

**SKETCH OF THE LIFE AND
PUBLIC SERVICES OF HON.
JAMES HILLHOUSE OF
NEW HAVEN**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649323753

Sketch of the Life and Public Services of Hon. James Hillhouse of New Haven by Leonard Bacon

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

LEONARD BACON

**SKETCH OF THE LIFE AND
PUBLIC SERVICES OF HON.
JAMES HILLHOUSE OF
NEW HAVEN**



James Hillhouse

SKETCH
OF THE LIFE AND PUBLIC SERVICES
OF
HON. JAMES HILLHOUSE
OF NEW HAVEN.

BY
REV. LEONARD BACON, D. D.

(FROM BARNARD'S AMERICAN JOURNAL OF EDUCATION.)

NEW HAVEN.
1880.

***JAMES HILLHOUSE,
THE STATESMAN, THE PATRIOT, THE CHRISTIAN,
BORN OCT. 21, 1754,
DIED DEC. 22, 1832.**

**HE LIVES IN THE AFFECTIONS OF HIS COUNTRYMEN,
AND HIS DEEDS ARE HIS MONUMENT."**



Figure 1: Scatter plot showing the relationship between the number of children and the number of books read. The x-axis represents the number of children (0 to 10), and the y-axis represents the number of books read (0 to 100). A line of best fit is drawn through the data points, indicating a strong positive correlation.

JAMES HILLHOUSE.

JAMES HILLHOUSE, the indefatigable "nursing father," and administrator of the School Fund of Connecticut, for fifty years treasurer of Yale College, and throughout a long and eventful life a beautiful example of the public spirited citizen in a republic, was born on the 20th of October, 1754, in Montville.

The name of HILLHOUSE is that of an ancient and honorable family in the North of Ireland. More than two hundred years ago, the family seats, with estates valued at more than two thousand pounds sterling yearly, were on the shores of Lough Foyle, near Londonderry; and though the name has there become extinct, the ancient estates, particularly Artikelly and Free Hall, are still held by descendants of the family in the female line.

Early in the last century, the Rev. James Hillhouse came to New England. His father, John Hillhouse, of Free Hall, was the eldest son of Abraham Hillhouse, who resided at Artikelly.* He "had his education, and commenced Master of Arts at the famous university of Glasgow, in Scotland; and afterward read Divinity at the said college under the care of Mr. Simson, then professor of Divinity there." He was ordained by the Presbytery of Londonderry, in Ireland, and appears to have resided at or near the ancestral home till, by the death of his father in 1716, the estate descended to his elder brother Abraham. His mother died a few months later, in January, 1717. Not long after that date he came to seek a home on this side of the Atlantic. He is supposed to have come with those other Presbyterian emigrants from the North of Ireland, who, in 1719, established themselves in New Hampshire, where the towns of Derry and Londonderry, and the

* The name of Hillhouse is connected with the memorable defence of Derry against the forces of James II. James Hillhouse, a brother of John, was one of the commissioners to treat with Lord Mountjoy, and was Mayor of Londonderry in 1698. Abraham Hillhouse was among the signers of an address to King William and Queen Mary, on the occasion of the relief of the siege of Londonderry, dated 29th July, 1690.

Londonderry Presbytery, as well as many Scotch-Irish family names, are the permanent memorials of that migration. At the close of the year 1720, we find him in Boston committing to the press a "sermon" which he had composed, nearly four years before, on the occasion of his mother's death, but which does not purport to have been preached. This work (for though entitled a sermon, it is more properly a treatise in a volume of more than one hundred and forty pages,) was introduced to the reader in a preface from Increase and Cotton Mather, who speak of the author as "a valuable minister," and again as "a worthy, hopeful young minister" "lately arrived in America." He found employment in the newly instituted second parish of New London, in Connecticut, (now the town of Montville) and in 1722 was duly inducted into the office of pastor in the church there. At that place he died in 1740, aged 53.

The wife of the Rev. James Hillhouse was Mary, the daughter of Daniel Fitch, and was descended from ancestors eminent in the earliest history of Connecticut. Her paternal grandfather was the Rev. James Fitch, who came from England at the age of sixteen years, in 1638, and having received his education for the ministry under the teaching of Hooker and Stone, in the church at Hartford, was pastor of the church in Saybrook at its institution in 1646. Fourteen years afterward, he removed with the body of his people to begin the settlement of Norwich, where he served many years highly honored, not only by his own church, but in the colony at large. Her father's mother was Priscilla Mason, a daughter of Captain John Mason, the military chief of the colonists on the Connecticut, and the hero of the Pequot war in 1637, — a man distinguished by almost every trust which the young republic could bestow. That she was endowed by nature with superior mental gifts, and was a thoroughly educated woman, notwithstanding the limited advantages for female education in her day, is not a mere tradition, but is sufficiently attested by letters of hers which are still preserved among her descendants.

In the first generation of descendants from the pastor of Montville, the name of Hillhouse was borne only by his two sons, William, and James Abraham. The first was born in 1728. He lived and died on the paternal estate at Montville, greatly trusted and honored by his fellow citizens. When he was twenty-two years of age he married Sarah Griswold, who was a sister of the first Governor Griswold. At the age of twenty-seven he represented his native town of New London in the legislature of what

was then His Majesty's colony of Connecticut. He was continued in that trust by semi-annual elections, till, (in 1785) having become honorably known throughout the state, he was chosen an Assistant, or member of the Council, then commonly called "the Upper House."^{*} Thus he served in one hundred and six semi-annual legislatures. Meanwhile he was also for many years a judge of the County Court. Nor did his civil dignities and duties excuse him from military service. He was major in the second regiment of cavalry raised by Connecticut for service in the war of the revolution. At the age of eighty, in the full possession of his powers, he declined a reelection to the Council, and withdrew from public life. Even to that advanced age his semi-annual journey to Hartford and New Haven was performed on horseback and in a single day, wheeled carriages being too new a fashion for a man like him. He was tall, spare, swarthy, with heavy overhanging eye-brows, quaint in speech, and remarkable for a primitive simplicity of manners, combined with an impressive dignity. He died at Montville in 1816, leaving a numerous posterity. Six of his seven sons, and two of his three daughters lived to maturity, and most of them to old age.

His brother, James Abraham Hillhouse, was born in 1730, was educated at Yale College, where he graduated in 1749, and was appointed tutor one year afterwards. A colleague and intimate friend of Ezra Stiles (afterwards President Stiles) he devoted himself, with that enthusiastic scholar, to legal studies; and when, after six years of service, he relinquished his academic employment, he established himself at New Haven in the profession of law. He was soon distinguished at the bar by his forensic abilities as well as by his learning. He was eminent among his fellow citizens, and was honored by their confidence. In 1772 he was elected one of the twelve "Assistants" who with the Governor and Lieutenant-Governor, were the Council or senate; for, characterized as he was by the combination of undoubted patriotism with moderation and political wisdom, he was one of those men who are most needed in a state at the crisis of an impending revolution. Three years afterwards, at the noon of life, being only forty-six years of age, he was removed by death, leaving a name

^{*} At Governor Trumbull's retirement from the public service, William Hillhouse was chosen to fill the vacancy at the council-board which had been caused by the promotion of his brother-in-law, Matthew Griswold, to the office of Governor, and of Samuel Huntington to the office of Lieutenant Governor.