



History of ancient Woodbury, Connecticut : from the first Indian dead in 1659 to 1872, Volume 2

William Cothren

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AFTER a lapse of seventeen years, during which history has more than "repeated itself," in great and stirring events, in the progress of living ideas, in the advancement of literature and science, in the spread of Christianity, and in the clear understanding and final establishment of the true principles of civil liberty, and the enfranchisement of the human race, it would seem wise to review the whole ground-work of our history as a nation, and as civil communities, that we may learn the true lessons of the recent past, and take prudent and judicious departures for the scenes and events of the future, through which we are yet to pass. We have been so overwhelmed with the tumultuous events which have occurred in the last few years, that we shall be astonished, on a calm retrospect, to observe what strides we have made in human progress, and how totally unconscious we have been of the magnitude and importance of the history we have been making, and of the share each little hamlet has had in producing it. It is from the careful examination of the elements, that go to make up any desirable event, or result, that we are able to understand and duly appreciate it, and derive from it the lessons desirable for future use and improvement.

It will be our pleasing duty, then, to review the history of our ancient and honorable town, and gather for the use of ourselves, and those who shall succeed us in our pleasant abodes, in this val-

ley of valleys, and on these rejoicing hills, so favored of Heaven, the "remnants, that remain" of the treasures not discovered before the completion of our former enterprise, and to preserve them in the archives of our local history, "that nothing may be lost." To accomplish this, the plan of the former work will be followed, recording, step by step, all further facts obtained, under the several heads employed before, sometimes repeating facts found in the first volume, for greater clearness of statement, and to save reference to another volume, so inconvenient in the reading of any work.

Although our country is so young, and our experience so recent, it is yet very difficult for us to picture to ourselves the novelty with which this Avilderness must have struck the early gaze of our forefathers, as they came here, "bearing the ark of their covenant into the wilderness." The land was all before them. They had full authority to enter and possess it, by solemn conveyance from the Indian proprietors, and by the full consent and endowment of the General Court, encumbered by no conditions, except to receive as many other "honest inhabitants" into proprietorship with them, as the plantation would "conveniently entertain"—a matter of prime necessity in new and feeble communities. How does our most fertile imagination fail to grasp and comprehend the mingled emotions which must have struggled in the bosoms of our sturdy forefathers, as, after a weary Avandering in the deep forests and beside the "great rivers," they stood upon the summit of "Good Hill," first local name selected and pronounced by their lips, in the new home, and gazed into the wild and beautiful valley, divided by its lovely, meandering river, seeking with the eye, even in this first moment of enraptured vision, the sequestered nooks in which they would build their happy, moral abodes, and erect their family altars, first offerings to their adorable God and Master, Like the land of Canaan to the Israelites of old, the new land was all before them, with its woods and rocks, and hills and streams—nameless as yet. Here were a thousand hills, valleys, streams, and beautiful local objects of every

form and style of loveliness, with no names by which they might be called; no appellation by which they might be described. They had bought land at "Pompe-raug;" they had been granted liberty by the General Court to found a new plantation there, and that was all there was of designation. Every thing betokened that the silence of nature had remain

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