



Connecticut Constitutionalism, 1639-1789

Curriculum Unit 80.ch.02
by Donald J. Surprenant

Performance Objectives: At the conclusion of this lesson the children should be able to:

1. identify Thomas Hooker and what he did.
2. identify the three reasons for leaving the Bay Colony.
3. identify the Holmes Company and their part in early settlements.
4. identify John Oldham and his settlement.

Procedures:

Students would be introduced to the geography of Connecticut through the use of maps, overhead projector and ditto maps that the students can complete themselves. The students would be encouraged to discover: what attracted settlers to Connecticut in the first place?; what was the importance of the rivers to these early settlers?; are there parallels in the early settlement of Connecticut to that of the Massachusetts Bay Colony?

Lesson II

Performance Objectives: At the conclusion of this lesson the children should be able to:

1. identify the significance of the Warwick Patent.
2. identify early conflict between Saybrook and the River Colony.
3. identify the importance of the Pequot Indians.

Procedures:

Students would be introduced to the Warwick Patent via overhead projector. Students would be encouraged to identify the major component parts of the document. Then proceed to trace the Pequot Indians and their quest to drive the whiteman from Connecticut. Identify major battle areas.

APPENDIX A—The Fundamental Orders of Connecticut—1639

(Transliteration from the original by Albert Carlos Bates)

(figure available in print form)

APPENDIX B—The Fundamental Orders of Connecticut Modernized

By-the Grace of Almighty God, we the people of the towns of Windsor, Hartford and Wethersfield, are living upon the banks of the Connecticut River and the adjoining lands. Wishing to maintain peace and unity, we come together to establish a government. We will call ourselves a Public state or Commonwealth. We promise to preserve and protect the liberty and purity of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to maintain the discipline of our established Churches.

For our civil laws we shall be governed by the following:

1) It is ordained that we the people will hold two courts or assemblies yearly. The first will convene on the second Thursday of April and the second Thursday in September for the purpose of choosing magistrates, other public officials and a governor. There are to be chosen six judges to administer the laws. These people are to be chosen by a major part of the freemen who have sworn allegiance to this colony.

2) It is ordained that the election be done by secret written ballot. That the freemen will choose from those listed. The Magistrates will be those who have received the most votes. They in turn, will choose one from their own (seven magistrates) to be the Governor for the year.

3) It is ordered that no one may be elected or chosen a Magistrate if he has not served in the General Court. The towns may nominate two people who meet the pre-requisite to represent them (in the towns).

4) It is ordered that the Governor:

- a. be a member of an approved congregation.
- b. be chosen no more than once every two years.
- c. be a former magistrate.
- d. be not allowed to take office until duly sworn in.

5) It is ordered that after the election the deputies, Magistrates, Governor and other public officials will conduct themselves in a public manner befitting their position.

6) It is ordered that the Governor shall send out a notice one month before the convening of each General Court. A special session may be called on fourteen days notice, and upon shorter time if necessary. If the Governor fails to call into session the General Court, then the Magistrates can. If the Magistrates fail to call into session the General Court, then the freemen can by agreement or a majority of them. The deputies would then choose a moderator from among themselves.

7) It is ordered that notice of call for the General Court shall be posted by the Constables in a public place. The town's freemen assemble to choose deputies who will represent them and that each deputy will be duly sworn in. Each town may choose three or four deputies, and these will be chosen by written ballot.

8) It is ordered that the towns of Windsor, Hartford, and Wethersfield may send fewer deputies. It is also ordered that new towns coming into the Commonwealth would be allowed deputies dependent upon the number of freemen residing in the town. These new towns would be bound to the laws enacted.

9) It is ordered that the deputies will have the power and liberty to:

a) appoint the place of meetings.

b) deal with the things that concern the good of the public.

c) examine their own election

d) may throw out deputies not duly elected.

e) may fine any intruding party.

f) call for new elections.

g) deputies can levy fines for infractions of the laws, these fines are to be turned over to the Treasurer of the General Court.

10) It is ordered that the General Court, if called by the freemen will consist of the Governor, or moderator four magistrates, and a majority of the deputies. It will then be the supreme power of the Commonwealth. It will make laws, repeal laws, grant levies, admit freemen, dispose of lands previously undisposed of. It will be able to call public officials in on misdemeanors, and can throw them out of office. The moderator will grant liberty of speech and silence disorderly speaking. He will put all things to a vote and vote himself only if there is a tie.

11) It is ordered that the committee be chosen to decide how much money should be collected from each town.

APPENDIX C—THE FUNDAMENTAL LAWS OF NEW HAVEN

(Figure available in print form)

APPENDIX D—THE ROYAL CHARTER OF 1662

(Figure available in print form)

Bibliography

Abranowitz, Jack. *American History Study Lesson* . No. 1 and 2. Chicago: Follett Publishing Co., 1945. This series includes text readings with worksheets with the main emphasis placed upon the United States Constitution.

Bates, Albert C. *The Charter of Connecticut 1662* . New Haven. Yale University Press. 1933. This book is one of a series published for the Tercentenary Commission of the State of Connecticut.

Brant, Irving. *The Nationalist, James Madison* . Vols. 1, 2, and 3. New York: The Bobbs-Merill Company, 1948. The series is excellent for catching a glimpse of Madison the man, and his influence upon the United States Constitution.

Butz, Otto. *Of Man and Politics* . New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston. 1960. A good work to give the individual a background in what is Constitutionalism.

Collier, Christopher. *Connecticut in the Continental Congress* . Chester, Conn. Pequot Press. 1973. A fascinating, easily read book, which gives rich insights into the parts played by Connecticut in the Continental Congress.

Collier, Christopher. *Roger Sherman: Puritan Politician* . New Haven. Colony Historical Society. 1976. Written for the person who is looking for an account of one of Connecticut's great political characters. The book is well written and easily read.

Collier, Christopher. *Roger Sherman's Connecticut* . Middletown, Connecticut. Wesleyan University Press. 1971.

Dutcher, George M. et al. *The Fundamental Orders of Connecticut*. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1933. This book is one of a series published for the Tercentenary Commission of the State of Connecticut.

Gordon, Irving L. *American Studies: A Conceptual Approach* . New York: Amsco School Publications Inc., 1977. This is an excellent textbook for the teacher to use. It gives a topical approach to the materials which saves time from looking through a whole chapter.

Hacker, Andrew. *The Federalist Papers*. New York: Washington Square Press. 1964. Readings from men attending the Continental Congress and the Constitutional Convention.

Jones, Mary Jeanne Anderson. *Congregational Commonwealth Connecticut , 1636-1662* . Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press. 1968. This book is limited to the problems of the Puritans in Connecticut. It is good for a factual relatively indepth reading, but it is very dry reading. Not for someone looking for a quick overview of the period.

McDonald, Forrest. *The Formation of the American Republic 1776-1796* . Baltimore: Penguin Books. Inc., 1965. A relatively good book on the formation of the American Republic. I found it also on the dry side. Definitely not for someone looking for that quick overview.

McLaughlin, Andrew C. *The Confederation and the Constitution* . New York: Collier Books. 1967. This book I found better reading than McDonald's. It covers the same basic period of time and does a good job of covering the materials.

Morgan, Edmonds. *The Puritan Dilemma* . Boston: Little, Brown and Co. 1958. I found this book applicable because it gave me some idea of what Hooker, Williams, et al. were leaving. A short book, relatively quick reading.

Purcell, Richard J. *Connecticut in Transition, 1775-1818* . Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press. 1963. A fascinating book, easily read, humorous in spots. It is good reading and will give to the reader a change in historical writing.

<https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu>

©2019 by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Yale University

For terms of use visit <https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu/terms>