

**AN HISTORICAL DISCOURSE IN  
COMMEMORATION OF THE TWO-  
HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE  
SETTLEMENT OF NORWALK, CT., IN 1651:  
DELIVERED IN THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL  
CHURCH IN NORWALK, JULY 9, 1851**

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An historical discourse in commemoration of the two-hundredth anniversary of the settlement of Norwalk, Ct, in 1651: delivered in the First Congregational Church in Norwalk, July 9, 1851 by Nathaniel Bouton

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**NATHANIEL BOUTON**

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AN

# HISTORICAL DISCOURSE

IN

Commemoration of the Two-Hundredth Anniversary

OF THE

SETTLEMENT OF NORWALK, CT., IN 1651;

DELIVERED IN THE

First Congregational Church in Norwalk, July 9, 1851.

BY REV. NATHANIEL BOUTON,

OF CONCORD, N. H.

NEW YORK:

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Norwalk, July 9, 1851.

REV. NATHANIEL BOUTON,

Dear Sir,

In behalf of their fellow citizens, this day assembled to commemorate the Two-Hundredth Anniversary of the settlement of the Town, the undersigned, appointed a committee for that purpose at the close of the public exercises of the occasion, would return you the cordial thanks of the people for your highly interesting and able Discourse, and would respectfully solicit a copy of the same for publication.

GEO. W. BETTS,  
EDWIN HALL,  
C. E. DISBROW,  
S. W. BENEDICT,

*Committee.*

TO  
THE INHABITANTS OF THE TOWN OF NORWALK;  
AND TO THE  
DESCENDANTS OF THE ORIGINAL SETTLERS,  
SCATTERED IN EVERY PART OF OUR COMMON COUNTRY;

**This Discourse**

IS VERY RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED BY

THE AUTHOR.

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## DISCOURSE.

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It must be deemed most appropriate to this occasion, to acknowledge with profound gratitude, at the very commencement of these services, the Divine goodness to us and to our fathers; and to adopt, as significant of our design, the inspired declaration: "ONE GENERATION SHALL PRAISE THY WORKS UNTO ANOTHER AND SHALL DECLARE THY MIGHTY ACTS."\* We meet to commemorate the settlement of the town; to repeat the names, rehearse the deeds, enumerate the trials, sacrifices and sufferings; to celebrate, and, we trust, to imitate the virtues of our ancestors. Some of us come with glad hearts from remote places to greet kindred and friends; to visit once more our native HOMES—the loved scenes of our childhood and youth—to see where our fathers first built their habitations and to walk over their graves. We come to survey once more from nature's amphitheater of hills and from the top of "the rocks," a scene more beautiful and picturesque of islands and main, of sea and land, of hill and dale, of dwellings and ships, than ever in other spots, saluted our eyes. We all meet

\* Ps. 145 : 4.

to praise and to give thanks to the God of our fathers, that through his benignant Providence, the "lines" of our nativity or our habitation "are fallen to us in these pleasant places," and that we derive from them "this goodly heritage."

Two hundred years ago the present season, the settlement of this town was begun. At a session of the General Court of the Colony of Connecticut, 26th June, 1650, NATHANIEL ELY and RICHARD OLNSTEAD in the behalf of themselves and other inhabitants of Hartford, desired the leave and approbation of the Court for planting of Norwaake;\* to whom an answer was returned in substance as follows: "That the Court could not but approve of the endeavors of men for the further improvement of the wilderness, by the beginning and carrying on of new plantations in an orderly way; and leaving the consideration of the just grounds of the proceedings of the petitioners to its proper place, did manifest their willingness to promote their design by all due encouragement, in case their way for such an undertaking were found clear and good; and provided the numbers and quality of those that engage therein appear to be such as may rationally carry on the work to the advantage of the public welfare and peace; that they may make preparations and provisions for their own defence and safety, that the country may not be exposed to unnecessary trouble and danger in these hazardous times; that the divisions of lands there to such as shall inhabit, be made by just rules and with the approbation

\* The spelling is retained as in the original record.

of a committee appointed for that end by this Court or to be rectified by the Court in case of aberrations, and that they attend a due payment of their proportions in all public charges, with a ready observation of the other wholesome orders of the country."\*

This is the first mention of Norwalk in the ancient records of the Colony. In order to understand distinctly the situation of the place at that time, and the preparatory steps to its settlement, it may be briefly stated that the Connecticut colony was begun in 1635, by emigrants from the vicinity of Boston: "About one hundred men, women, and children, took their departure from Dorchester, Newtown† and Watertown, to travel on foot through an unbroken wilderness. They were fourteen days performing the tedious journey. The wilderness then for the first time resounded with the praises of God. They prayed and sung psalms and hymns as they marched along; the Indians following and looking on in silent admiration.‡ These emigrants were of the true Puritan stock—pilgrims fled from oppression and persecution in their native land. They settled, with others, that soon followed, in Windsor, Hartford and Wethersfield.§

\* See Colonial Records of Conn., 1636—1665, p. 210, published by J. Hammond Trumbull, Secretary of State: Hartford, 1850.

† Now Cambridge.

‡ Mass. Hist. Coll., 1st Series, vol. v. p. 167.

§ Among the early settlers of Windsor, we recognize the names of several whose descendants are *now with us* or *of us*. One was the Rev. EPHRAIM HUIT, who came over in 1639, and was colleague pastor with the Rev. John Warham; another was JOHN BISSELL, who came over