

The New England Town: A Way of Life

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THE process by which New England was colonized was unique. Where settlement in other colonies was achieved by individuals or sporadic groups, unrestrained by prior design, in New England the community and social idea, controlled and directed by provincial authority, was present from the beginning. Groups of religiously and socially like-minded families organized themselves into a "church and town," acquired a tract of land about six miles square, settled thereon according to definite rules, and proceeded to work out for themselves an orderly agricultural community. The New England town was a carefully "planned society." The system, as originally conceived and administered by the Massachusetts General Court, prevailed throughout the province of Massachusetts Bay, in its offshoots, Connecticut and New Hampshire, and in its colony of Maine.¹

Since church and town were coeval and coextensive, the community formed around meeting house and village green. Land was divided by lot into village plots fronting on the green, and outlying portions for farming, grazing and wood lots. Other tracts were set aside for the common use of all, and still others, held for future needs. This arrangement of home lots in one locality made for a compact agricultural village, effective for religious, political, and social purposes.

¹ For objectors, conscientious or otherwise, to the New England system, there remained Rhode Island, where township settlement lacked the two basic characteristics of the rest of the area—fundamental agreement of the body of inhabitants in a religious and social ideal, and identification of church and town. Since the Rhode Island town represents, both historically and ideologically, an exception to the New England way of life, I shall for the most part omit it from the present discussion.

Community control of the distribution of land implied also control over admission of new residents. As a result, the town never grew too large; instead, it threw off spores, which in time developed into new towns.

At this point I desire to make it clear that I am writing only of the *rural* town, not of such seaboard centers as Boston and Newport, which I have elsewhere described as cities.² Moreover, I will confine my remarks strictly to the period from 1740 to 1776, because in those years the New England town ceased to be a frontier community, preoccupied with the pioneer problems of clearing, shelter, subsistence, and defense, and attained its fullest and most effective development. Earlier years reveal the rawness of youth; later years exhibit the decadence of age. It is the rural New England in which grew up the embattled farmers that I wish to examine.

By 1740 the New England town was no longer a social experiment, but a fully developed, functioning, institution. One hundred years of interaction between physical and man-made environments had produced a noteworthy fusion. Town and nature exhibited an harmonious adjustment, visible result of which attracted the attention of all English travelers. "In the best cultivated parts" of New England, reported one of them, "you would not in travelling through the country, know from its appearance, that you were far from home. The face of the country, has in general a cultivated, inclosed, and chearful prospect; the farmhouses are well and substantially built, and stand thick. . . ."³ Over all prevailed the evidence of careful planning—planning in the lay-out of the land, the arrangement of homes, and the adjustment of the whole to terrain and landscape. The socio-religious community ideal of the inhabitants found expression

² In *Cities in the Wilderness*, New York, 1938.

³ Anon., *American Husbandry*, London, 1775, vol. I, p. 61.

in an air of permanence and order that had the rigid logic of Calvin's *Institutes*. Stripped of all non-essentials, the New England town had achieved a complete social functionalism. Like its severely simple farmhouses it rejected superfluous ornament, but with the same tendency for cheerful asymmetry it could afford to ignore unimportant eccentricities. It attained the beauty of entire usefulness. This beauty was unconscious and austere, to be sure, but it was the only successfully blended beauty of natural and man-made environment that America has ever known. A solid unity among the people produced this synthesis and insured its success.

As this town was not so much an area as a way of life, an understanding of it must be sought in its people. In the four decades preceding the American Revolution the population of New England more than doubled, increasing from about 325,000 to 675,000. Much of this gain was the result of natural increase of the original English stock or of immigration from England, but this accounts for only about seventy per cent of the inhabitants. The remaining thirty per cent was composed of Scots, Scotch-Irish, Celtic Irish, Germans, and other folk. These were the people who shaped town life, and were in turn shaped and molded by it. New Englanders were not merely old Englanders transplanted; they were a new breed; they were Yankees.⁴

Wherever they lived, in village or on isolated farm, these Yankees made the family their most fundamental and enduring association. The family tie derived its strength as much from its economic and social as from its moral and religious significance. Not only was it a means for increasing and perpetuating the race; it was also the principal unit of agricultural, industrial and business life, and the basic

⁴ Stella M. Sutherland, *Population Distribution in Colonial America*, New York, 1937, p. xii; *Annual Report of the American Historical Association*, 1931, p. 307.

agency of social intercourse. It guaranteed the permanence, stability, continuity and orderly development of the community. With ten or twelve children, several relatives, the hired-men, servants and slaves, all living together, frequently under the same roof, the colonial family was very large. The larger the family, the more hands to aid in cultivating the soil and doing the chores, the more members for the church, the more citizens for the town.⁵

It must not be assumed, however, that members of one family occupied the same plane as those of every other family. No, the town exhibited a definite hierarchy of social classes. Look about eighteenth-century New England where you will, you will scarcely discover "the pure crystal of democracy." Class distinctions sprang full-blown into being with the division of lands when the town was founded. The few whose position in life or whose wealth seemed to demand it had received more land than those lower in the social scale or less favored by fortune. Privileged families were thus able from the beginning to adopt and maintain a style of comparative luxury. The minister occupied a position of social as well as religious leadership, and with his unencumbered homestead, a salary of £60 to £100; exemption from taxation and free firewood, could often live much better than the rank and file of his congregation. Madam Estabrook, consort of a Connecticut parson, boasted among other possessions three silk and three crepe gowns, with petticoats to match, three riding hoods, two bonnets, two other hoods, eleven night caps, twenty-one aprons, nine pairs of gloves, and two fans. Such frippery is never found in the inventories of the "middling or inferior sorts."⁶

⁵ Albert L. Olson, *Agricultural Economy and the Population in Eighteenth-Century Connecticut*, New Haven, 1935. Connecticut Tercentenary Commission, No. 40, p. 18.

⁶ Ellen D. Larned, *History of Windham County, Connecticut*, Worcester, 1874, vol. 1, p. 263. There is a history of nearly every one of the 566 New England towns of 1776. I have read a great many of them. In preparing this essay, however, I have leaned heavily on the works of Miss Larned because of her admirable quotations from the records.

Frequently the innkeeper, the keeper of the general store, the lawyer, and the physician were also ranged with the select few who composed the upper crust of town society. But most aristocrats belonged to the squirearchy, the country gentry who constituted the leading agricultural, political, religious, and cultural interest of the New England countryside. In the settled areas of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and New Hampshire, wrote the author of *American Husbandry* in 1775, are "many considerable landed estates, upon which the owners live much in the style of country gentlemen in England." Many of these large properties were divided into two portions; one cultivated for the squire's use under direction of an "overseer"; the remainder let to tenants under lease. This writer's criterion for a place in the squirearchy was an income of £200 to £500 per year from an "estate," of which rents often formed an important part. More frequently, perhaps, tenants being scarce, the country gentleman and members of his family farmed his whole estate.⁷ Supplementing his rents or the income from sale of his produce, were profits from lumbering, a saw mill, or the sale of frontier lands which he almost inevitably possessed.

Travelers discovered New England gentry living in a "genteel, hospitable, and agreeable manner." Southern Massachusetts came to be known as the "land of the Leonards," where dwelt in baronial splendor that great family of ironmasters. Daniel Leonard, Harvard College, 1760, who would

Scrawl every moment he could spare
From cards and barbers and the fair,

dazzled all New England, including John Adams, in 1767 when he and his bride toured the countryside in their elegant

⁷ *American Husbandry*, vol. 1, pp. 62-5.

coach before settling down at Taunton Green in their spacious mansion with its deer park.⁸ Squire Edmund Quincy of Braintree, Massachusetts, owned a fine "manor house" built in 1716, surrounded by stable, barn, sheds, cider-mill, fish pond, garden, wood-lot, orchard, and broad-acred farm. The interior was beautifully furnished in "the newest fashion" and the best of taste, chiefly with mahogany and fine plate. In 1775, in preparation for the marriage of his daughter Dorothy to John Hancock, the walls of the mansion were hung with imported Chinese wallpapers. In fact, as one observer noted, New England "country gentlemen are enabled to purchase whatever they want from abroad."⁹

Members of the gentry made their influence felt in every sphere of town life. At church they sat in the choice pews, and more frequently than not controlled the elders and deacons. They ran town meetings, either by continuous occupancy of the key offices of moderator and selectman, or by securing the election of townsmen who saw things their way. As town proprietors their voice in the regulation and disposition of undivided lands was decisive. Thus did the New England squires see to it that the town thought as they thought, and acted as they would have it act. They were men of ability, accorded respect, if not deference, by the rest of the town. They controlled town life, because they possessed capacity and education, as well as wealth.

"The most considerable part of the whole province" of New England, however, was the yeomanry, or, as contemporaries defined them, the independent, industrious, freeholding farmers. In contrast with the genteel existence

⁸ *American Husbandry*, vol. 1, p. 64; *Dictionary of American Biography*, vol. 11, pp. 174-5; Frederick B. Goff, "Daniel Leonard et Alii," (Seminar Paper, Brown University, 1939); John Trumbull, *M'Fingal*, in V. L. Parrington, ed., *The Connecticut Wits*, New York, 1926, p. 66.

⁹ In 1756 Elizabeth Mosely sought in particular the custom of "Country-Gentlemen" at her Boston tavern. Charles Francis Adams, *Three Episodes of Massachusetts History*, Boston, 1892, vol. 2, pp. 681-2; *Boston News-Letter*, Sept. 16, 1756.

amid comfortable surroundings enjoyed by the gentry, the farmer and his family lived plainly and frugally in a severe, unpainted frame farmhouse. Beyond prime necessities, he might possess a Bible, a musket, a looking-glass, and perhaps a piece of carpet. His food and drink were plain, and probably monotonous. Throughout rural New England flour was a luxury indulged in chiefly by the upper class. Thomas Hutchinson told King George in 1774 that the average New Englander preferred coarse bread made of rye or corn to the wheaten variety, and as late as 1800 corn meal remained the yeoman's staple food. Fresh meat appeared rarely on his table. Each autumn a hog was slaughtered and salted down, regularly to be served at future meals. This constant use of salted meat generated the insatiable thirst for which the Yankee became notorious, and which he variously treated, according to his purse or the season, with generous applications of beer, cider, or rum. He thereby supplied his parson with inspiration for countless homilies on the evils of "baneful intemperance."¹⁰

Soil and climate conspired to force the New England farmer to struggle incessantly for a bare living. Economy and thrift were essential to survival, and the Yankee farmer rationalized his necessity into a creed and made a cardinal virtue of unremitting physical labor. Yet even the most industrious could not altogether avoid a touch of wistfulness. Theodore Foster of Brookfield, after entering on the margin of his almanac for August 18, 1767, "Began to plow behind the orchard," broke into limping verse:¹¹

Thus our work is nevr Done;
But uneasily it goes on,
At least for my own part,
This I say from my Heart.

¹⁰ *American Husbandry*, vol. 1, pp. 66-7; Adams, *Three Episodes*, vol. 2, pp. 685-6. Before the Revolution some rural families did not spend ten dollars a year. See "A Farmer" in *Hampshire Gazette*, Sept. 3, 1788.

¹¹ This almanac is in the Rhode Island Historical Society.

Although basically a farming community, each New England town had its little coterie of artisans and craftsmen. The blacksmith, the wheelwright, the weaver, the cabinet-maker, and other workers needed to render the community self-sufficient, may also be classed with the yeoman stock. Of course, every farmer had to be a jack-of-all trades, and many tiny industries were conducted in the home, but the importance of village artisans and craftsmen is brought home to us when we read that in 1747 at Preston, Connecticut, when a village house burned down, one Avery, a weaver, and his family of fifteen lost their looms and £400 "worth of Cloath of their own Manufacturing." Certain towns, moreover, boasted craftsmen whose mysteries served the needs of the surrounding regions or even the whole colony. Caleb and Robert Barker of Hanover, Massachusetts, cast bells up to 2,000 weight at two shillings per pound which graced the belfries of meeting houses all over New England. Lexington rejoiced in its "noated clock-maker," Robert Mulliken, while Colchester, Connecticut, took as much pride in the fine furniture made by Pierpont Bacon as did Little Rest in Rhode Island the beautiful silver produced by Samuel Casey.¹²

Toward the close of the colonial period the rural population of New England, especially that part of it which enjoyed contact by water or highway with Boston, experienced a rise in its standard of living. Tea and coffee came into general use after 1750, because farmers were producing a small surplus "sufficient to buy such foreign luxuries as . . . [were] necessary to make life pass comfortably." The best informed observer of the period believed the yeomanry to be in general "a very happy people."¹³

¹² "The Trade of a Currier is very much wanted in Middletown, the Metropolis of Connecticut," where a master of that craft may "get a pretty Estate in a few Years," read an advertisement of 1758. *Independent Advertiser*, Mar. 13, 1749; *Boston Gazette*, Dec. 11, 1753; Nov. 6, 1758; Jan. 14, 1760; July 29, 1765; William Davis Miller, "Samuel Casey, Silversmith," *R. I. Hist. Soc., Collections*, vol. 21, pp. 1-14.

¹³ *American Husbandry*, vol. 1, p. 67.

This "middling sort," then as now, formed the backbone of the village community. They were a hard-working and self-respecting lot. To their economic and social superiors they cheerfully accorded due respect but no subservience. Socially as well as politically the yeomen were sure of themselves. They were as jealous of their rights as any colonial governor, and insisted upon the importance of their position as freeholders, independent farmers, heads of families, church members and voters. This led to a certain aggressiveness in their attitude toward outsiders who might not appreciate their importance and worth, and an absence of formality from their manners that gave foreign observers an impression of rampant democracy. An English official reported of inhabitants of rural Connecticut, "They seem to be a good substantial Kind of Farmers, but there is no break in their Society; their Government, Religion, and Manners all tend to support an equality. Whoever brings in your Victuals sets down and chats to you." But in his own community the yeoman farmer or artisan infused a thrifty, sober steadiness into the tempo of village life.¹⁴

Most residents of the towns owned some land. "Where there is one farm in the hands of a tenant," reported Governor Hutchinson, "there are fifty occupied by him that has the fee of it."¹⁵ In like manner the number of indentured servants was small as compared with that of the Middle and Southern Colonies. Few Negro slaves were to be found in rural New England, where the prevalent system of husbandry was unsuited to forced labor. There is scant evidence in this period also of the "hired man" and "hired girl," later to become familiar characters throughout the countryside. Actually, members of "dependent classes" were few,

¹⁴ Ann Hulton, *Letters of a Loyalist Lady*, Cambridge, 1927, p. 105.

¹⁵ Many years before, Roger Williams had said "Land is one of the Gods of New England." Quoted by Charles M. Andrews, *The Colonial Period of American History*, New Haven, 1934-38, vol. I, p. 57n.

and, as the author of *American Husbandry* found, better off than their brothers anywhere else in the world, because their labor brought high wages, and cheap land was generally available to them.¹⁶

So much for the Yankee men. What of their mothers, wives and daughters, the forgotten women, who after all made up one half of the town community? Even in the eighteenth century no New England male would have denied the usefulness of woman. He was strong to wive, because he needed a woman to keep his house, produce his labor force, cook his meals, spin his flax, dip his candles, care for his garden, minister to him when sick, and perhaps even aid him in the fields. A good wife would husband his small surplus, increase his standing in the community, and not rarely provide him with companionship. Colonial women deserve our tribute because of their remarkable energy and character. Despite excessive child-bearing they performed feats mere thought of which would stagger their modern sisters. The examples of three good wives of Windham, Connecticut, will suffice. Hannah Bradford cared for the town sick for many years, and is reported to have taught the first male doctor of the community much of his medical lore. Mary Howard kept her own house and that of John Cales, whose estate she managed most skillfully. Lucy Reynolds could kill a bear, heft a barrel of salted meat, or, if challenged, "throw the strongest man in Windham." In industry and frugality they equalled the New England man, whose protection they did not necessarily require. Mrs. Hannah Mackerwethy, of Dedham, Massachusetts, started life with a legacy of £20 from her father, and bequeathed to grateful heirs at her death in 1771 £1,200 "which she had earned with her own hands by spinning." She had at the

¹⁶ Large numbers of boys and girls, however, did hire out in their teens. *American Husbandry*, vol. 1, p. 70; Sutherland, *Population Distribution*, p. 47.

same time made herself a power in the community, giving generously to the support of church and minister.¹⁷

President Eliot of Harvard once remarked that the New England woman had not only to put up with her work and her children, she had also to put up with the New England man. Legally, her husband was her lord and master. He controlled all property she possessed at the time of her marriage and whatever she might acquire later, and all family decisions were made by him. We must make careful distinction between colonial woman's usefulness to her man and the amount of social recognition he accorded her. However, rebellion against his snug little tyranny was not unusual, and advertisements for runaway wives appear in the newspapers with startling frequency. "My wife Annabelle Holman," announced John Holman of Bridgewater, Massachusetts, in 1745, "absolutely refuseth to cohabit with me at my house in said Bridgewater, but keeps still at Newport, where she is continually running me into debt and exposing me to many lawsuits. . . ." In Annabell's case we note a quite understandable preference for the bright lights of the "Metropolis of Southern New England" to household drudgery among the local yokels of Bridgewater!¹⁸

It is extremely doubtful, however, that the average New England housewife regretted her lot. In the end life was managed pretty much as she wanted it, for her importance in the scheme of things was too vital for her to be long disregarded. Throughout the ages her sex had learned that where the frontal attack on the male often failed success could be attained by indirection. Frank men admitted this. When Jonathan Brewster of New London wrote to induce John Winthrop to return to town, because "Wee and the

¹⁷ Larned, *Windham County*, vol. 1, p. 77; *Massachusetts Gazette and Post-Boy*, July 15, 1771.

¹⁸ *Boston Post-Boy*, Nov. 4, 1745.

whole Towne and Church wants you," he simultaneously invoked the aid of Mistress Winthrop, for "you know weomen are very strong and powerfull to act this way, and overcome the strongest and wisest men that ever were or are in the world, by perswations and swete alurements."¹⁹

In 1778 John Adams gave Major Langbourne of Virginia a recipe for making a New England town: town meetings, training days, town schools, and town churches. "The virtues and the talents of the people are there formed"; Adams went on to explain, "their temperance, patience, fortitude, prudence and justice, as well as their sagacity, knowledge, judgment, taste, skill, ingenuity and industry." There is no question that the New England character was given direction by its peculiar institutions, nor that its virtues (that they were as many as Adams listed I will not try to maintain) as also its defects stemmed directly from the same source. It will, however, be instructive to pass these agencies briefly in review in order to note their particular effect upon the developing philosophy of town life.²⁰

"Town Meeting to Day makes a great nois and hubbub," recorded Theodore Foster of Brookfield, on February 19, 1768.²¹ Quite naturally, for at Town Meeting the Yankee could air his views and grievances, and explain why the town should not spend money for this or that project. Here nearly every man in the town had a voice and used it, for the local franchise was much broader than that of the colony. The freeholding farmer with his little stake in society was an intense conservative and habitually suspicious of innovation. In this he saw eye to eye with the large property owner with whom he usually ranged himself in voting "no" on

¹⁹ Quoted by Samuel Eliot Morison in *Builders of the Bay Colony*, Boston, 1930, p. 62.

²⁰ John Adams, *Works*, Boston, 1850-56, vol. 3, p. 400; John and Abigail Adams, *Familiar Letters During the Revolution*, New York, 1876, pp. 120-1.

²¹ Almanac, in the R. I. Hist. Soc.

appropriations. Fresh from a hard struggle to make both ends meet on his farm, "he watched public expenditure with a cold saving eye, and in town-meeting could be safely counted upon to raise his voice against anything which was likely to impose a burden on his acres."²² When it came to voting taxes, he was downright tight; but if money must be spent he wanted the voting of it himself. This attitude the imperial authorities never quite understood. Minor town jobs, from hogreeve to fence-viewer, were all filled by farmers, who in a real sense rendered yeoman service. Where town matters were involved, politics aroused the greatest interest, yet save in times of stress nothing is more striking than the generally apathetic attitude of townsmen on provincial or imperial questions. The town managed its own affairs, expected others to do likewise, and wanted no interference from without. Beyond voting instructions for the town's representatives in the colony assembly on such pertinent questions as an issue of paper currency or a new road from the metropolis, it had no wish to go. Political caldrons boiled only a local brew until the very eve of the Revolution.

Yet this tiny forum graduated many a hard-headed political thinker in whom, despite ingrained village prejudices and ample misinformation, analytical acumen and capacity to lay bare the fundamental principles of government combined to a degree surprising to the present age. Such a Yankee was William Manning, who grew to manhood in the Old Manse at Billerica and nourished his deep-seated distrust of lawyers, aristocrats, and government on newspapers, the oratory of Otis and Sam Adams, and talk. "Teased in his mined . . . for many years" with what seemed a menacing disregard of the great principles which had taken him to Concord with the minutemen in 1775, he painfully

²² Adams, *Three Episodes*, vol. 2, p. 712.

composed in 1796 a shrewd, vigorous, original and salty, if unlettered, tract for democracy, *The Key of Liberty: Shewing the Causes Why a Free Government has always failed and a Remedy Against it*. In this unique and precious document we glimpse the profound truth of the assertion that "with the sole exception of England of the Commonwealth, no community in modern history has been so fecund in political thought, as America of the revolutionary generation."²³

"They are all Politicians," said James Hulton, "and all Scripture learnt." This juxtaposition ceases to surprise when we remember that the New England meeting-house served both as town hall and house of worship. It was never called a church, for as Richard Mather had said, "there is no ground from Scripture to apply such a trope as church to a house for public assembly."²⁴ Here, then, was an outward and visible sign of the curious mixture of the ideal and the practical in the Yankee character. This being so, it was the church as a social rather than as a religious institution that was so important in shaping the lives of townsmen. Theological emphasis may have been strong at first, but after the embers of the Great Awakening died down, about 1750, it is probable that the average New England would rather have wet his whistle with a gill of rum than sweeten his mouth with a morsel of Calvin.

²³ "I am not a Man of Larning my selfe for I neaver had the advantage of six months schooling in my life. I am no travelor for I neaver was 50 Miles from where I was born in no direction, and I am no grate reader of antiant history for I always followed hard labour for a living. But I always thought it My duty to search into and see for my selfe in all maters that consaned me as a member of society, and when the war began between Brittan and Amarica I was in the prime of Life and highly taken up with Liberty and a free Government. I See almost the first blood that was shed in Concord fite and scores of men dead, dying and wounded in the Cause of Libberty, which caused serious sencations in my mind.

"But I believed then and still believ it is a good cause which we ought to defend to the very last, and I have bin a Constant Reader of publick Newspapers and closely attended to men and measures ever sence, . . ." William Manning, *The Key of Libberty*, ed. by S. E. Morison, Billerica, Mass., 1922, pp. v-xiv, 3-4; S. E. Morison, "The Struggle over the adoption of the Constitution of Massachusetts, 1780," *Proc. Mass. Hist. Soc.*, vol. 50, pp. 354, 364, 401.

²⁴ Hulton, *Letters of a Loyalist Lady*, 105; Noah Porter, *The New England Meeting House*, New Haven, 1933. Connecticut Tercentenary Commission, No. 18, p. 5.

Church attendance on the Sabbath by no means turned out to be the chore that some historians of our godless age imagine it to have been. In truth, a good time was had by all; even a youth like Thomas Mentor of Ipswich claims the attention of posterity because he was reprimanded for "taking of the maids by the aprons as they came into the meeting house . . . putting his hand in their bosoms," snatching away their posies, and laughing and whispering with "the very little boys" all during the time of worship "most of the Sabbaths of this year." For the elders, now that singing by note had been introduced, the rendering of hymns proved a pleasure, although the parson still had occasionally to chide his congregation for ignorance and heedlessness "in sliding from one tune to another while singing or singing the same line in different tunes."²⁶ New England ministers had to be good to hold their jobs. The General Court of Connecticut stated inclusively:²⁶

That by an able and orthodox minister . . . they understand a person competently well-skilled in arts and languages, well-studied and well-principled in divinity, approving himself by his exercises in preaching the gospel to the judgment of those that are approved pastors . . . to be a person capable of divining the word of truth aright, to convince gainsayers, and that his conversations is such that he is a person called and qualified according to gospel rule, to be a pastor of a church. . . .

Those who did not suit were liable to acid remarks from village critics, like the brother who declared, "I would rather hear my dog bark than hear Mr. Billings preach."²⁷ As secularism filtered slowly but pervasively into the puritan way of life in the mid-eighteenth century, the clergy shifted from theological and doctrinal sermons to dissertations on social and political subjects. Many an unlettered Yankee

²⁶ Thomas F. Waters, *Ipswich in the Massachusetts Bay Colony*, Ipswich, 1905, vol. 2, p. 3; Larned, *Windham County*, vol. 1, p. 60.

²⁶ Quoted by Miss Larned, *Windham County*, vol. 1, p. 87.

²⁷ Larned, *Windham County*, vol. 1, p. 281.

absorbed by ear from the discourses of a learned minister much knowledge, especially in the field of political theory, and, by the time revolution threatened, had become thoroughly familiar with the jargon of the pamphleteers. One loyalist blamed much of the rebel spirit of New England upon members of "Sam Adams' black regiment" who allowed their pulpits to "Foam with Politicks."²³

In addition to providing townspeople with an opportunity to assemble, exchange amenities and listen to sermons twice a week, the church was a powerful instrument for social discipline, and played an important part in the regulation of morals and conduct. Everyone, whether religiously-bent or not, felt the influence of this institution in the life of the community. In the social rather than the theological sphere lies the lasting significance of the New England churches.

Discussion of the contribution of militia training and the school to New England town life may be passed over rapidly. There was a certain disciplinary value to the former; it developed a local *esprit du corps* and gave a rudimentary training in leadership and cooperative effort to all concerned. Every man from sixteen to sixty had to be a citizen soldier. Officers' interests and ambitions centered often in election and promotion and in the increasing prominence offered by good regimental connections rather than in provision for the common defense. The colonial records of New England are literally stippled with military titles. Dr. Alexander Hamilton and a friend, being in Salem in 1744, one evening dropped in at the Ship Tavern, "where we drank punch and smoaked tobacco with several colonels; for colonels, captains, and majors are so plenty here that they are to be met with in all companies. And yet," the physician shrewdly observed, "methinks they look no more

²³ Alice M. Baldwin, *The New England Clergy and the American Revolution*, Durham, 1928.

like soldiers than they look like divines; but they are gentlemen of that place, and that is sufficient."²⁹

With the quieting of the frontiers after the last French War the militia became more than ever a local levy, and another example of the New England town's exclusiveness and self-sufficiency. The New England farmer might keep his musket ready for the protection of his home, but he resented being summoned to the defense of a neighboring community, and, since soldiers cost money, preferred to stand guard in his own town unassisted. Though the gentry may have prayed to be blessed with ample rum and military titles, he had no hankering after military glory, and recruiting officers continually found poor pickings among local militias. Eight years of fighting for independence hardly altered this parochialism. Muster day provided occasion for rough sociability eight times a year, but entirely lacked the pomp and formality that characterized parades of uniformed cadets or fashionable troops of horse in more urbane communities.³⁰

Of the school, it may be pointed out that poverty and the need for the labor of every pair of hands throughout the period prevented a realization of the New England ideal of a school for every forty families and a Latin school for every hundred. Yet by 1750 most wealthier communities maintained a grammar school for at least part of the year, and in virtually all of them ambitious lads could read with the minister for entrance into college. At Woodstock, where drain of money and man power during the French and Indian Wars defeated all efforts to maintain a grammar

²⁹ Alexander Hamilton, *Itinerarium*, St. Louis, 1907, pp. 148-9.

³⁰ The social and political aspects of the militia system in the eighteenth century are worthy of study. For a brief sketch, see Allen French, *The First Year of the Revolution*, Boston, 1934, pp. 32-6; also Jonathan Smith, in *Proc. Mass. Hist. Soc.*, vol. 55, pp. 345-6; *American Weekly Mercury*, May 13, 1731; *Virginia Gazette*, Oct. 27, 1738. For a contrasting view, belittling the train bands, see C. F. Adams, *Three Episodes*, vol. 2, pp. 264-5.

school, the Reverend Ezra Stiles prepared several young men for Yale. Indeed, there was throughout New England a great respect for learning as one of the better things of life and a means of elevating a man to the professional and governing classes. Many a Yankee farmer at great cost to himself sacrificed the labor of a promising son to allow him to acquire a Harvard or Yale degree. It is probable that a majority of townsmen could read and write; at any rate they respected those who did, and where they were able to raise the funds at all were quite willing to devote them to a school.²¹

To these four institutions singled out by John Adams as the principal formative agencies of the New England character, I would add for these years at least two more—the tavern and the highway system.

In any chronicle of the rise of republican government in New England the town meeting, church and tavern form a sort of trinity. And the most democratic of these was the tavern. "Here," remarked John Adams caustically, "vicious habits, bastards and legislators, are frequently begotten." Its joys were open to members of all classes, some of whom occasionally forgot their places in the social scale under the influence of the cup that cheers. To this center of village society came post and stage riders, and all "foreigners" having goods to sell or news to impart. In the inn much of the village business was transacted, and here in the long evenings the political engine was worked to the limits of its capacity. Tavern clubs became tiny forums for the discussion of all topics from local elections and the state of

²¹ After 1754 advertisements frequently appeared stating that "any Country town" destitute of a schoolmaster may have one who "will be faithful," on "Customary terms." Larned, *Windham County*, vol. 1, pp. 262, 384, 550, 571, 572-3; Marcus W. Jernegan, *Laboring and Dependent Classes in Colonial America*, Chicago, 1931, pp. 104, 121-6; Clifford K. Shipton, "Education in the Puritan Colonies," *New England Quarterly*, vol. 7, pp. 654-5; *Boston Gazette*, Dec. 17, 1754.

crops, through current deistic or literary controversy, to the latest rumor that Mary Parker and Obadiah Bartlett must shortly stand before the congregation and admit having indulged in carnal wickedness. Hours spent around tables with mugs of rum, mulled wine, or potent flip gave Yankee townsmen an education in human nature which the combined efforts of church, school, and even the colleges at New Haven and Cambridge could not impart. That New England inns became so famous even President Dwight felt impelled to sing their praises was in large measure due to the superior human qualities of the innkeepers. John Adams knew them well from his experiences while riding the judicial circuit, and insisted that many of them were the "grandest people alive." The landlady at Treadwell's Inn, Ipswich, was a great-granddaughter of Governor Endicott, and had "all the great notions of high family that you find in Winslows, Hutchinsons, Quincys, Saltonstalls, Chandlers, Leonards, Otises," and Winthrops, while her husband was "as happy, and as big, as proud, as conceited as any nobleman in England. . . ." No man, be he even the parson or the squire, cut a finer figure than mine host of the village tavern, and few knew more about American conditions or wielded more influence in town councils.³²

³² After listening to tap-room poetry for a lifetime, John Daggett of Attleborough, who kept a tavern on the Boston-Providence Road, composed his own epitaph, "addressed to a Traveller":

If e'er good Punch to thee was dear,
 Drop on John Daggett's Grave a Tear:
 Who then alive, so well did tend
 The Rich, the Poor, the Foe, and Friend,
 At ev'ry Knock, and ev'ry Call,
 I'm coming, Sir, he cry'd to All:
 At length Death Knock'd! poor Daggett cry'd,
 I'm coming, Sir! And so he dy'd.

John Adams, *Works*, vol. 2, pp. 85, 111-4, 125, 281; Timothy Dwight, *Travels; in New England and New York*, New Haven, 1821-22, *passim*; and for the epitaph, *Newport Mercury*, June 27, 1768.

Between 1740 and 1776 a network of passable highways slowly spread over all New England.³³ Poor, but adequate for their day, they played a paramount role in the breakdown of rural isolation.³⁴ After 1750 stage routes operated on regular schedules between important points, and post riders carried the mails and newspapers to rural areas with considerable frequency.³⁵ In addition, peddlers with their mysterious packs came periodically and increasingly over the roads to compete with the local general storekeeper. By this period, too, rural customers could purchase by mail order from Boston nearly any article desired. Samuel Hardcastle, at the sign of the Three Nuns and Comb, in Cornhill Street, announced in his hardware advertisements that country customers "may be furnished by sending a letter as if present themselves." The same held true for wholesale orders of dry goods from the warehouse of Jonathan and John Amory. Even "Bride and Christening Cakes, ornamented in the Genteelest Manner at a Pistareen a Pound," might be

³³ So great had become the traffic on the Massachusetts highways by 1765, that a caution was issued to all persons of "town and country" driving or walking always to "keep on the right-hand side of the way," as in England (which must have changed its rules at a later date!) *Boston Evening Post*, *Boston Gazette*, Apr. 22, 1765. On Connecticut roads, consult Isabel S. Mitchell's excellent *Roads and Road-Making in Colonial Connecticut*, New Haven, 1933. Connecticut Tercentenary Commission, No. 14, especially the map. At Norwich Landing in Connecticut, on June 20, 1764, was raised the Leffingwell Bridge, "the most curious and compleat piece of architecture, of the kind, ever erected in America. It is 124 feet in length, 28 feet from the water [of the Thames River], and the water 30 feet deep; having nothing underneath between the buttments to support it, but is entirely supported by the geometry work above, and is supposed to be strong enough to bear 50 ton weight. The work was performed by Mr. John Bliss of Norwich, said to be one of the most curious mechanicks this age has produced." *Boston News-Letter*, July 19, 1764.

³⁴ Improved roads and the stage coach, for example, made possible the rise of Stafford and Mansfield Springs, in Connecticut, as summer resorts. Carl Bridenbaugh, "Baths and Watering Places of Colonial America," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., vol. 3, pp. 152-8.

³⁵ On the post riders, see *Boston Post-Boy*, Dec. 25, 1749; *Boston Gazette*, July 27, 1767; and Hugh Finlay, *Journal*, Brooklyn, 1867. For the Boston-Providence-Newport stage route, consult *Boston News-Letter*, Aug. 8, 1745; May 26, 1757; *Weekly Advertiser*, July 17, 1758; *Boston Post-Boy*, July 20, 1767; *Boston Gazette*, Aug. 17, 1767. The stage to Portsmouth, N. H., began to operate in 1763. *Boston News-Letter*, Apr. 14, 1763. Silent Wilde was the regular "carrier" from Boston to Deerfield, 1761-1775. *Boston Post-Boy*, Apr. 6, 1761; *Boston Chronicle*, Oct. 26, 1775.

procured from Thomas Selby's Pastry and Kitchen Cookshop for rustic festivities, though nothing is said about their condition upon delivery.³⁶

More significant than the facilitation of trade by the improvement in transportation was the passage of culture over these roads, by means of which rural New Englanders began to share in the continuous process of civilization in transit from Europe to America. By 1766 Boston and Newport newspapers were regularly delivered by "News Riders" at taverns throughout most of rural New England; the *Massachusetts Gazette and Boston News-Letter* announced that "it circulates mostly in the Country, especially on the Great Western Road to Worcester, Springfield, Northampton, Hartford, New Haven, etc."³⁷ Boston maintained its importance as the greatest bookselling center in America by virtue of the expanding hinterland market for all kinds of reading matter from almanacs to novels, from the poems of Stephen Duck of Wiltshire to the writings of John Locke. As in earlier days peddlers served as book agents, but now booksellers also used the mail order system, whereby books and all sorts of printed matter reached remote destinations. Many a Yankee farmer purchased religious and political tracts, and even occasionally a work of fiction. There were practical works as well, like *The Cyder-Makers Instructor*, Culpepper's inevitable *Household Physician*, and *Look e'er you Leap: a History of Lewd Women*, in chapter III of which we find "Women considered in the threefold Capacity of

³⁶ The Amorys opened a branch store at Salem. At Charlestown Ferry, Charles Russell, apothecary, made a special point of outfitting "Gentlemen Practitioners . . . in the Country." *Boston News-Letter*, Nov. 14, 1754; Oct. 12, 1758; Jan. 15, Nov. 26, 1761; *Boston Post-Boy*, Dec. 26, 1774; *Boston Gazette*, May 7, 1764.

³⁷ Moses Holmes of Ashford covered the route from Boston to Hartford; Christopher Page to Springfield, Samuel Farrar to Fitchburg, and Silent Wilde to Deerfield. Wilde also chaperoned Deerfield young ladies on trips to and from Boston! *Weekly Advertiser*, Aug. 14, 1758; Nov. 12, 1759; *Boston News-Letter*, Dec. 31, 1761; July 3, 1766; *Boston Post-Boy*, Feb. 18, May 27, 1771; *Publ. Colonial Soc. Mass.*, vol. 11, pp. 34, 34n.

Maid, Wife and Widow.—With Directions how to choose a good Wife.” The book was sober enough, but like our modern films the title promised more.³⁸ John Mein, one of Boston’s leading booksellers, in 1765 launched a circulating library of several thousand volumes, from which his country subscribers might withdraw by mail two books at a time, and nine years later Henry Knox from his Book Store in Cornhill Street offered special prices to “those Gentlemen in the Country who are actuated with the most genuine Principles of Benevolence in their Exertions to exterminate Ignorance and Darkness, by the noble Medium of Social Libraries.”³⁹

By 1770 the ideas coming over the high road to the New England town to hammer against its insularity and provincialism were slowly swinging the interior into the current of seaboard thought, and subtly preparing the minds of men for momentous events to come.

The people of New England and their institutions were gradually fused in the crucible of the New England environment into the folk known as Yankees. But what was their mental outlook, the philosophy which made for the town way of life? The New England character was at one and the same time extremely individualistic, yet intensely social. This apparent paradox resolves itself when the New England way of life is subjected to analysis.

The Yankee’s ideal was basically an agricultural ideal, and his outlook that of the farmer. Living close to the soil he knew instinctively the odors of field and forest, the songs

³⁸ Bridenbaugh, *Cities in the Wilderness*, p. 452; *Boston Post-Boy*, May 3, 1762; Apr. 18, 1763; *Boston News-Letter*, May 13, 1762.

³⁹ A Catalogue of Mein’s Circulating Library (Ms. in Mass. Hist. Soc.); *Boston Gazette*, July 13, 1761; *Boston Post-Boy*, Feb. 1, 1762; Nov. 4, 11, 1765; May 19, 1766; *Boston News-Letter*, Oct. 31, 1765; Mar. 3, 31, 1774. For social libraries in rural towns, see Larned, *Windham County*, vol. 1, pp. 356-9, 526, 574-7. Darien, Connecticut, seems to have had a “Book Company” as early as 1733. Joseph T. Wheeler, *Literary Culture in Colonial Maryland* (Ms. Thesis, Brown University, 1938), p. 5.

of birds, the habits of animals. This intimate contact with nature continually reflected itself in earthy speech, even in the discourses of parsons, as when the Reverend Josiah Dwight told his listeners that "if unconverted men ever got to heaven, they would feel as uneasy as a shad up the crotch of a white oak."⁴⁰ The rural New Englander was never far from consciousness of the mutability of the seasons or the unchanging courses of the stars. Yet at the same time he did not, like other American colonists, live on an isolated farm, but where he could enjoy the stimulating benefits of village society. His individuality was thus tempered with sociability from the start.

So rigorous was the climate and so unyielding the soil that the New England farmer was kept eternally busy with the mere gaining of a living. The easier husbandry of the South or of the unrivalled limestone lands of Pennsylvania he knew not; he had to make a virtue out of the realities of his hard life, and continually practice industry and economy. In matters of spending he could be downright mean, but he did spend when necessary; he spent well and got the best. Lovely churches, substantial and well-proportioned houses, and taxes for education stand witness for him. New England thrift was zealously contemplated, but it was never inefficient. And no one who genuinely deserved charity ever met with denial from inhabitants or town. Yankees were of one mind about shiftlessness and waste; they were detestable if not actually dangerous, as threatening the very basis of existence. So, too, their handmaidens, ostentation and display.

Nothing is more misleading than the assertions of some

⁴⁰ Mr. Dwight's quaint conceits annoyed the ministerial association, which visited him and rebuked him. The parson meekly admitted his fault and promised reform, but in praying at the departure of the worthies "hoped that they might so hitch their horses together on earth that they should never kick in the stables of everlasting salvation." Quoted in Larned, *Windham County*, vol. 1, p. 51.

superficial historians that town life was dull and unedifying. On the contrary, existence in the villages was at times decidedly hilarious, vulgar, often noticeably intemperate, and usually enjoyable. A free and generous hospitality prevailed, good cheer abounded, and rural fun and frolic were often indulged. Being human, the Yankee was a sociable animal, and his far-famed humor was never intended or suited for soliloquies. The critical curiosity of outsiders coming into town often met with a cool welcome, and their reports, like those of their fraternity in all ages, may be somewhat discounted.⁴¹ New Englanders had plenty of fun of the spontaneous sort common to all rural societies, and their capacity for self-entertainment was indeed remarkable.

Town living fostered development of what we call the "town character," since the slower tempo of life in a compact rural setting bred a great variety of human nature. Eccentricity was not only tolerated by the community, it was often actually encouraged because it made people more interesting. It was a luxury a person certain of his social status could afford to indulge. Besides, a man's peculiar habits and tastes were his own business. No check to the development of individuality was needed or applied so long as it did not become anti-social, or interfere with the community ideal.

An outstanding attribute of rural New England in the mid-eighteenth century was its humanity, nowhere more evident than in the community attitude toward morality and sin. True, people did mind one another's business, but in what society in any age do they not? Yet it was more than mere friendly or idle curiosity that led to snooping and prying; for the good of the community the social ideal must be

⁴¹ For the standard traveler's tale about Yankee curiosity, see Patrick M'Robert, *A Tour through Part of the North Provinces of America*, 1776, reprinted in *Pa. Magazine of Hist. and Biog.*, vol. 59, pp. 15-6.

preserved. The church still held before the people a stern moral code, but its puritanism had noticeably mellowed. At the tavern or in village homes most honest folk silently agreed that the flesh was weak; they and their ministers wisely realized that a frigid asceticism could find no more place in rural New England than in any society close to the soil, but they nevertheless set themselves a high mark to shoot at. The majority approved a strict morality, yet inclined to leniency with sinners who fell by the wayside. Sex was a private matter so long as it did not cost the community anything. Couples guilty of sexual lapses were required to admit their sin on the Sabbath in the meeting house before a full congregation, but this could hardly have proved a harsh penalty, since church members were all neighbors, and in a small community such situations were probably pretty general knowledge before ever they saw the light of public confession. "These confessions were very frequent," says an unimpeachable authority, and the seven months' baby became a Yankee by-word.⁴² That any stigma permanently attached to what all regarded as a temporary youthful lapse is not borne out by the future attitudes of the town. Adolescent wild oats were easily forgiven and quickly forgotten when young man and young woman indicated their willingness to settle down and assume their share of community responsibility. The town was far more likely to deal harshly with those whose loose utterances might threaten the social order. When Jeremiah Ripley of Windham publicly asserted on election day at the Court House "That the Honorable Governor was a fool, and his friend

⁴² Windham, a shire-town of Connecticut, had voted in 1728: "That all baptismal persons have a right to hear confessions for public scandal, and that no such confessions shall be accepted unless made before the congregation on the Sabbath, or some public meeting wherein all baptized persons have a warning to attend." Quoted in Larned, *Windham County*, vol. 1, p. 271. See also, Adams, *Three Episodes*, vol. 2, p. 795, and *Proc. Mass. Hist. Soc.*, vol. 2, pp. 477-516.

and counsellor, Roger Walcott, a knave, and that we will turn out the knave and kick out the fool," his penalty was the loss of his franchise, the posting of £100 bond for good behavior, and payment of costs.⁴³

An orderly place was the average New England town. When Bryan Sheehen of Marblehead was found guilty of rape in Essex County Court in 1771 the press announced him to be "the first Person, as far as we can learn, that has been convicted of Felony in this large county, since the memorable year [of the witchcraft], 1692."⁴⁴ Yankees made honest and well-behaved citizens, not only because the church taught that such demeanor was enjoined by Holy Writ, but because the town as a social unit functioned better that way. In their transactions with one another the historian can find little to arraign. But when they left their own locale the lid came off, and the Yankee earned the reputation for sharp practice pinned on him by the people of colonies to the southward. Of course you dealt honestly with your neighbors, but if you could put it over on the city folk of Boston you were rather a smart fellow, and did no real harm. In 1758 a farmer sold a turkey in Faneuil Hall market inside of which the purchaser found a brick weighing fifteen ounces, and another "Countryman was detected in the Market, for selling a Quarter of Meat, which was found to be stuff'd under the Kidney with some Empty Guts, &c. to set it off the better. . . ." In this case the sin consisted in being caught, and when fined twenty shillings the culprit "with Great Humility" promised reformation. Amos Brown of Stowe made a practice of concealing putrid butter beneath a covering of good for the benefit of his city customers till a fine of £6 and the posting of a large bond wiped

⁴³ Larned, *Windham County*, vol. 1, p. 273.

⁴⁴ *Massachusetts Gazette and Post-Boy*, Nov. 18, 1771.

out his profits.⁴⁵ There is historical precedent in plenty for the wooden nutmeg racket and the candid sign on display in a New Hampshire town: "Antiques, made and repaired."

In common with the rest of New England, rural life shared in the growing secularism of the eighteenth century. Slowly but perceptibly, the old socio-religious emphasis gave ground before the more mundane commercial point of view. Even the clergy were swayed by the new winds of trade. With salaries none too adequate at any time for the social plane on which they lived, some of them devoted large portions of their time to secular concerns, such as speculation in town lands and other business enterprises. Frequently parishioners were shocked by such worldliness, as at Gorham, Maine, in 1757 when the congregation complained to the town proprietors that the Reverend Solomon Lombard "has taken upon him so much business which does not concern the ministry, which gives us grounds to think him more for the fleece than he is for the flock."⁴⁶

From the first there had been present in the New England character a conflict, or at least a dualism, of the practical and the ideal. To this the Calvinistic system, which tended to find in worldly success an indication of spiritual salvation, contributed a moral sanction. As soldier, colonist, or farmer the New England Puritan believed he should trust God but keep his powder dry. With the material leavening of the eighteenth century his philosophical outlook developed a growing dichotomy, as Puritan idealism had increasingly to contest for supremacy with Yankee practicality. In a letter accepting the pulpit of the Braintree church the Reverend

⁴⁵ The *Boston News-Letter*, in 1750, published "Rules proper to be observed in TRADE," urging its readers to "Strive to maintain a *fair character* in the world." *Boston News-Letter*, July 12, 1744; Mar. 29, 1750; Jan. 26, 1758; Oct. 11, Nov. 8, 1759; June 20, 1765; *New York Evening Post*, Nov. 14, 1748; *Newport Mercury*, Dec. 24, 1764.

⁴⁶ C. K. Shipton, *Sibley's Harvard Graduates*, Cambridge, 1933-45, vol. 4, pp. 4, 251; vol. 7, p. 202; Larned, *Windham County*, vol. 1, pp. 60-1.

John Hancock expressed his deep sense of the "seriousness, solemnity and affection" of the occasion and his quite proper feeling of having been called by the Lord to the new charge, but then suddenly added, "I would just take leave to recommend to your consideration the article of wood, which I understand is, or is likely to be pretty dear and scarce in this place."⁴⁷ The very realistic approach to questions of business honesty and village morality already mentioned reveals other aspects of this conflict between a noble ideal and the practical necessity for getting on in the world. We have no just cause to brand the Yankee a hypocrite for this attitude; here again, his struggle for survival in an ungracious country, coupled with his broad knowledge of human nature, had taught him that God is far more likely to help those who help themselves. New Englanders took the position that religion (and this includes idealism) was a joint stock partnership between themselves and the Deity. They were willing to take God in on what they were doing, but first of all they wanted to save themselves.

It was this attitude of practical idealism that made the needs of the town more imperative than those of the individual. The Yankee was a political and social being mindful of his responsibilities to his fellow townsmen. He shrewdly recognized that the town as a body was wiser than he, and that in the long run what was best for the community was probably also best for him. The town allowed the individual to develop any number of personal idiosyncracies so long as these did not threaten the structure of the social order, but nothing was suffered to attack family or church, business or social institutions. In the eighteenth century a broader view of what constituted good citizenship succeeded the narrow "rule of the Saints," but the fundamental ideal of the town as a social entity existing to foster

⁴⁷ Quoted in Adams, *Three Episodes*, vol. 2, p. 618.

and promote a way of life prevailed as long as the town possessed any vitality at all. "Keep up your place," said the town, "support church, schools and town government, if not actively, at least by declining to undermine them. Keep your children off the town, mind your own business, and don't annoy your neighbors. Beyond this, you may go your own way." The Yankee, under such a dispensation, appears as a rugged individualist only within certain very definite limits.

Springing from its very nature, its ideal of self-help and self-sufficiency, came the greatest weakness of the New England town. It bred in its citizens an intense and at times insufferable provincialism. Yankees ran their towns efficiently, and were attached to their way of life, which they rationalized themselves into believing the only way possible and right. It followed, therefore, that they had nothing but contempt for those benighted souls to the south and west who did not order things as they did in New England. They could bow to the social ideal of the town, but not to that of the nation. Their outlook was confined to a narrow area six miles square. It is profoundly significant that prior to the revolutionary period few provincial leaders rose from the rural towns. Such leadership as the country party enjoyed came from Boston bosses like the two Elisha Cookes and the elder Samuel Adams. Only with the opening up of roads and the extension of the postal system did this excessive localism begin slowly to broaden, and it may plausibly be argued that the New England town achieved its greatest influence, both as a producer of leaders and as a mother of new communities in New York and the West, at a time when it had already begun to lose its perfect adjustment as a social and economic unit.

But in its day the New England town, even with this serious limitation, was a success. It succeeded because a

group of like-minded men and women, with a common religious faith, a common political outlook, and a common agricultural economy, were willing to subordinate themselves as individuals to the social ideal of a well-regulated community.

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