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THE
MINUTE MAN
ARRANGED BY
HENRY C. SHERWOOD

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Sons of the American Revolution

Unveiling at Compo Beach

Westport, Conn.

June 17th, 1910



Committee

HON. MORRIS B. BEARDSLEY, Chairman

GEN. E. S. GREELEY

LEWIS B. CURTIS

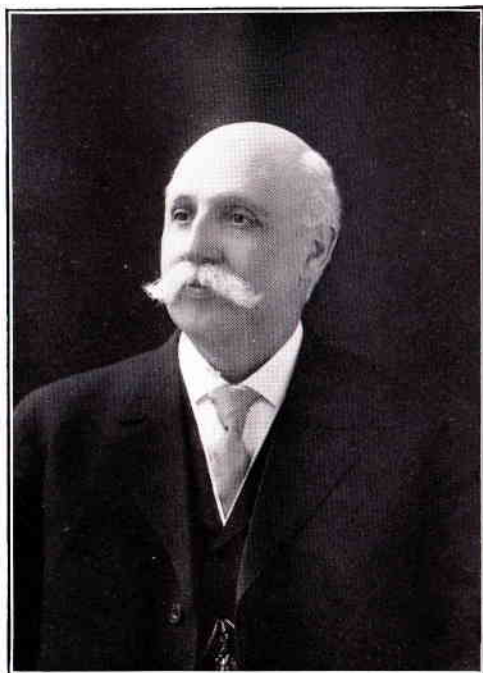
SEYMOUR C. LOOMIS

CLARENCE H. WHITCOMB

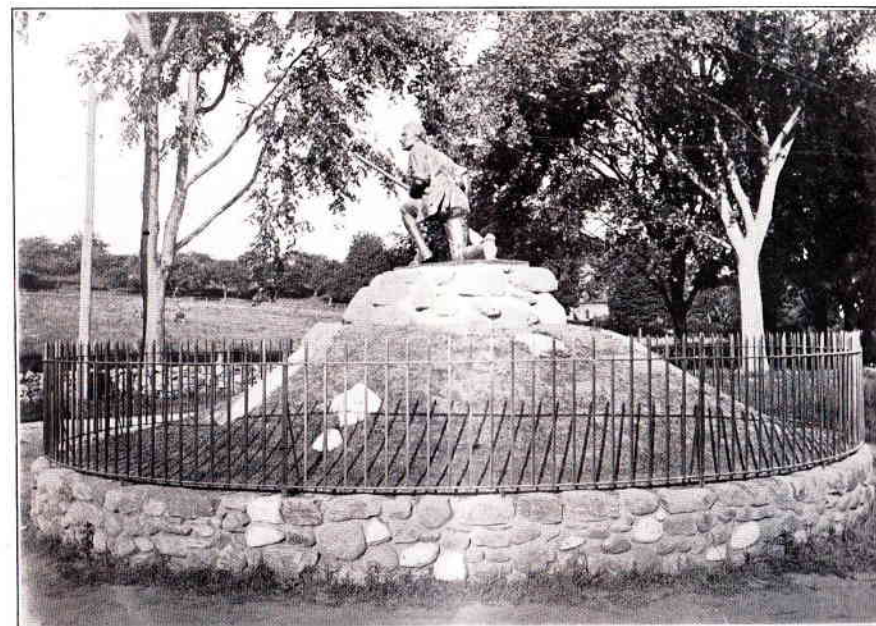
HOBART L. HOTCHKISS

WILLIAM H. BURR

HENRY C. SHERWOOD



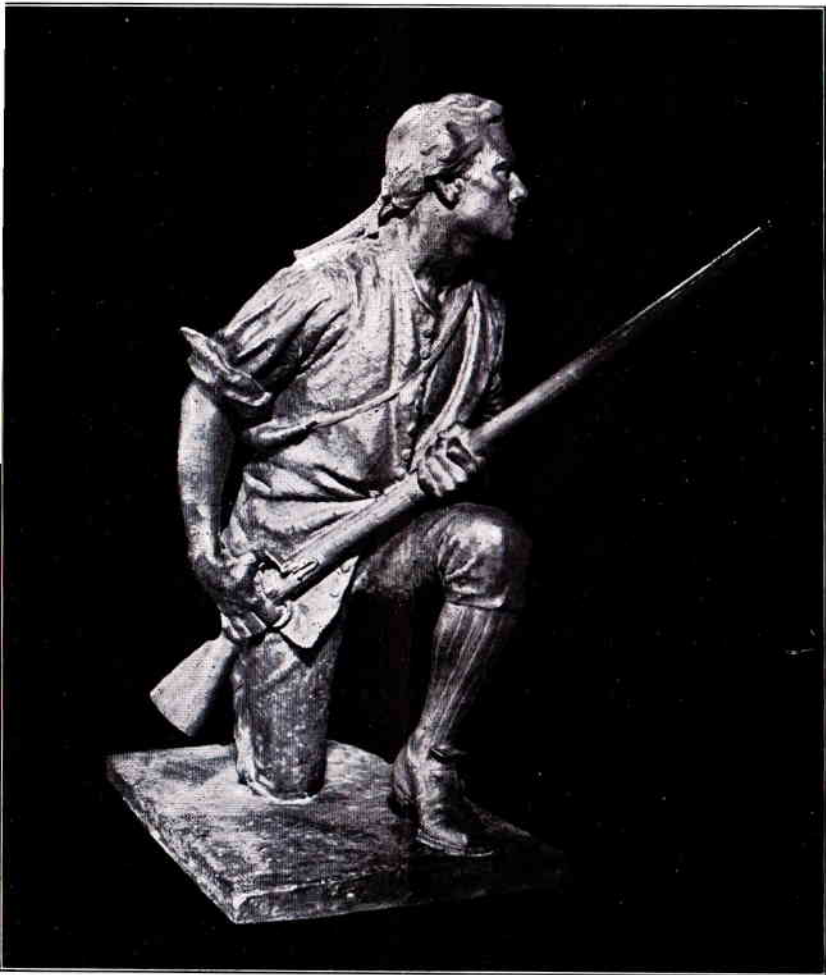
HON. MORRIS B. BEARDSLEY
Past President General National Society
Sons of the American Revolution



THE MINUTE MAN

TO COMMEMORATE THE HEROISM
OF THE PATRIOTS WHO DEFENDED THEIR COUNTRY
WHEN THE BRITISH INVADED THIS STATE,
APRIL 25, 1775.
GENERAL DAVID WOOSTER, COLONEL ABRAHAM GOULD
AND MORE THAN 100 CONTINENTALS
FELL IN THE ENGAGEMENT AT RIDGEFIELD
AND CLOSING ON COMPO HILL.

THE MINUTE MAN



THE unveiling of the Minute Man, the masterly effort of H. Daniel Webster, of Sylvan Avenue, was the moving event in town today, and the assemblage of Sons of the American Revolution, Daughters of the American Revolution, and prominent men of the State, served to make the occasion at Compo a notable one.

Feature of Outing.

"The Minute Man," a life size statue of a Revolutionary patriot, erected at Compo Beach by the Connecticut Society, Sons of the American Revolution, to commemorate the resistance to the landing on April 25, 1777, of the British troops under General Tryon, for their march to Danbury, was dedicated with appropriate ceremonies, as the chief feature of the annual field day of the Sons of the American Revolution in observance of Bunker Hill day.

From the East, on the 11:28 train came a large delegation far off as Hartford. From the West on the 11:58 were others, while all roads led to Compo, and trains, trolleys and vehicles lined the streets.

Clambake First.

About the noon hour the summons to the bake came, and close upon 300 enthusiasts hungry for all their zeal sat down to feast. It was 2 p. m. before the feast ended, presided over by William H. Burr, then came the march to Compo and the statue.

About this time throngs lined the way to the scene, Bridge street school children in the procession, while special trolleys brought pupils from the High and other Westport schools to the monument.

School Children Sing.

At 2:30 o'clock the ceremonies began with singing by the High school chorus, assisted by children of other schools, the vim and spirit so infusing the assemblage that it made the echoes ring with patriotic songs.

Following these the Rev. Kenneth Mackenzie of Trinity church asked the invocation and Judge Morris B. Beardsley, of Bridgeport, followed with the presentation of the statue to President L. B. Curtis, of the Sons of the American Revolution.

Judge Beardsley's Address.

In presenting the statue in behalf of the committee, Judge Morris B. Beardsley said:

"In the introductory note by the editor of the admirable article of Mr. Burr upon the event which the monument to be unveiled to-day is to commemorate, and which I hope every one who has not already done so will read, occurs these words:

"The American people are inclined to undervalue the nation's historic shrines and in its unparalleled prosperity the noble landmarks are being swept away to make room for progress. Such is the thoughtlessness of a material age when the supreme moment is the next one and the great yesterdays are forgotten.' It requires an organized appeal to gain the attention of the populace to-day.

"The patriotic societies among which ours occupies no mean place, furnish the medium for making this appeal and the organization necessary to carry it into effect. Among the objects enumerated in our constitution is 'to mark the scenes of the Revolution by appropriate memorials.'

Has Much to Its Credit.

"The Connecticut Society of the Sons of the American Revolution has to its credit in this line the purchase, fitting up, and maintenance of the old war office at Lebanon; the purchase and restoration of the Nathan

Hale school house at New London, and five bronze tablets marking historical sites in different parts of the State.

"Connecticut is not rich in these sites. She furnished about one-eighth of the entire Continental army. Her sons fought on every field, but little at home. It was her boast, and almost true, that no foreign foe ever remained over night on her soil.

Nearly Decade at It.

"For nearly a decade it has been our purpose to place a suitable memorial on this spot. October 20, 1908, the present committee was appointed. We were fortunate in securing the services of H. Daniel Webster, who has given us a statue, artistic and beautiful, and the equal of any in the State. He has not been actuated solely by money considerations, but has been public spirited and so desirous of giving to his town something in which its people could take pride. He has been patriotic, as well, and has assisted us to erect this tribute to those who fought and died for liberty, giving us more than we could pay him for.

"The money to pay for the monument came in part from the state appropriation, in part from a most generous contribution from the Jennings family, whose ancestor, Col. Abram Gould, fell at Ridgefield; \$50 from Gen. Silliman branch of Bridgeport, and the rest from contributions of a few of the members of the Society. Not a dollar was taken from its treasury. I wish to give especial credit in the matter of securing subscriptions to Mr. Burr and Judge Hotchkiss, and to thank every donor.

Work Is Done.

"Mr. President, your committee has finished the work which was given it to do, and we have placed upon a foundation of rock this statue of enduring bronze. We believe in the efficacy of this manner of teaching history. Mayor Gaynor, of New York recently visited his boyhood home, and there for the first time learned that the battle of Oriskany was fought

within a mile of the place where he was born. Our Society has erected on the spot a monument and now every one knows it.

“Leonidas with his 300 Spartans held the Pass at Thermopylae against a countless horde of Persians. The sculptured lion that was placed there with the inscription:

“‘Go, stranger, and to Lac-e-dae-mon tell,
That here obedient to her laws we fell.’

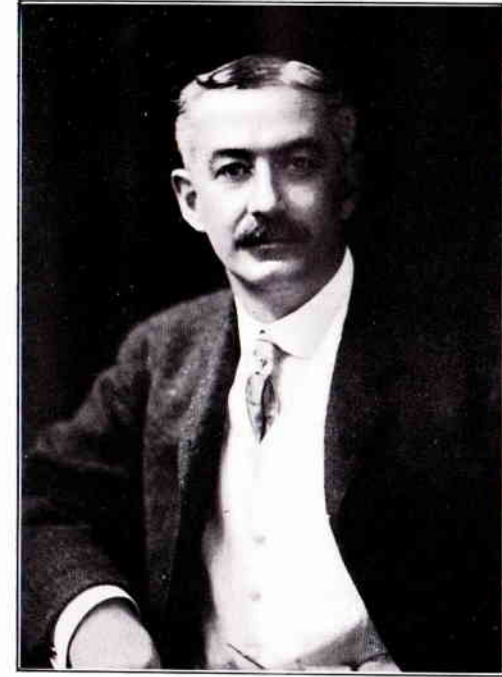
Has made them, the event, and the pass immortal.

Few Realize Story.

“It has been said that all Greece for centuries had the lines by heart. How few people of these times know the full story of Tryon’s raid, or realize that in connection with it took place the most important fighting of the war in our State; or the numbers and quality of those engaged on both sides; or of the great part it played in defeating the scheme of cutting off New England and depriving Washington’s army of its supplies.

“But for all the years to come the ‘Minute Man’ poised to catch a last shot at the invading Red Coats, will tell the story to every passer by, or at least will give the suggestion which may lead him to study it; and the beautiful conception of the artist will show to people yet unborn what manner of men those were who learning of the presence of the hated foe in those days when there were none of the present methods of spreading information in an incredibly short time, left their homes, marched all night and all day in the storm, and then dared to oppose the veteran troops of England, although outnumbering them three to one, and showed that man to man they were their superiors, when in defense of their homes and all that they held dear and actuated by the sacred spirit of freedom.

“To you, representing the society from which we received our commission, we deliver the completed memorial.”



President LEWIS B. CURTIS

Proud to Receive It.

President Lewis B. Curtis of the Connecticut State Society, in accepting the statue, said:

“In receiving this monument from your hands, I am filled with pride. You sir, and your associates have done a noble work, and can not receive too much credit.

“For many years, this work has now been going on, oftentimes under most discouraging conditions, but at last it has been completed, and the result is well worth waiting for.

“At first, nothing as pretentious as this was contemplated. Something of the gravestone variety with a tablet on it was the height of our ambition, and it was not until Mr. H. Daniel Webster came to our res-

cue that such a beautiful monument as this became possible. To us, it was a piece of great good luck your finding a man like Mr. Webster right here in town, who had the genius, and the skill to produce such a result, to say nothing of having the patriotism to bring the cost within our reach. His conception of the subject was marvelous, and his industry beyond praise.

Credit Due Committee.

"While Mr. Webster was the creator, you and your committee made it possible for him. You by your councils and advice, General Greeley by his constant criticisms and suggestions, Mr. Loomis by his able business management, Mr. Hotchkiss, who raised a large part of the funds, Mr. Wickham, who aided us in many ways, Mr. Sherwood, our treasurer, to whom we are indebted for to-day's arrangements, and last but not least, to Mr. Burr, who always seemed to be on hand, and willing when anything was to be attended to. We also owe a debt of gratitude to the state board of sculptors, who have materially aided us by their suggestions, and friendly criticisms. To those who made the statue possible by their liberal contributions, we can only thank them for their patriotism, and trust that we have fulfilled our obligation to them in a satisfactory manner.

Turns Over Statue.

"And now sir, to you as first selectman of the town of Westport, we commend the care of this monument. You may well feel proud of it, for it not only marks a most important historical spot, but it is itself, a thing of beauty. A few weeks ago, I stood before that other minute man, and in imagination listened to the shot 'heard round the world.' I refer to that famous statue by D. C. French at Concord. While I was lost in admiration at its marvelous beauty, as must everyone be, who sees it, yet I tell you that this statue did not suf-

fer from the comparison. Thousands have made the trip to Concord and Lexington to visit that historical spot, and to admire the graceful lines of that statue, and so I venture to predict will thousands visit this sight in time to come, and Compo Beach, and Concord will stand side by side in historic interest.

"Westport should always cherish among their brightest possession, this spot, and the monument which we have erected to commemorate the noble deeds enacted here."

The chorus once more sang as the unveiling of the statue took place, the pretty daughter of Mr. Curtis assisted by Brewster Jennings performing this act, midst hurrahs and enthusiasm that roused the dead, in sentiment, in Westport.

Wakeman Accepts.

Selectman Lewis P. Wakeman in accepting the statue on behalf of the town said:

"In accepting this memorial of bygone days and heroes, for the town of Westport, it is with the profoundest appreciation of the spirit of those who honor us with the gift, as well as of the history that made such a memorial possible, plausible. I am minded to feel that the honor of accepting that memorial might better have been imposed upon some resident more eloquent, for words seem poor indeed in expressing feeling on such an occasion. Yet I plead guilty to pride, first in that I am the town's sponsor on so auspicious an occasion; again that I am, figuratively, god father of so splendid a subject, that Webster who has made possible so characteristic a monument to our Revolutionary sires, that shall perpetually stand for our country and for freedom.

Frame His Counterpart.

"I am proud for personal reasons. It is an old saying: 'Some are born great, some have greatness thrust upon them.' The latter case I find to be my

own. I may be pardoned this pride yet in the composite bronze has been moulded the counterpart frame of your humble servant and few greater honors other than having been a Minute Man in fact, do I concede than that of having been part of the conception and art of the sculptor now given to the full light of day.

"May its significance weigh; may its character inspire all who see it; portraying as it does the breadth, integrity, stamina and pluck of our forefathers, and may we as a people reverence that sentiment that we must see in the mind's eye crowns this statue with the glorious heritage that made us Americans.

"Gentlemen, for my fellow citizens of Westport, I accept and heartily thank you for this splendid memorial."

Then came addresses by William H. Burr, alone the master spirit here in fostering and fathering the inspiration that became a reality to-day, speaking on: "The Story of the Invasion."

The Invasion of Connecticut in 1777.

Neither colonial history, nor the enactments of the general court, after kingly protection was renounced, record the name of the town within whose borders we are commemorating an event in which Connecticut men from Massachusetts to the sea, fought in defense of home and country.

The omission of our name from the early rolls may account for the difficulty some of our journals experienced in definitely locating us. Many points on the north shore of Long Island Sound have been described by the press as Westport, Compo and Cedar Point. Though new in name our claim to ancient heritage is valid. Two of the most respectable early "Grants" parted with their choicest lands and best citizens that we might have a place in the federation

of towns in this commonwealth. A goodly river divided Old Fairfield from Norwalk, but we captured the river giving us the finest stream in Fairfield county.

Our greetings this day will not be as explosive or as destructive as were those vouchsafed by our ancestors in 1777 to their visitors. We do cordially welcome you to our town and bid you enjoy a short belonging to the people, of matchless beauty, and rich in its historical setting.

What occurred here a century and a third ago swept yonder hilltop from the common place, and gave to the circling shore and sparkling river a special importance. The marshalled hosts of to-day may cause the armies of the past to look insignificant, but the display of heroism that characterized the small band of patriots in their persistent efforts to capture or destroy the invaders, is unsurpassed in valor, and is worthy of a conspicuous page in our country's history.

The tangible results of the prompt rising, and the vigor with which the State was defended on those April days in 1777 prevented further incursions of a like character into the interior of the State, and the proximity of such an alert and irrespressible foe, kept a large force to garrison New York and so materially depleted Howe's army in the field.

The spring of 1777 had opened brightly for the royal arms, the expeditions into New Jersey and up the Hudson had been successful and consequently Sir William Howe was determined to take possession of western Connecticut and capture the stores at Danbury. We find their coming recorded thus: "On Friday, April 25th, 1777, a mild sunny afternoon, twenty-six sails of the enemy's fleet anchored at the mouth of the Saugatuck river in the town of Fairfield, a little before sunset, 2,000 well armed troops were landed on the long beach at the foot of the beautiful hill of Compo."

This was a notable as well as a noble band of men who came to "exercise the arts of war," in obedience to the command of their king. Gen. Tryon commanded the expedition, and his troops in discipline, service, and courage represented the flower of the English army. They were resplendent in their brilliant uniforms, and mounted on handsome chargers made a most imposing appearance. They were not Hessians but gentlemen.

This is Bunker Hill day; 134 years ago to-day two of the regiments, the King's Own Regiment, and the Welch Fusiliers, who lead the charge at Bunker Hill, and later fought here, left over a hundred dead on that memorable field.

Few of our soldiers were available for defense, as they were sharing the fortunes of war with Washington in New Jersey, or defending the forts on the Hudson, a fact known to Tryon. He anticipated little difficulty in holding the country and winning it back to the crown.

At the head of Compo street a few patriots opened fire on the advancing column and a number of red-coats fell. Tryon entered Danbury, Saturday afternoon, compelling the little band of militia which was garrisoning the town, to withdraw. He established his headquarters and those of General Agnew and Erskine in favorable localities, and quartered the troops in the remaining houses preparatory to a continued occupancy. Tryon with his marching thousands met only scattering groups of militia in the advance and he undoubtedly felt the royal army was secure from molestation, but that night he was warned by the loyalists that the country was rising and that generals, heroes of many battles were approaching with patriots who were gathering from the hillsides far and near. Tryon needed no other impetus to hasten his departure. Long before dawn his bugles sounded, his men were aroused and put in marching order, thousands of barrels of provisions were destroyed, and fire brands were applied to every house in the village except those of the Tories.

Such briefly told was the advance to, and occupancy of Danbury by his majesty's troops. Let us observe how the coming of these battalions effected the Amer-

icans. Tryon's forces were landed Friday evening, and not until midnight was his objective point known to the patriots. Before the dawn of the new day messengers swift as the rider to Lexington, or those who summoned Clan Alpine to the fight, were speeding far over the hills and valleys calling on all to resist the foe. The names of the men who bore on the warning may never be known, but history tells us that General Silliman, who was at his residence at Fairfield, immediately sent out his expresses to alarm the country and collect the militia. Heralds on swift relays of horses transmitted the message from hand to hand, village to village, the sea to the hills, and it was not suffered to drop until the state was aglow. The call met with such a loyal response, that early on Saturday morning General Silliman was on his way to Redding with 500 men. As the patriots wound their way up the steep hills, they were overtaken by two horsemen, timely reinforcements, who filled their hearts with hope, for one was General Wooster, commander of the Connecticut militia, and the other General Arnold, who had fought many a battle on sea and land. Sheridan's ride over a good broad highway from "Winchester Town" has been made immortal. Over rough roads for fully thirty miles had pressed these two officers.

Upon learning that the enemy were retreating toward Ridgefield, on Sunday morning Arnold and Silliman were detached with four hundred men to cross the country and take post in that town, while General Wooster with two hundred men were to attack the flank and rear, of the retiring columns.

As the British entered Ridgefield, General Wooster made two assaults and captured in the first, forty prisoners. Encouraged by his success, Wooster urged his men to press on exclaiming: "Come on boys, never mind such random shots." As he thus led them on he fell mortally wounded and the noble patriot was borne from the conflict.

Arnold and Silliman had constructed across the village street a barricade and here 500 men held the 2,000 troops of the King in check for an hour. Col-

onel Gould, of Fairfield, commanding the fourth Connecticut Militia was killed with many of his men. The battle that opened on the hills that Sunday morning extended to the Sea. The minute men continued to pour in from the distant parts of the State, and when Tryon left Ridgefield on Monday morning, points of advantage were occupied by continentals, from which deadly missiles were sent into the retreating battalions, the hills resounding with the roar of cannon and the rattle of musketry

“As the farmers gave them ball for ball,
From behind each fence and farm yard wall.”

Colonels Huntington and Oswald with five hundred men and Lamp's artillery from New Haven occupied the hill to the west of the Saugatuck river above the bridge. Tryon saw it would be impossible to advance in that direction, he turned his horses and forded the river and at a double quick step made for his shipping.

General Tryon finding it impossible to escape without assistance ordered Sir William Erskine to land the marines from the boats (six ships having arrived the night before) and take position on Compo Hill with field guns and check the advance of the patriots. Probably not far from 2,500 British troops were on the hill when Colonel Lamb, who had just ridden in some sixty miles from Southington, proposed to carry the fortifications by storm. The troops readily advanced, receiving unterrified, the grape shot which were cutting down their ranks. As they reached the fence, Colonel Lamb fell seriously wounded, the progress of the Continentals was checked and the British withdrew to their vessels with the Americans pressing them closely. After the engagement a house on the plain was taken for a hospital, where many of the wounded from both armies received surgical aid. Many of those who fell were borne to their own towns for sepulture, but in a long grave more than a score of patriots were laid to rest: among whom was Lieutenant Samuel Elmer who came from Sharon and fell at the fence. His father had

his remains removed to the cemetery at Greens Farms where the ancient stone bears this quaint inscription:

“Our youthful hero, bold in arms
His country's cause his bosom warms
To save her rights, fond to engage
And guard her from a Tyrant's rage,
Hies to the field of blood and death
And gloriously resigns his breath.”

We noticed on the arrival of the British, they were some of the finest troops bearing the royal standard.

We will now consider those who gave them battle. Major Gen. Wooster, who was born in Stratford, and fell at Ridgefield, was nearly three score and ten years of age. Upon learning of the coming of the British he mounted his horse and rode fifty miles to lead the attack on the invaders. He had rendered valuable service in the French and Indian wars and in Canada. “They who die in a good cause are redeemed from death, each place grows proud for them who were born there. As God musters them out on earth he enrolls them above.” Arnold was very brave and received the thanks of Congress, he was also presented with a horse handsomely caparisoned for his service at this time. Gen. Silliman, Cols. Gould, Huntington, Oswald and Lamb had seen service, and many who took part in the battle on Compo Hill were destined to hold important positions in the new nation.

Washington placed Lamb in command at West Point and after the war he appointed him Collector General of the port of New York.

Sixteen year old Oliver Wolcott whose father was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, followed Colonel Lamb in his charge on Compo Hill. Oliver remembered his mother's admonition when she handed him his father's flintlock “To conduct himself like a good soldier.” He was treasurer of the U. S. for five years and Governor of Connecticut for nine years.

The large majority of those who responded to the call and followed the officers were those who had been left to care for the farms, while the regulars were with the army. Many were very old some very young, they

came in their homespun, with weapons with which they were most familiar. They were only a fraction of those who were enduring hardship for the cause of independence, but they were actuated by the same spirit and entitled to the same glorious recognition as those who fought where the enthusiasm of numbers and the inspiration of martial music made one forgetful of self and stirred to deeds of valor.

With such a sturdy and irrespressible foe at his door and an unconquered country stretching away to the East of the Hudson, is it surprising that Lord Howe, turned a deaf ear to the entreaties of Gen. Burgoyne to send him reinforcements?

Three thousand troops arrived for Howe. Clinton moved up the Hudson river, but too late to save Burgoyne, and thus the first great victory came to American arms. Howe rightly divined the purpose of militia, for the day Clinton moved up the river, the Connecticut men were marching to the Hudson.

We cannot at this time describe what occurred in the different engagements and how from point to point the Continentals endeavored to capture the foe. The British records show that their loss was three hundred, probably double that of the Americans. When the King's troops reached their vessels they threw themselves on the decks completely exhausted, they claimed they had fought twice their number and had been worse handled than at Concord and Lexington.

We are not here to exhibit the trophies of war, to describe battles, to display ancient armor, or to uphold militarism, but we are here to commend that spirit which is in man, that will stand for the right, because it is right. A nation is sinking into decadence that does not cherish the memory of those who died in her service, or of those who have wrought for her emancipation.

We have passed through the gateway of the century, behind us are the years of our fathers, around us the heritage they have given to us and to all who will adopt this land as their own with its wonderful possibilities.

The minute-men as an organization may have passed into history with the first battle of the revolution, but the minute-men as individuals have been, and will continue to be, the men, who in the hour of their country's peril, or need, were, and are ready and waiting to consecrate their lives to her service. They made possible the Revolution, they answered by the tens of thousands from the Atlantic to the Pacific when President Lincoln called for volunteers to save the union. We rejoice that as we dedicate this memorial to the heroes of the distant past we have with us the heroes of Gettysburg, Vicksburg, and some of them are wearing that precious emblem bearing the of their towns to place their names on the roll. inscription of minute-men because they were the first

Truly in this glorious fabric of the union the chief architect is the plain man. As the structure rises in truth and loyalty it will be more lasting than granite, and reflect that light, liberty and justice which proceeds from the throne of God.

Our artist may have gained his conception of that firm, noble and resolute face we have before us to-day, from a study of the life of his kinsman and whose name he bears, whose statesmanship towers above his contemporaries and whose eloquence remains unsurpassed. Mr. Webster's parents left the New England hills to found a home on the western plains. The son has returned that we might have his conception of what the true American is, under whatever skies it may be his fortune to live. It is not the perfect form, or his equipment of ancient armor, that stirs our souls and fires our imagination, but the spirit that is embodied in the man that will lead him on to do and dare, until the right is triumphant. Human forms pass away, the armor of yesterday is the junk of to-day, as ours will be of the tomorrow, but the spirit of the past will continue to actuate lives as long as the sun floods hilltop and valley with its glorious effulgence. This beautiful memorial should bear from the past to the future the thought of the great orator when speaking of those who were to follow, said: "We welcome you to the blessings of good govern

ment and religious liberty, to the treasures of science, and the delights of learning, to the immeasurable blessings of rational existence, the immortal hope of Christianity, and the lights of everlasting truth.

“ We glory in the sages
Who in the days of yore,
In combat met the foeman,
And drove them from the shore.

We glory in the spirit,
Which goaded them to rise,
And form a mighty nation
Beneath the western skies.”

Our minute-man looks not out across the seas for the foe but rather the challenge comes to us, to be instant in season and out, that our priceless heritage be not pilfered or wasted, that no invidious foe of the public weal be permitted to divert into the narrow channels the streams that in its onward course would carry blessing and happiness to the multitude.

We rejoice that war and bloodshed are of the past, that hostile fleets and invading armies are succeeded by messengers of commerce, that the choicest products of mind and hand are being given to the world for the benefit and enlightenment of all mankind. “That duty lights the way for the beautiful feet of peace.”

The man who stands steadfastly for that which is right, who would bind all nations more closely in the bonds of brotherhood, represents the highest standards of an American, before whom Princes bow, to whom Kings do reverence.

We know courage is better than fear, and faith is better than doubt, and so long as fountains gush from the rocks and yonder river flows on its course to the sea, shall the spirit of patriotism inspire the hearts of men to the performance of noble deeds.

The sculptor H. Daniel Webster, after prolonged cheering, a fitting tribute to his skill and conception, evidence of which now stood revealed, responded to the call on: “The Artist’s Conception.”

Typifies Spirit of '76.

Mr. Webster said:

“Among the profession it is considered very bad form for a sculptor to make a speech at the unveiling of his own work, but I know that my contemporaries will pardon me to-day for embracing this excellent opportunity to thank most sincerely all those who have helped me in any way to complete this monument—without the aid of my friends it could not have been a success.

In the bronze figure before you I have endeavored to represent the spirit of the brave men who gained for us the liberty we now enjoy, and paid for it with their own precious blood. I have tried to represent a noble man, full of strength and determined to protect his home and family against those who had come to destroy his property and deprive him of his liberty. He is the kind of man that was able to turn these Connecticut stones to bread and drive the British into the sea.

“My hope is that this monument may be a worthy reminder to the coming generations of all that we owe to the splendid men of the American Revolution, whose sons and daughters we are proud to be.”

Mrs. John L. Buel and Mrs. John T. Sterling, representing the D. A. R., added their portion to the tribute as well of the spirit as the artist, through his statue, and President General Marble, of New York closed.

Mrs. Buel’s Remarks.

The next speaker was Mrs. E. C. Buel, of Litchfield, State Regent of the D. A. R., who said:

“Mr. President, President General, Madam Vice-President General, Sons of the American Revolution and guests, ladies and gentlemen: “It is a great pleasure to bring greetings to your society from over 4,000 Connecticut Daughters of the American Revolution who congratulate their brothers upon the successful outcome of their labor of love and patriotism.

Woman Can be Brief.

“I am asked to be brief and wish to prove that a woman can be brief even when speaking for 4,000 other

women. The deepest feelings you know are always expressed in the fewest words, and so you may measure the depth of the sincerity of our felicitations to your society to-day by brevity of my speech.

The Women of '76.

"Your society and mine, which I have the honor of representing are heirs of a common duty and obligation to honor our brave past and the men who gave us this nation. But listen: wherever a minute man may spring forward to guard our coast from invaders like Tryon, our Daughters of the American Revolution wish it to be forever remembered that behind him stood the woman with the spinning wheel, behind every gun was a distaff. We maintain and always will maintain that our war for independence was won by the women, our grandmothers of the wheel and loom.

"I know that the chivalry in the heart of every Son of the American Revolution to-day will bear me out in this. All honor to them, to the Minute Man and that great army of noble, self-sacrificing, heroic, resourceful and self-reliant women who stood back of him and proved an invaluable reserve force in his rear.

Tribute to Their Memory.

"As their sons and daughters we unite in paying a tribute of love and gratitude to their memory. May the God of our fathers help us to be worthy of their unselfishness, their nobility and high ideals."

On a bright afternoon in April, 1777, a little over 133 years ago the residents of Norwalk and Fairfield were thrown into consternation by the arrival of 20 transports and six war vessels flying the flag of King George, the Third, off the Caukeen Island. Soon the big ships anchored and in the sunlight could be seen the redcoats disembarking and coming ashore in small boats in great numbers. It was on Compo Beach at the foot of the hill that they first set foot. About 2,000 of them landed, and probably as many more remained in the ships.

Disastrous to Invaders.

This is the beginning of the story which tells of the first British invasion of Connecticut, which was more disastrous to the invaders than to the Continentals as regards loss of life and suffering, and as a matter of strategy the failure of General William Tryon to hold his position in Danbury after burning it, was a big detriment to the working out of the plans of the British later in the year. It was hoped that by burning the stores at Danbury and occupying the town would cripple the New Englanders and keep them busily engaged while two British armies one from the North and the other from New York marched up the Hudson and down Lake Champlain intending to cut off New England from the Continental forces.

Plot Was Foiled.

The plot was good but was foiled by a little band of patriots from Fairfield, New Haven, Redding, Sharon, and other men in the western part of the State. The British were finally driven from Danbury around to Ridgefield where they were attacked fiercely and forced to go on. Had the British been unable to occupy Compo Hill they would all have been captured before they could embark and sail away out of reach of the Connecticut Yankees.

Aimed for Danbury.

Lord Howe, in command of the British army in the spring of 1777, placed William Tryon, Royal Governor of New York in command of an expedition which was to weaken the resources of New England and break the patriotic spirit of the people. The direct purpose of the first trip to Connecticut was to capture the stores at Danbury and draw men from the Continental army in New Jersey to the defense of Connecticut, so weakening General Washington's forces.

The Connecticut men as soon as they saw the Red Coats making for Compo Beach sent messengers as far as New Haven warning people of the approach of the British. Their point of attack was not known un-

til they had landed and the word was given, "On to Danbury." But they didn't go on to Danbury until the minute men fresh from the plow had given the British a little taste of American sharpshooting. The British returned the fire and sent a cannon ball through the house of the parents of Chancellor Kent, to whom the legal profession is indebted for the famous commentaries. The future advocate was in the attic at the time and has said that if it hadn't been for the big chimney there would probably have been no commentaries.

Marched Through Fairfield.

The red coats marched to a point in the Danbury road in the north part of Fairfield and encamped for the night. At dawn they started for Danbury. The terror stricken inhabitants had fled and the soldiery consisted of but 150 men, 100 of whom were militia men. They were hardly enough to form a rear guard for the retreating residents.

Danbury's Rum.

But if Danbury hadn't enough soldiers to overpower the British she had enough rum stored away to accomplish nearly the same result. In those days rum was to a soldier a necessity, and great quantities were stored in Danbury. The only way to destroy this under army etiquette was to drink it and drink it they did. But there was too much for even 2,000 soldiers and they were a helpless lot by night.

Wanton destruction of the town followed. Only houses protected by the "Sign of the White Cross" were exempt.

All this time Connecticut soldiers were gathering under General Wooster, General Benedict Arnold and General Gold Sellick Silliman of Fairfield, and were rapidly marching toward the British. Tryon learned of this and began to beat a hasty retreat to his ships by a more westerly course than he had come.

Death of General Wooster.

This last move was foreseen by the Continental forces and Generals Arnold and Silliman rushed 500 men to Ridgefield, while General Wooster with 200 men went

to Danbury and harassed the enemy as they fled. In the first encounter General Wooster captured 40 men. In the second attack two miles north of Ridgefield the brave general while cheering on his troops was fatally wounded. He was 67 years of age when he was killed.

Held British Two Hours.

Meanwhile the boys in blue and buff under Generals Arnold and Silliman were waiting in Ridgefield. A barricade had been thrown up on Ridgefield street and the British and Continentals fought face to face. It was two hours before the trained English soldiers, the flower of the British army could make any headway under the galling fire of the American guns, although the latter were outnumbered almost four to one. At this battle Lieutenant-Colonel Abram Gould fell mortally wounded. The British spent the night in Ridgefield.

At morning they started for their ships. General Arnold forced them to change their route and they started for the ford at the Saugatuck river. They finally succeeded in reaching Compo Hill where they had a chance to train their field pieces on the Americans.

Made Desperate Attacks.

Although it was like flying in the face of death, Lieutenant Samuel Elmer, of Sharon, who had just returned from the army in New York on a furlough with 100 volunteers attacked the British and Lieutenant Elmer met his death. Another gallant effort was made by Colonel John Lamb and his artillery from New Haven, but the British continued to hold the hill. Reinforcements came from the ships and while the fresh troops from the boats covered the Continentals, General Tryon's army about 200 short of the number which landed fled in small boats to the big ships waiting outside the bay.

The death roll of the Continentals was probably 60. Twenty of these found graves in the beach where they had lost their lives.

In the old grave yard at Greens Farms the body of Lieutenant Elmer lies buried. A plain headstone marks his resting place. The following inscription is on the stone:

"LIEUT. SAMUEL ELMER
SON TO COL. SAMUEL ELMER
OF SHARON
WAS KILLED AT FAIRFIELD FIGHTING FOR
THE LIBERTY OF HIS COUNTRY
APRIL 28, 1777
IN THE 25TH YEAR OF HIS AGE.

'Our youthful hero, bold in arms,
To save her rights, fond to engage,
And guard her from a Tyrant's rage,
Flies to ye field of Blood and Death,
And gloriously resigns his Breath.'"

Mrs. Sterling's Speech.

On behalf of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, of which she is Vice-Regent, Mrs. John Sterling, of this city spoke as follows:

"Mr. President, Connecticut Chapter S. A. R. and Guests: In hearing the chairman introduce the National Society, D. A. R., our thoughts speed across the country to the far West—in Colorado and California and Washington, and we recall the Daughters there, then we turn to the North country, to the Great Lakes territory—there are many of us up there; then through the heart of the great central West, down into New Mexico and the Gulf states, up the Atlantic sea-board, back into our own New England—everywhere our members are to be found; 70,000 women are to-day wearing the insigna of the Daughters of the American Revolution. To be the representative, the speaking voice of these 70,000 is an honor and a responsibility. It is also a pleasure to bring to you to-day, from this great society, a salutation of cordial friendliness and extend to you the hand of fellowship and comradeship.

"Last April the D. A. R. in annual Congress assembled, had the pleasure of listening to your then President General. We were honored in entertaining the worthy head of a worthy society. The patriotic pulse of some of us beat faster because Connecticut had furnished the S. A. R. with an able President General and to a few of us, our State pride itself was quickened by a vigorous civic pride for was he not our own fellow-townsmen, our own home city had contributed your distinguished leader. We congratulated the order on its discrimination and wise selection.

Patriotic Work.

"The beautiful and artistic tribute which is presented to-day, commands the full sympathy and pride of the D. A. R., for it is so completely in harmony with our own efforts and objects. We are in accord, not only in this commemorative work, but also in that other endeavor, the patriotic education, of those whom the open hospitality of this government has enticed to the shelter of our national roof tree, those who have sat down by our political firesides, as if at their own home hearthstones. It rests, to some extent, with the descendants of the Founders; with the Sons and Daughters of the American Revolution, to see that this foreign invasion does not disturb or overshadow the family circle of our domestic policies with alien influences.

Patriots Were Noble Men.

"The Minute men of the Revolution whom we are remembering, were noble men, they gave their lives—many of them—for the principles under which we live to-day. Your State President and Chapter were most happy in selecting this figure to illustrate heroism and patriotism and to dedicate it on Bunker Hill day. This memorial will always be a testimonial to their sagacity, skill and successful effort.

"An ancient Greek patriot and warrior, when told that his son had been slain in battle, replied: 'I did not request the gods to make my son immortal or long lived, but I asked that he might have integrity of principles and

be a lover of his country, and now I have my desire.' When we look at this statue, eloquent of the uprightness and heroism of its prototype, it will have for us a two fold significance, it will be not only a graceful tribute of honor to the past, but also a pledge of righteous citizenship to the future, a request to the gods that our sons and daughters 'may have integrity of principles' and be upright lovers of their country.'"

The school choruses again sang "America," in which the assembly joined and the Rev. Mackenzie brought the memorable event to a finale with the benediction.

For the first time the people now have an opportunity for viewing the Minute Man, as characteristic and effective a memorial to the heroes of '76 as graces any community.

The following poem by Mrs. Agnes Lewis Mitchell, called "The Minute Man," was read by the authoress, a well known writer and critic of the town, and the famous lecturer on "Current Events:"

Old Compowe Road runs rambling down
For many a league through Westport Town,
Nor stops until it sees the sand
In curving beach outline the land,
And here the British vessels lay
In harbor, as but yesterday !

From every roadside home they fired,
—Those patriots brave,—
Freedom to win, their land defend,
The Flag to save ;
And as the British bullets sped
Our fathers finched not, though they bled.

To-day we place this statue fair
Beneath the sun,—
Long years have passed, and men have gone
And freedom won.
And here where once our fathers died,
The Minute Man we rear with pride.

What dost thou guard, oh Pilgrim sirs?
No ships are in the bay.
The chariots that race thee by
Hold merry folk at play.
What does thy forehead stern forefend,
Thy knotted arm and hand defend?

Guard us, we pray, from foes unseen
That lurk within.
The lust of power that gold may buy,
The wage of sin,
The lack of sturdy manhood's might,
To hold and battle for the Right !

Teach us, both men and nation vast
That fine ideal
Of civic worth and civic pride
Our sires made real ;
Teach, what they bravely taught us then
That rank lies not in lands, but men.

Look out, oh Minute Man, clear eyed
Upon to-day !
God grant the woes we do not see
May pass away.
Still keep brave watch o'er thine abode
Beside the sea, on Compowe Road.



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COMPO BEACH

