

**A HISTORICAL DISCOURSE, DELIVERED  
BEFORE THE CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY, AND THE CITIZENS OF  
HARTFORD ON THE EVENING OF THE  
26TH DECEMBER, 1843**

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A Historical Discourse, Delivered Before the Connecticut Historical Society, and the Citizens of Hartford on the evening of the 26th December, 1843 by Thomas Day

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**THOMAS DAY**

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A  
**HISTORICAL DISCOURSE,**

**DELIVERED BEFORE THE**

**CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL SOCIETY,**

**AND THE**

**CITIZENS OF HARTFORD,**

**ON THE**

**Evening of the 26th day of December, 1843.**

**BY THOMAS DAY,**

**PRESIDENT OF THE CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND OF WADSWORTH  
ATHENÆUM.**

**HARTFORD:**

**PRESS OF CASE, TIFFANY AND BURNHAM.**

**1844.**

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At a meeting of the CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL SOCIETY, January 2d,  
1844:

*Voted*, That the thanks of this Society be presented to HON. THOMAS DAY,  
President of the Society, for his very interesting historical address, delivered  
to the Society, on the 26th of December, 1843, upon the occasion of their  
occupying, for the first time, the rooms in WADSWORTH ATHENÆUM, recent-  
ly prepared for their reception; and that he be requested to furnish a copy of  
the same for the use of the Society.

A true copy,

Attest.—

CHARLES HOSMER, *Recording Secretary.*

## PREFATORY NOTE.

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THE following remarks were prepared at the request of THE CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL SOCIETY, and were originally designed as an address to the members of that Institution, on the occasion of their taking possession of the rooms in WADSWORTH ATHENÆUM destined for their use. About the same time, the Society proposed to give a series of historical lectures to the citizens of Hartford; and the committee charged with that business applied to me to commence the series. It occurred to me, that a subject adapted to one occasion would not be inappropriate to the other; and I concluded to make this two-fold application of the subject I had in preparation; and thus the address and the lecture became identified. The Society first met, on the evening of the 26th of December, 1843, in the south division of the Athenæum; and thence proceeded, shortly afterwards, to the lecture-room of the First Congregational Society, a few rods distant, on the opposite side of the street, where the contents of the following pages were addressed to a numerous and highly respectable assembly, consisting of the members of the Connecticut Historical Society, and the ladies and gentlemen of Hartford.

The facts stated in the narrative have been cautiously taken from authentic sources, generally based upon evidence such as would be admissible and satisfactory in a judicial proceeding. In preparing

the discourse for publication, I have referred to the authorities, in all cases where it was practicable and desirable; and these cases embrace the most important facts; but in a few instances, where the facts were derived from entries in old bibles which were private property, from monumental inscriptions, to which but few persons could have access, or from oral communications or personal knowledge, it seemed hardly practicable, and useless as impracticable, to refer to the authorities. When I have had occasion to refer to the records of the *United Colonies of New England*, I have referred to them as printed in *Hazard's Historical Collections*.

The names of the several proprietors of the Athenæum lot, when first introduced, are printed in small capitals.

T. D.



## HISTORICAL ADDRESS.

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MEMBERS OF THE CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL SOCIETY,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN :

GREAT and manifold are the uses of history. To say that it connects the past with the present, is to say the truth; but it is not *all* the truth. It brings forward the accumulated treasures of the past, and gives them present existence. It makes the experience and wisdom of by-gone ages our own. Of the future we know nothing; of the present, not much more—as the present becomes past before we can garner its fruits. The great store-house of human knowledge, therefore, lies in the dominions of the past. History is the common carrier that brings it to us. As well might we expect to enjoy the benefits of foreign commerce, without ships, as to appropriate the acquisitions of past generations, without history.

But it is not my present purpose to dwell upon the benefits of history generally. This topic, with its wide-spread ramifications, so full of dignity and interest, may be illustrated, by an abler hand, on some other occasion; and the time could rarely happen in connexion with any stated or extraordinary meeting of this society, when such a topic would be inappropriate. What I wish particularly to call your attention to, now, is, the desire so universally prevalent of knowing more or less of the history of the persons and things most intimately connected with ourselves. This desire is manifested in early childhood. Give your little boy a toy, and, as soon as it is *his*, much as he values it, he will break it, to find out what is in it, and how it was made;—in other words, to learn its history. This desire increases with advancing age; and gradually amplifies its scope to take in the multifarious objects that are continually springing up before it. This desire is a laudable one. It

is dignified in its nature ; and not only innocent, but positively beneficent, in its tendency and results. It emanated from the same divine spirit as the unquenchable thirst of immortality. It is, indeed, "of the eternal" a "co-eternal beam."

The commencement of this course of historical lectures is coteremporaneous with the opening for our use of yonder castellated edifice, whose apartments are destined to become "storied halls" with "trophied arches;" our society having met this evening, for the first time, in the division appropriated to our use. Under the influence of the spirit alluded to, let us cast a retrospective glance at some of the objects immediately connected with such an occasion : I refer particularly to the structure spoken of, and the ground on which it is erected.

Following the natural order, let us then, in the first place, enquire what title we have to the land thus occupied ; for it much concerns us to know, whether we are rightfully in possession, or trespassers. Can we truly and confidently say to all adverse claimants—*Hæc mea stant* ?

It is familiar history with those whom I address, that the first permanent settlers of Hartford came here in 1635 ; that having been admitted freemen in Massachusetts, they, on their arrival here, organized themselves as a municipal corporation ; and that the next important step was, to procure from the original proprietors a title to the land within their corporate limits. Accordingly, upon the application of Samuel Stone and William Goodwin, in behalf of themselves and their associates, SUNKERQUASSON, (a) Sachem of Sukiaugc, and grand-proprietor of the lands in that sachemdom, with the consent of his adult subjects, in the year 1636, granted to such applicants, for the use of themselves and their associates, by a written instrument under his hand, for a satisfactory consideration by him received, all the land

(a) The name of this chieftain, like most Indian names, is variously spelled. Winthrop spells it, in one instance, *Sequasson*, and in another, *Sequashin*. 2 *Winth. N. E.* 128. 332. (*Sav.* ed.) Trumbull spells it, uniformly, *Sequassen*; and it is generally so spelled in the records of the United Colonies.

between Wethersfield bounds on the South and Windsor bounds on the North, and extending, the whole breadth, from Connecticut river on the East, six large miles into the wilderness on the West. This grant was afterwards, upon the desire of Mr. Haynes and the other authorities of the town, and upon a further consideration paid, renewed and enlarged, by the same aboriginal patriarch. In a succeeding age, after he had gone to his final rest, [1670] it was fully confirmed, by his successors, on their receiving a further gratification nearly equivalent to the original value of the land. (\*)

The first notice of Sunckquasson, furnished by our records, after his original grant to the Hartford planters, is under date of July 2d, 1640, when he appeared before the Particular Court, and testified, that he never sold any ground to the Dutch; neither was at any time conquered by the Pequots, nor paid any tribute to them. The object of this testimony probably was, to repel the claim of our Dutch neighbours of the Manhattoes to any part of the land embraced in the above-mentioned grant.

Sunckquasson was a relative of Miantonomo, chief Sachem of the Narragansets, and one of his peculiar favourites; and the well-known hostility of the patron towards Uncas, Sachem of the Mohegans, was readily infused into the heart of the protégé. Uncas was not backward to reciprocate the sentiment, whenever a suitable occasion presented itself. Such an occasion occurred in 1643. Sunckquasson's men had killed a principal Indian belonging to Uncas; and shortly afterwards, Uncas himself having been up Connecticut river, on his return, was way-laid and shot at with arrows, by Sunckquasson, or some of his warriors. Uncas

1 *Trum. Hist. Con.* 129, 161. 2 *Haz. Hist. Col. passim*. In the records of the Colony of Connecticut, July 2d, 1640, it is written *Saqueston*. 1 *Col. Rec.* 49. And in the Hartford Town records, under date of January, 1643, it is written *Soaquasen*. 1 *Hart. Town Rec.* 25. But in the Indian deed of confirmation, as it appears upon the public records, it is written *Sunckquasson*; (1 *Col. Rec.* 390, 1.) and this orthography I have adopted, because it is supported by equal authority, and is, I think, favoured by analogy.

(a) 1 *Col. Rec.* 390, 1.