



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1979 Volume III: Remarkable City: Industrial New Haven and the Nation, 1800-1900

The Development of Westville

Curriculum Unit 79.03.01
by Richard Canalori

Introduction

It would be impossible to study the development of Westville or any other area without references to people, places, and events outside of Westville. The teacher should at all times in studying local history stress this idea.

Westville geographically was and is somewhat isolated and not very large. There were, however, many important families who lived in Westville and events which occurred in Westville which contributed to the entire world and were part of larger events occurring elsewhere. This concept of relating, whenever possible, Westville to the world is the major theme of this curriculum unit.

The unit is divided into three main sections: Early Westville, Industrial Westville, and Westville in the Arts. The unit deals primarily with events to 1900, although some references are made to Westville in this century.

Early Westville

In 1988 New Haven will celebrate its 350th anniversary. The original nine squares including the Green were laid out in 1638. The town of Westville began two years later in 1640. It was at that time when the land west of York Street was first apportioned. During this period, the area was known as "the Waste" and/or "the Commons." The year 1990, then, will be the 350th anniversary of the Commons or, as it is now called, Westville.

The names "Waste" and "Commons" were used because Westville was not heavily settled and was considered a long distance from the city. Westville's location was to help shape its community history and gave Westville a unique blend of beauty, industry, and pride. These early names, as well as the reasons for them, offer a good starting point in studying this unit.

One of Westville's first prominent citizens was a tenant farmer, Richard Sperry. Sperry, whose family later had a successful business, The Pond Lily Company, is best known for his part in the Judges' Cave story. (A special section on the Pond Lily Company is presented later in this paper.)

The Judges' story begins in July 1660 when William Goffe and Edward Whalley landed at Boston. They were two of the judges who had decreed the beheading of King Charles I of England. Charles I had been found guilty

of treason during the Civil War struggle for power between the King and Parliament. Charles I died in 1649.

The Puritan Revolution of the 1640s in England was a signal of things to come in the 1770s here in the United States. Dissatisfaction in England began long before the American Revolution. This dissatisfaction and eventual revolution were led by Oliver Cromwell, whose followers had ordered the King's death. Cromwell ruled England with a commonwealth form of government between 1649 and 1660, the years between the death of Charles I and the monarchy of Charles II.

After Charles II was restored to the throne in 1660, he ordered the arrest of the judges who had condemned his father. Nineteen of the regicides surrendered; others were taken as they attempted to flee. Ten of those caught were beheaded.

After Goffe and Whalley landed in Boston, it soon became unsafe as King Charles' officers sought them with warrants for their arrest. They then fled to the New Haven colony where, at a citizen's meeting, Richard Sperry told of a shelter where the regicides would be safe. This was the famous Judges' Cave.

For months Sperry brought food and fresh water to the judges and kept the secret of their location even from his son John. Not until years later did John know the true identity of the two mysterious visitors. Richard Sperry had the same type of courage as those who would fight more than 100 years later for freedom in the American Revolution. He risked his safety and that of his family for what he believed. Throughout the following years, Richard Sperry and his family prospered. The wilderness was being transformed into farms as more settlers came into the district.

Sample Lesson Plan I, which follows, deals with the story of Judges' Cave. It should be approached in relation to the Puritan Revolution and not solely as a Westville event.

During this same period, in 1658, New Haven Sheriff Joshua Hotchkiss built a home at what is now the corner of Whalley Avenue and Blake Street. As others moved to the area, Westville gradually took the name of "Hotchkissville." Another account says that John Munson's property in the Beaver Pond neighborhood finally went to his son-in-law Caleb Hotchkiss, giving the area its name. Many present day streets in Westville are named for early settlers of Westville. The teacher should encourage students to identify these streets and keep a record or even a map on which to write the street names. Hotchkiss and Munson are only two examples of the many that will be mentioned.

More than 100 years later, on July 5, 1779, the British attacked New Haven at Westville. During that battle three members of the Hotchkiss family were killed. The British, who probably came across Forest Road, had landed in West Haven. They were turned back where Edgewood Park is now located. An old cannon marks the site of this historic battle.

The British attack on Westville should be taught in connection with reasons for the American Revolution as well as its outcome. "What if...?" types of questions can add to this study. For example: "What if the colonists of Westville had lost their fight?"; "What if the American colonists had lost their fight?"

The first 200 years (1640-1840) of Westville's history were rather slow in terms of expansion. One reason for this is that most of New Haven's expansion was toward the east. Westville remained, for the most part, isolated. Westville was inland, away from the harbor; Whalley Avenue was not paved; and the Westville end of Chapel Street was not connected with New Haven until the mid-1800s. Transportation was obviously difficult and primitive. As a result, Westville never became a large industrial area. Being isolated for nearly 200 years

may have contributed to a community spirit and community life. Families of Westville became very close and powerful, and their actions for the most part determined Westville's direction. Sample Plan II deals with the location of Westville.

Westville's families met at the Westville Tavern, which was once located at the junction of Fountain Street and Whalley Avenue. Going back to the War of 1812, this hostelry was always a public gathering place, first being an ale house and hotel. Under the proprietorship of Charlie Morse, and later his widow, the tavern became famous for its dinners and quiet atmosphere. Nothing very exciting happened at the Tavern, although it was the gathering place of the politicians. Here deals were made and put through whenever possible. Westville people determined Westville's destiny during this period. This point should be stressed. A comparison to today can be made asking the question, "How much control does each person have of his or her destiny today?"

One exception to the quiet routine of early Westville was the story of Captain Thunderbolt, the "Bogyman" of Westville. About 1830, it is said, the people of Westville were stirred out of their routine by the appearance of an uncouth, furtive-eyed man who came to the Pendleton Tavern for board and gave his name as Wilson. His queer actions and refusal to engage in conversation could not be understood. He would disappear for months, return unexpectedly and have plenty of money. No one knew his occupation and no one trusted this man who would not look one squarely in the eyes and who traveled at night.

One exception to his coldness was when he married a domestic at the boarding house. People thought he hypnotized her and her friends begged her not to marry him. The couple lived in what was said to be a haunted house on the Litchfield Turnpike, far from the center of Westville and set way back from the road, accessible only through a narrow lane. When people visited his wife, he would run out the back way. His wife was harnessed at times to a cart during the harvest like a beast of burden driven by her lord and master. One time he chased her nearly a mile with a carving knife, swearing to kill her over a trivial thing. He was disarmed by two men and would have been punished except for the pleading of his abused wife.

Later, a pamphlet from Scotland came offering a reward for the notorious robber chief "Captain Thunderbolt" supposed to have fled to this country after committing numerous crimes. For his wife's sake, no investigation was made to see if Wilson was this notorious robber, but everyone believed this was the case. At any rate, old Wilson died carrying his secret to the grave.

The story of Captain Thunderbolt points out once more how Westville was used as a refuge. As with Judges Whalley and Goffe, Westville's isolation was ideal for a secret life. For Westville, Captain Thunderbolt broke a normally quiet routine and caused quite a stir in the community. Creative writing assignments dealing with Captain Thunderbolt's past life, or reasons for his secrecy, are suggested.

Children should be encouraged to compare the location of other communities with that of Westville; and to study the effect location has on types of people, industry, and agriculture. As we have seen, early Westville was a quiet, inland town with farming as its major occupation. The Fair Haven neighborhood and the Hill neighborhood offer good comparisons. Sample Lesson Plan II, which follows, deals with Westville's locations.

Industrial Westville

The early settlers of Westville were predominantly farmers. William Alden, for whom Alden Avenue was named, was but one of these farmers. Alden and many others contributed much to Westville's pride and were typical of Westville's quiet style of life.

Yet, Westville did have the West River and West Rock mountain; these two natural resources allowed some industry to develop. Three of the companies to be studied located along the West River to use the river for their power. The three are The Pond Lily Company, The Parker Company, and The Diamond Match Company. The Whitney Blake Company, using West Rock and the surrounding quarries, was also of major importance.

Despite Westville's location away from the city, significant industrial firsts came from Westville. The families of Westville were responsible for many of these important firsts.

One of Westville's most famous families was the Beechers. Anson Beecher moved to Westville in 1852 with his wife Nancy Benton Beecher and his four sons, Ebenezer, Lucius, Lyman and William. Beecher School is named for his inventive family. The Beechers moved from Woodbridge (then called Plymouth), where two years earlier they began match-making. Woodbridge's Thomas Stanford had developed a formula for making the friction match by hand. Stanford, in fact, is credited with the invention of the sulfur match, and this should be noted by the teacher. Upon arriving in Westville, Beecher established the firm of Anson Beecher & Sons, which invented machinery nationally used to produce machine-made matches of many types. Later, the company combined with the Swift and Courtney company and, at the end of 1880, it became the Diamond Match Company with the Beechers as one of the major owners. The Beecher Match Company's location in Westville is the present site of the Geometric Tool Company. A tour of this company is possible by contacting their office.

The Beecher family also contributed other notable firsts. They are said to have made the first pins with hard heads in this country, a new type of berry basket, and one of the first straw hats. Benton School, with its emphasis on music, was erected through their efforts. The school was located on Whalley Avenue and Harrison Street where Temple Beth El is now located.

Another famous match-maker from Westville was Thomas Gorman, whose company on Whalley Avenue burned in 1870. The fire lasted three days and discolored many houses. One other match-maker during the 1860s was Edwin Tyler, who combined with James Hotchkiss. Tyler was killed in 1874 by an explosion of composition. Hotchkiss shortly afterwards joined the Diamond Match Company.

The fact that Westville had as many match factories as it did suggests that factories may have been started by foremen or other workers who, after working in one factory, learned enough to begin their own. This learning by experience and then beginning a new company was not confined to Westville and the match industry and should not be treated as such; it was typical of industrializing America.

The teacher may wish to point to the cigar industry in New Haven as another example. Rollin Osterweis has stated that the F.D. Grave Company, which still operates in New Haven, was begun by Frederick Grave after he had served as foreman of the Osterweis Company, keeping their best products and adding them to his own line, which included the Judges' Cave cigar. Children should be encouraged to find other such examples in American or foreign industry and share them with the class.

In addition to the Diamond Match Company, a second industry was located a little further up the West River. This was the Joseph Parker Company where fine book paper was made out of cotton waste. Parker also invented newspaper mats and blotting paper. A Scotsman, Parker brought many Scots to Westville, where they lived along Whalley Avenue. Much of the information on the Parker Brothers Company presented here is from an interview with Leonard Michaelson, Jr., past secretary of Parker Brothers and current resident of Westville. Children can, after reading and discussing this section, be assigned an oral history project. Interviewing techniques should be stressed before the students begin these interviews. Citizens in an area are

a valuable resource in studying local history.

In 1840, Frederick S. Parker and his son Joseph established the paper mill as a family business. Between 1840 and 1892 it was operated as the J.S. and J. Parker Company. During the time between 1840 and 1856, the Parkers made book paper from cotton. They also made “flongs” or mats. Flongs were used in printing. These mats were wet together with a matrix and tissue paper helped to print newspapers. Lead was poured over the matrix and the type and pressed together for printing. This went out soon, however, as dry mats were developed which were much easier to use.

After 1856, the production of book papers also ceased when the firm discovered it could make blotting paper. Only one mill, the Ford Paper Co., Ltd. in England made blotting paper and their paper was thin. Thus there was a large market for the paper. Sand shakers were used before blotting paper in this country, hence the large market. From 1856 on, blotting paper was the Parker Company’s only product.

Blotting paper was actually discovered by an error in the mill in 1856. The beaterman (whose job it was to mix the batter) was making a batch for the book papers. Book paper had to be glued to close the fibers and make it smooth for writing. This process was called “sizing.” This day the “sizing” was left out and the fibers did not close. The mistake hit the Foundrinier machine (used to make the paper) and it just lay there. The mistake was put aside and the beaterman was probably docked or even let go. Later, Joseph Parker, on a trip to a New York account, Brunridge, Kimpton and Haupt, brought some of the paper with him. They saw it was suitable as a blotting paper. It was heavier; and thus Parker was in the blotting business.

The period from 1890 until the Depression was the peak of the Parker Company’s operation. During this time, and even after, blotting paper was used greatly in advertisements. Insurance companies sent fliers on blotting paper, as did banks and many others. Everyone used it and it cost no more to mail. Coasters and photographic drying paper are present-day uses of blotting paper. Ballpoint pens, however, have for the most part made it obsolete.

A third industry along the West River was the Pond Lily Company, with which one section of this Unit will deal. *The Pond Lily Company, The Story Of One American Business*, should be used with this section.

Thirty copies are available for loan from Sheridan for classroom use. The company was chosen for study because of the Sperry family’s role in the story of Judges’ Cave, as well as because of the company’s growth and changes which typified Westville and the country.

Levi Sperry, a descendant of Richard, decided there was a need for a grist-mill in his district. The West River ran through his land; he built a dam to supply power and erected the mill in 1794. For about 50 years the Sperry mill served farmers of the vicinity by grinding their corn and grain.

In 1809, James Brewster had formed a small company in New Haven to begin the manufacturing of carriages. This business grew and other factories were opened. New Haven was becoming the carriage center of the world. The mill owners saw the growth of industrialism and the grist-mill was closed and dismantled. A factory was erected on the site for the manufacturing of springs and axles to be used in carriages and in wagons. In 1856 fire broke out and the entire plant was destroyed. Its reconstruction required several years.

In 1861 war came again. Civil War wagons were used for supplies and transport. Axles and springs were smashed on wagons and gun carriages at Bull Run, Antietam, Vicksburg, and Gettysburg. They had to be replaced. The Pond Lily Company supplied the replacements in great quantities during the war years.

Times changed after the War as well, and there was a severe depression which lasted from 1873 until the middle of 1879. Axle and spring manufacturing stopped. The Southern market was gone and war production no longer needed.

At this time, Joseph Parker had developed a new process for the manufacture of paper. His papermill was near the Pond Lily mill (at the foot of the hill near Whalley and Dayton Street). Because of the better prospects in the manufacture of paper and the abundant water supply, the Pond Lily Company entered that business.

In 1896, the Pond Lily Company established the present textile dyeing and finishing business. At first, much of the material dyed was for carriage tops and later automobiles. The firm also dyed shoes and fabric for the government during World Wars I and II.

What is more important than the company itself are the changes and times it went through. They reflect the social changes that Westville as a whole experienced, as did the rest of the country and the world. This section should be studied with this in mind. Sample Lesson Plan III follows dealing with changes in society which not only affected Westville, but the world.

Westville also was famous for its foundries. The most notable was that of Eli Whitney Blake, nephew of Eli Whitney's wife. Blake became a great figure in American industry. His papers on elastic fluid and the velocity and transmission of sound were ahead of his time. Blake's most important invention, however, was the stone-crusher or macadmizer, which enabled men to construct a road by laying successive layers of broken stone rapidly. He first used the stone-crusher to pave Whalley Avenue and connect Westville with New Haven during the 1850s. According to Blake, the stone-crusher or macadmizer did the work of a hundred men at a fifth the cost. He went on to say that by 1872 the 509 machines in existence had already saved \$55,000,000 in labor costs. The stone-crusher had changed the face of the earth. Children may have ideas on how paved roads did change the world and how Westville, despite its small size, did, in fact, revolutionize transportation. These ideas should be developed.

The Merriman & Son foundry and the G.C. Hotchkiss foundry, both located upstream on the West River at the present day West Hills, made such things as axes, knives, blinds and window trimming. Combining West Rock with the West River afforded these opportunities. Hardware and cutlery plants also operated in Westville using these resources. Philos Blake invented the corkscrew in Westville at the Blake Brothers hardware shop on Pearl Street, which is now called Blake Street in honor of this famous family.

References should be made to Westville's role in the development of the steel industry. Westville had many of the country's early foundries and ironworks. With its resources, Westville also had an influence on the carriage industry for which New Haven was famous throughout much of the world.

While Blake's stone-crusher connected Whalley Avenue to Westville and private citizens built the Chapel Street Bridge, Westville was not officially a part of New Haven until well along in the 20th Century. Residents had feared higher taxes and were, in fact, granted special tax benefits for several years.

Westville In The Arts

There are many different ways to look at a city. It is a place to live, a source of work, but also a place for education, recreation and culture. A little over one hundred years ago Donald G. Mitchell was Westville's most distinguished citizen. He owned a 200-acre farm on the west side of Whalley Avenue and may have owned land that is now part of or adjacent to Southern Connecticut State College. But it was Mitchell's writing rather

than wealth which made him important.

Writing under the pen name "Ik Marvel," Mitchell wrote his best known works, *Reveries a Bachelor* (1850) and *Dream Life* (1852). In both works Mitchell offers the reader insight into experiences of life and feelings we all share. A great deal of symbolism is used by Mitchell to better describe his thoughts and dreams. In *Reveries of a Bachelor*, the present is related to noon, a brief moment which belongs to us and which we should not waste. In *Dream Life* he uses the seasons to relate the periods of his life. He begins with spring and the many dreams of boyhood and continues through to winter, the end of dreams. All of Mitchell's writings, including *My Farm At Edgewood*, in which he describes how he found his land and enjoyed his home, can be found at the Mitchell Library on Harrison Street in Westville.

The teacher may wish to assign a report on one of Mitchell's works or perhaps the work of one of his contemporaries. Washington Irving was a close friend of Mitchell's and the two men shared many of their thoughts with one another. A feeling for this period in history can be developed through such a reading assignment. One additional note: if you do visit the Mitchell Library, the West End Juniors have identified many different types of trees in the area surrounding the library; and studying the various types which are present can be a very worthwhile science lesson related to this unit.

In addition to his fame as a writer, there are links between the Mitchell family and the family that founded Tiffany and Company in New York, and directed the production of America's most famous glass. Donald Mitchell's younger brother, Alfred, married Charles Tiffany's oldest daughter, Annie. Also, Louis C. Tiffany, Charles Tiffany's son, married Mary Woodbridge Goddard, the daughter of Donald Mitchell's cousin and dearest friend. The three families, Tiffany, Mitchell and Woodbridge, had a profound effect on the taste of America and the world before 1900.

Louis C. Tiffany was greatly influenced by Mitchell, who had said that perhaps this country could make its greatest contributions in architecture and the decorative arts through the use of stained glass. The quarter of a century following this statement has come to be known as the "stained-glass decades." In fact, Donald Mitchell's son, Pringle Mitchell, born at "Edgewood" in 1858, became a partner in the firm.

Tiffany's fame as a decorator and designer grew and grew. In the summer of 1881 he redecorated Mark Twain's home in Hartford, and in 1882 he was called by President Chester Arthur for alterations on the White House. One of the first Tiffany stained-glass windows to be installed outside of New York was commissioned by the Mitchell family and presented in 1885 to the Church of St. James the Apostle in Westville where it can still be seen in the building at 110 Marvel Road. The window is a simple but elegant design with Christian symbols.

Mitchell was also responsible for laying out many Westville streets and for designing Edgewood Park and East Rock Park. Other examples of beauty and the maturing of Westville can be found. Westville was no longer just growing; it was now aware of its leisure time and sought to beautify its surroundings. Manufacturing had caused surplus wealth. People built larger churches, homes and schools. Parks and other leisure activities such as dances and outings began.

John M. Greist, the past president, treasurer and general manager of the Greist Manufacturing Company, which made sewing machine attachments, built his home at "Marvelwood" with a 700-acre backyard, now the site of the Yale Golf Course. Mr. Greist brought a herd of elk and deer to his land to create a game reserve. A wire fence surrounded the preserve, seven miles long. If straightened, the fence would stretch from Woodbridge to the New Haven Green. Of his beautiful home and magnificent grounds, Greist said, "Marvelwood is my hobby." The public was allowed to visit. The fence had seven gates on Forest Road,

Fountain Street and at other points.

One other home at 987 Forest Road, "Greenway," is that of Jennie Jerome. Now retired, Jennie was the Art Librarian at the Main Library, downtown, for 35 years. She was, and still is, a city treasure. Jennie Jerome is a direct descendant of Matthew Gilbert, the first deputy governor of the New Haven colony. Also, Lady Randolph Churchill, mother of the late Prime Minister of Great Britain, came from the Jerome family. Jennie Jerome is yet another example of Westville's contribution to the City of New Haven. Her autobiography is located at the Main Library and she can be contacted at her home for a possible oral history if more information is desired. Other such prominent Westville residents should be sought out by students, as only the surface of Westville's heritage has been covered in this guide.

Conclusion

A sense of pride should be developed not only toward Westville, but New Haven as well. Many New Haven residents have made significant contributions. We should be proud of our city and aware of its accomplishments. An interest in local history will, I hope, increase community pride and awareness. Perhaps we can add to the great tradition New Haven possesses.

Sample Lesson Plans

Lesson I

Concept: What was the Puritan Revolution and Westville's role in it?

Performance Objective: The student will be able to tell the story of Judges' Cave and relate it to the Puritan Revolution.

Lesson Outline:

1. Richard Sperry will be identified. Read Chapter I, *The Pond Lily Company, The Story of One American Business* .
2. William Goffe and Edward Whalley's journey from England to Westville should be traced.
3. Charles I, Charles II and Oliver Cromwell should be discussed. The Puritan Revolution should be part of this section. Reports on the Civil War in England may be assigned at this point.
4. Reasons for Goffe and Whalley's flight and Sperry's willingness to protect the Judges should be discussed.
5. Later in the unit there will be a study of the Sperry family's business, The Pond Lily Company. Locate the site of this company at Whalley Avenue and the Litchfield Turnpike.
6. The fact that Westville was isolated enough to hide the Judges should be discussed. Why was this a good place to seek safety?

Vocabulary Providence Hill, Oliver Cromwell, treason, Edward I, Edward II, condemn, flee, prosper, transform, Puritan Revolution, regicide, Parliament, monarchy, commonwealth, decree, shelter, wilderness

Materials The Pond Lily Company , The Story of One American Business (John Francis Welch, 1971), 30 copies available at Sheridan Middle School.

Eugene Keyarts, *Short Walks In Connecticut* , Volume I, (The Pequot Press, 1968).

Possible Field Trip The Regicides Trail is shown in Short Walks in Connecticut. It would make a very nice class hike, beginning perhaps at the Pond Lily Company or West Rock Park and proceeding to Judges' Cave. Unfortunately, the Cave is not in good condition. Graffiti and other acts of vandalism are evident. Letters to city officials and/or fundraising events may be additional class activities. Pride in Westville and New Haven should be stressed. Children might want to discuss why such acts of vandalism occur and what can be done to improve pride in New Haven.

Lesson II

Concept: How does the location of a community determine its industrial development? Why are many large cities located near water?

Performance Objectives. The student will: (1) identify by name three industries of Westville and give their locations; (2) state two reasons for their locations; (3) locate Los Angeles, New York and Chicago and write three reasons for the large growth of these cities; and (4) name at least four other major cities in Connecticut and give their locations, major industries, and type of community.

Lesson Outline:

1. New Haven will be located on a map of Connecticut and shown to be a coastal city.
2. Westville will be shown to be a somewhat inland part of New Haven. Colored yarn can be used to measure the distance from each New Haven neighborhood to the harbor. It will then be clear that Westville is not as close as some New Haven neighborhoods. Early New Haven industry depended a great deal on the harbor, and Westville's longer distance from the harbor and a poor transportation system are reasons Westville was not a large industrial center.
3. The West River should be located, as well as The Parker Paper Company, The Pond Lily Company and the Geometric Tool Company (former Beecher Match Company). Why were these industries located on the river? The idea of water power is important. While Westville did not have a harbor location, this river and West Rock Mountain did afford an opportunity for some industry.
4. Different methods of transportation in the 18th and 19th centuries should be discussed. A study of the harbor and/or the carriage industry may be appropriate.
5. The terms "imports" and "exports" should be defined. Westville was, from 1640 through 1840, a farming community and grew slowly, unlike many coastal cities which dealt largely with other cities and countries.
6. Reasons Los Angeles and New York are so large should be introduced. Both of these cities are

coastal cities, closer to other nations, and have goods and services to trade. Chicago should be shown as a transportation link between parts of the United States. Although not a coastal city, it is located on the Great Lakes.

7. Connecticut cities with over 100,000 population should be located. Types of industries in these cities should be discussed. New Haven, Bridgeport, Hartford, Waterbury and Stamford are the five Connecticut cities in this category.

8. The 33 Connecticut cities with over 25,000 population should be located by the students. These 33 cities are listed in many sources dealing with population growth. Plotting these 33 cities will give a clear picture of where cities are located as well as help children learn the names of Connecticut's major cities.

Vocabulary inland, industry, coast, location, import, transportation, export, harbor, landlocked.

Materials Maps of United States, Connecticut, and New Haven, colored yarn, set of encyclopedias, almanac.

Possible Field Trips Liberty Belle boat trip departing from Long Wharf.

Walk along West River culminating, perhaps, with visit of Geometric Tool Company at the corner of Blake and Valley Streets.

Lesson III

Concept: How does the Pond Lily Company's history reflect changes in society both in Westville and the rest of the world?

Performance Objective: The students will be able to trace the growth of The Pond Lily Company through the use of a time line showing not only changes in products, but also showing changes in society as a whole.

Lesson Outline:

1. The Pond Lily Company has undergone many changes throughout its history. We will be tracing these changes and learning why they occurred, as well as what was happening at the time in society.
2. The Pond Lily Company history begins in 1794. Chapter Two in *The Pond Lily Company*

describes this beginning. There was a need for a grist-mill to grind corn and grain. Levy Sperry (a descendant of Richard Sperry) was its founder. Agriculture was very important during this period, as industry had not yet developed to any great extent.

3. A time line with 1794, the grist-mill, and agriculture should be drawn.

4. The year 1809 saw James Brewster form a small carriage shop. This company, of course, grew, as did many others. Society was entering the industrial era, and the Pond Lily Company realized that it, too, must change. So they began making springs and axles for carriages. On the time line, the period from 1809 through 1860 should be marked as a growing period both for society, the carriage industry, and the Pond Lily Company.

5. The Civil War years (1861-1865) should be marked on the time line. During this period, the Pond Lily Company made axle and wagon springs for the Army. Many people as well as industries were preoccupied with the war. The Pond Lily Company and society responded to this change.

6. The Pond Lily Company changes several other times throughout its history. The advent of the automobile, World Wars I and II, and the Depression are examples of other times during which changes occurred. Always, as the company changed, society as a whole was changing. These changes in society and in the company should be marked on the time line.

7. Chapters Two through Five in *The Pond Lily Company* deal with the changes in the company. These chapters should be read by the class. As changes in the company occur, trends in society should also be noted.

8. The Pond Lily Company is typical of many companies not only in Westville, but throughout the country, which were affected by society and changed accordingly. Local history can and should serve as a springboard in dealing with history in the broader sense. The Pond Lily Company and its story offer such an opportunity.

9. You may wish to go back through the time line noting cultural changes during each period. For example, agricultural society probably was centered on religion while industry gave people more money and more of a culture of leisure.

Vocabulary time line, agriculture, grist-mill, industry, textiles, Civil War, carriage industry, World Wars I and II, Depression, society, culture (additional vocabulary will develop from text, The Pond Lily Company).

Materials Th e Pond Lily Company, The Story of One American Business , John Frances Welch (1971).

Maps:

The following two maps were taken from Beers' *Atlas of New Haven County* , published in New York in 1868.

Copies of the maps are available from the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute office for classroom use. Listed below are examples of some ideas for which these maps can be used:

- (1) Many street names were changed to avoid confusion with existing streets of the same name when Westville became part of New Haven. For instance, Whalley Avenue was Main Street. Children should extrapolate other examples of such changes.
- (2) Cardinal points can be taught using the maps.
- (3) Distances can be calculated using scale of miles.
- (4) Units of measurement, such as rods, can be introduced.
- (5) The concept of wards can be developed. How many wards are there today in New Haven? What is your ward? Who is the representative?
- (6) The distance from each area of New Haven to the harbor can be calculated.
- (7) Imaginary trips from place to place can be planned.
- (8) New maps can be drawn to show changes in the Westville area and in the rest of New Haven.
- (9) People and places studied in the unit can be located.
- (10) Transportation routes and types of transportation can be discovered.

(figure available in print form)

(figure available in print form)

Teacher Bibliography

* **Teacher and Student Bibliography**

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