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The Southwick Jog

By

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1964 to 1968

Boston, Massachusetts, was my place of residence for several years. In 1964, I moved to the quiet, peaceful town of Southwick, Massachusetts. When told of the change of address, my acquaintances assumed a puzzled expression and almost without fail the inevitable question was, "Southwick? Let's see now, where is that?" Or, one of them said "You mean Sturbridge;" and another thought surely I had meant to say "Southborough." In any event, it seems that the existence of this community came as a surprise to these people living in the eastern section of the state.

This is really quite understandable, I suppose, when one stops to consider a few facts. Before 1950, Southwick was a small, rural community comprised of 1,600 people, a few tobacco plantations, and the Congamond Lakes. But, with the post-war building boom and the push from the city to the suburbs, Southwick experienced a rapid population increase.¹ Even though the town I now call "home" is small and unknown, it is very prominent on any accurate map of Massachusetts. Indeed, if one places his finger on the southern border of Massachusetts and runs it along westward, about midway he will come to an irregular place in the line, a dip into Connecticut territory, a "pocket" of Massachusetts surrounded on three sides by Connecticut. This is Southwick, sometimes called the "pocket" town, and sometimes thought of as Southwick, Connecticut, for obvious reasons.

After I had become settled and reasonably well acquainted with the community and its people, I grew curious as to why Southwick was so situated: half in Massachusetts and half in Connecticut. My first approach to the problem was a visit to the public library. However, the resources provided little help. A few old histories of the region mentioned the irregular border at Southwick but offered no further word of explanation.² Even the history of Southwick written by Maud Etta Gillett Davis, devotes only a few pages to the problem, offers a solution, (which I find upon further research to be incorrect), and proceeds to another topic.³

Another approach was to talk to some of the people whose families had lived there for many generations. Almost without exception everyone had a theory or story to explain the "pocket" town. One such story or theory says that the lakes⁴ and western land adjoining the lakes fall within Massachusetts control because the source of these lakes is

¹ It is said that at one period in the '50's, the population growth was such that Southwick was the second fastest growing town in the state. Today, the population stands at approximately 6,000. Although the boom is passed, there is still a moderate yearly increase.

² I found this generally true in many of the books to which I referred. They simply mention the fact of Southwick's unusual geography and then pass on to some other topic.

³ Maud Etta Gillett Davis, *Historical Facts and Stories About Southwick* (Southwick, 1951), pp. 23-25

⁴ Congamond Lakes are made up of a series of three ponds: North Pond, Middle Pond, and South Pond.

the north lake which is unquestionably within the Massachusetts border. Thus it was felt that all the lakes should be within Massachusetts jurisdiction by virtue of possession of the source. Another popular story is that the early surveyors who ran the line were a bit under the influence of alcohol when they arrived at this point. Consequently, they laid the line too far north. Rather than go to the expense of running the line again, a compromise was made, giving Southwick some of Connecticut territory. This is essentially Maud Etta Gillett Davis' theory, which I referred to earlier and quote here from her historical study:

“Many wonder why the otherwise straight-line boundary between Southwick and Connecticut is broken by one small pocket extending down into Connecticut. In fact, about one sixth of Southwick's entire territory is bounded on three sides by the State of Connecticut. Various legends explain this odd fact. Perhaps the most plausible one claims that the surveyors made a mistake in running the State line a bit too far north. This mistake was discovered by the time they reached Congamond Ponds. Rather than go all over the route again, Massachusetts was compensated by giving it the “jog” into Connecticut.”⁵

Someone quite humorously remarked to me when they knew of my interest in the border irregularity that the jog was there for the express purpose of holding Massachusetts in place, lest it slide into the sea.

This paper is an attempt to find the truth to the problem, to get behind all the fiction and legends, to ascertain, as much as the records will allow, why Massachusetts at this point in its geography takes a sudden and erratic plunge into Connecticut for approximately two and one-half miles.

Like most problems, there is no easy or quick solution, and the immediate answer upon closer scrutiny is often found not to be the answer at all. To understand and appreciate fully the geography of Southwick as it exists on any accurate map, the theories are hardly sufficient. We have to go back in history, back to the very early settlement of this region.

The Springfield-Hartford area was settled in the mid 1630's by William Pyncheon and Thomas Hooker, respectively. William Pyncheon had been connected with affairs in the Massachusetts colony from its very inception. He was the founder of the settlement called “Roxbury” and when his people took the “Western Fever”, he led them to that place by the Connecticut River which came to be called “Springfield”; the year was 1636. Thomas Hooker was an English clergyman, and upon his arrival in the new world, settled in Cambridge with his congregation. Neither he nor his congregation were happy there and three years after settlement they, too, took the “Western Fever” and removed themselves to the area that is now known as “Hartford”; the year was 1636.

Springfield covered a broad area. The boundaries were indefinite and as additional settlers moved in, the area spread out to include what are now the towns of Westfield, Southwick, West Springfield, Chicopee, Wilbraham, Ludlow and Longmeadow and Enfield and Somers in Connecticut.⁶ Hartford, too, spread up and down the Connecticut without much regard for boundaries.

⁵ Maud Etta Gillett Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 24

⁶ Suffield, Connecticut's lands were later within Springfield's jurisdiction. In 1647, the Massachusetts General Court ordered that Woronoco, (Westfield), should be part of Springfield. At this early period, Suffield was included as a part of Woronoco. Hezekiah S. Sheldon, *History of Suffield* (Springfield, 1879), p. 9

With the Connecticut River as a common avenue to the outside world, Springfield and Hartford found themselves closely allied, both socially and commercially. But soon troubles arose. First, there was the tax Connecticut imposed upon Springfield for support of the fort at the mouth of the river. Although Springfield used the river and benefited from the protection the fort gave to all inland towns, she was reluctant to pay the tax. And, secondly, there slowly came into being the border disputes between the two colonies. This was inevitable, of course, as more and more people moved into the area and assumed the status of squatters with no definite knowledge as to what their boundary rights were. By 1641, the Massachusetts General Court complained that Connecticut was overstepping her bounds. Already she had established a trading post at Woronoke, (Westfield), with the permission and encouragement of the Connecticut General Court.⁷ And it was in question whether Springfield fell within Connecticut's jurisdiction or within Massachusetts' jurisdiction.

By 1642, it was evident that the border question could not go unattended. The influx of population was too rapid and everybody was stepping on everyone else's toes and it was difficult to determine who was trespassing against whom. As a possible solution to some of the border problems, Massachusetts employed two surveyors to run her southern boundary line. This had never been done before simply because there had never been the need. The early settlements of Massachusetts had stayed pretty close to the shore, never penetrating inland more than twenty miles. But now the few years had brought enormous changes in the number of people settling and the number of settlements being "laid out."

Nathaniel Woodward and Solomon Saffrey were chosen to lay the line. Massachusetts had great faith in their abilities characterizing them as "skillful and approved artists." Connecticut was not so enamored by their skills and spoke of them rather sarcastically as "the Mathematicians." But whatever men thought of them, they did their best despite several obstacles. For instance, about all they had to "go on" was the Massachusetts Charter which stated that the southern border of Massachusetts ran west to the Pacific Ocean, "from a point three miles south of the most southerly branch of the Charles River." Then, too, we must appreciate the fact that the instruments of that day were anything but refined for such delicate and accurate work. They were crude and inaccurate to say the least, and the best they could do was to give approximations. Nevertheless, with Charter and instruments, Woodward and Saffrey set out to establish the line. They began at the place they believed was three miles south of the most southerly branch of the Charles and noted the latitude. Then they made their fatal mistake. Rather than perambulate the territory in question as would be the normal routine, they figured they could save themselves a considerable amount of work and time by taking a ship around the colony up the Connecticut River and there, at the proper latitude, fix the line and establish the boundary. This is what they did. But due to faulty instruments or erroneous observation, they fixed the line considerably too far to the south. Indeed, at its widest margin, the line ran seven miles below the true line, and at its narrowest, about four miles reaching all the way to present day Windsor.

⁷ Woronoke, being an Indian name, clearly indicates that it was an Indian center and is reported to be noted for its beaver skin. Therefore, Connecticut's early interest in the area. See, Maud Etta Gillett Davis, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-8

At a meeting of the United Colonies in 1649⁸, Connecticut protested the decision of 1642. It was felt that the line was grossly in error, but there was no proof of this. Besides, it is doubtful that Connecticut could have done anything to alter the course of things had proof been in hand. Unlike Massachusetts, Connecticut had no charter. Strictly speaking, the inhabitants were squatters on land which was not legally theirs;⁹ and because of Cromwell and his armies and the uncertainty in England, it did not appear that anything like a charter would be forth coming, at least not immediately. And so it became a matter of quiet protest and patient waiting.

Finally in 1660, Connecticut received news that Cromwell and his Puritans had been defeated and the Crown was restored to power in the person of Charles II. How this was to affect the colonies was a matter of conjecture. Perhaps the Crown, opposed to Puritans, would assume absolute control.

Connecticut decided that the best approach was the direct approach, and so she petitioned Charles II for a legal charter. Because of excellent representation in the person of John Winthrop, Jr., (the eldest son of Massachusetts' famous leader), and powerful friends in England, a charter was granted in 1662. It was a remarkable document, which not only gave the people of Connecticut, at long last, some legal basis for their colony, but also a high degree of freedom and independence. In granting the territory, it specified what the boundaries should be. The eastern limit was to be the Narragansette River, the southern boundary, the sea, and on the north, its limit was to be the southern line of Massachusetts with the whole colony extending westward to the Pacific Ocean.

Though Connecticut had her charter which clearly defined her northern border, and though she was suspicious that the 1642 line violated her charter, she did little more than make periodic protests to her neighbor to the north. There was good reason, of course, for her reluctance to right this wrong which she felt had been committed against her. At the moment she was embroiled in other border disputes: one with Rhode Island over her eastern boundary and a second with New York over Long Island and the western Territory.¹⁰ Also, it must be remembered that the Indian menace was still a live issue in all of the colonies at this period, diverting considerable time, energy, and interest to the winning of that struggle.¹¹

The land continued to fill up and the pressure of town against town was increasingly felt; the border problems with Massachusetts could no longer be ignored. The problem seemed to concentrate itself particularly around the area which is now Suffield and Enfield, Connecticut.

Enfield, Connecticut, was originally a part of Springfield and was settled as early as 1647 by residents of that town. In 1657, thirty families from Salem came and made their home there. The population increased and gradually there began a migration from Enfield out into the surrounding territory, particularly to the eastward. Somers, Connecticut, was one result of this migration.

⁸ Massachusetts, Plymouth, Connecticut, and New Haven united in 1643 for friendship, defense, and advice. This was known as the New England Confederation. Each colony was expected to contribute money for the common defense, and was entitled to send two commissioners to the annual meeting of the Confederation. Albert E. VanDusen, *Connecticut* (New York, 1961), p. 57

⁹ Albert E. VanDusen, *op. cit.*, p. 23

¹⁰ See Clarence W. Bowen, *The Boundary Disputes of Connecticut* (Boston, 1882)

¹¹ The whole Indian crisis came to head in King Philip's War, (1675-1681), which was in brief a loose alliance of all colonies against the colonists.

About this same time Suffield, Connecticut, was being settled by people also from Springfield, and, like Enfield, filled up rapidly, as it was desirable land and situated on the banks of the River.

Therefore, by the last decade of the seventeenth century, there existed all the ingredients for a full scale border dispute. There was the 1642 boundary line which Connecticut did not approve; there were two interpretations as to what the territorial limits should be; and now there were two new towns¹² lying in what appeared to be questionable territory.

In 1686, complaints were heard from Suffield and Enfield to the effect that their territory was being molested by the towns of Windsor and Simsbury.¹³ Windsor and Simsbury answered this criticism with the report to their government that the towns of Suffield and Enfield were the aggressors. It is difficult to say who was sinner and who was sinned against. It is very probable that both were guilty when it came to invading the border of the other. In these early years, individuals more often than not decided local boundaries with the sole view of their own personal convenience and profit.¹⁴

At any rate, Connecticut moved slowly and carefully in the face of this new controversy. Before making any decision, she felt the wise move would be to draw her own border to determine where the line really lay.

Calling upon Massachusetts to join her in this survey, she received a flat refusal. The Bay Colony saw no need to do the work which had already been done. The 1642 survey clearly revealed where the line was and the towns of Suffield and Enfield were unmistakably within that border and had every legitimate right to complain when Connecticut encroached upon their territory.

Connecticut, therefore, struck out alone, engaging John Butler and William Whitney to run the line. In preparation for their assignment, they studied the Massachusetts Charter, found the point three miles south of the most southerly branch of the Charles River, noted the latitude and then, unlike the “mathematicians” before them, set off overland, surveying the line in the orthodox fashion. With their work completed, they filed their report dated August, 1695, which to no one’s surprise, revealed the 1642 line in error; it was laid too far south.¹⁵

¹² *i.e.*, Enfield and Suffield

¹³ Roland M. Hooker makes the claim that Enfield and Suffield complained that Massachusetts was encroaching upon her territory, rather than Simsbury and Windsor, as I have reported. As the towns were recently settled by Massachusetts people, it would appear a bit early for such criticism. Roland M. Hooker. *Boundaries of Connecticut* (Connecticut Tercentenary Commission Publications, 1933), pp. 17-18

¹⁴ For many years after 1700, people living in the northeast part of Granby were subjected to great inconvenience and loss by a claim set up by Suffield, that they were within the limits of Massachusetts and, therefore, liable to pay taxes to that town which was then considered as belonging to that colony. Their property was often seized and carried into Suffield and sold for payment of taxes; and other trespasses were committed by their Suffield neighbors; under the same claim much of their annoyance and injury. The Legislature of Connecticut in 1705, passed an Act prohibiting them from paying taxes to Suffield, and to punish, by a summary process, all persons who should attempt to extend the jurisdiction of Massachusetts over any part of Simsbury, or who should commit trespasses under color of acting under the laws of that Colony. Noah Phelps, *History of Simsbury, Granby and Canton* (Hartford, 1845), pp. 83-84

¹⁵ Dorothy Deming says that the Woodward-Saffrey error of survey 1642 was not discovered until 1702. This would seem to be in error as Connecticut received a letter from Massachusetts dated December 12, 1695, stating that the newly established line was too far north. Also, it must be remembered that Connecticut had always been suspicious of the 1642 decision and now the 1695 report only confirmed what she had always believed. Dorothy Deming. *The Settlement of Connecticut Towns* (Connecticut Tercentenary Commissions Publications, 1933), p. 28

Connecticut, of course, confronted Massachusetts with her finding, but Massachusetts was anything but receptive to this report. She criticized the new line as being too far north and thought the whole business unnecessary and unreasonable as the border line was already in place and there was no need for any alteration.¹⁶

Now there were clearly in existence two lines, but no agreement. The towns of Suffield and Enfield continued to complain that they were being unjustly invaded; Simsbury and Windsor complained of a similar offense.

After numerous attempts at some sort of reconciliation, but without encouragement, Connecticut, desirous of settlement, offered a proposal to Massachusetts on May 9, 1700. Connecticut agreed to abandon her recently surveyed line and honor the 1642 line, but on this condition: when the 1642 line approached to within twelve miles of the River, it would swing north a mile and then west to the River. Massachusetts, aware of how desirous Connecticut was to arrive at a border settlement, sought to take full advantage of the situation, and offered a counter proposal. Massachusetts said that she was willing to end the dispute under these conditions: allow the Suffield line to be continued sixteen miles west of the River and the Enfield line eight miles east of the River and hence south to 1642 line. Also, Massachusetts insisted that all of Woodstock remain under her jurisdiction.¹⁷

A deadlock resulted. Neither colony was willing to accept the other's proposal. If Massachusetts agreed to Connecticut's plan, she would lose some of her territory as well as weaken her defense of the 1642 border. On the other hand, if Connecticut agreed to the Massachusetts proposal, it would mean a deeper penetration into Connecticut territory, particularly at Woodstock, Massachusetts. And so the problem stood, no nearer final solution, but indeed, more complex with each colony clinging tenaciously to its own personally surveyed border line.

In 1702, James Taylor of Massachusetts and Messrs. Pitkin and Whiting of Connecticut, ran a third line according to the Massachusetts Charter, with the result that it coincided almost perfectly with the line Connecticut had run in 1695. It confirmed, as the second line had confirmed, that the Woodward-Saffrey Line fell too far south by as much as seven miles. Upon receiving this report, Massachusetts was in a quandary. It was impossible to accept the results, yet one of her own citizens was on the board of surveyors. When Connecticut pressed Massachusetts for a decision, she replied that acceptance of this new study was impossible as James Taylor of Massachusetts who served on the board of surveyors had never received full power to represent Massachusetts.¹⁸ Therefore, the report as far as Massachusetts was concerned, was invalid. Again, the problem was no nearer solution than it had been sixty years before when all the line running began. Connecticut was utterly frustrated; she insisted that the border problem had been fluid too long and it was time that it be settled. Massachusetts, on the other hand, answered that, as far as she was concerned, it had already been settled in 1642, quickly underscoring the point with the fact that the Woodward-Saffrey line was in existence long before Connecticut had any legal right to settlement. And then to make doubly sure that Connecticut understood how serious she was with regard to this matter,

¹⁶ Clarence W. Bowen, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-55

¹⁷ Woodstock had been settled by Massachusetts in 1686. Apparently part of it fell south of the 1642 line, of which Massachusetts was aware. By including Woodstock in her proposal, it was her design to retain this questionable piece of territory, *ibid.*, p. 55

¹⁸ *ibid.*; pp.55-56

Massachusetts announced that if Connecticut persisted in encroaching upon her territory, an appeal to the Crown would be in order. Much to Massachusetts surprise and chagrin, Connecticut retorted with a similar threat. Unless the 1702 line were adhered to, she, too, would be forced to appeal to the Crown. But these proved to be idle threats uttered in the heat of the moment, as nothing was done on either side.

It might be well to diverge for just a moment to say Connecticut's threat to appeal to the Crown over her border dispute with Massachusetts reveals, in some measure, a desperation, and frustration over this whole matter. It has been mentioned that Connecticut's Charter of 1662 was one of the most liberal ever approved by the Crown.¹⁹ It gave her virtually self-government with little or no interference from England. So jealous was she of this Charter, that she maintained an attitude of conservatism right up to the Revolution, lest the Charter be endangered. This was no idle concern. Periodically, authorities in the Mother Country charged Connecticut with abusing her Charter rights by carrying on unauthorized activities, such as enacting capital law, trying robbery and murder cases, illicit trade, and refusal to obey England's instructions on a whole host of subjects. Therefore, Parliament was constantly requisitioned to pass an act which would revoke all existing charters, rewriting them as royal charters.²⁰

It seemed to Connecticut's advantage, therefore, to remain as unobtrusive and uncontroversial as possible, lest the Crown step in. To threaten a petition to the Crown is indeed a surprise in the light of what has just been said, and reveals Connecticut's intense feeling with regard to the settlement of her northern border.

Finally, in 1708, the Connecticut General Assembly, meeting in Hartford, revived the threat of appealing to the Crown, unless the survey line of 1702 were accepted as the rightful boundary between the colonies. If this were agreeable, then Connecticut would be perfectly willing that Massachusetts have jurisdiction over the disputed lands. But Massachusetts refused this proposal, and, consequently, both colonies enacted what they had only threatened six years before. Memorials were sent to England.

In her memorial to the Crown, Massachusetts' basic appeal stood on the fact that the land Connecticut was contesting had been surveyed many times since the first line was run in 1642; however, no two surveys ever produced identical results, although the variations were never very significant.²¹ Therefore, reasoned Massachusetts, it would seem that the Woodward-Saffrey line had as much jurisdiction for being the true line as any subsequent line and besides, it had been around a long time and for many was the legitimate border.

Connecticut's defense was based on the fact that the Massachusetts' Charter stated quite specifically what its border limits were to be. To accept the line as it was laid out in 1642 would to violate this Charter, as the line ran outside the specified boundaries by at least seven miles.²²

It is anybody's guess to which colony would have sustained in this dispute. Due to the fact that Connecticut ran into some bad luck, the memorials were never seriously

¹⁹ The other was Rhode Island's Charter of 1644. James T. Adams, *The Founding of New England* (Boston, 1921), p. 185

²⁰ Albert E. VanDusen, *op. cit.*, pp. 124-125

²¹ The 1642 line was seven miles south of the 1695 line at its widest point. This may not have been significant to Massachusetts but it certainly was to Connecticut.

²² The surveys of 1695 and 1702 proved this beyond a doubt.

considered. Shortly after her memorial was received in London, her agent suddenly and unexpectedly died, leaving the colony without formal representation. Then, too, there was considerable expense involved in maneuvering such petitions through the proper channels, and Connecticut was poor. And third, Connecticut was already involved in land disputes presently before the Crown for disposition.²³ In the face of such odds, Connecticut retreated and sought to work out some adjustment at home.

In 1713, a compromise was finally agreed between the disputing colonies, calling, first of all, for a new line to be drawn. This was done, and it fell north of the original line laid out seventy-one years before.²⁴ Obviously, this presented an immediate problem. The new line lay north of the Massachusetts settlements of Suffield, Enfield, and Woodstock. The question now was what should be the disposition of these towns. Should they go to Connecticut, now that the new line clearly revealed they were well within Connecticut's territory, or should they remain under the authority of the colony which first settled them?

After a considerable amount of mature study and debate, it was decided that Massachusetts should retain control of these towns, but Connecticut should be reimbursed with an equivalent amount of land within Massachusetts' border.²⁵ It was also agreed that all disputes with regard to Springfield, east and west, which included the Westfield-Southwick area, should be settled with Massachusetts in firm and rightful control.

To all concerned, it appeared to be an equitable decision. However, the colonies made one mistake which Massachusetts was later to regret. In deciding the fate of the three Connecticut towns, no one thought to consult the inhabitants of these towns. But it was too late to protest, for the compromise was signed, sealed, and stamped, and after more years than anyone cared to review, the border was finally settled.

The settlement was of short duration, however. Outwardly, Suffield and Enfield accepted the compromise, for, indeed, there was nothing else they could do. But underneath, resentment festered over the unethical way in which the affair had been settled. In 1724, they petitioned Connecticut to be brought under her jurisdiction. No one seems to be quite clear why such a request was made. A possible answer may be taxes. Massachusetts taxes were high while Connecticut's assessment was comparatively low.²⁶ Also, Connecticut's very liberal Charter may have been an irresistible inducement. Then, too, by 1717, Enfield and Suffield had populations which were pretty much equally divided when it came to state loyalty; there were as many Connecticut

²³ The heirs of Deputy Governor Mason claimed a portion of Connecticut that Mason in 1659 had granted to him by Uncas, Sachem of the Mohegans. The colony protested and referred it to the Crown for disposition. Clarence W. Bowen, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-26

²⁴ This line of 1713 is pretty much the line which exists today.

²⁵ Massachusetts turned over an equivalent amount of land to Connecticut from her western frontier which amounted to 107,793 acres. Surprisingly enough, Connecticut neither held nor settled this claim, but two years after receipt, sold it for £683 and turned this sum over to the young and struggling Yale College, which was founded in 1701. This money was a welcome gift indeed, and was partly responsible for keeping the College together during these critical years. Albert E. VanDusen, *op. cit.*, p. 358

²⁶ We know that in a border agreement with New York in 1682, Connecticut lost the town of Rye. Inhabitants of Rye were most displeased at this. It is interesting to note the almost universal popularity which Connecticut enjoyed among the small border towns throughout the period of border controversy. In almost every case when the question of Connecticut's jurisdiction was brought before the citizens involved, the majority was in favor of Connecticut's control. The reasons seemed obvious: Connecticut had low taxes and almost unlimited local self-government. Roland Mather Hooker, *op. cit.*, p. 33

people settled in these two communities as Massachusetts citizens. Seymour C. Loomis, speaking on the occasion of Suffield's two hundred and fiftieth anniversary, gives an interesting interpretation:

“It has been said that the reason why Suffield went to Connecticut was to avoid payment of taxes to Massachusetts. But at the time she first evinced a desire to be a part of the Constitution State, there were no taxes accrued, and an unprejudiced study of history, I think, reveals the fact that she preferred Connecticut for basic reasons and, of course, in any form of statecraft taxation is of much importance.

It is certain that Connecticut with her representative government under her Fundamental Orders of 1639, the first written constitution given to the world, was more attractive to the wise men and women of Suffield than the benign Commonwealth of Massachusetts.”²⁷

Whatever may have been the reason for Suffield's and Enfield's request – taxes, freedom, or retaliation for the unethical treatment of 1713 – Connecticut did not succumb to the temptation to include these towns under her Charter. Very emphatically she denied the request, underscoring her decision with the fact that the compromise of 1713 could not be violated under any circumstances. Connecticut probably remembered, too, the long years of struggle which had gone before this compromise, and was not willing to risk reopening that old wound.

For several years there were peace and good relations on both sides of the border. Suffield and Enfield had accepted Connecticut's decision, but had never entirely given up the hope of becoming part of that state. A resurvey of the line in the 1730's was made on behalf of both colonies with the result that a few minor errors were found and adjustments were made, but nothing of greater significance.

It is recalled that the first half of the eighteenth century was marked by a series of Indian wars which laid extreme burdens on the colonies, Massachusetts in particular, in terms of man power and money. By the time the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle was signed, bringing close King George's War, (1748), Massachusetts found herself under an enormous tax burden. Because no one enjoys paying taxes, particularly when they're higher than one's neighbor's it is not surprising that those Massachusetts towns adjacent to Connecticut should seek some means of relief.

Woodstock was the first to seek such relief. In March of 1747, she petitioned the General Assembly of Connecticut for admittance to that state, justifying her request under the guise of that old resentment Suffield and Enfield had raised earlier: Connecticut had no right to transfer territory to another state without consulting first those most immediately involved. To make her appeal more convincing, Woodstock secured the decision of the Attorney-General of New York whose written opinion made it emphatically clear that no colony could transfer land lying within its borders to another colony without approval of the Crown.²⁸ At about this time, Suffield and Enfield reintroduced their earlier petition for transfer.

Unlike her decision of twenty-four years earlier, Connecticut now encouraged these actions. It is easy to guess why. First of all, a considerable period had elapsed

²⁷Seymour C. Loomis, *Quarter Millennial of Suffield* (Suffield, 1920), p. 26

²⁸ Clarence W. Bowen, *op. cit.*, pp. 61-62

since the 1713 compromise, new leadership had assumed control of the state, and the favorable decision of the New York Court had been received.

With confidence and directness, Connecticut voted May, 1749, to receive Suffield, Enfield, and Woodstock under her control and further made it known that the 1713 compromise was not binding as it had not been approved by the Crown.²⁹

Massachusetts answered this declaration with a somewhat sarcastic note, informing Connecticut that while she (Connecticut), may not have sent the results of the 1713 compromise to England for approval, Massachusetts had done just that, as was her custom with all important matters.³⁰ Therefore, it would seem that if anything had been illegal as to the proceedings, such error would have been called to the attention of the colonies before this date.

So insistent was Massachusetts that the three towns were still under her jurisdiction that she continued to levy taxes, send announcements of feast days, and election sermons right up to the period of the Revolution. When these failed to be acknowledged, there followed petitions, letters, threats, and even some minor violence.³¹

Over one hundred years had passed since the first line was run, and still the colonies were no nearer to a solution that they had been in 1642. But now there were other events which were increasingly absorbing the colonies' interests and attention: the French and Indian War, (1754-1763); the Stamp Act, (1765); the Boston Massacre, (1770); the Boston Tea Party, (1773); and the Intolerable Acts, (1774).

In May, 1774, a very unusual event occurred. Just when everyone assumed that the border troubles had been forgotten, a petition was received by the General Assembly of Connecticut from a small group of the inhabitants who resided in the southern portion of Southwick, Massachusetts.³² The petitioners gave no reason for their sudden desire for Connecticut control, other than to say that their land lay below the accepted state line, and, therefore, ought to belong to Connecticut.³³ We do know Southwick had become a separate district from Westfield four years earlier. Perhaps this change had produced a dissention from its inhabitants, which some favoring the separation and some opposed. It might be that now that they were a separate district from Westfield, (1770), responsibilities, financial and otherwise, fell heavily upon them. Despite the added burden there were those who treasured this independence at any cost. The opposition expressed its disfavor by appealing to Connecticut.

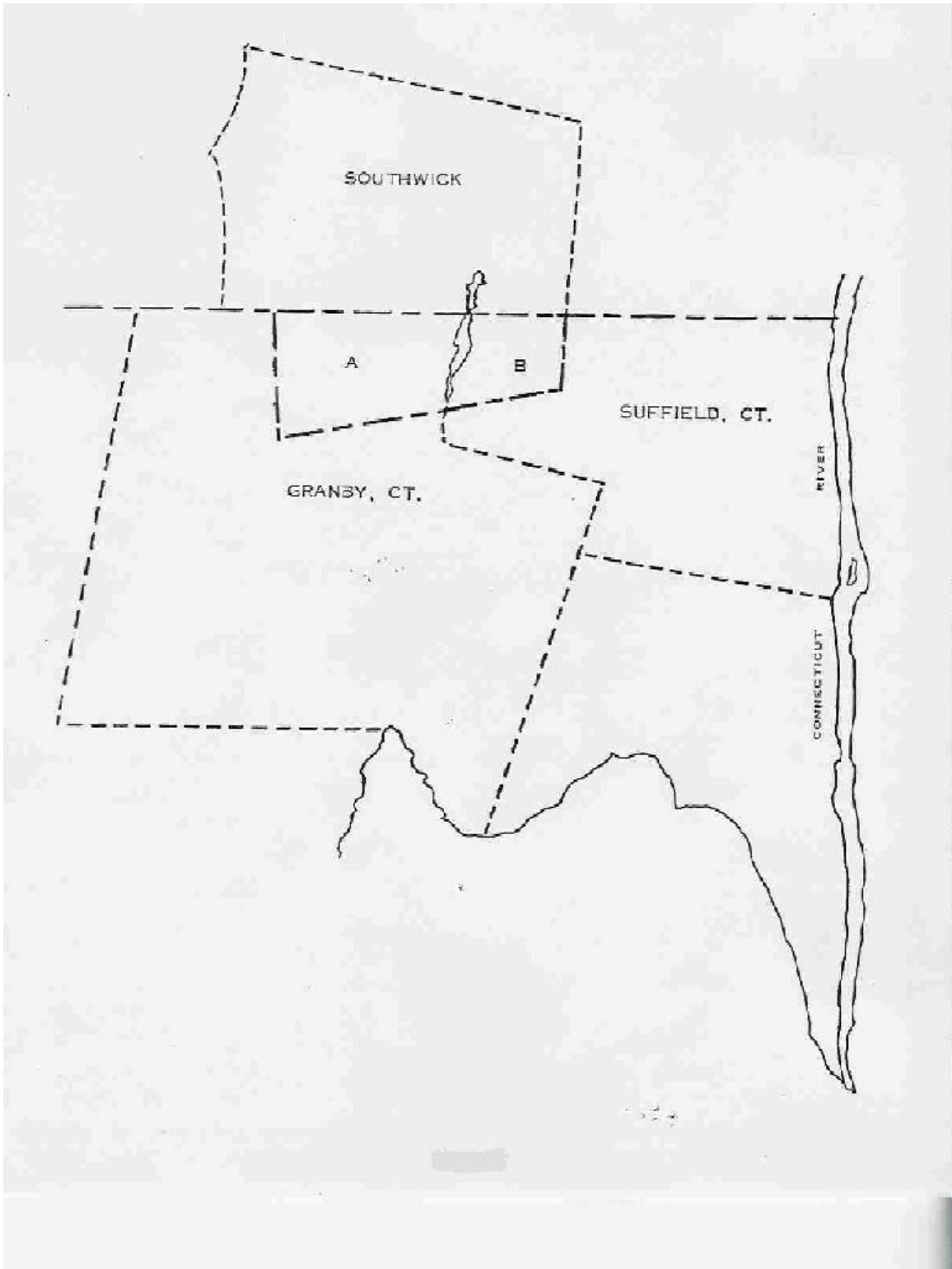
²⁹It seems a bit unfair when we recall that Massachusetts paid for this land by giving Connecticut equivalent lands in her western territory which Connecticut in turn sold.

³⁰ This points up the contrast between the two charters. Massachusetts had a tighter charter with a Royal Governor, which meant that all her decisions came under British review, while Connecticut's charter was loose, allowing for a colonial appointed governor with little or no outside interference.

³¹ In 1753 Connecticut and Rhode Island sent an appeal to the Crown, as they thought this the only answer to Massachusetts' persistent threats. Although the Crown never considered this appeal, Lord Saybrook, the Attorney General did, and his thought was that the 1713 decision was still in force. Clarence W. Bowen, *op. cit.*, pp. 62-63

³²From very early times, before the lines were clearly established, Southwick was settled in an wide area, a portion which fell below the line laid out in 1713, *i.e.* an area of about five miles in length and two and one-half miles in breadth. (See map on next page 21; the portion of Southwick requesting Connecticut jurisdiction is marked "A" and "B")

³³ Connecticut Archives, *Colonial Boundaries*, III. 149



Whatever the reason, the petition was introduced and approved by the Connecticut General Assembly. In part, their resolve read:

“Resolved by this Assembly that all the inhabitants living on said lands south of the line fixed by the Massachusetts Charter are within and have right to all privileges of this colony and that all the said lands with the said inhabitants thereon vis that part thereof bound east and south of the said town of Suffield,³⁴ shall and the same are hereby annexed to the said town of Suffield... and... that... bounded south and west³⁵ on the said town of Simsbury and to the Society of Salmon Brook in said town of Simsbury, and that they shall all be entitled to the same privileges within the same that the other inhabitants in the rest of the towns and localities in the Colony have and enjoy by law.”³⁶

Massachusetts received this news with obvious protest but took no direct action,³⁷ since the conflict with the British was coming to a head in and around Boston, making the border problems pale in significance.³⁸

On April 19, 1775, the “shot heard ‘round the world” was fired and the Revolutionary War was officially begun and was to continue for eight long, hard, and grueling years. For this reason, nothing more is heard about the Southwick border dispute until the year following the war’s end. Now that peace was restored, Connecticut felt constrained to settle the boundary problem with Southwick which had been suspended for the duration of the war, and to this end she appointed a committee. Nothing much is heard about the endeavors of this committee. We do not know what they accomplished, if anything.

Ten years later, (1793), however, a joint commission was appointed to reexamine the boundary for the express purpose of establishing peace and harmony between the citizens of the two states and to mark a line which shall forever afterwards be the just and true line.³⁹ The results of this study revealed that the existing line⁴⁰ was mutually agreeable, with the exception of that troublesome piece of land at Southwick which extended south of the border. It was troublesome because both colonies claimed it.

Connecticut’s claim stood on two indisputable facts. First, the territory was clearly below the agreed upon boundary, and well surrounded on three sides by Connecticut territory. Second, the inhabitants of the disputed land had requested Connecticut jurisdiction rather than remain under Massachusetts control.

³⁴ That portion of Southwick marked “B” on map, page 21.

³⁵ That portion of Southwick marked “A” on map, page 21.

³⁶ Connecticut Archives, *Colonial Boundaries*, III. 160

³⁷ It must be remembered that Massachusetts had good reason to protest. The compromise of 1713 states, among other things, that the Springfield areas east and west which included Westfield and that part of Westfield now called Southwick was to be given to Massachusetts control without further question.

³⁸ This was the period of the Boston Tea Party (December, 1773) and the Coercive Acts (1774).

³⁹ Connecticut Archives, *Colonial Boundaries*, III. 156

⁴⁰ Meaning the line which was laid out in 1713, which is about what the present line is today.

Massachusetts countered this with a fact which apparently Connecticut had conveniently forgotten. Connecticut had assumed jurisdiction over Suffield, Enfield, and Woodstock in 1749 in direct violation of the 1713 compromise. However, Massachusetts made it clear that she would be willing to accept this loss but would remain firm in her refusal to relinquish any portion of Southwick.

And so the situation remained until 1801 when Massachusetts offered a compromise as a means of settling its dispute. If Connecticut would not agree to surrender her claim to all of the disputed land,⁴¹ would she be willing to negotiate a compromise. The plan was this: divide the tract into two portions with the Congamond Lakes (which lay approximately in the center of the disputed territory), as the boundary between the two. That portion east of the lakes would go to Connecticut while that portion west of the lakes would go to Massachusetts.⁴²

Although Connecticut was eager to settle the problem which had existed for so many years, she was not receptive to this proposal. It was argued that such a compromise, if entered into, would deprive Connecticut of a tract of land within its chartered limits about two and one-half miles square, which it had administered for approximately twenty-seven years.⁴³ It was further stated that the disputed territory was reported as part of Connecticut when the Articles of Confederation and the Constitution were adopted with no expressed objection from Massachusetts at that time. And, finally, it appeared to Connecticut that unless some good reason could be given, a straight border was more to be desired than one laid out in some other fashion.

Naturally, Massachusetts could not agree on any of these points. It had come to the place now where the land was not as important as the principal involved. Massachusetts had retreated before and had lost heavily. She was not about to suffer another loss even though it did involve an insignificant amount of acreage. So serious was her intention to win this fight that she threatened to reopen the old sore surrounding Connecticut's violation of the 1713 compromise.⁴⁴

Connecticut was not frightened into accepting Massachusetts proposal and for several more years, arguments, replies, studies, reports, propositions, and counter-propositions flew back and forth between the two colonies. Finally, in 1804, an agreement was reached which seemed equitable to everyone involved. The southern half of Southwick was to be divided at the lakes, with the line running from the southwest corner of West Springfield, down by the lakes to the ancient south line of Westfield and

⁴¹ That is, portions "A" and "B" on the map, page 21.

⁴² The reason for this arrangement was probably due to the fact that people living on the east side of the lakes were more isolated from Southwick because of the water barrier and thus had little direct intercourse with the town, while those living on the west side encountered no such barrier; consequently, they enjoyed full partnership in town activities.

⁴³ Connecticut Archives, *Colonial Boundaries*, III, 162

⁴⁴ Connecticut Archives, *Colonial Boundaries*, III, 163

then to the ancient southwest corner of Westfield.⁴⁵ The territory east of the lakes was ceded to Connecticut, while that to the west fell under Massachusetts' jurisdiction.⁴⁶

Thus, after one hundred and sixty-two years of border uncertainty, the line was finally established.

⁴⁵ Allen Chamberlain, *An Unwritten Chapter in Massachusetts Geography* (New England Magazine, May, 1897), pp. 339-345

⁴⁶ In this compromise, Massachusetts received about five-eighths and Connecticut three-eighths of the territory under dispute. Also, as far as I can determine, Massachusetts received control of the lakes as the present border of Connecticut runs along the eastern shore of the lakes.

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