mass was solemnized occasionally in the homes of communicants. The first priests to administer the sacrament in Milford were from St. Mary's parish in New Haven. One of these priests, the Reverend Edward J. O'Brien, realizing the need of a church for his growing congregation, in 1850 bought a small piece of land on Gulf



## THE MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY

Street, a short distance north of the present railroad bridge. On this plot of land Milford's first Catholic church, Milford Mission—later St. Mary's Church—was built in 1853. In 1856 the mission passed into the care of St. James parish in Bridgeport. Six years later St. Mary's was once more made a mission of St. Mary's, New Haven. In a short time it was transferred again to the jurisdiction of St. Mary's, East Bridgeport, and in 1872 to St. Mary's, Derby.



## CHAPTER SIX

### THE BEGINNINGS OF MODERN MILFORD

1874-1916

In the trying years of depression and slow national recovery that followed the Civil War, Milford had cause to be thankful for its diversified industries, its agriculture, and its bountiful supply of seafood. When business began to improve, its straw hats, shoes and seeds became more in demand.

Seed had been raised for market in Milford since 1840, when Enoch Clark and his sons, Albertus and Clifford, developed a small business. In 1856 Everett B. Clark raised a crop of cabbage seeds which he cured and stored in the parlor of his home. By 1883 the seed industry had attained such proportions throughout the country that the American Seed Trade Association was organized. One of its founders was Everett B. Clark, whose business had grown rapidly since his trial effort in cabbage seeds in 1856. In 1890 Clark took his sons into his business as partners. The firm continued under the name of Everett B. Clark & Sons after the death of the father in 1907. A few years ago it was merged with other seed companies into the Associated Seed Growers, Inc., with offices in New Haven.

Another Milford concern of national importance in the seed industry, F. H. Woodruff & Sons, Inc., was established in 1903. Frank H. Woodruff, who was born in Orange in 1849 and died in Milford in 1927, had spent the greater part of his life farming and growing sweet-corn for seedsmen. In 1903 he decided to go into business for him-

## THE BEGINNINGS OF MODERN MILFORD

self, taking with him his two sons, William H. and Harold F. The business was begun in a barn on the home farm, with billing and bookkeeping done by lamplight at a desk in the dining-room of the farmhouse after the day's work. From this simple beginning the business grew rapidly until today the concern has branch warehouses in several States, with its main warehouse in Milford. Although the company specializes in vegetable seeds, in recent years it has developed notable lawn grasses and has added flower bulbs to its list of products.

The success of the William M. Merwin & Sons Company with deep sea oyster beds led to a boom in the oyster business. In 1878 the town issued forty-one permits, each for a two-acre oyster grant, sixteen of them to women. In that year the Merwin firm secured a permit to stake out two hundred acres of oyster grounds near Pond Point in water varying from twenty to fifty feet in depth. The firm continued to expand until by 1888 its oyster beds had increased to a thousand acres, yielding about a million bushels yearly. Merwin seed oysters were of such high quality that orders for "stock" were received from firms abroad as well as in this country. The Merwins maintained a "shucking" plant in Milford on the site of the present plant of the Connecticut Oyster Farms Company. A force of from fifty to seventy-five employees opened from 150,000 to 200,000 bushels of oysters a year. In 1911 William M. Merwin & Sons sold their interests to the Sealshipt Oyster System which reorganized in 1913 as the Connecticut Oyster Farms Company, a subsidiary of the North Atlantic Oyster Farms, Inc. In 1929 the Connecticut Oyster Farms Company was taken over by the Bluepoints Company, Inc., a subsidiary of the General Foods Corporation.

Milford's population was only 3,347 in the 1880 census, a drop of 58 from the previous tally. By 1889 Milford had

## HISTORY OF MILFORD

705 children of school age (four to sixteen years), a grand list of \$1,162,430, funded indebtedness of \$41,500, and a floating debt of \$10,661.54. The chief industry was agriculture and seed raising; the chief manufactured products were straw hats and shoes. The *Milford Times*, an independent news journal, was distributed every Thursday. The chief financial institution was the Milford Savings Bank, then paying interest at the rate of four and a half per cent per year on deposits of \$207,269.78, and claiming a surplus of \$8,157.72.

At sunrise on August 31, 1888, a fifteen-gun salute, flag raising, joyous pealing of church bells, and shrill blasts of factory whistles, ushered in the day set aside for the unveiling of the Civil War Memorial. Three thousand dollars had been raised for this memorial by the Milford G.A.R. Post and by private subscription. At nine fifty A. M. cannon again roared in a thirteen-gun salute announcing the arrival of the G.A.R. Department Commander and his staff, followed by another thirteen-gun salute on the arrival of Governor Phineas C. Lounsbury and his staff. Three signal guns announced the hour for the forming of the line of march, while a final shot was the signal for the starting of the parade.

The procession marched to the bunting-trimmed Green where hundreds of townspeople and visitors were gathered to witness the unveiling of the granite shaft surmounted by an heroic figure of a soldier in the field uniform of 1861-65 standing at parade rest. On the base of the monument are carved the inscriptions:

### GETTYSBURG

A Tribute

To the Bravery of the Men  
Who Risked Their Lives That  
The Nation Might Live  
1861-1865

# THE BEGINNINGS OF MODERN MILFORD

## FORT FISHER      PORT HUDSON APPOMATTOX

Erected by  
George Van Horn Post  
No. 39, G.A.R.  
And Friends

In preparation for the 250th anniversary of the founding of the First Church, committees were appointed by the town and by Plymouth Church to cooperate with the First Church committee in planning a celebration for the summer of 1889. The joint committee agreed that as part of the observance of the anniversary, "a substantial mark should be made in honor of the Founders of the town" . . . and . . . "that such a mark should unite utility with the picturesque and at the same time be typical of the men and time of settlement." It was decided that this purpose could best be accomplished by building a stone bridge over the Wepawaug River, "upon whose banks their first habitations were placed and the first mill erected."

A special town meeting voted to appropriate \$3,000 with which to build the Memorial Bridge. Construction was begun in the fall of 1888 and completed in time for the three-day celebration in August of the following year. Built of large, rough blocks of Leete's Island granite, and dominated by a forty foot turret tower topped with red Spanish tile, the bridge includes a commemorative stone for each individual founder. Each memorial block is engraved with the name of a settler, the name of his wife, and the date of his death. The cost of the inscriptions was paid by descendants of the founders, many of whom were living in distant parts of the world. On the Prudden boulder at the southwest end of the bridge is engraved the text of the first sermon he preached in the New Haven Colony. At the southeast end of the bridge is a boulder in memory of Captain Thomas Tibbals "in consideration of his helpfulness at the first com-

## HISTORY OF MILFORD

ing to Milford to show the first comers the place." On the keystone of the bridge is carved an idealized Indian head, and on one block is the old Indian name "Wepowage," on another in raised polished letters, "Wepowaug River." At the east end, a stone seat is inscribed:

In Memoriam

Jonathan Law, Governor of the Colony of Connecticut,  
from 1742 to 1750  
this stone once his doorstep.

On heavy blocks which cap the buttress of the tower are carved: "Law," "Order," "Morality," "Liberty," "Charity." On the keystone of the tower doorway is carved an idealized head of the Indian chief Ansantawae, and the mark—a bow and arrow—with which he signed the deed of the Milford land purchase. The tower door hangs on arrow-pointed hinges, and the knocker is bow-shaped. A seat at the end of the buttress is made of a millstone reputed to be the first used by William Fowler in his mill on this site in 1640. The stone was donated by William Fowler of the eighth generation.

Day-long services, with a recess at noon, were held in the First Church on Sunday, August 25, 1889, at which historical addresses were delivered, reviewing the important events in the development of the town. On Monday, August 26, a social reunion was held, followed by a program in which resident pastors, visiting ministers, and members of the Church took part.

Residents continued the celebration with a program of festivities on August 28, beginning at sunrise with the firing of a forty-two-gun salute and the ringing of bells and blowing of whistles. A parade from ten o'clock until noon was followed in the afternoon by a program of sports on the Town Hall Green. At three o'clock exercises were held in the First Church with the Governor of Connecticut as guest speaker.





MEMORIAL BRIDGE IN 1889



MILFORD GREEN



ST. MARY'S CHURCH



LAURALTON HALL

## THE BEGINNINGS OF MODERN MILFORD

A feature of the evening entertainment was the "Grand Illumination of the Broad Street Park," as the Green was designated on the printed program of the festivities, a band concert and a fireworks display.

The construction of the electric street railway in 1898 through the region then known as Great Meadows and Meadows' End started a boom in shore property, and the summer resort business became one of the town's most important enterprises. Prior to this the swampy marshland had been considered of little value; but after the railway made it accessible, its proximity to Long Island Sound turned it into profitable land for real estate promoters. One small section of a thirty-eight acre farm sold for \$2,800 in 1898, although the entire farm had been acquired in 1897 through foreclosure of a mortgage for only \$4,000. Building, maintaining and servicing beach properties along Fort Trumbull, Silver, Myrtle, Laurel, Wildermere, and Cedar Beaches, and supplying their summer residents with food and general merchandise, grew to be a major source of income for Milford business men and farmers. The tremendous increase in property values in the beach areas contributed greatly to the increase in the town's grand list from \$1,925,740.66 in 1900 to \$6,453,859.23 in 1910. Appropriations for town expenditures amounted to \$81,807.37 in 1910 as against \$22,027.60 for 1900. Taxes from new real estate developments swelled the town funds appreciably, enabling Milford to finance its expanding government functions.

A number of important industries continued during the last twenty-five years of the nineteenth century. The firm of Baldwin and Lamkin which in 1875 had moved to larger quarters on Broad Street and there installed modern machinery and a sixty horsepower engine, employed about two hundred workers and was so successful that it again enlarged its quarters in 1885. The company eventually met with



## HISTORY OF MILFORD

financial difficulties, however, and by 1903 ceased to do business. Another shoe factory, owned by Walp & Company, was started in Milford in the plant on West Main Street which Payne and Todd had operated for a few years as a paper-box factory. In 1890 the business was removed to Lynn, Massachusetts, a center of the New England shoe industry.

Straw hats were made in Milford until after the World War. The Mitchell Manufacturing Company, another straw industry, incorporated May 28, 1888, produced floor matting with the Doherty loom designed in Milford. The owners believed that the machine-made product of the Mitchell Company could compete successfully with the cheap hand-made products of China and Japan, the chief source of the straw matting supply. Because of the narrowing of the market for its product after the turn of the century, and the keen competition from cheaper Chinese and Japanese matting, the company discontinued operation in Milford.

The famous Fowler Mill property passed out of the hands of the Fowler family in April, 1901. The mill was demolished two hundred and sixty-one years after William Fowler built his first gristmill on the spot in 1640.

*The Milford Citizen*, a weekly newspaper, was first published in 1894. For forty-five years its publication has continued under a succession of owners. In 1915 the newspaper was purchased by Fred W. Lyon, formerly of Greenwich, who continued to publish it until his death in 1936. His sons, Roger S. and Augustus F. Lyon, are now the proprietors of the paper, which is issued every Thursday.

The management of the Washington Bridge was taken over by Fairfield and New Haven counties in 1889. In 1872, rather than comply with an order to rebuild the bridge issued by the State Legislature in 1870, the bridge company turned the bridge over to a commission composed of

## THE BEGINNINGS OF MODERN MILFORD

representatives of the three towns most interested, Bridgeport, Stratford, and Milford, and this commission rebuilt the bridge at a cost of \$19,000. By 1895 increased traffic necessitated a stronger and more modern structure. An iron bridge with a center draw replaced the old wooden trestle, tolls being abolished.

The trolley company at first was refused permission to lay tracks on the new bridge because of the narrow roadway, but in 1897 the prolonged dispute was settled and the rails were laid and completed to Milford the following year. A petition of the Milford Street Railway for a right of way across the town meadows was granted in 1897, and to aid in the building of the railway, the town voted in 1898 to build a new "iron or steel" bridge over the Wepawaug at the Jefferson Bridge site on River Street. The first trolley to reach Milford from Bridgeport was received by a brass band and a general celebration. The same year, 1898, the tracks were extended to Woodmont, where connections were made with the West Shore Railway. Milford then had trolley service to both New Haven and Bridgeport. The company provided hourly service; the running time was fifty minutes to Bridgeport and seventy minutes to New Haven.

The New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad Company progressively improved its service and equipment. In 1881 a new station was erected at Milford. The "four tracking" of the railroad from New Haven to New Rochelle, started in 1892, was completed through Milford in 1896. In the company's annual report of 1892 the following notation appears: "If electricity as motive power becomes commercially practicable the two interior tracks of the four . . . will prove especially adapted for its use." The electrification of the railroad between New Haven and New York was later undertaken and completed on January 22, 1914, at a cost of \$20,000,000.



## HISTORY OF MILFORD

The first rural mail routes were established on June 1, 1898. A steady increase in yearly postal receipts advanced Milford to the rating of a second-class post office in 1906, and to a first-class office in 1926. Regular city delivery service was inaugurated on February 1, 1909.

In 1874 the Town Hall and the Baptist Church were made into one building by the erection of a central connecting section. The colonial type building was in the shape of an H with an auditorium on the east side. The central part and the west side were two stories high and housed the town offices, as well as the graded and high schools. The jail and lodgings for transients were in the basement. The row of fluted pillars across the front was approached by steps running the entire width of the building. The central part was topped by a cupola, containing the school bell.

Fire destroyed this remodeled Town Hall in the early morning hours of February 19, 1915. Five vagrants who were lodged for the night in the basement were awakened by the distressed mewing of a cat. They battered their way through the basement ceiling with a pipe wrenched from the wall, made their escape from the burning building, and sounded the fire alarm. With help from neighboring towns and cities, the local fire department fought desperately, but a high wind defeated all attempts to check the blaze. The loss was estimated at \$50,000. Fortunately the town records, as well as the valuable silver communion service of the First Church, which were stored in a fire-proof vault, escaped destruction.

As the town increased in population and its governmental problems became more complex, the old method of budget-making and appropriation of funds directly through town meetings proved inadequate. To bring about more efficient administration of fiscal affairs, the establishment of a Board of Finance was proposed in 1910. Milford's representatives

## THE BEGINNINGS OF MODERN MILFORD

in the next General Assembly introduced a bill which was enacted into law on April 4, 1911, creating a department of finance. The act became effective July 1, 1911; it was amended in 1921 and again in 1929. The Department of Finance was created (1) to conduct hearings with respect to the needs of each department of town government; (2) to make estimates of the moneys adequate to finance each department; (3) to submit its recommended appropriations to town meetings for approval; (4) to estimate the rate of taxation needed to meet the appropriations recommended.

A recommendation of the newly-created Board of Finance that \$500 be appropriated for sheriffs' and constables' fees called forth heated argument in 1911, and the appropriation was tabled. By 1913 town sentiment in favor of a paid police force had developed sufficiently to decree

. . . that the Selectmen are hereby authorized to appoint such number of Deputy Sheriffs, Constables, or other persons, as they may deem proper, to act as patrolmen under section 1825 of the General Statutes of Connecticut. On condition that all officers' fees in criminal cases in the Town Court, where arrests are made within the Town of Milford, shall be paid into the Town Treasurer.

A year's trial of special police proved unsatisfactory, since certain residents demanded more adequate protection. A special committee was therefore appointed in 1914 to investigate the feasibility of maintaining an organized police department, and made the following report on January 8, 1915:

. . . that a Board of Police Commissioners be provided for and regular patrolman appointed, and that said Board of Police Commissioners be given authority to regulate and license auctions, peddling, sports, exhibitions and public amusements . . . .

## HISTORY OF MILFORD

Accordingly, the State Legislature in 1915 created the Board of Police Commissioners and authorized a police force in Milford. The budget prepared by the Board of Finance for 1915-1916 appropriated \$5,700 for the department with an additional \$580 for equipment. Quarters were temporarily set up in the parish house of St. Peter's Church. Three Police Commissioners appointed Chief James M. Maher and five police officers. In the first year sixty-three cases were brought to trial.

Justices of the Peace had served the community adequately as judges in minor cases, with Grand Jurors serving as prosecutors. This handling of minor cases was changed, however, when a town court was established in Milford by an act of the State Legislature on June 29, 1901. The first Judge, appointed by the General Assembly, was the Honorable Richard R. Hepburn, also Town Clerk and Judge of Probate. One of his first official acts was the appointment of Omar W. Platt, Esq., a former Grand Juror, to the post of Prosecutor. Platt is still the Prosecutor of the Town Court, as well as Judge of Probate, and Chairman of the Board of Education. Roger S. Baldwin, a former Justice of the Peace, was the first Deputy Judge. The first case, on July 5, 1901, was for the "theft of a keg of beer, valued at \$2.50"—evidently a Fourth of July prank, because the Judge discharged the accused after a short continuance. The second case, also heard on July 5, was that of two young men charged with "riding a bicycle on the sidewalk." Both pleading guilty to the charge, Judge Hepburn suspended judgment.

Violations of the "Sunday Liquor Laws" headed the list of cases coming before the Town Court until 1906, when violations of the motor vehicle laws became frequent. On October 8, 1906, ten motorists were charged with "Violations of the Speed Laws" in a drive to check speeding within

## THE BEGINNINGS OF MODERN MILFORD

the town limits. The speed limit at that time was fifteen miles per hour.

Court sessions were held in the old Town Hall until it was destroyed by fire in 1915. Then court was held temporarily in St. Peter's parish house, while the present Town Hall was being erected. Robert C. Stoddard, Esq., is now Judge of the Town Court.

For almost sixty years the Arctic Engine Company served as the town's only fire-fighting organization. On May 9, 1882, when the volunteer fire company had been called to a fire in Buck's Drug Store, the old engine was out of order, and the fire was fought by a bucket brigade. This incident led to an ultimatum to the selectmen that unless the town supplied a new fire engine the company would disband. A new machine was procured on May 21, 1883. Horses were first used to haul the engine in 1892, and later bicycles helped to get the volunteers more quickly to the scene of a fire. For several years the engine company had been asking for an electric fire-alarm system. A fair held in April, 1898, netting the company \$700, work on installing the electric fire alarm was begun at once. The money on hand, however, being insufficient, the town appropriated an additional \$500. A disastrous fire in Woodmont in 1896, another in Meadow's End in 1905, and still another at Cedar Beach in 1907, demonstrated the need of local fire-fighting organizations in the beach areas. Consequently volunteer fire companies were organized in all the outlying sections. Usually a group of neighbors organized themselves into a bucket brigade and applied to the State for a charter of incorporation. The Woodmont Fire Company was organized in 1897, the Walnut Beach Company in 1905, the Fort Trumbull Beach Company in 1909, the Devon Volunteer Fire Department in 1910, and the Myrtle Beach Fire Com-

## HISTORY OF MILFORD

pany in 1912. The headquarters of each of the volunteer units became miniature community centers. The rivalry among the companies added interest and color to routine fire fighting.

In 1915 Milford built a new central firehouse on Factory Lane south of Broad Street. In the same year two full-time paid firemen were appointed from the ranks of the Arctic Company, one of whom was Lewis F. Stowe, now Milford's Fire Chief. An act of the State Legislature in 1917, created the present Board of Fire Commissioners with supervision over all the fire companies in town.

The Woodmont Association, originally a community improvement organization started in 1901, was incorporated by a charter from the State Legislature on June 18, 1903. At this time Woodmont became a borough within the town of Milford. Duly elected officers were empowered by the charter to levy taxes, control health and sanitation, build roads, sidewalks, and drains, appoint special police and do anything to improve the borough of Woodmont which did not specifically encroach upon the powers exercised by the town government. A share of the town taxes with which to carry on public works was paid to the association.

Another development was of importance in changing the character of Milford. On November 1, 1913, the name of Naugatuck Junction, a railroad station in the western part of town, was changed to Devon, by which name the locality is now known. About 1914 Devon building and real estate developed rapidly to provide housing for workers employed in the Bridgeport munitions and allied industries, and the area became a community in itself.

Taking advantage of an act of the State Legislature passed in 1863, the town consolidated its school districts into one system, and on December 30, 1874, created a Board of Education of twelve members, one from each of the former



## THE BEGINNINGS OF MODERN MILFORD

school districts. Each year, four members are installed for a three-year term, so that the Board is never composed entirely of newly-elected members. A six-room graded school was set up in the Town Hall building to provide for the children who had been attending the districts near the center of Milford. Schools were maintained for outlying districts as formerly. Supervision of all schools passed from the school districts to the central Board of Education or Town School Committee. The practice of levying a special tax to raise school funds was discontinued in 1878, and thereafter an annual appropriation from regular town funds was made. On November 15, 1876, A. M. Drummond became the first principal of Milford High School. In 1883 Herbert I. Mathewson was made principal of the High School. He later became Superintendent of Schools and served faithfully in this post until his death in 1927.

The first of Milford's modern school buildings was erected in 1907 at Devon. The rapid development of that section of town had made this new two-room school imperative. By 1913 it was necessary to build a four-room addition. In 1908 a twenty-one room school building was erected on West River Street opposite the Town Hall for the central graded school and the high school, both of which had been housed in the Town Hall building. Complaints were made at the time that the new school building was much too large for the needs of the town, but soon every desk was occupied. A four-room school at Walnut Beach was erected in 1916; nine rooms and a kindergarten were added in 1923.

Lauralton Hall, also known as The Academy of Our Lady of Mercy, a private boarding and day school for girls, with elementary and high school departments, was established in 1905 by the Sisters of Mercy of the Roman Catholic Church. The school has a twenty-three acre campus of

## HISTORY OF MILFORD

rolling lawns, bordered by beautiful shade trees and shrubs, the estate formerly of Charles H. Pond and later of Henry Augustus Taylor. The buildings are a quarter of a mile from the High Street entrance to the grounds. In 1938 the school had an enrollment of one hundred and thirty-five students. It is affiliated with the Catholic University of America and is approved as a secondary school by the Connecticut Education Commission.

In 1894 Henry Augustus Taylor offered to build a memorial library if the town would furnish the land and agree to appropriate a fund for maintenance each year. Milford was quick to grasp the opportunity and purchased a plot of land at the corner of Broad and River streets for \$3,400, and agreed to set aside a thousand dollars each year to pay the expenses of operation. The Taylor Library was completed at a cost of \$25,000 and dedicated on February 2, 1895. There are two branches, one at Devon and a children's department on River Street, with approximately twenty thousand volumes available.

The Woodmont Union Chapel, non-denominational, was built in 1886 to provide a house of worship for people of all faiths. Similar union chapels were built at Walnut Beach in 1895 and at Devon in 1908. The small chapel built in Devon served the congregation until an increase in population required the building of a larger church in 1917.

The present St. Mary's Church building was erected in 1881, and a new rectory was acquired in 1899. For a time St. Mary's became the parent church for missions in Stratford and West Haven, but in 1892 the West Haven mission became independent and in 1906 the Stratford mission separated from Milford. In 1906 St. Agnes Chapel, a summer chapel at Woodmont, was built; in 1910 St. Gabriel's, for the west-end beaches.



TAYLOR LIBRARY



OLD TOWN HALL (1915)





HIGH SCHOOL



D. A. R. CHAPTER HOUSE

## THE BEGINNINGS OF MODERN MILFORD

The cornerstone of the Mary Taylor Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church was laid on October 3, 1892. The church, completed and dedicated June 25, 1893, was the gift of John Howard, Margharita, Mary Elizabeth, and Henry Augustus Taylor, Jr., as a memorial to their mother, Mary Meyer Taylor.

The Baptist Colored Church was organized in Milford in 1893. Previously the colored people of Milford had been without their own place of worship. In 1893 a group of men who had been members of the Emanuel Baptist Church of New Haven organized the First Baptist Church of Milford. At first, services were held in the old Methodist Church on River Street. The congregation had no paid minister, and a deacon or visiting clergyman conducted the services. The church moved in 1896 to a redecorated shop just above King's Bridge (Maple Street), which served as its meeting-house until 1900, when the present church on North Street was bought.

The Freeloze Baldwin Stow chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution was formed in 1896, with Mrs. Mary Hepburn Smith as the first regent. The Chapter House on Broad Street was erected in 1907 on land given by the regent, the chapter raising the money for the building.

About a mile east of Washington Bridge, on the north side of Bridgeport Avenue, resting on a ledge somewhat above and plainly visible from the highway, stands "Liberty Rock," a boulder about ten feet in diameter. This boulder was formerly known as "Hog Rock," the following stanza explaining the origin of the name:

"Once four young men upon ye rock  
Sate down at chuffle board one daye;  
When ye Deuill appeared in shape of a hogg,  
Ande frighten'd ym so they scampered awaye,  
Ande left Olde Nick to finish ye play."



## HISTORY OF MILFORD

On one side of the rock is cut in capitals "LIBERTY, 1776," done by Peter Pierett, Jr., at the time of the Revolution. The rock is said to have been a signal station during Revolutionary days.

On September 6, 1897, the Freelove Baldwin Stow Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, following appropriate ceremonies, raised an American flag on a pole erected on the rock. A flag has since been maintained at the rock, which from that time has been known as "Liberty Rock."

The Schermerhorn House was built in 1904 at Point Beach by the New York Protestant Episcopal City Mission Society, with funds made available by a legacy received from Sarah Schermerhorn. The institution was established to provide fresh-air treatment and other necessary care to convalescent mothers from the slums of New York City. The most recent report shows that 499 "fresh-air" children were accommodated and 1,678 convalescents were treated during the course of one season.

Telephones were first installed in Milford in 1881, with twenty-two listed. Milford was a part of the New Haven exchange until 1896 when a switchboard was installed in a drug store near the Milford Green. About a year later the switchboard was located in Frank Brown's bicycle shop, Brown acting as the operator. The number of subscribers steadily increased until by 1912 there were 800 telephones in Milford. The present two-story, brick telephone building on High Street was erected in that year, and the subscribers were given the benefit of "common battery" service, with current supplied from the telephone office instead of from batteries for each telephone. Subscribers no longer needed to turn a crank to signal the operator. In 1938 there were 3,100 telephones in Milford. George W. Coy of Milford

## THE BEGINNINGS OF MODERN MILFORD

was the inventor of the switchboard used by the New Haven exchange, the first commercial telephone system in the world.

The developer of the first street railway system and the originator of the electric elevator was also a Milford man, Frank Julian Sprague, born July 25, 1857. The electrical equipment designed by him became standard for elevated railways and subways throughout the United States. Sprague received many awards in recognition of his distinguished achievements in the field of electrical science. He died in New York City in 1934 at the age of seventy-seven years.

Until 1898 Milford had no community water supply. In October of that year, Moses Joy and David J. Greene organized the Milford Water Company under a charter granted in 1895 to George M. Gunn and others, and built a reservoir, stand-pipe, and pumping station on Beaver Brook, near the point where the brook crosses Bridgeport Avenue. This was the location of a fulling mill, built in 1689, later known as Prince's Mill. In 1907 the New Haven Water Company acquired a controlling interest in the Milford Water Company. For the past three years the Milford reservoir has been kept in condition for emergency use only, all of the water for Milford consumption coming from the supply of the New Haven Water Company.

Illuminating gas was piped to Woodmont from New Haven in 1901, but was not available for Milford center until 1909, when a gas storage tank was erected on New Haven Avenue. Gas street lamps were installed that same year and were used in some sections as late as 1919.

The Village Improvement Association, formed in 1908 and incorporated in 1909 for the betterment and beautification of the town, was the pioneer in many movements for civic improvement, such as tree spraying, street cleaning, better lighting and parks. It was instrumental in 1909 in getting the United States Government to present to the town the

## HISTORY OF MILFORD

Rodman Gun, which mounted on a concrete base adorns the Green in front of the Soldiers Monument. The purchase of Gulf Beach in 1912 was another of its accomplishments. At about the time of the World War the Association ceased to function.

Wilcox Park, a wooded area of about twenty acres, on the east bank of the harbor, was added to the park system on August 28, 1909, by deed from Clark Wilcox. This spot was affectionately known to many generations of youngsters as Harbor Woods. For many years it was a favorite spot for picnics and outings. Wilcox Park is part of the original grant to William Fowler, the first miller, and had been owned by the Fowler family until purchased by Mr. Wilcox in 1908. A pleasing entrance was constructed, comprising two stone posts, each surmounted with a wrought iron lamp. Roads were laid out winding among the trees, the underbrush cleared away and shrubbery planted. The Village Improvement Association undertook the task of keeping the grounds clean and the trees and bushes trimmed. The Milford Garden Club now maintains a bird sanctuary there, placing food in feeding stations throughout the winter. The club has also set up many bird houses in the park.

Stimulated by the activities of the Village Improvement Association, George Hare Ford presented to the town a Memorial Fountain erected on the Green and unveiled on August 27, 1910. Dedicated to Thomas Ford, one of the founders of the town, the fountain is constructed of fieldstone from the farm that has been occupied by the Ford family since the early settlement. A lantern hung above the fountain was modeled from the Paul Revere lantern.

Milford's first commercial bank, the Milford Trust Company, was organized and incorporated in 1912, and a building was erected on River Street next to the Library.

On August 22, 1914, Milford celebrated its 275th an-

## THE BEGINNINGS OF MODERN MILFORD

niversary. Churches, public buildings, private residences, and places of business were gaily decorated with flags and bunting. The day was declared a local holiday, and a festive air pervaded the whole town. It was estimated that about 20,000 persons, residents and visitors, attended.

The program began at sunrise with a cannon salute followed by ringing of church bells, fire bells, and the tooting of factory whistles. At nine o'clock athletic events began on the Green. The ceremonial laying of the cornerstone for the Memorial Mill took place at eleven o'clock under the auspices of the George Van Horn Post, G.A.R.

After a light luncheon served in the Town Hall and on the lawns of some of the residences, came a parade followed by speeches by a number of prominent men. Then came hose-laying contests between the fire companies. In the evening an historic pageant was presented on a large stage especially built for the occasion on the brilliantly illuminated Green. The pageant, written and produced by Miss Julia Rogers Beach, presented scenes from the history of Milford, beginning with the first purchase of land from the Indians.

The *Bridgeport Sunday Post* of August 23, 1914, said of the affair:

Demonstrating that when Milford attempts anything it succeeds admirably, the entire day's events running smoothly and without interruption, exhibited beyond a doubt that every member of each committee had done his share exceptionally well.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE LAST QUARTER CENTURY

1916-1939

Milford in 1916 was a sequestered New England community of colonial dwellings around a shady, four-acre green, with the Wepawaug winding through the village, dipping beneath the Memorial Bridge and spilling into the shallow harbor. Modest shops served a thrifty people who sought good government by the election of a town ticket of conservative citizens. The busy Boston Post Road ran through the village, bringing heavy week-end traffic during the summer months when vacationists sought the watering places alongshore. Trolley cars, horse-drawn vehicles, and cyclists, together with the noisy motor cars of the period, added to the bustle along Milford's streets.

Early in 1916, when Pancho Villa raided Columbus, New Mexico, and the United States Regular Army pushed far below the Rio Grande, Connecticut militia promptly mobilized. With the exception of the New Haven Grays, State troops were mustered into the Federal Service and hurriedly transported to Nogales, Arizona, for patrol duty. Twenty Milford men went with this contingent, and served on the Mexican Border from early in July until November, 1916.

Late in the autumn, troop trains rolled eastward on the way to New Haven, New London, and other New England points. On the sides of dusty "Tourist" coaches, banners proclaimed that "The Boys Are Home, Safe and Sound!" . . . "Thank God for Wilson!" . . . and "He Kept Us



## THE LAST QUARTER CENTURY

Out Of War!" Mexican Border veterans, sun-tanned, lean, and fit, waved to the girls on the depot platforms and shouted at bystanders. Milford was soon to become familiar with men in uniform, as these same troops were called for further service on February 20, 1917, to guard railway bridges, water works, and munition plants.

When European powers obtained American credit and placed their largest orders for war materials in the United States, the town of Milford participated in the industrial activity which swept across New England. Bridgeport became "the Ruhr of America;" New Haven likewise enjoyed rapid expansion. Neither of the neighboring cities had ample housing, and part of the overflow sought accommodations in Milford where rents were reasonable and school facilities better than average.

On February 12, 1917, the Connecticut Military Emergency Board caused a census to be taken of all able-bodied men between the ages of eighteen and forty-five. After the formal declaration of war against Germany and the Central Powers on the 6th of April, many of the young men scanned recruiting posters, sought the sergeant-in-charge, and signed on "for the duration;" others, imbued with the seafaring heritage of their ancestors, enlisted in the navy. Congress passed the Selective Service Act on May 31st, and men who had not already enlisted "received their numbers" at the St. Peter's Parish House. More than seven hundred Milford men eventually saw service with the United States Army, Navy, and Marine Corps.

The sinking of a West Haven built schooner, the *Lyman M. Law*, by a German U-boat in the Mediterranean, was headlined in newspapers on the morning of February 15, 1917. That night, Milford residents

Voted: That the citizens of the Town of Milford in town meeting assembled hereby pledge our support to

## HISTORY OF MILFORD

President Wilson in his administration to vindicate the honor of our flag. Milford's record in past crises is a guarantee of its stand at the present one.

That a telegram be sent to our President, also the Senators and Representatives, of our action at this meeting.

That the Town Agent be instructed to communicate with the Superintendent of Schools, Mr. Herbert I. Mathewson, on the question of assembling the children on the Green on Saturday morning and there instructing them relative to the patriotic question of the day and the raising of the flag.

The Milford Red Cross Chapter had been formally organized on February 2nd, and Milford women were already learning to roll bandages. Rumors of impending participation in the European War had long been a topic of earnest conversation. Real estate experienced a lively boom, rents were scarce, building lots sold at inflated prices, and the community of Devon (formerly Naugatuck Junction) expanded rapidly with an influx of new residents employed in Bridgeport factories. Agents from Winchester, Marlin, and Avis Arms combed the village for "barrel straighteners," toolmakers, jig and fixture men, and common labor. News that the Bridgeport cartridge shops were hiring female help prompted many Milford women to don aprons, pack lunches, and join the ranks of the gainfully employed. Wages were high but so were retail prices; supplies of basic commodities dwindled as the world took young men from factory and field and yet required larger quantities of goods.

Carpenters had more orders for dwelling houses than they could fill, as pasturelots became building lots and workers from Bridgeport and New Haven sought "a little place in the country" or by the sea. To prevent "jerry built" structures, Milford, on October 3, 1917, appointed its first



MILFORD SAVINGS BANK BUILDING



MILFORD TRUST COMPANY BUILDING





STREET SCENE AT DEVON



STREET SCENE AT BEACH

## THE LAST QUARTER CENTURY

building inspector, Clarence V. Sewell, who assisted in the preparation of Milford's Building Code.

The Stanford Steel Products Company opened a factory in Milford on February 14, 1916. The R. N. Bassett Company of Ansonia and Derby, manufacturers of metal goods, sent a representative to Milford to select a branch factory site and to determine whether fifty girls could be engaged. As a local news correspondent wrote: "It will be a great boon to Milford if the people can secure work which many of them lost by the closing of the Milford Straw Hat Factory." Only about half the required number of hands applied for work, because wages in Bridgeport cartridge shops were too attractive. This company came to Milford in 1917 and operated here for about a year.

The Argonaut Salvage Company, one of the several Simon Lake ventures, was organized for marine salvage, submarine, and engineering missions, and many Milford residents were employed at the Lake Torpedo Boat Company of Bridgeport. Simon Lake, a naval architect and mechanical engineer, and one of the best-known designers of submarines in the world, made his home in Milford. Lake, who is credited with eighty United States patents, was the designer and builder of the first even-keel submarine (1894); made the first trial run with a submarine in the open sea (the *Argonaut*, 1897); first used an internal combustion engine in underseas craft (1897); and served both the United States and foreign governments in perfecting and developing equipment that made submarine navigation possible. Shipping the *Protector* to Russia during the Russo-Japanese War, furnishing the designs used by the German Krupp works in the fabrication of U-boats, and equipping the *Nautilus* for Sir Hubert Wilkins' voyage beneath the ice fields of the Arctic, are but a few of Simon Lake's notable accomplishments.



## HISTORY OF MILFORD

Throughout the war period, substantial payrolls continued to come to Milford. The Milford Tool & Engineering Company opened a plant for the production of tools, gauges, jigs and fixtures; the Atlantic Manufacturing Company, noted for fine screw machine products, left Bridgeport for the lower tax area of Milford. These new arrivals prospered and endured through boom, readjustment, and recession.

At the branch of the Goodyear Metallic Rubber Shoe Company, established in 1917, girls adept at needlework found employment on war orders for gasmasks; the Simon Lake Experimental Laboratories were busy designing new periscopes, ballast tanks, and air locks for submarines. Everybody with a backyard machine shop had sub-contracts from the larger firms on work that often paid "cost plus ten percent."

Milford still made straw hats. The Crofut & Knapp Company purchased the former plant of the R. N. Bassett Company on March 27, 1920, but in 1925 transferred its straw hat business to Norwalk, and its cap and felt hat production to New York. Newspapers soon printed the welcome news, however, that the company would resume work in Milford on January 1, 1927, with between 75 and 125 employees. Representatives of the firm stated that unfavorable labor conditions in New York City forced them to return to Milford. On June 26, 1930, Crofut & Knapp sold the Milford plant to the Henry Stuart Co., Inc., metal products manufacturers.

Buildings, schools, and highways that had been satisfactory during the era of slower, more moderate growth proved entirely inadequate for the boom period of Milford's development.

On June 17, 1916, more than a thousand people gathered beneath lowering skies to participate in the cer-

## THE LAST QUARTER CENTURY

emony of the laying of the cornerstone for Milford's new Town Hall, the fifth municipal building on the same site. Prominent citizens made appropriate addresses, the Milford Band furnished music, and Selectman Manley J. Cheney wielded the silver trowel. Within the stone of Lee marble a copper box contains many documents, photographs, minutes of town meetings, reports, a telephone directory, various programs of Milford events, specifications, three arrowheads, and other trophies.

The one-story red brick structure with a trim clock tower, in modern colonial style, was completed late in the autumn of 1917, at a cost well within the appropriation of \$151,000. The auditorium in the center of the structure seats seven hundred. In the west corridor are the offices of the Town Clerk, Judge of Probate, Tax Collector and Assessors, with the record vaults; in the east corridor, the offices of the Selectmen, Welfare Department, Old Age Assistance Department, and the Recreation Commission. The beautifully landscaped grounds form an attractive setting for this modern civic center.

At a special town meeting of June 19, 1916, it was

Voted: That the voters of the Town of Milford, in town meeting assembled hereby adopt the official seal of the Town of Milford, an emblem in the shape of an octagon, in the center of which there shall be a shield bearing the letters 'MF,' being the seal adopted by the original settlers in 1639 . . . in the strap of the octagon the following words to appear: 'Sigillum oppidi Milford in republica Connecticutensi,' also the date '1639' and the bow and arrow of Ansan-tawae.

The octagonal shape is adopted in memory of Robert Treat, one of Milford's most eminent citizens, and for thirty-two years either Deputy Governor or Governor of Connecticut, whose seal was of that form.

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When news of the Armistice reached Milford, church bells pealed, prayers were offered, the community celebrated, and the munitions workers saw the last of swollen overtime pay envelopes. The period of readjustment was less painful than in many nearby communities, but the financial strain on the town was severe.

The men from overseas arrived home early in 1919 and were extended an enthusiastic and spontaneous welcome, though the rejoicing was clouded by the memory of the twenty-two local men who had died in service. Both Milford and the Woodmont Association erected honor rolls.

Ten years after the Armistice, the Milford World War Memorial, a bronze figure of an infantryman on a granite pedestal, was dedicated on the plaza in front of the Town Hall. The tablet on the front of the pedestal is engraved with the names of Milford men who died in service and bronze tablets on the sides bear a list of over seven hundred local residents who were in uniform. A bronze plaque on the back is inscribed, "Erected by the Town of Milford in grateful recognition of the services of its citizens who served in the World War."

Milford's grand list increased from \$10,750,000 in 1916 to \$13,468,842 in 1919. When all real property of the township was reassessed in 1920, an increase of more than \$5,000,000 in the grand list provided vitally needed tax revenue. The population increase to 10,193 was ample proof that Milford was developing into a selective residential area for a home-loving people.

The growth of the village was dramatically demonstrated in 1923 when the General Assembly passed "An Act Incorporating the City of Milford." In a referendum at a special town meeting held August 6, the act was rejected the majority of the voters believing that the town form

## THE LAST QUARTER CENTURY

of government was more economical and better suited to the needs of the community.

Requirements for increased educational facilities in the outlying districts were met by the erection of a new two-room school at Woodmont in 1918; successive additions to the Devon school from 1919 to 1927, which provided twelve new rooms, an auditorium, and a kindergarten; an addition of nine rooms and kindergarten to the Walnut Beach School; and the erection of a four-room school at Fort Trumbull Beach in 1923. Because of the increased number of pupils at the center of the town, the Central Grammar School, the town's largest educational institution, a modern building with twenty-four classrooms, a kindergarten, and large auditorium, was constructed in 1930. The West Main Street School, near the Boston Post Road, was built in 1932 to provide instruction from the kindergarten through the sixth grade.

In 1939 Milford's 3,197 pupils in graded, grammar and high schools occupy five graded schools, one grammar school and a high school. Transportation from outlying districts is by bus. The town employs 69 graded school and 26 high school teachers, and has an annual school budget of about a quarter of a million dollars. The budget provides education at a cost of \$72.20 per graded school pupil, and \$111.59 per high school pupil. Dr. Carl W. Madocks, the present Superintendent of Schools, has served in that capacity for the past twelve years.

Scholarships for higher education available to Milford students are provided by the George Miles Gunn Scholarship established in 1925 just before the death of Mr. Gunn, who had been Chairman of the Board of Education for forty years, to assist a Milford High School graduate toward an education at Yale University; two one hundred dollar Wey-

## HISTORY OF MILFORD

lister Scholarships; the Herbert I. Mathewson Scholarship Fund; and the Delphian Scholarship Fund.

Two private schools enroll both day and resident pupils. The Weylister Secretarial Junior College, a resident and day school for girls, now conducted by Mrs. Marion W. Skinner Beach, was founded in 1927 in a colonial building on West River Street where the Reverend Bezaleel Pinneo had conducted a private school from 1800 to 1845. On a five acre estate shaded by lindens, magnolias, and tulip trees and provided with sports fields, the five buildings of the institution have accommodations for pupils who come from all parts of the United States and from Hawaii and Porto Rico. By a special act of the General Assembly in 1939, the Weylister Secretarial Junior College is empowered to award the degree of Associate in Science. This institution prepares for the highest type of secretarial positions and has won recognition in national contests for the excellence of its work and its high standards.

The Milford School, a preparatory school for boys, was established by Samuel H. and Harris Rosenbaum in 1916, on the former William S. Pond estate on Gulf Street, the site of the Howe School for boys in the late nineteenth century. The Pond Mansion is used as the administration building, with the fourteen acre homelot as the campus. The addition of a detached twelve acre tract, two classroom buildings, two dormitories and a gymnasium, improved the facilities of the institution. The school offers a four year college preparatory course and limits classes to about six pupils each. The institution is on the list of the New England College Entrance Certificate Board.

Churches, too, felt the increased growth of the town. The First Church was renovated in 1918 through donations made by Clark M. Wilcox. The pulpit was moved to the north end of the building, facing the door, and the church





WEYLISTER JUNIOR SECRETARIAL COLLEGE



MILFORD SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION BUILDING



COURT AND OFFICE BUILDING



UNITED STATES POST OFFICE

## THE LAST QUARTER CENTURY

organ and choir loft were placed at the rear of the pulpit. The year previous the Reverend Frederick A. Sumner had resigned to become president of Talladega College in Alabama. The Reverend Leslie B. Briggs who succeeded him, asked for and received six months' leave of absence to serve as Chaplain with the Red Cross overseas.

As the outlying communities continued to develop, the Myrtle Beach Methodist Chapel needed larger quarters, and a portable structure was erected on Maplewood Avenue and dedicated December 18, 1921. Formerly a branch of the Mary Taylor Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church, the Chapel became an independent church in 1929 and adopted the name of Community Church of Myrtle Beach.

The Fort Trumbull Christian Union, a neighborhood organization which met in the members' homes, had so increased in numbers by 1920 that the Fort Trumbull Union Church was organized in December and a building obtained. Under the leadership of the present pastor, the Reverend William R. Vivrett, the church has prospered.

St. Peter's Church organized a boys' vested choir in 1923. During the following year an addition to the church for a choir room completed the cruciform design of the edifice. For the convenience of increasing numbers of members who lived in Devon, this church established the Mission of St. Andrew in that community. On March 26, 1927, Mrs. George Miles Gunn presented to the church a chime organ as a memorial to her late husband, a distinguished citizen and a lawyer of note, who served as president of the Milford Savings Bank and of the National Tradesmen's Bank of New Haven for many years.

Under the leadership of the rector, the Reverend George E. Knollmeyer, St. Peter's Church will celebrate the 175th anniversary of its founding with appropriate services on August 27, 1939.



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The Catholic Mission of St. Ann's, at Devon, became an independent parish, with the Reverend Edward Curran as pastor, on November 24, 1924. The mission is now associated with St. Gabriel's at Wildemere Beach, under the care of one priest. The transfer of Father Peter H. McClean, pastor of St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church, to Bridgeport in 1924 was a distinct loss to Milford. He had taken a keen interest in civic affairs and had served for many years as a member of the Board of Education. Father Dennis R. Moran is now pastor of St. Mary's Church.

An outstanding event of 1926 was the consolidation of the First and Plymouth Congregational churches. At a union service on March 14 the two congregations worshipped as one for the first time since 1741. The formal union of the two churches took place at the First Church on March 28, 1926, and the name adopted was "The Church of Christ, Congregational, Incorporated." The Reverend Charles F. Atkins, pastor of Plymouth Church, was called to the pulpit.

The Christian Science Society in Milford, formed early in 1913, established a meeting hall on Broad Street, and in 1931 purchased a house at 28 High Street. In 1932 the society became a branch church of the First Church of Christ Scientist, in Boston.

The Mary Taylor Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church is in a prosperous condition under the leadership of the present pastor, the Reverend Franklin McLain Bass. The churches of Milford enter 1939, the Year of the Tercentenary, with their affairs in excellent order and membership rolls at encouraging levels.

Writers and historians seeking information about the departed sons and daughters of this village frequently visit Milford Cemetery, a well-shaded fifteen acre reservation just north of the railroad tracks in the center of the community. Originally a part of Peter Prudden's garden,

## THE LAST QUARTER CENTURY

where the first white adult to die in the settlement was buried in 1645, the town burying ground was laid out on March 7, 1661, and was enlarged by the acquisition of further land in 1712 and later purchases. Graves were at first made in the order of deaths rather than by family plots.

Here is the final resting place of such distinguished personages as Governors Robert Treat, Jonathan Law, and Charles H. Pond. Ancestors of three signers of the Declaration of Independence (Abraham Clark, Robert Treat Paine, and Roger Sherman) rest beside Brigadier-General George W. Baird, U. S. A., who attained his rank from the grade of private soldier and won the coveted Congressional Medal of Honor in an 1877 action against the Nez-Perce warriors at Bear Paw Mountain, Montana. Milford's first citizens, leaders of church and State, have been buried here since the cemetery was first established.

Epitaphs of rugged colonial dignity are found on slate and sandstone headstones, and on the slabs supported by short columns sculptured on the Ionic or Doric order. In the old graveyard, 479 stones have been identified by Nathan G. Pond in a pamphlet entitled, *Inscriptions on Tombstones in Milford, Connecticut* (1889). The oldest stone now standing is on the grave of William Roberts and bears the date August 6, 1869. Near the center of the cemetery stands a beautiful receiving vault of granite, a gift of Anson Treat Downes as a memorial to his son. Elms and evergreens provide ample shade in the older section of the cemetery; three miles of drives offer easy access to the fifteen acres; and the natural beauty of the ground has been retained through efficient landscaping and maintenance. Since 1901 the care of this cemetery has been in charge of the Milford Cemetery Association. An additional plot of twenty acres on US 1 was recently purchased by the Association, and is now in use as King's Highway Cemetery.



## HISTORY OF MILFORD

Milford's 16,290 acres of varied topography present a complex highway problem, especially in the region of congested traffic leading to the beaches and on the Boston Post Road to the densely populated cities to the east and west. Construction of wider, straighter roads and new bridges on the trunk lines must be accomplished without interruption of the traffic flow. In 1918 Broad Street was widened and several new streets were opened. During the following year outlying districts and seaside communities, by that time thickly populated, made earnest requests for better highways, improved schools, and more efficient fire protection. The town also authorized the resurfacing of a highway from Devon Station to follow Naugatuck, Electric, and Walnut Beach Avenues to East Broadway, as well as several other new roads along the various beaches. A new highway was laid on New Haven Avenue to Memorial Bridge, and another from the end of the Woodmont cement road to the top of Eells Hill.

At nightfall on March 14, 1919, Milford streets, previously dimly lighted by flickering gas lamps, were suddenly illuminated by electric lights which gleamed along both sides of the Green, and stretched from Cedar Beach on the west almost to Woodmont on the east. Never before had the town been so brightly lighted, for March 14 marked the last night of the town's contract for gas street-lighting and the trial night for the newly installed electrical system.

Traffic on the Boston Post Road had long been handicapped by the narrow steel Washington Bridge over the Housatonic River. A survey at this point on a busy weekend tallied 42,000 motor cars passing in one direction during a six hour period. In 1918 a legislative act authorized a new \$1,500,000 bridge to be financed jointly by the State, Fairfield and New Haven Counties, and The Connecticut Company. Work was started in June, 1919, with plans

## THE LAST QUARTER CENTURY

specifying an 870-foot, five-span, reinforced concrete and steel structure about 38 feet above the river. A 125-foot draw allowed the passage of shipping; the 40-foot roadway between the two 8-foot sidewalks provided for anticipated traffic increases. The piers for this bridge have a bedrock footing 75 feet below the surface of the river; about 75,000 barrels of cement were poured to make the bridge a substantial, freshet-proof structure. On concrete obelisks along each side of the span, clusters of three-globe lights furnish illumination.

At eight o'clock in the morning on November 1, 1921, the busy traffic of the Boston Post Road began crossing the new Washington Bridge over the Housatonic. On Armistice Day, 1921, the span was formally opened and dedicated, just one hundred and thirty-two years from the day when Washington last crossed in 1789. State and town officials, and Milford and Stratford citizenry listened to speeches by visiting dignitaries.

An appropriation of \$10,000 was authorized on August 28, 1928, for the construction of a bridge over the Wepawaug at West Main Street on the site of the Meeting House Bridge. This reinforced concrete structure, replacing an unsightly iron bridge, greatly enhanced the beauty of the civic center.

When the trolleys were replaced by busses, the State Highway Commission proposed the building of a new concrete structure to replace the old Jefferson Bridge over the Wepawaug River. The town committee insisted on a stone bridge and after several conferences with the Highway Commission carried its point. Work was started in May, 1935, and the bridge completed in August of the same year.

The broad, modern trunk highway, US 1A, or the Boston Post Road, constructed by the State Highway Department in 1932, re-routed through traffic and relieved

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congested conditions in the center of Milford. US 1, the old Boston Post Road, still passes the Milford Green but is used chiefly by local traffic.

Another noteworthy highway improvement was the acquisition of the trolley right-of-way along East Broadway upon its abandonment by the traction company. In 1937, with an appropriation of \$195,000, work was started on the West Shore Boulevard along the waterfront from Surf Avenue at Fort Trumbull Beach to Naugatuck Avenue. Bulkheads were erected to protect the road, and the two-lane highway, divided by a safety island of greensward, was completed June 27, 1938.

National recognition of Milford's shell fisheries came in the summer of 1918, when the United States Bureau of Fisheries established an experimental laboratory at the harbor's edge to observe conditions of oyster and clam culture. In 1932 Dr. Victor L. Loosanoff, government biologist, was assigned to the Milford laboratory, and the State Shellfish Commission cooperated with him by donating the use of the boat *Shellfish*. Charles E. Wheeler, production manager of the Connecticut Oyster Farms Company, furnished the assistance of an experienced commercial oysterman and conservationist, and the laboratories of Yale University offered the use of their facilities to Dr. Loosanoff in his effort to recover this source of revenue.

During the year 1932 there was no oyster set in Milford waters; the last good set had been obtained in 1930. For several years local oyster grounds had failed to produce a set and experiments had been conducted annually by the Connecticut Oyster Farms Company, on grounds within the harbor leased from the town, to determine a method of more successful artificial propagation. The Oyster Pest Control, created by the Federal Government in 1935, for the elimination of starfish, was of great assistance to the industry. In

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addition, Dr. Loosanoff's experiments, using calcium oxide, 480 pounds to the acre, have proved 80 per cent effective, but he advises that "until experimentation is completed" calcium oxide be used only in seasons when "no larvae of commercial species of fish are found in the water."

Opportunity for more extensive research will be provided by the completion of the new laboratory for the Bureau of Fisheries. This two-story, fireproof brick structure in modern colonial style, will include offices, laboratories for chemical, physiological, and biological experimentation, a chemical stock room, an aquarium, and a library. Improved wharves and outdoor tank facilities will be provided.

Milford's oyster grounds are still capable of production after more than three centuries of use by white men and uncounted years of harvest by the Indians. The last of the red men came to Milford Point from faraway Lake Champlain in 1831, to camp at the site of the fire pits of their forefathers, to feast on shellfish, and to exchange tales of the chase and tribal wars. Today, about 2,000,000 bushels of oysters are removed from the local waters in a normally good year, transplanted to purer waters to remove the stains of industrial pollution, and then harvested for market. The largest local operator in this industry is the Connecticut Oyster Farms Company, owner of more than 25 percent of Milford's 8,000 acres of submarine shell-fisheries, employer of 64 oystermen, and operator of seven boats.

Milford's prehistoric memorial to the fertility of local oyster fields, an extensive shell heap covering twenty-four acres at Milford Point, is distinguished as the largest Indian kitchen midden in New England. Visitors interested in Indian lore presumed that the great piles of oyster shells had accumulated from the countless visits of inland Indians who annually came down the Housatonic River to "salt" and to feast on sea food. Not until 1921, when Claude C. Coffin

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of Wheeler's Farms, Milford, member of the Connecticut Archaeological Society, conducted explorations here, was it discovered that Milford Point once had been the site of one of the largest and most important Indian villages in New England. Coffin secured the cooperation of the Archeological Survey of New England which conducted explorations here in 1922.

Digging from the tidal flats to the crest of Ceremonial Ridge, the workers unearthed many rare specimens "characteristic of all the so-called cultural horizons postulated for New England, including the Pre-Algonquian Slate Culture and the Algonquian Culture, both in its pure stage and with the southern and Iroquoian admixtures." Excavating at the site, continued through 1923, uncovered more than fifteen hundred separate choice artifacts, slender bone needles, drills, awls, antler tips, harpoons, yellow jasper flakes, sinker stones, discoids, and fine pottery. Evidence of torture and human sacrifice were found in one pit which contained many detached toe and finger bones and many skeletons with crushed skulls. Almost every known type of artifact from crude bone arrow tips to metal trade goods was discovered, and the silent record of several hundred years' occupation of the site unfolded as the shovelers labored through the tortures of "Indian itch" (caused by the potash in the old fire holes) and carefully sifted the earth from blackened pits and wigwam sites.

The scattered graves at Eagle Hill yielded but few relics and the exploration failed to locate the cemetery used by the Indians. In 1939 excavations in Stratford for a new factory of the United Aircraft Corporation uncovered many bones that may have marked the location of the burial ground. Whether or not the graveyard is ever found and properly explored, the Indians of this region have left a lasting impression on the archaeology of New England. Their relics



## THE LAST QUARTER CENTURY

have been preserved in museums and private collections in Hartford, Andover, Massachusetts, and New York.

In 1935 twenty acres of Milford Point, at the mouth of the Housatonic River, including the sites of many of the excavations, were given to the State of Connecticut for a Wild Fowl Sanctuary by Mrs. Elizabeth H. Ford and Mrs. Mary Louise Warner.

Until 1917 all volunteer fire companies of Milford operated as independent units under individual chiefs. To consolidate the companies under one executive department, the Milford Board of Fire Commissioners was created by legislative act in 1917. The volunteer companies turned over their apparatus to the new Board and pledged themselves to abide by the rules established. Frank H. Stevens was appointed the first Fire Chief of Milford in the following year. A modern concrete fire station for the Devon Hose Company was officially opened on December 9, 1918, and on the same day the town purchased a truck with a chemical tank for the protection of Devon property. For more efficient service to the beach communities, the Myrtle Beach and Walnut Beach Fire Companies were consolidated in 1919 and established in a new firehouse on Naugatuck Avenue at Stowe Avenue. In February, 1920, the headquarters of the Fort Trumbull Beach Fire Company No. 2 were destroyed by fire. A temporary firehouse was used until the present concrete structure on Charles Street was completed in 1924.

The opening of the Central Fire Station, July 13, 1929, was the occasion of a housewarming by the Arctic Engine Company No. 1. The station is a two-story, red brick building with white trim; on the first floor is the equipment, office switchboard, signal room, machine shop, and an insulated "smoke room" for gas mask drill. In the rear, a 55-foot drill tower is used by the Training School. On the

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mezzanine floor are card rooms, lockers, and showers. The second floor has a spacious clubroom, locker room, dormitory with 12 beds, store room, five offices, and five single bedrooms for officers. In the basement are the battery room, hose dryers, two bowling alleys, kitchen, and a banquet hall with a capacity of one hundred persons. Paid firemen are now on duty in all Milford firehouses, although the personnel of the department is still largely volunteer. All members of the paid department are former members of volunteer companies.

The Visiting Nurse Association of Milford was formed in April, 1919, through the earnest efforts of the "Minute Women," a war-time organization composed of Milford, Woodmont, and Devon residents. Starting its public nursing work in that year with a part-time nurse, the activities of the association have gradually expanded during the twenty years of its existence until they now embrace many phases of public health service in addition to bedside nursing. The work of the association is supported in part by voluntary contributions and appropriations from town funds. At present a staff of three full-time nurses is employed. The association was incorporated in 1931 under the name of Milford Public Health Nursing Association, Inc.

The Milford Hospital Society, incorporated by an act of the General Assembly approved May 10, 1921, opened a modern well-equipped hospital on June 5, 1924, erected on a site donated by Charles W. Beardsley. Physicians on the Hospital Staff in 1939 are: Doctors Clinton J. Hyde, Harry W. Stetson, Albert E. Harrington, John R. Lee, Oliver B. Andrus, William J. H. Fischer, Carleton K. Heady. The institution has fifty beds, fifteen bassinets, and a nursing staff of nine. Miss Edith M. Oddie, R. N., serves as superintendent, and Omar W. Platt, Esq., is president of the society.

On March 17, 1928, the *Milford News*, an independent



MILFORD FIRE HEADQUARTERS



MILFORD HOSPITAL





RIVER STREET SCENE



CONNECTICUT OYSTER FARMS

## THE LAST QUARTER CENTURY

weekly, started publication under the management of J. A. and Gordon A. Goldsmith. The newspaper has grown in both circulation and local influence.

Fifty new families came to Devon in March, 1924, on the completion of a modern steam-driven electric generating plant for the Connecticut Light & Power Company. The plant produces primary current for distribution throughout southwestern Connecticut.

In March, 1928, building activity in Milford greatly increased. Many new homes were constructed at Pearl Hill, Point Beach, Rivercliffe, and Devon. Most of these dwellings were of frame construction and of the one family type, a large proportion being built for home owners or for customers who purchased them immediately on completion. Smaller construction projects and the building of one family houses gained impetus as Milford's population increased.

In 1930 Milford published a series of "Building Zone Regulations" as adopted by the Commission on Town Plan, in accordance with the General Statutes. This code, allowing for the industrial and commercial buildings already erected in the community and the chaotic growth of certain summer colonies, is designed to prevent future congestion and the erection of unsightly buildings, and to regulate the growth of the town.

A special legislative act in 1931 created a Board of Sewer Commissioners, following local agitation dating back to 1918 concerning the lack of a proper sewage disposal plant. About 100 private sewers served approximately 5,000 people. Under the direction of the new board a modern sewage disposal plant, built through the timely assistance of Federal grants, went into operation on April 13, 1938. The plant now serves 2,500 people, in the center of the town.

Improvements in the vicinity of the civic center continued. The movement for the erection of a Service Men's



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Memorial building in Milford, started at a special town meeting on April 13, 1920, finally achieved its objective in 1928. Meanwhile the Milford Post No. 34 of the American Legion had established headquarters in the Fowler Memorial Mill, built by the town in 1914 to commemorate the first mill erected by Milford planters. In 1928 the town received from the State Highway Department the sum of \$7,000 in return for permission to raze the mill and the adjacent old Fowler Homestead, in order to widen the highway north of the Memorial Bridge. This sum, with an additional \$23,000, appropriated by the town, financed the erection of the Fowler Memorial Building for the use of veterans' organizations.

The building of red brick and white trim, with a shingled gambrel roof in modern colonial style, on the site of the Fowler homestead, near the eastern end of Memorial Bridge, was opened on August 16, 1930. The first floor provides an assembly room, forty by twenty feet, two lounging rooms and an office; on the second floor are two small meeting rooms, janitors' rooms, bathrooms and showers. In the basement are a banquet hall, kitchen, and shooting gallery. The building was furnished through a generous gift of the Honorable William H. Woodruff; the American Legion has charge of maintenance.

The Milford Savings Bank opened its new, modern red brick structure on Broad Street in 1930. Dating from its incorporation in June, 1872, this financial institution has enjoyed the confidence and patronage of Milford residents. Harry M. Merwin now serves as president, Henry C. Peck as treasurer.

In 1926, when Milford's Post Office attained a first-class rating, agitation was started for a new building. By 1931 annual receipts mounted to \$65,810.90, and in June the United States Postal authorities authorized the construction of a brick and limestone building on a seventy foot River

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Street lot, diagonally across the way from the new Town Hall. The cost of the land and building totaled \$140,000; the building has 10,782 square feet of floor space, and was first occupied on May 1, 1932. Postmaster George S. Clark, a descendant of an early planter, served as acting postmaster from November 7, 1935, and became postmaster on January 23, 1936.

Milford's new Court and Office Building on West River Street was opened on March 27, 1937. This thoroughly modern community building, erected under the Public Works Administration program, provided offices for the Police Department, Town Treasurer, Health Officer, Engineering Department, Sewer Commission, Building Inspector, and Zoning and Planning Board, relieving the congestion in the Town Hall across the way. This building was but one of the several local improvements financed through Federal assistance during the last few years.

Following the financial panic and tightening of credit during the nationwide depression, the Unemployment Committee of Milford, with funds raised by private donations and with town money, cared for the unfortunates and indigents through 1932 and most of the following year. In November, 1933, the Civil Works Administration was instrumental in relieving the load, and the Civilian Conservation Corps also assisted by furnishing employment to qualified young men and World War veterans. When the Federal Emergency Relief Administration was organized in 1934, the local relief burden was lightened by various projects employing Milford residents, and the distribution of surplus foods and clothing to the needy partially relieved the drain on town funds. In September, 1935, when the Works Progress Administration assumed the duties of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, many of the village streets, drains, sewers, and town buildings were improved

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by local labor paid from Federal funds. The Welfare Department of Milford was created in 1934 with George F. Weed as supervisor.

Financed by the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, work started May 24, 1935, on a project of grading Prospect Park, removing mud and silt from the Wepawaug River, and building riprap walls on the river bank. This work, completed October 31, 1935, stood the severe test imposed by the flood waters that rushed down the little river during the excessive rainfall which preceded the hurricane of September 21, 1938.

Milford's grand list of \$30,457,722 in 1929, an increase of \$2,125,000 over the previous year, shows the amazing growth of a semi-agricultural town supported by local industries and a thriving residential development on the shore. When the 1930 census takers found that 12,660 individuals lived along the banks of the Wepawaug and in the environs of Milford, only a portion of the story of Milford's growth was recorded. Summer people, cottage dwellers who came to the shore for either the week-end or the season, more than doubled the population. With the coming of the depression, many cottagers occupied their seaside residences the entire year.

Beach colonies now form an almost continuous settlement along the Milford shore. East of the harbor are Gulf Beach, Welch's Point, Pond Point Beach, Point Beach, Morning-side, Farview Beach, Burwell's Beach and Woodmont. West of the harbor stretch Fort Trumbull Beach, Silver Beach, Myrtle Beach, Wildermere Beach, Laurel Beach, Cedar Beach, and Milford Point. Of these Welch's Point is a private residential area, Gulf Beach is for public use, and Milford Point is a State bird sanctuary, while the remainder are residential communities.

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Seventy-seven new single family houses, forty garages, and more than \$100,000 worth of residential alterations were listed by the building inspector as new construction for 1938. Building and plumbing permits issued in Milford during March, 1939, total \$65,000, all for residential dwellings and alterations.

Milford's social life embraces old-time organizations such as the Milford Club and the Milford Wheel Club, as well as many lodges with rosters retaining the names of many of the town founders. Two Milford social organizations, the Milford Wheel Club and the Grandfathers' Club, contribute much to the life of the community, attract national attention with their unusual names and activities, and furnish many lively news items for the local correspondents.

Interest in preserving the historic Eells-Stow House, stimulated in 1930 by the Freelove Baldwin Stow Chapter of the D.A.R., resulted in the organization of the Milford Historical Society, May 19, 1930. Contributions were solicited from members and from descendants of the early owners of the house, making possible the purchase of the building on November 8, 1930.

The building, now open to the public as a museum, stands on High Street (formerly called Wharf Street) where it was built by Captain Samuel Eells shortly after the town deeded to him the plot of land in 1669. Captain Eells came to Milford about the time of the arrival of the fleeing regicides, Goffe and Whalley, whom he is believed to have known intimately in England. He became prominent in town affairs and served in King Philip's War. The town records, copied at that time from the old worn book, are in his handwriting. Several generations later this house was occupied by Captain Stephen Stow and his wife, Freelove Baldwin, four of whose sons served in the Revolutionary War. Among distinguished descendants of the Eells and Stow families

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are Edward Eells, one of the founders of the Society of the Cincinnati, and John Pierpont Morgan.

The Milford Yacht Club, organized largely through the efforts of Dr. Willis S. Putney, who became the first Commodore in 1903, has a membership of 293 and a fleet of 66 boats, including ten "snipes," ranging from a 14-foot outboard craft to a 57-foot motor cruiser. Every week-end in season, club races are held for the smaller craft. In 1932 the Wepawaug Yacht Club, was formed by several young snipe racing enthusiasts; an old schooner was purchased and moored off Spencer's Wharf about halfway up the harbor to serve as a clubhouse. In 1934 the two yacht clubs were merged under the name of the older club. The combination grew financially and socially. Dr. DeWitt B. Nettleton is the present Commodore.

Milford Harbor has tides of about six and one-half feet, and is sheltered from all but southerly and southeasterly winds. Extensive harbor dredging is scheduled for 1939. The sand and mud from the harbor will be deposited on shore near the present Wilcox Park, and the new, deeper channel will attract many new boat owners to the enlarged anchorage basins. The town wharf is under reconstruction, the Milford Yacht Club's headquarters have been rebuilt and modernized, and a new float for use as a boat landing has been provided.

In 1923 the School Committee budgeted \$5,000 which was used for the purchase of an athletic field on Washington Street. On November 12, 1934, Milford established a Recreation Commission of five members empowered to employ a Recreation Director and assistants as needed. The following year this commission was increased to nine members. Supervision of playgrounds, the encouragement of adult sports, and the formation of leagues for competitive play, especially



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in softball, are among the varied accomplishments of this commission.

Milford's first little theater movement started in January, 1936, when the Board of Trustees of the Church of Christ, Congregational, authorized the alteration of the Plymouth Church building (now known as the Plymouth Auditorium) for use as a playhouse. The Connecticut Players, Inc., organized by Marcus Merwin of Milford, gave its first performance at the Plymouth Auditorium during the following summer, with a professional cast, and has continued to present a series of plays annually throughout each summer. Wepawaug Players, local amateurs, were organized July 13, 1936, to further community interest in dramatics and to raise a fund to establish a scholarship for training local high school pupils who demonstrate their ability. This group produces several plays each winter in the Plymouth Auditorium.

A Works Progress Administration Educational Program, organized in 1936, with headquarters in the basement of the Town Hall, has offered training in such a diversity of subjects that by 1939 its classes have an average monthly enrollment of 3,200 pupils and a staff of thirty-four instructors and officers. The program of activities is open, gratis, to adults and out-of-school youths. Two murals, completed in 1939 by the art department, represent "Goldilocks and the Three Bears," placed in the West Main Street School, and "The Purchase of Milford from the Indians," placed in the Devon School. The dramatics department successfully writes and directs plays, constructs the scenery and makes the costumes.

The Milford Post No. 34 American Legion Junior Drum Corps, formed in June, 1929, with a roster of forty members, made its first public appearance on Memorial Day, 1930. In competition with other junior corps, these young people

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have won thirty-two cups, including the coveted Treadwell Trophy for State Champions. The Corps won this honor in 1934, 1935, and 1937, has attended every State Legion Convention, and marched in the National Legion Convention parade at New York in 1936.

Milford is the home station of Battery E, 242nd Coast Artillery, the only unit of anti-aircraft artillery in the Connecticut National Guard. Captain Kenneth Fagan, Battery Commander, maintains a high efficiency rating in his organization of fifty-eight enlisted men. The battery has one three inch Type M-4 gun.

About 850 wage earners are employed in local mechanical establishments. Small manufacturing plants are the rule; locks, corset steels, candlesticks, hose supporters, rivets, and screw machine products roll from the production lines as once the bright new carriages were lowered down the ramps from the second floor paint-shops. One of the only two ear-muff manufactories in the United States, that of the A. J. Donahue Corporation, employs more than 200 in their Milford plant and annually produces about 50,000 pairs of ear warmers. The five-and-ten cent stores throughout the country sell these ear muffs, as well as the garters and hair curlers made by the same company.

Among the several substantial manufactories now operating in the village are those of the Waterbury Lock & Specialty Company, producing locks and metal specialties; the Rostand Manufacturing Company, noted for brass and bronze fabrications such as andirons and candlesticks; the Pruven Composition Products Corporation, plaster moulders; the Devon Metal Goods Company, manufacturers of hose supporters; the Watkins Manufacturing Company, a screw machine products firm; the Henry Stuart Company, Inc., producers of pyroxlin covered corset steels; the Peer-



TOWN HALL



FOWLER MEMORIAL



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less Tool Company, making special tools; and the Milford Rivet & Machine Company.

Milford is the home of two of the largest seed producing concerns in the United States. Visitors to the New York World's Fair will walk on smooth velvet turf grown from Milford seed of the F. H. Woodruff & Sons Company, Inc. Both the Woodruff Company and The Associated Seed Growers, Inc., maintain laboratories in Milford and have made great strides in the production of a hybrid sweet corn. This will prove very valuable to the canning industry as it will produce an evenly maturing crop and will give a larger yield per acre. The stock seed is grown in Milford and is then shipped to the west to be used in producing the main crop.

More than one-third of the total land area of Milford, 6,106 acres out of 16,290, is devoted to agriculture. The crops produced for local markets are green vegetables, small fruits, poultry products, and fluid milk; the individual farms are small with a relatively high proportion of tillable land. The farmers are 37 percent of old American stock, 37 percent of Polish origin, 17 percent Italian, 6 percent German, and one percent Jewish.

Through the years, Milford citizens have requested legislation creating various voting districts in the outlying sections. This movement started in 1915, but it was not until 1931 that final settlement of the political subdivision of the township was accomplished. This legislation designated the first voting district as the center of the village, the second as Devon, the third as the beaches, and the fourth, the Borough of Woodmont and adjoining territory.

Milford now has 15,126 people who are classified as all-year residents. Although only 4,121 are of full native parentage (1930 census), the 6,620 people of foreign or mixed parentage and the 3,549 foreign-born individuals seek their



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leadership from the old native stock. Sixteen family names in the community are identical with the names of the pioneers. Among the town officers are many men and women, serving faithfully and conscientiously, who can trace their lineage back to the pioneers of 1639. A descendant of William Fowler, who built the first town mill in 1640, serves as Town Clerk in 1939, and is the fourth of that family to hold the office.

The unity and social consciousness of Milford people is noteworthy as the community observes the 300th Anniversary of its founding. On February 12, under the leadership of Dr. Roy M. Houghton, pastor, the Church of Christ, Congregational, opened Milford's observance of the anniversary with a service commemorating the first purchase of lands from the Indians on February 12, 1639. Judge John L. Gilson of New Haven addressed the congregation of five hundred and extended the felicitations of the New Haven Colony Historical Society. At Welch's Point, where dusky warriors once sighted the first approach of the white man's sailing vessels, five hundred worshippers gathered at five-thirty o'clock in the morning of April 9, for the first community-wide Easter sunrise service sponsored by local churches.

Milford in 1939 has a conservative town government, a low tax rate, excellent schools, the healthful atmosphere of a seaside community free from large industrial establishments, ample room for recreation, a pleasant fraternal life, efficient communication and transportation facilities, and a progressive, alert group of local businessmen. Milford citizens look forward to the fourth century of the town's existence with a confidence born of the heritage of ordered living recorded in this chronicle.

MILFORD OLD HOUSES AND CHURCHES



## MILFORD OLD HOUSES AND CHURCHES

The old houses of a town are the best visible record of its history. If they are preserved anywhere near intact, they tell more of the life of their builders than anything else they have left. In Milford their number is not large, as in Guilford and Madison, for instance, but there are a number of unusual features, some found in Milford alone, which have attracted attention from an early date.

"The house is terribly old . . . over two hundred years old . . . that I know for a fact. You can tell that it's old by the big cracks in the floor." In the eyes of their owners many houses are "over two hundred years old." The farther back one goes in the records, however, the greater is the uncertainty as to dates of erection. Neither the sentimental nor the genealogical approach that the last generation made would be considered adequate today. In Milford, as in every old town in the State, the number of houses credited with very early dates has grown considerably in recent years. The State Tercentenary helped to create both supply and demand. But taking the State as a whole, scarcely a quarter of the dates claimed can survive architectural analysis and a check from the records.

It was not until the present century that a scientific approach was made to the subject. Miss M. Louise Greene's articles in the *Connecticut Magazine* of 1899 describe what was known of Milford houses before 1900, and Norman M. Isham, in the first book to deal with the old houses of Connecticut in a scholarly manner, takes two Milford houses, the Eells-Stowe and Benjamin Houses, as representative of their periods.

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Scarcely a seventeenth-century house in Connecticut has come down unaltered. It is but a scrap of seventeenth-century work at best that survives the remodeling energies of two hundred and fifty years of American restlessness. To judge adequately, one must have a wide knowledge of other seventeenth-century structures in New England and the conditions that governed their erection.

The builders, for the most part, were of English descent, and accustomed to contemporary English methods of construction. Certain materials such as timber and stone were almost embarrassingly prevalent; while secondary materials, such as nails and glass, were at premium.

While timberwork was found in some counties in England, it was by no means as prevalent there, even in the meaner grade of houses, as it became over here. To the majority of the settlers, the English cottage or manor house had to be expressed over here completely in wood, instead of in wood and in stone.

It was natural that rooms should be large, as they had been in England, where in a milder climate they could be fairly easily heated from the cavernous fireplaces, which were the center of family life. It was natural, too, that the framing of oak should incline to be heavy, not only because of the abundance of primeval trees, but because it was taking the place of the English stone, which was a sturdier material. This framing was usually visible in the room and consisted of four heavy corner posts, the girts and plates that connected them at ceiling height, and a broad beam across the center of the room, called a "summer." This usually ran from the chimney girt to the end girt. These girts, that support the summer, were ordinarily heavier than the plates or girts at the front or rear. Brick and plaster were used, but the average wall was of wood, sheathed in a type of "bevel and bead," called "featheredge."





STOCKADE HOUSE



EELLS-STOWE HOUSE (HISTORICAL SOCIETY)



BUCKINGHAM HOUSE



GARRET VAN HORN DEWITT HOUSE

## MILFORD OLD HOUSES AND CHURCHES

The chimney was the center of the house in every sense of the word. It was ordinarily close to the center of the floor plan, built of stone, and of dimensions equal to those of a small room. All the fireplaces were large, although sometimes bedrooms were not heated at all. Fireplaces were often so large that stone could not span them, and a heavy lintel of oak was laid across. Stone did not begin to replace these oak lintels until the fireplace itself began to be made smaller, around 1725-1750. Oak lintels can be found as late as 1789. About 1800 the very common fireplace, so often seen in old houses, came in; this is made of brick, with an iron bar supporting the masonry above. Brick ovens, however, seem to have been built from an early date, and very often were at the back of the fireplace.

Many of the earliest houses remaining show that only the structure to one side of the chimney was built at first, and the other side was added, as means, or the family, grew. The house expanded further by means of a leanto at the back, continuing the rear slope, often at a slightly different angle. Milford once had many of these added-leanto salt-box houses. The Buckingham, Clark ("Stockade"), and Whitmore Houses, and the Clark Tavern, have lost their original additions. It was once believed that the Eells House was an example of this, perhaps the earliest, type. But further examination shows that the framework of the Eells House, perhaps the most problematical early house in the State, was built all at one time. The final stage in the evolution of the "saltbox" came after 1700, when the rear rafters were made all in one piece, making the rear roof of one unbroken slope. The two Peck Houses, now owned by the Benjamin and De Mezzo families, are of this eighteenth-century style. The "saltbox" form was abandoned entirely when the rear part of the house was raised so as to make the whole structure two-and-one-half stories tall and two



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rooms in depth. This was the solid, typical "Colonial" house. The Clark ("Stockade") House shows this transition in a very interesting way in the attic, and it was evident even in the shingles on the ends until the recent remodeling. The final step came around 1750, when houses began to be built around two chimneys, resulting in a central hall, and a more hospitable and accessible interior. The Stephen Gunn and Garrett Van Horn DeWitt Houses are examples of this stage of development.

The Milford house that is usually given the earliest date, the Buckingham House on North Street, can be looked upon as almost an architectural history in itself. Practically all the interior woodwork is the result of remodeling in the middle of the eighteenth century when Jehiel Bryan, carpenter and real estate operator, married the daughter of Captain Samuel Buckingham in 1753, or by owners from the early nineteenth century down to the present day. Only the framing, the rear kitchen fireplace, and the featheredge boards now inserted around it, a door upstairs, and possibly the front clapboards, are original. The window arrangement, the handsome front door with its crossed panels, and the brick chimney top, date from the time of Jehiel Bryan, as does the exceptional corner cupboard within, with its Prince's feather motif. Even the cellar under half of the house has been modernized.

The land was first granted to Thomas Buckingham, as recorded in the records of 1643. He died fourteen years later, leaving his second wife with five children to rear. Though a leader in the church, Thomas Buckingham was not rated a wealthy man, and it is probable that his house was not exceptionally large—as this house would have seemed at the time. It is more likely that this is the house of his second son, Samuel, the grandfather of Captain Samuel who died in 1749, to whom the house can be definitely traced

## MILFORD OLD HOUSES AND CHURCHES

in the land records. Previous to that, it is a matter of inference, particularly from wills.

At first glance, the marker date, 1660, of the Clark Tavern on West River Street seems entirely at variance with the Victorian house one can see from the street. It illustrates perfectly, however, the difficulties and pitfalls of dating an early structure. This land, though apparently adjacent to the Newtons, was sold to Samuel Andrew, 3rd, grandson of Mr. Newton's successor. He died in 1728, and left a house on the plot. Andrew Clark, the inn-keeper, secured it in 1789. Within the house are found many primitive characteristics in spite of its central hall and outside remodeling. The cellar is under only the north part of the house; the rooms above were originally large and fairly low, and are intersected by broad, flat summer beams, 17½ inches wide. No other framing shows, since the walls were "taken in" during a remodeling, after Captain William Davidson bought the place in 1810. In 1874 the old stone chimney was removed, and further additions made. An examination of the attic shows that the house was built all at one time, and that a leanto, now gone, was added later, giving it a "saltbox" line.

The house at present bearing the name of the Reverend Samuel Andrew, on the northwest corner of North Street and the "Kissing Bridge" is a consistent and well-preserved example of an early nineteenth-century dwelling, with a wide overhanging roof and Doric portico of a still later nineteenth-century date. The house is of the fully developed two-story type, with squarish rooms, cellar under the whole, and chimney and fireplaces of brick throughout. No framing shows except corner posts of a moderate size. There are nineteenth-century mantels, and the sparse paneling is of a nineteenth-century variety, called sunk paneling.

The first mention of this site that can be found is on



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April 27, 1801, when the Proprietor's Committee gave a 999-year lease of this property, up to that time common or undivided land, to Nehemiah Bristol, for the sum of \$45. It is probable that Bristol, who had already taken a chance by occupying it, had built the small shop by the bridge which some people remember as stocked with everything that a country store can manage to handle. He would not have built so large and important a house on it without owning the property; but after buying it in 1801, he appears to have put up a somewhat ambitious house, intending to entertain on a larger scale. The second-floor rooms could be thrown open by folding partitions to make a dance hall across the whole rear side, overlooking the river—another feature characteristic of the early nineteenth century.

A study of the records shows that the Reverend Samuel Andrew lived on West River Street, in a house he bought in 1685, which his heirs later sold to Dr. Abraham Tomlinson. Henry J. Bristol lived for more than twenty years on that site and then removed, in the 1880's, to the house his family had built across the river on North Street.

Isham speaks of one Milford house as among the most interesting in New England, that of Sergeant Samuel Eells, which is now, fortunately, the home of the Milford Historical Society. It is interesting because of two peculiarities that mark it as almost unique: the coved cornice (of which only one other example exists today in Connecticut) and the famous "dog-legged" stair, of which again but one other example (and a very much later one) has been found in Connecticut. The north end shows light framing and no summer beam: the south room, though not original, is undoubtedly near the position of the original chimney. The narrow central hall with its odd stairs is apparently original, and the north rooms across it were probably not heated. This very unusual design is paralleled in the old Stevens

## MILFORD OLD HOUSES AND CHURCHES

House in Clinton, which dates back to 1699. The peculiarity of the stairs—that the rails, both upper and lower, both fit into but one post at the turn—is no doubt occasioned by the narrowness of the hall. The balusters, which are low and primitive, undoubtedly an early type, are broken into by this arrangement, and the effect is not a happy one. On the second floor this is avoided by twisting the upper rail so that the two overlap.

The history of the house has been well written in a short pamphlet published by the Daughters of the American Revolution. All the evidence with regard to the date of the house is not given, however, for it is now known that Eells lost his original home, on West River Street, to Alexander Bryan in 1679, though he continued to rent it. His wife died in 1687, and he moved away from Milford. The house must have been built within those eight years.

There are other old houses with seventeenth-century dates, but only one that can be securely assigned to that period: the Josiah Whitmore House (1698), at the corner of West Main and Gunn Streets. Its record is easily traced, and, although in poor condition, it is the most authentic building of the period left. The cellar is under the west end only. None of the old fireplaces are now open, for the building is in use as a grain store. The framing is heavy, especially in the girts over the fireplaces and the end walls, and in the wide summer beams that connect them. The stairs are simple, enclosed in plain boards, and ascend by winders without rail or ornament of any kind.

One block east, on West Main Street, stands the Ford House, one of the best of the town's early houses. It has been in the Ford family from the beginning; first mention of it is in the will of John Ford (1704-60). It was probably built a full generation later than the Whitmore House a block away, and retains something of the same form, but

## HISTORY OF MILFORD

in a larger and more expansive version. There are nine windows now on the front instead of five, as in the earlier house; and the house is deeper, two full rooms deep and two stories in height. It is in the very wide overhang of the attic framing all round, and the broad shallow chimney that the old lines persist. It is possible that the house once had a coved cornice, like that of the Eells House. Until recently it had a small one-story leanto across one-half of the rear, but it was never a saltbox. The main lines of the structure are of 1730, the paneling and staircase perhaps twenty years later.

The house that of late years has been named the Stockade House reminds one in many ways of the Ford House. It has been given the varying dates of 1659, 1660, 1689, 1695, and 1700. Fortunately, however, the architectural evidence is clear, and though the house shows a diversity almost equal to that of the dates, the transitions in its structure can easily be traced and are its chief interest today.

The first mention of the building is in a deed of November 1, 1708, from George Clark, husbandman, to Nathan Clark, his son, transferring the "pasture lott eight acres more or less with every part and parcell ye of with all ye house housing and barn Standing upon or being." Nathan died in 1729, his father in 1734. That it was originally a saltbox type of house, with a leanto added at the rear, is evident from an examination of the attic. This could formerly be readily seen from the outside, where the lines in the older clapboards were very distinct from those used to piece out when the rear was raised to a full two-story height. This remodeling probably took place around 1750 during the ownership of the first Jonathan Clark, son of Nathan.

The beauty of the house is in its wall end of paneling in the west room, unspoiled by either paint or varnish, with tall pilasters flanking the fireplace much like those in the



FORD HOUSE



WHITMORE HOUSE





SANFORD HOUSE



RICHARD PLATT HOUSE



## MILFORD OLD HOUSES AND CHURCHES

Ford House. The rooms are almost exactly the size of those of the Ford House. The stair, too, is similar, but of an open stringer variety, with low rails and no balusters. The fireplaces have all been made smaller by brick, and are not original. A most unusual built-in bookcase and cupboard is in the east room and must certainly date from Jonathan Clark's remodeling.

One other house, sometimes given a seventeenth-century date, is the story-and-a-half peak-roof house on the north side of Broad Street Green, where Golden Hill Street branches off. It might appear to be an exceptionally attractive and well-preserved cottage of the early nineteenth century, did it not prove to have older work in its fireplaces.

One group of later houses belongs to a definite type, with two variations, characteristic of Milford. The three, two-chimney, story-and-a-half houses on Gulf Street represent one variation. They have a piazza across the front, under a flaring roof which rises in a gambrel on the front, but slopes back behind in a long graceful curve. Two of these, the Elijah Bryan and the Stow Houses, date from around 1790. The David Clark House (1789) is similar, though it lacks the piazza. The other variation, probably somewhat earlier, has a stone central chimney. The Jonah Clark House on Governor's Lane, and the Samuel Sanford House on North Street, later extended and given a second chimney, are of this type. The Downes House (1797) was originally in this style. The Durand House is similar, but has a straight roof in the front. From its architecture and a search of the records it appears to be of about the same date.

Of the type which followed the saltbox—two stories high both front and back—there are no better examples than the house usually known as the Ebenezer Downes House on the Post Road, and the David Ingersoll House to the west of it, with a beautiful cross-panel door.

## HISTORY OF MILFORD

Another interesting house, but this time with a gambrel roof, is the stately home of Garrett Van Horn DeWitt, the merchant who came up to Milford from New York after the Revolution. The house, on the south side of Broad Street Green, lent an urban touch to the Connecticut village. The elaborate doorway and sidelights belong to the sophisticated period of the Greek Revival that was beginning to make itself felt in the centers. The Stephen Atwater Treat House (1798) on Gulf Street, is a more orthodox specimen of this period. The heavy piazzas are more modern than the rest of the house.

A perfect example of the Classical Revival house at the height of its effect on New England is the second Stephen Gunn House (1821), now an antique shop at the junction of US 1 and US 1A. The open pediment portico and simple, consistent detail give it an atmosphere of the early Federal period that is still authentic and unspoiled. A house of later date, in the fullness of the Greek Revival, is the Richard Platt House, the second house to the east of the Stephen Gunn House. Here the gable end faces the road, with a hip-roofed porch of perfect proportions over the door in the left corner. The fluted Ionic columns, the delicate detail of cornice and pediment remain. It is pleasing to find no details wiped out by asbestos shingling or other modern incongruity. Further to the east, a still later house, similar in plan but plainer in detail, reflects the growing simplicity of the later period of the Classic Revival. These three houses very aptly summarize its development.

Beyond question, the architectural distinction of Milford lies in its three old churches. It has an unusual number of houses of the Victorian period, from the Dennis Beach to the Harvey Beach Houses, which have fumbled through all sorts of experiments in form, some happy and some more or less bizarre. But in the two Congregational Churches (1823

## MILFORD OLD HOUSES AND CHURCHES

and 1834) and the stone Episcopal Church (1850) the early Federal period and Classic and Gothic Revivals found an expression at once happy and pure.

Tradition has always assigned the name of David Hoadley as architect of the First Church. The church records mention Michael Peck of Milford as builder, and contain the testimonial given him at the completion of the edifice. However, the church does employ some of Hoadley's favorite devices, and we know he built the church in North Milford (now Orange) at about the same time. It is probable that Peck obtained the plans from Hoadley.

The First Church occupies a strategic place in the history of Connecticut church architecture. Three other churches were patterned closely after it, a compliment never before nor since accorded any church in the State: Cheshire, built in 1826; Southington, built by Levi Newell in 1828; and Litchfield, by the same builder a year later. The First Church was not only widely admired, but that very admiration helped to crystallize certain tendencies which came to characterize the culminating period of our early architecture.

One of these was in the placing of the tower. In the eighteenth century the tower had stood at one end of the church proper, attached, but practically a building apart. Then it began, so to speak, to be drawn into the edifice of the nave, as in Gibb's churches; and then to have a front entrance pediment thrown out around it, lower and smaller than the main gable of the church, but repeating the same lines. Half of this projecting portico is enclosed, half an open colonnade; and it is from this dividing line that the tower rises, centered over the front wall of the main roof. Four reeded and fluted Ionic columns support the pediment over a shallow open portico. Behind these are three doors of equal height, each with a fanlight with a pattern of

## HISTORY OF MILFORD

delicate leaden tracery. At the center of the festoons is the unusual feature of a spread eagle. These features were repeated over and over in the first half of the nineteenth century.

If the First Church is a fitting illustration of the best of the post-Colonial period, the building of Plymouth Church represents just as strikingly the final and logical outcome. It was built in 1834, in the Doric, rather than the Ionic Renaissance style, and sacrifices grace and charm for solidity and simplicity. The First Church was in no sense a Greek temple: it was a New England building, drawing inspiration for many details from Greek precedents. The architect was free to design his steeple in ways that pleased himself and descended directly from eighteenth-century practice, as in the use of an open stage in the belfry. Plymouth Church was, however, a Greek temple transplanted to a totally different climate effectively but a little incongruously, since the necessity for a steeple led to a compromise. The building is less a unit than First Church, though it does have its own dramatic quality. The two together make a composition such as no other town in New England, save New Haven, can display.

The Episcopal Church of St. Peter (1850), though later, is perhaps the best of the Victorian Gothic edifices in the State. It belongs to what might be called the Stoke-Poges variety of early Gothic, but has a tall spire that reminds one of Stratford-on-Avon. If St. Peter's were situated on the verdurous banks of a stream like the Avon, it would easily become one of the most admired churches in New England. The simplicity and sincerity of the design entitle it to this esteem.

## APPENDIX





OFFICERS OF THE TOWN OF MILFORD  
JUNE 1, 1939

ELECTED

*Selectmen*

HARRY M. MERWIN  
CORNELIUS A. STOWE                      FRANK M. MCCARTHY

*Town Clerk*

CLARISSA M. FOWLER

*Treasurer*

DAVID A. CLARKE

*Collector of Taxes*

WILLIAM G. BISSELL

*Board of Assessors*

FREDERICK M. SMITH  
ARTHUR B. CHAPIN                      JAMES E. ENGLISH

*Board of Relief*

KAROL DUDZINSKI                      RICHARD JASPERS  
FREDERICK J. BONI

*Constables*

GEORGE E. MALLORY                      AUSTIN F. DAWSON  
WILBUR B. CHASE                      JOHN F. ROACH  
WILLIAM MCGIRR                      ALLAN M. MACTAGGART  
LESLIE I. KELLER

*Registrars of Voters*

HAROLD L. PICKETT                      HENRY S. RYAN

# HISTORY OF MILFORD

## *Town School Committee*

OMAR W. PLATT	CAROLINE T. PLATT
BESSIE POWELL	JERVIS D. BROWN, JR.
J. HENRY ANTHONY	JOHN J. NOWICKI
CLAUDE A. COX	LEVI E. ALLING
EPHRIAM E. SINN	MARION R. DALY
MARY A. KAST	JULIA M. COFFEY

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## APPOINTED BY THE SELECTMEN

### *Board of Finance*

PETER N. LANDINE	ALBERT P. STOWE
JOHN J. TOOMEY	JOHN J. REARDON
ROBERT H. CLEMENCE	FRANK C. BROTHERTON

### *Board of Police Commissioners*

WILLIAM A. FORD	JOHN A. HALL
J. BURTON SMITH	WILLIAM ASHWORTH
ALBERT P. BARROWS	BERNARD J. FAGAN

### *Board of Fire Commissioners*

WILLIAM M. O'HARA	ROBERT M. TREAT
MOSES E. HARRIS	FRANK W. HUNTER
JOSEPH J. CARROLL	LEWIS P. BALDWIN

### *Town Plan and Zoning Commission*

JOHN N. FOEHR	TRUBEE J. DOOLITTLE
HAROLD S. HAWKINS	HENRY C. C. MILES
JOHN W. CANNON	JAMES F. CAVANAUGH

### *Zoning Board of Appeals*

ARTHUR W. EADE	EDWARD J. MAHER
DAVID J. GREENE	ALBERT C. TINGLEY
ARNON D. THOMAS	

### *Board of Sewer Commissioners*

ELBERT N. CLARK	BERTON L. WRIGHT
HANS ZWIEBEL	MAX W. WEIR
EZRA G. MITCHELL	

# OFFICERS OF THE TOWN OF MILFORD

## *Recreation Commission*

ROBERT H. CLEMENCE	HARRY E. PETERSEN
FRANK C. BROTHERTON	FRANK H. NETTLETON, JR.
FRANK DEMATEAU	FRANK S. WARGO
FRANK M. MCCARTHY	LEVI E. ALLING
TRUBEE J. DOOLITTLE	

## *Fowler Memorial Building Committee*

ROBERT C. STODDARD	TRUBEE J. DOOLITTLE
ARTHUR L. BALDWIN	HARRY M. MERWIN
JAMES E. TOCKER	DAVID J. GREENE
CECIL H. TROWBRIDGE	MORRIS W. ABBOTT

## HISTORY OF MILFORD

### INDIAN DEED OF 1682

Whereas the predecessors as underwritten namely An-nacowset Washoise Nansantaway Anshootta Potaquatton cataconnacouse pychiamah Askwhout Amantoneek Manamatque pamatacouse pacommon Towtanramay Tewackhecg Napahisset & others haveing formerly sold unto William fowler Edmund Tapp Zachary Whitman Robert Treat & Alexander Bryant for and in behalfe of the Town of Milford certain parcels of land & Meadow &<sup>e</sup> with all appurtenances for which they have severall deeds or writing under the hands of our say<sup>d</sup> predecessors. the hands of some to one deed or writing & the hands of some to others according their severall rights and power of disspose which severall parcels of land & meadow &<sup>e</sup> layd together reach from New Haven Bounds westward to Stratford River & the west of the Islands therin sold to them & from the sea & the South of that island in the sea Northward to the Two mile Brooke near paugoset or Derby And the path that goeth from paugoset to New Haven. so that the sayd Lands Meadows & Islands are Bownded as afoarsayd all which former sales Bargaines & agreements, made by our sayd predecessors we underwritten doe hereby allowe of & rattifye the same to the sayd englishmen & their successors for the use & benefit of the Towne of Milford afoarsayd according to the True Intent thereof one of which writeings beareing date February 12<sup>th</sup> 1638 another dated December 20<sup>th</sup>: 1660: another January 2<sup>d</sup> 1660 another December 12<sup>th</sup> 1661:

& we doe for o'selves heires & successors utterly disclaime any right title or Interest (to) the sayd Lands or priviledges mentioned in the sayd deeds or writeings or any part thereof



## INDIAN DEED OF 1682

& farther we doe upon farther Good consideration & for satisfaction in hand received doe freely alienate & make over all our right title and Interest to the sayd lands that we or any of us ever had have or might have or to any part thereof unto the englishmen affoarmentioned for the use benifit & behoofe of the Towne of Milford & their successors for ever all which forementioned Lands with all the priviledges & appurtenances thereunto belonging to the sayd Town of Milford & their successors are to have & to hold to them their heires & successors forever, & we doe hereby engage our selwes, heires & successors to secure the Town of Milford from any clayme of any Indian or Indians to the sayd lands or any part there of In witnesse whereof we have hereunto set our hands this 2<sup>a</sup> day of October 1682

<p>Witnessed by us  Ketassomen his marke  Ebenezer: Johnson  Samuel: Eales  James Briscoe  <i>witness</i> Thomas Bishop, his marke  The Interpreter.</p>	<p>Cockapatanna his marke  Nanshutta his marke  Ackenach his marke  Awowas his marke  Mughshittin his marke  Sowahous his marke  Chippanck his marke  Tehunques his marke  hughsson  Keucksen his marke</p>
--	---

The above written Instrument was  
acknowledged by all the subscribers  
to be their acts and deeds this 2<sup>a</sup> day of  
October 1682 before me

Robert Treat Dep: Gov<sup>r</sup>

The above written is a True copy of the originall being  
examined & compared therewith this 7<sup>th</sup> of October 1685 per  
John Allyn Secy:

## HISTORY OF MILFORD

### NAMES OF REVOLUTIONARY PATRIOTS BURIED IN MILFORD CEMETERY.

The Milford Cemetery contains the identified graves of the following Milford Revolutionary patriots:

Baldwin, Lieut. Nathan	Glenny, William
Bristol, Nathan	Green, Samuel
Brush, Abraham	
Bryan, Elijah	Higby, Samuel
Bryant, Lieut. Jehiel, Sr.	
Bryant, Sergt. Jehiel, Jr.	Mallory, Moses
Buckingham, John	Munson, Joseph
Budington, Walter	
	Nettleton, Caleb
Carrington, Dr. Elias	Nettleton, Thaddeus
Clark, George	
Clark, Isaac	Parsons, Samuel
Clark, Isaac	Pond, Captain Charles H.
Clarke, David	
Clarke, Samuel	Sackett, Daniel
Coggeshall, William	Sanford, Elisha
	Smith, Cabb
Davidson, James	Smith, John
DeWitt, Garret V. H.	Smith, Samuel B.
Down, John	Stow, Samuel
	Stow, Stephen
Fenn, Lieut. Benjamin	Stow, Stephen
Fenn, Lieut. Daniel	
Ford, Amos	Treat, John
Ford, John	Treat, Samuel
Fowler, Lieut. John	
	Wells, Nathan
Gibbs, John	Wire, Sergt. Samuel
Gillette, Benjamin	Woodruff, Enoch

There were other Milford citizens who served in the Revolutionary War, whose final resting places are not identified in the cemetery. There were also many men whose place of residence appears in the records as Milford, but who are buried elsewhere than in Milford Cemetery.

# NAMES OF RESIDENTS OF THE TOWN OF MILFORD WHO SERVED IN THE CIVIL WAR 1861-65

Compiled from records furnished by Nathan Stow, a Civil War veteran and a descendant of Stephen Stow, the Revolutionary Patriot.

Abbott, Oramel G.  
Amesbury, Marvin H.  
Andrews, Gilead T.

Baird, George W.  
Baird, Jas. W.  
Baker, Edward E.  
Baldwin, A. V. H. Dewitt  
Baldwin, Charles W.  
Baldwin, Chauncey S.  
Baldwin, Dennis E.  
Baldwin, Edwin B.  
Baldwin, Elliott H.  
Baldwin, John H.  
Baldwin, Roger S.  
Bartlett, Chas. H.  
Bassett, Mark  
Batchelor, Henry E.  
Beach, Calvin  
Beach, Dennis  
Beach, Elliott H.  
Beach, Fuller W.  
Beach, George Marvin  
Beach, Oscar C.  
Beard, Wm. Addison  
Beecher, Henry M.  
Beecher, R. Frank  
Beers, Ira S.  
Benham, Chas. H.  
Benham, Geo. W.  
Benjamin, David W.  
Benjamin, J. M.  
Billings, Peter

Bishop, Willett M.  
Booth, Joseph W.  
Botsford, Chas. H. K.  
Brill, William F.  
Bristol, Edwin  
Bristol, Julius A.  
Bristol, Lewis B.  
Bristol, Lewis D.  
Bristol, William M.  
Bristol, William T.  
Broadwell, Commodore M.  
Bronson, Wm. S.  
Brown, James P.  
Buchanan, J. J.  
Buckingham, George F.  
Buckingham, John W.  
Burleigh, Edward W.  
Burnett, Thomas  
Burns, Benjamin Walter S.  
Burns, Geo. Nelson  
Burwell, Arnold T.

Cairolì, J. S.  
Canfield, Smith  
Chase, Wallace  
Christian, Carle  
Clark, Albertus N.  
Clark, Almon E.  
Clark, Arthur N.  
Clark, Arthur W.  
Clark, Augustus N.  
Clark, Edwin W.  
Clark, Everett B.

## HISTORY OF MILFORD

- |                       |                     |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Clark, John G.        | Glenney, George H.  |
| Clark, Joseph R.      | Glenney, Samuel C.  |
| Clark, Marshall A.    | Glenney, Stephen W. |
| Clark, Nathan         | Graham, John L.     |
| Clark, Samuel         | Graham, Wallace W.  |
| Clark, Samuel B.      | Graham, W. L.       |
| Clark, Sydney E.      |                     |
| Clark, Theodore M.    | Haley, Thomas       |
| Coleman, William      | Harris, Theodore    |
| Collins, George C. M. | Harris, William     |
| Colter, Charles       | Harris, W. H.       |
| Cornwall, Chas. E.    | Hawley, Wm. H.      |
| Cornwall, Frederic    | Hephim, Richard     |
| Coy, Geo. W.          | Higby, George O.    |
| Curtiss, Chas. E.     | Hill, Daniel        |
|                       | Hine, Aaron         |
| Dahl, John W.         | Hine, Abner         |
| Dayton, George H.     | Hine, George W.     |
| De Garmo, John L.     | Hine, James R.      |
| Dickinson, Sylvanus   | Hine, Lewis         |
| Dodge, Jeremiah R.    | Hitchcock, Shirland |
| Dowd, Martin V.       | Hopper, Charles     |
| Downs, Henry A.       | Hooghkirk, William  |
|                       | Horigan, Patrick    |
| Eaton, Shepard F.     | Hyde, Samuel D.     |
| Edwards, Harmon T.    |                     |
| Elkins, George.       | Jackson, Charles S. |
| Ells, William         | Jackson, Gilbert    |
|                       | Jackson, Homer      |
| Ford, Charles W.      | Johnson, Guernsey   |
| Ford, James E.        |                     |
| Fenn, William S.      | Keeshan, Dennis     |
| Ferris, James L.      | Keifer, Daniel J.   |
| Foster, Francis A.    |                     |
| Fowler, Joseph        | Larrabee, Edwin H.  |
| Fowler, William       | London, Charles     |
| French, Burr H.       | London, Horace      |
| French, Smith B.      |                     |
|                       | MacGuinness, James  |
| Gabriel, John         | Manville, George W. |
| Gabriel, Joseph Peter | Marks, Hobart       |
| Gabriel, Theodore     | Marks, Treat A.     |
| Gage, Robert B.       | Marshall, Henry G.  |
| Gall, John            | McBride, Wm. T.     |
| Gammel, William F.    | McCarthy, James     |
| Gauche (or Dauche)    | Merwin, Chas. W.    |
| Gavin, Patrick J.     | Merwin, John H.     |

## RESIDENTS WHO SERVED IN CIVIL WAR

Michel, Carl (Chas. Michel)	Scranton, Alonzo
Morris, Charles J.	Sherman, Henry
Murphy, Lawrence	Shine, John
	Slade, Frederic C.
Nolan, Andrew	Smith, Andrew
Northrup, W. A.	Smith, Brainerd
Nettleton, Elliott W.	Smith, Caleb
Nettleton, Harvey S.	Smith, Elliott N.
Nettleton, Henry	Smith, Henry E.
Nettleton, Lewis J.	Smith, Henry Herbert
Nettleton, Samuel A.	Smith, Hezekiah P.
	Smith, James H.
Overton, Edward W.	Smith, Joel
Oviatt, Edward L.	Smith, Miles
Oviatt, Erasmus	Smith, Sam'l B.
Oviatt, John M.	Somers, Dwight
Oviatt, Willis S.	Somers, Joseph
	Somers, Levi
Peabody, Joseph N.	Sonnewald, August E.
Peck, Chester D.	Spencer, Rufus
Peck, F. Henry	Stowe, Edgar P.
Peck, George T.	Stowe, Luke
Peck, Ira Abbott	Stowe, Nathan
Peck, Ralph	Stowe, Nelson L.
Peck, William H.	Stowe, Sydney
Peet, Lauren	Sullivan, James
Pike, George W.	
Platt, Albert C.	Taft, Lowell
Plumb, Albert	Tibbals, Albert C.
Plumb, Edwin W.	Tibbals, George W.
Plumb, Sydney H.	Tibbals, James S.
Plumb, Wm. Elliott	Tinkham, L. Enos
Pope, Julius J.	Tinkham, W. H.
Porter, Albert A.	Totten, Charles A.
Prince, Alvin C.	Treat, Noyes A.
Prince, George W.	Treat, Thelus C.
	Trowbridge, Wm. D.
Rallis, Dwight	Trowers, Wm.
Ricks, William	Tucker, Henry A.
Roberts, Frank H.	Tuthill, Thomas C.
Rogers, George E.	
	Van Horn, Edgar
Sanford, Chas. H.	Van Horn, George
Sanford, Chas. W.	
Sanford, John F.	Warburton, Samuel
Scofield, John E.	Welch, Lewis M.
Scott, William O.	Whitcomb, Russell



## HISTORY OF MILFORD

Wilcox, John W.  
Williams, Thomas  
Williston, Josiah F.  
Wilson, Joseph  
Wilson, William L.  
Woodbury, Joseph S.

Woodruff, Stiles  
Woods, Francis Victor  
Word, Thomas J.  
  
Yale, Ed.  
Yale, Merrit A.

## LIST OF MILFORD MEN WHO SERVED IN THE WORLD WAR

(As given on the Milford World War Memorial)

\* Died in Service.

Abbey, Frederick J.  
Ahrens, William H.  
Alcott, George E.  
Allan, James J.  
Allen, Everett W.  
Allen, George A.  
Allen, John H.  
Allen, John J.  
Anderson, James  
Antaya, Albert M.  
Appleton, William B.  
Armitage, Lawrence  
Auburn, Harry  
Augat, August  
Avery, John P.

Babcock, Carl A.  
Bachand, Joseph T.  
Badeau, Alton A.  
Bahan, Charles A.  
Bailey, Chester N.  
Bailey, William C.  
Baird, Charles E.  
Baldwin, Arthur L.  
Baldwin, Clarence H.  
Baldwin, Harold W.  
Baldwin, Warren C.  
Banks, Jesse  
Banta, Lewis E.  
Barnes, George E.  
Barnes, Harry G.  
Barnes, Harry M.  
Barnes, Joseph B.  
Barnes, Truman S.

Barney, Edward J.  
Barney, John J.  
Barrell, Edward A.  
Barry, Edward P.  
Basden Leland A.  
Basile, Silvester  
Bassett, Prentice P.  
Bassett, Royal M.  
Battel, Fredrick  
Beach, Edward H.  
Beard, Charles  
Beard, R. Miles  
Beatty, Albert  
Beatty, William E.  
Becker, William E.  
Bellows, Ernest M.  
Benham, William M.  
Benjamin, Hugh H.  
Benjamin, Percy E.  
Bennett, Leroy, P.  
Bentze, Frederick J.  
Bentze, John J.  
Berchem, Charles  
Bernard, Clinton  
Bernatowski, Frank  
Bissell, Raymond W.  
Blackhall, Frederick S., Jr.  
\*Blackhall, George B.  
Blackman, Chester  
Bogaers, Mariner  
Bolan, Francis J.  
Bond, George A.  
Boni, Fred J.  
Boni, Stephen J.

## HISTORY OF MILFORD

- |                        |                         |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Bonyai, William J.     | Carbone, Vincent        |
| Booth, Gerald D.       | Cardonell, Melvin A.    |
| Booth, I. H.           | Carlson, Arthur E.      |
| Booth, Leo M.          | Carnright, H.           |
| Bosworth, Albert       | Casanelle, Jencie       |
| Bouteiller, George     | Casey, Joseph P.        |
| Bowden, William        | Cashow, Ernest J.       |
| Boyd, Edward D.        | Castle, Orren F.        |
| Boyd, George           | Cedarholm, Neil S.      |
| Boyd, Joseph           | Chadwick, Stuart        |
| Bray, Harry T.         | Chapell, Alexander R.   |
| Bray, James S.         | Chapell, Andrew P.      |
| Bremier, Leonard G.    | Charles, Reuben         |
| Bridge, Edward         | Clapper, Charles A.     |
| Bridge, Lucien L.      | Clapper, Matthew F.     |
| Bridge, Richard W.     | Clark, Arthur L.        |
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| Brown, Roger N.        | Collins, Edward J., Jr. |
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Reardon, Harold H.	Schlosser, John J.
Redfield, H. Earl	Scott, J. H.
Reilly, James P.	Scranton, Harold C.
Reilley, Sam	Scranton, Leverett M.
Resnick, J.	Scully, George A.
Reynolds, Frank L.	Scully, Joseph L.
Richards, Frank	Seevan, Thomas W.
Rici, John	Shalkop, Bertram L.
Rideout, Alfred R.	Shanley, William H.
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Roberts, Mark W.	Shepard, Charles G.
Robertson, Howard S.	Shepherd, William I.
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Rock, Charles C.	Simmons, Frederick W.
Rock, Clifford	Skapchinski, Lucian
Roder, Albert F. Jr.	Skiff, Walter S.
Rogan, Charles H.	Smith, Alvin C.

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| Smith, Carleton B.           | Summons, Elmer R.        |
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| Smith, Kenneth E.            | Tashlein, Henry G.       |
| Smith, Lamberton             | Tellier, Albert          |
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| Smith, Mark                  | Thayer, Albert W.        |
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| Spears, Edward               | Tingley, George T.       |
| Spencer, Elmer A.            | Tingley, Harold K.       |
| Spender, Raymond N.          | Tobin, Joseph T.         |
| Sperry, Eliot W.             | Tomkins, George E.       |
| Springsteen, William A., Jr. | Toocker, James E.        |
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| *Stillman, William T.        | Van Horn, Edgar W.       |
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| Stovell, William H.          | Von Hacht, Harry A.      |
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2. Colonel A. R. Hine's Estate
3. D. Bristol
4. J. Flynn
5. L. Benjamin
6. T. C. B.
7. G. Betts
8. S. W. Downs
9. J. Benjamin
10. Miss C. Durand
11. Chair Shop
12. S. Strong
- 13 Shoe Shop
14. D. H. Durand
15. J. Welch
16. J. Beardsley
- 17 Dr. Beardsley
18. J. B.
19. D. B. Platt
20. J. B. B.
- 21 J. B.
22. Mrs. J. A. Mallett
23. A. R. H.
24. L. B. Mallett
25. Nathan Smith
26. N. Woodruff
27. L. Burns
28. S. C. Durand
29. Mrs. Mallett
30. J. B.
31. E. W. Peck
32. Mrs. E. Beach
33. S. Davidson
34. W. Downs
35. W. E. Downs
36. S. Beach
37. Cooper Shop
38. H. J. Bristol
39. Captain E. H. Stone
40. H. R. Beach
41. S. Strong
42. E. T. Peck
43. J. Bristol Store
44. Sanford & Burns
45. M. Ford
46. Carpenter Shop
47. H. Hitchcock
48. J. Carrington
49. H. Miner
50. S. Strong
51. Miss S. E. Woodcock
52. J. Benjamin
53. H. M.
54. C. B.
55. H. Hitchcock
56. J. Follows Estate
57. G. W. Baldwin
58. Mrs. Smith
59. J. Carrington
60. I. Somers
61. R. Tomlinson
62. J. Bristol
63. J. Porter
64. C. B.
65. S. S.
66. American Hat Weaving Co.
67. L. F. Baldwin
68. H. F.
69. N. B.
70. H. P. Botsford
71. J. C.
72. S. Gunn
73. D. Beach
74. L. Oviatt
75. W. F.
76. 1st Cong. Parsonage
77. Mrs. Marshall
78. Miss Bryan
79. Mrs. Bailey
80. H. S. Ford
81. N. Bolsford
82. E. Sanford

83. A. R. Hine Estate
84. J. Carrington
85. Mrs. Buckingham
86. I. C. Smith
87. G. S. Oviatt
88. M. T. Baldwin
89. W. M. Miles
90. A. Clark
91. J. S.
92. J. Clark
93. G. S. Hand
94. C. Kingsley
95. School No. 5
96. C. P. Strong
97. Store
98. Miss D. M. & E. C. Miles
99. W. Ford
100. W. Ford
101. Mrs. S. B. Ford
102. M. B. P.
103. W. M. Miles
104. Store
105. J. Maher
106. J. Wilson
107. School No. 9
108. M. B. Plumb
109. Miss Strong
110. J. C. Buckingham
111. Captain J. W. Sanford
112. L. F. Welch
113. C. W. Ford
114. C. Tuttle
115. S. Shop
116. C. Baldwin
117. Mrs. Davidson
118. W. Bush
119. S. Glenney
120. Mrs. Plumb
121. T. Davidson
122. Downs
123. Harness Shop
124. E. Smith Store
125. C. Botsford
126. T. D.
127. S. Shop
128. F. Pope
129. 1st Cong. Church
130. W. B.
131. M. F.
132. W. F.
133. W. Platt
134. School
135. Plymouth Cong. Church
136. J. Short
137. L. Nettleton
138. W. Glenney
139. Store
140. J. Strong
141. Mrs. Green
142. L. S. Blake
143. A. S.
144. Mrs. Wheeler
145. Miss M. P. & S. Strong
146. A. French
147. W. B. Bristol
148. H. O. Pineo
149. S. Somers
150. H. E. & A. N. Clarke—  
Silver Plate Shop
151. Mrs. Lee
152. D. S. Ford
153. Parsonage
154. H. Manville
155. Mrs. Ford
156. C. B. Peck
157. S. Higby
158. G. Baldwin
159. A. Smith
160. E. B. Smith
161. Mrs. Fairchild
162. Trimming & Store Room
163. Mrs. Sanford
164. W. E. Plumb
165. Carpenter Shop
166. Carpenter Shop
167. W. D. Smith
168. J. Kilpatrick
169. C. Peck
170. B. Sanford
171. B. Bradley
172. Mrs. N. Plumb
173. Dr. L. N. Beardsley
174. Store
175. J. S. Ferris
176. L. S. B.
177. S. B. F. Estate

178. J. Stowe
179. Dr. L. N. B.
180. Beecher & Miles Carriage Factory
181. N. Fenn
182. A. L. Train
183. Paint Shop
184. Blacksmith Shop
185. Wagon Shop
186. S. G. Higby
187. W. S. Pond & Co.
188. C. H.
189. Miss Starr
190. E. Oviatt
191. Grist Mill
192. C. Oviatt
193. R. Victor
194. Dr. L. N. B.
195. M. Stowe
196. S. Buckingham
197. J. Dempsey
198. I. Hyatt
199. Town Hall
200. School
201. E. P. Munson
202. C. B. Peck
203. Store
204. I. P.
205. M. B. Plumb
206. D. L. Baldwin
207. J. Connor
208. C. H.
209. W. P.
210. Miss Tibbals
211. (Drug Store—J. T. Higby—Post Office) (Tin Shop—Hardware—S. B. Gunn & Co.)
212. L. Powell
213. C. Hine
214. C. Oviatt
215. J. Nettleton
216. C. P.
217. C. Davidson
218. H. C. Miles
219. N. R. Ford
220. Hearse House
221. M. Brennan
222. G. Plumb
223. Mrs. Hine
224. L. Beers
225. J. Miner
226. M. E. Parsonage
227. Blacksmith Shop
228. C. W. Cornwall
229. I. W. Goldsmith
230. L. Smith
231. C. Burton
232. D. Nolan & D. Haley
233. N. Roydan
234. M. Oviatt
235. L. B.
236. S. O.
237. G. Ford
238. M. Mervin
239. S. W. D.
240. E. Clark
241. D. Finland
242. N. Clark
243. N. A. Baldwin
244. T. Cornwall
245. P. Ryan
246. T. Bahun
247. Mrs. N. Fowler
248. Cath. Church
249. S. Scofield
250. C. H. Pond
251. Mrs. H. S. Rogers
252. P. E. Church
253. W. Fowler
254. Mrs. Stone
255. N. A. Baldwin
256. E. Mallory
257. H. Ells
258. W. P.
259. R. W. Chidsey
260. J. N. B. & E. C.
261. N. Kelsey
262. I. Glenney
263. C. E. Smith
264. School No. 3
265. J. Green
266. Fire Engine House
267. J. H.
268. W. Fowler
269. C. Oviatt
270. W. G. Mitchell
271. Geo. B. Wheeler

272. N. C. Tomlinson
273. H. Mallett
274. Office Livery
275. A. H. A.
276. Blacksmith Shop
277. J. Parsons
278. J. N. B. & E. C.
279. N. Clark
280. L. Curley
281. D. Bassett
282. Passenger Station
283. J. W. F.
284. School No. 2
285. Mrs. Haley
286. N. G. Pond
287. Market and House—I. C. Smith
288. Mrs. Nettleson
289. W. S. P.
290. C. B. Bassett
291. N. G. Pond
292. C. E. Church
293. Mrs. Driver
294. D. S. Ford & Bros.
295. N. Y. & N. H. R. R.
296. W. S. P.
297. E. Curtis
298. Saloon
299. F. E. E.
300. Store House
301. E. M. Clark
302. N. C. Tomlinson
303. Shoe Shop—C. H. Peck
304. Grist Mill
305. E. E. Burnt
306. S. Brown
307. Dr. A. H.
308. Store
309. Saw Mill
310. S. C. Peck
311. J. W. F.
312. J. W. Fowler
313. J. N. Buckingham
314. E. Clark
315. A. Stowe
316. C. Durand
317. J. Fowler
318. J. N. B. & E. C.
319. A. Green
320. Ford
321. S. W. Dickenson
322. J. W. Fisher
323. Wm. Brooks
324. Dr. H. Allen
325. Milford Hotel
326. H. A. Street
327. Barber Shop
328. N. A. B.
329. Store—W. G. Cornwall
330. Mrs. Johnson
331. Mrs. N.
332. J. Camp
333. Mrs. Carder
334. J. Platt
335. J. C.
336. Dentist—J. A. Dibble
337. R. B.
338. A. Nettleton
339. T. Shop
340. W. Brooks
341. N. G. Pond
342. Store & T. Shop
343. W. S. Pond
344. W. S. Pond
345. A. Stowe
346. J. W. Merwin
347. N. A. B.
348. Mrs. T. Baldwin
349. C. Stowe
350. J. W. Fowler
351. M. Curley
352. C. Cornwall
353. Boarding House
354. S. Baldwin
355. Mrs. A. Baldwin
356. W. Brooks
357. D. W. Smith
358. T. Smith
359. A. Nettleton
360. L. M.
361. Mrs. J. Smith
362. J. W. Smith
363. C. W. Beardsley
364. Store—P. S. Bristol
365. Gas Factory
366. N. A. Baldwin & Co.—  
Straw Hat Factory

367. J. Conner
368. G. & M. Tibbals
369. Shop
370. Store—J. W. Buckingham
371. W. B. Clark
372. Beard & Tibbals
373. A. Kelsey
374. Mrs. Buckingham
375. Mrs. Wilson
376. J. Tibbals
377. G. Cornwall
378. T. Fowler
379. C. W. Merwin
380. N. G. P.
381. R. A. Beard
382. C. A. Bassett
383. J. Stowe
384. C. H. Peck
385. Mrs. B.
386. N. C. Tomlinson
387. S. C.
388. S. N. Beecher
389. D. Merwin
390. L. Langridge
391. S. Clark, Sr.
392. P. Baldwin
393. D. T. Plumb
394. Mrs. Franklin
395. Box Factory
396. Captain H. Treat
397. Plumb & Beard—Sash & Blind Factory
398. J. Burns
399. A. H. Alling
400. Mrs. M. Ford
401. C. Ford
402. J. Smith
403. A. Mallett
404. A. Fowler
405. S. R. Beard
406. Kingsley
407. Mrs. Carrington
408. T. B. B.
409. Store
410. S. B. Gunn
411. L. Burns
412. Mrs. M. Mallett
413. J. Bristol
414. E. Diggin
415. G. W. Plumb
416. D. & J. Beard
417. D. L. Hubbell
418. T. B. Merwin
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420. C. Baldwin
421. Store House
422. P. Burns
423. D. Plumb
424. Z. Gorman
425. A. Plumb
426. Wm. Fowler
427. Miss Tibbals
428. I. J. Green
429. A. A. B.
430. M. Baldwin
431. S. L. Burns
432. Mrs. Stowe
433. Mrs. Baldwin
434. J. Merwin
435. J. B. Baldwin
436. D. Peck
437. Store House
438. Mrs. Jones
439. Cooperage Shop
440. C. R. Baldwin
441. S. Clark
442. A. Bristol
443. Mrs. Merwin
444. M. Davidson
445. C. Platt
446. D. Buckingham
447. Mrs. Bristol
448. S. B. & A. B. Baldwin
449. D. Bristol
450. Mrs. Camp
451. H. Cornwall
452. A. Beard
453. D. & J. Beard
454. A. A. Baldwin
455. E. S. Stowe
456. Episcopal Parsonage
457. G. H. Osborne
458. Hon. I. T. Rogers
459. H. Clark
460. W. Tibbals
461. Carpenter Shop
462. T. Camp



463. N. G. Pond  
464. J. Cornwall  
465. L. Haley  
466. J. Bahon  
467. Store  
468. School No. 12  
469. B. Winne & J. G. French  
470. A. W. Burns  
471. Wm. F.  
472. W. Peck  
473. B. Clark  
474. W. T.  
475. J. Dotson  
476. L. Beard  
477. G. Flagg  
478. W. Fenn  
479. T. Camp  
480. O. Clark  
481. N. C. Tomlinson  
482. J. Bristol  
483. Dr. J. Sweet  
484. J. Baldwin  
485. W. H. Cox  
486. M. Clark  
487. D. Miles  
488. C. M. Tibbals  
489. M. Tibbals  
490. L. Platt  
491. D. L. H.  
492. I. Somers  
493. D. L. Baldwin  
494. M. T.  
495. W. Brotherton

496. E. C. M.  
497. D. L. H.  
498. D. L. H.  
499. J. F. Clemants  
500. M. Stowe  
501. H. Beardsley  
502. G. Mallett  
503. C. W. B.  
504. N. A. Baldwin  
505. G. Osborne  
506. P. Baldwin  
507. D. Miles  
508. J. Nettleton  
509. M. T.  
510. D. L. H.  
511. C. Durand  
512. N. A. B.  
513. W. Glenney  
514. C. Prince  
515. M. McGown  
516. C. Miles  
517. G. L. Tibbels  
518. N. A. B.  
519. W. Coggeshall  
520. C. D.  
521. W. M. M.  
522. J. Nolan  
523. S. Parsons  
524. M. T.  
525. P. Feltus  
526. C. Baldwin  
527. M. Merwin, 2nd  
528. C. M.



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