

“The Mount Atlas of Independence”: Forgotten Founder Roger Sherman

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Introduction

Roger Sherman is an incredibly important, if not the most important, forgotten founder of the United States. He devoted his life to public service and sought not only to demonstrate his faith personally but also represent Connecticut and America through his spiritually grounded beliefs on patriotic duty. Sherman was the only man to sign all four founding documents: the Articles of Association, Declaration of Independence, Articles of Confederation, and the Constitution. He was also the only one to serve on the three major boards of the Revolution: The Board of War and those drafting the Declaration and Articles. He came from one of the humblest backgrounds of any founder and yet rose to hold a plethora of state offices and Congressional committees. Sherman is best known for creating the Connecticut/Great/Sherman Compromise which established America's bicameral legislature with equal representation in the Senate and proportional representation in the House of Representatives (reconciling both the New Jersey and Virginia Plans respectively). However, Sherman's influence in Connecticut and the founding was one far greater than a single achievement. His unique quality of being independently analytical and biblically minded makes him difficult to categorize into party or faction, but his story is fundamental to understanding the American process. Roger Sherman deserves greater recognition and study for his influence on Connecticut's laws and governance, the American founding documents, culture, and for his personal life story and philosophy.

A self-taught man, Sherman came from a humble background of shoemaking and farming, working with his father William. Upon his father's death when Sherman was eighteen, he took care of his widowed mother and siblings. Two years later, Roger and his family moved from Newton, Massachusetts to New Milford, Connecticut, where his older brother William had moved. There, likely with his minister, Reverend Samuel Dunbar, Sherman studied sophisticated

books on spiritual and literary topics.¹ In 1745, at twenty years of age, the General Assembly of Connecticut appointed Roger surveyor for Litchfield County (which was the largest county in the state at the time).² Gaining a greater attachment to the people and geographic composition of his home state, this position also helped the young cobbler attain wealth and recognition.

A repeated theme in Sherman's life was being called up to serve. Sherman personally felt a civic duty and responsibility to his neighbor, writing on the idea of biblical self-love that "true self love and social" (acting for the benefit of one's neighbor/community) "are the same."³ His passion for public service was well satisfied with this office as Sherman was called by many in his community to various positions he had not even sought after. By 1750, having taught himself advanced mathematics and science to such a degree that his community started to rely on his calculations for the weather and planting, and thus "at the Desire of many of my Friends and Acquaintance," Sherman began publishing an almanac for the next eleven years.⁴ These works were culturally significant, and Sherman's quips and words of wisdom sprinkled throughout add to his repertoire of societal influence.

His writing would take on a more direct purpose of changing Connecticut practices with his 1752 work, "A Caveat Against Injustice." He wrote this circulated pamphlet under the pseudonym "Phileunomos," meaning "lover of good law." Defending his fellow Connecticut

¹ "Roger Sherman (1721-1793)," in *The Encyclopedia of The Continental Congresses*, ed. Mark Grossman (Amenia, NY: Grey House Publishing, 2015). http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=https://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/greycc/roger_sherman_1721_1793/0?institutionId=5072. Samuel Dunbar most likely gave Sherman access to his personal library, but even if he did not, Dunbar was Sherman's minister, and the young cobbler would have listened to many sermons and lessons from the Harvard-educated clergyman. Formally, Sherman was only educated up to the sixth grade.

² Edward R. Lambert, *History of the Colony of New Haven: Before and After the Union with Connecticut* (New Haven, CT: Hitchcock & Stafford, 1838), https://www.cga.ct.gov/hco/books/History_of_the_Colony_of_New_Haven.pdf.

³ Roger Sherman and Samuel Hopkins, *Correspondence between Roger Sherman and Samuel Hopkins 1889*, ed. Andrew Peabody (Worcester, MA: Charles Hamilton Press, 1889), 7.

⁴ Roger Sherman, *The Almanacs of Roger Sherman, 1650-1761*, Victor Hugo Paltsits, ed. (Worcester, Massachusetts: The Davis Press, 1907), 5.

citizens and his own business interests as a shopkeeper, he spoke out against the currency crisis of Rhode Island and New Hampshire's depreciated bills circulating in Connecticut and hurting local business and Connecticuturs at large.⁵ This would be a repeating pattern of Sherman's career: taking to the pen on issues of finance and politics in which he saw deeper, spiritual harm.

Though driven to help the public, his ambition was minor compared to the demand of others wanting him to serve in public roles. Sherman's entry into law came at the suggestion of a local barrister. Sherman was called in by a neighbor to present a petition to a lawyer at the New Haven county seat, and when the attorney examined Sherman's notes to present his neighbor's claim, the lawyer was stunned at its sophistication and said, much to young Roger's shock, "My friend, you should fit yourself to be a lawyer."⁶ Others seconded this exhortation, and once he passed the Litchfield bar in 1754 (through his own studies), Sherman represented and assisted many neighbors, friends, and community members. In his first year alone, he represented his townspeople in 142 cases.⁷ With this reputation, he was called "Squire Sherman" by many in his locality.⁸

In May 1754, he was also appointed justice of the peace for Litchfield County by the General Assembly (a post he held until his move to New Haven). A large part of this job was fining and dealing with those who broke blue laws representative of Sherman's Puritan Connecticut.⁹ That same month Sherman was elected to the General Assembly for six months,

⁵ Roger Sherman, "A Caveat Against Injustice, by Philoeunomos," 1752, in *Collected Works of Roger Sherman*, ed. Mark David Hall (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2016), 39-49.

⁶ Roger Sherman Boardman, *Roger Sherman, Signer and Statesman* (New York, NY: Da Capo Press, 1938), 1.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 54-55. It is also suggested that Sherman may have influenced his state's perceptions towards a more positive view of lawyers: In 1697 lawyers were "legislated against along with drunkards," demonstrating the distrust of a frontier community against legal bureaucracy, and in 1730-1731 a law was passed capping the number of lawyers in Connecticut to eleven.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 55.

⁹ Boardman, *Signer and Statesman*, 57.

reelected in the fall, and two years later elected again. Following, he was “semiannually reelected” for the Assembly’s sixth-month terms until he left the town in 1761.¹⁰ When Sherman moved his family to New Haven in 1761, more appointments were waiting for him.

Upon entering New Haven life, Sherman started shopkeeping at two stores, one in New Haven and the other about 14 miles north in Wallingford, Connecticut.¹¹ Right across the street from the former business stood Yale University, which allowed Sherman to make friendships and connections with the intellectual community of Connecticut. New Light radical Thomas Clap would become a good friend of Sherman. Within this environment of discourse and politics, Sherman moved from his Old Light congregation to a New Light church.¹² His writings also reflect a personal conviction that individual conversion was a fundamental part of church membership and taking part in the sacrament of Communion. Sherman was planted in the epicenter of Connecticut matters, and his representative religious, economic, and political attitudes propelled him to high places.

Becoming one of New Haven’s foremost citizens, Sherman was again elected to the lower house of the General Assembly in 1764. He embraced three main legislative issues during this period, becoming an impassioned, vocal debater on depreciation, the Susquehannah controversy, and religious liberty. From 1766-1789, Sherman was also appointed Judge on Connecticut’s Superior Court in which many of his cases dealt with matters of Christian ethics that were part of Connecticut’s legal code.¹³

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Mark David Hall, *Roger Sherman and the Creation of the American Republic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 46.

¹² This is a nebulous topic in the literature as Christopher Collier deems this more of an opportunistic switch; others attest that Sherman came to believe in New Light doctrine based on personal conversion, and it may also be argued that Sherman was simply more open-minded than most Puritans and needed to belong to a church in his new town, most of which were New Light.

¹³ Ibid., 47. “Judge Sherman.”

His motivations of seeking to protect his population from both physical and spiritual harm falls into a long tradition of Puritan philosophy on government, and these concerns about moral leadership are plentiful throughout Sherman's writings. His goals of protecting Connecticut citizens' religion can be seen in his fear of an established state church and bishopry in America. Sherman wrote on this issue and later drafted statutes on religious toleration in his rewriting of Connecticut's legal code with Richard Law in 1784. The same year he began as Judge (1766), Sherman was simultaneously moved to the Upper House of the General Assembly, in part due to his outspoken advocacy against the Stamp Act.¹⁴

This pious Puritan/Congregationalist with a heavy sense of duty and reverence for authority, would become an advocate of independence before pivotal founders like John Adams or Thomas Jefferson. Sherman and many like-minded colonists saw direct taxation from Parliament as inherently unconstitutional. Viewing themselves as citizens of Britain, entitled to all the rights of the British constitution, it was unthinkable that the Parliament (not the King) would levy taxes against them without giving them representation. Sherman led a New Haven meeting which made a petition to the King insisting on their rights as Englishmen and was at the forefront of Connecticut civil and economic protests.¹⁵

Sherman encouraged boycotts within Connecticut, even personally wearing homespun clothes, which he continued to do throughout his service in national offices.¹⁶ Sherman led boycott efforts in New Haven with committees of merchants seeking to enforce non-importation in their business-driven town. At a Hartford meeting for that purpose in February 1770, Sherman

¹⁴ Ibid., 46.

¹⁵ Hall, *Sherman and the Creation of the American Republic*, 49. He would not partake in the riotous actions of the Sons of Liberty, however.

¹⁶ Christopher Collier, *Roger Sherman's Connecticut: Yankee Politics and the American Revolution* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1971), 71.

supported non-importation very strongly and was gaining a reputation in other colonies for being an “anti-Parliament leader.”¹⁷ He also advised merchants in the area “not to forsake the cause of liberty for the prospect of a little wealth.”¹⁸ Various letters to fellow representatives reveal Sherman’s revolutionary sentiment and conclusion that independence was a necessity about a decade before the Continental Congress.

The three Connecticut men sent to the First Continental Congress were Roger Sherman, Eliphalet Dyer, and Silas Deane.¹⁹ In the delegations, Sherman and Dyer voted with the radicals while Deane tended towards the conservative side, who were rumored to be seeking him as their choice for Speaker.²⁰ While Silas Deane would later be thrown out of Congress for a scandal in 1778, Sherman would remain, serving nationally until 1787 and in his state until his death in 1793.²¹ One of Sherman’s first comments in the Congress was on the Congress’ concession that Parliament had a right to some external regulation of colonial America’s trade in their “Declarations of Rights” also known as the “Declaration of Resolves.” Sherman, ever the pragmatist, noted that while of course some regulation might occur out of necessity, it was impossible to be constitutionally supported.²² Besides the Declaration of Resolves, all three

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Julian P. Boyd, “Roger Sherman: Portrait of a Cordwainer Statesman,” *The New England Quarterly* 5, no. 2 (1932): 230. <https://doi.org/10.2307/359611>. This occurred in 1770 after the repeal of the Townshend Acts, many merchants were becoming less vigorous in the cause and their dedication to the boycotts.

¹⁹ J. Hammond Trumbull, “Eliphalet Dyer.” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 3, no. 2 (1879): 174. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20084395>; Collier, 90-93, 130.

²⁰ Collier, *Roger Sherman’s Connecticut*, 92.

²¹ “L’Affaire Silas Deane” in Collier, *Roger Sherman’s Connecticut*, 134-135.

²² Christopher Collier, *Connecticut in the Continental Congress* (Chester, CT: Pequot Press, 1973), 16. Sherman writes, “‘tho’ some Regulation of Trade &c. may be necessary for the General Interest of the nation...’ there was, nevertheless, ‘no constitutional way to establish such regulations so as to be legally binding upon the people of the several distinct Dominions...but by the consent of the Legislature of each Government.’”

Connecticut delegates ensured their support for the Suffolk Resolves and the subsequent Continental Association, upholding a commitment to colonial-wide boycotts of British goods.²³

Different works classify Sherman's level of radicalism in different terms, perhaps because he was a man who embodied all parts of the seemingly paradoxical phrase 'revolutionary Puritan.' Some works labeled Sherman 'a cautious revolutionary,' a man slow to get to the decision of independence but once on board, in full-throttle pursuit of independence. Others classify Sherman as a moderate who worked with radicals to achieve aims for Connecticut rights and land claims.²⁴ Research validates a mixture of these terminologies; while Sherman would be considered very conservative in his social views today, he was open-minded and more tolerant to other views, denominations, and propositions than many of his New England cohorts. He was a revolutionary Puritan, unswayed by the pressure of belligerents or popularity, yet willing to negotiate and change. He was fully devoted to the Revolution largely because of his devotion to Congregationalist Christianity and his understanding of justified resistance according to Scripture and the Calvinistic tradition. The Reformed tradition and the Bible itself guided Sherman more than any other work or philosophy (though he was well read in political theory, philosophers of the Enlightenment, Greco-Roman thought and government, history, law, science, and math).²⁵ His faith anchored his decisions, and while he was considered a radical for independence, Sherman considered himself to simply be following British tradition

²³ Ibid., 18. While Deane promised Sam Adams that "Connecticut... would 'pray the most sacred regard to the resolutions of the Congress'" there were actually pockets of dissent that would keep the General Assembly busy with management and enforcement of nonimportation measures.

²⁴ Collier, *Roger Sherman's Connecticut*, 85.

²⁵ Daniel Dreisbach, *Reading the Bible with the Founding Fathers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 86, 92.; Roger Sherman, "A Short Sermon on the Duty of Self-Examination: Preparatory to Receive the Lord's Supper," 1789, in *Collected Works of Roger Sherman*, 747-760.

and demanding the rights guaranteed to Englishmen. The breaking of this covenant and entry into tyranny convinced Sherman of the legitimacy and righteous cause.²⁶

While the First Continental Congress (September 5 to October 26, 1774) set goals into the next year, by the time the Second Continental Congress came to pass (on the agreed upon 10th of May 1775), blood was already spilt in the first battle of the Revolution, Lexington and Concord.²⁷ Bloodshed shifted the tone of the new meeting much further than mere dialogue and economic sanctions. Connecticut, generally a step ahead of the intercolonial consensus, jumped to set up a boycott and train soldiers. Sherman was instrumental in rallying support and sacrifice for the cause by advocating homemade goods, enlistment, and helping in the supply crisis.²⁸ Already established for a move towards war, Connecticut also had several generals ready to be assigned high ranks by the Continental Congress.

Sherman's connections and involvement in local politics proved his loyalty, almost to a fault. However, his attempts to help friends and advocate for local issues never included insider trading or maneuvers that lined his own pockets. He sought Connecticut's best interest in issues of land claims, Generalships, and finance, but also sacrificed for the country and rallied his fellow Connecticut citizens to the cause. For large measure due to Sherman's efforts, his home would become known as the 'Provisions State,' supplying the entire Revolution with many of its munitions, proportionally giving more troops than any other state.²⁹ Sherman also related to the

²⁶ Sydney Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 406; Glenn S. Sunshine, "Protestant Resistance Theory" in *Slaying Leviathan: Limited Government and Resistance in the Christian Tradition* (Moscow, Idaho: Canon Press, 2020), 95.

²⁷ "Continental Association, 20 October 1774," Founders Online, NationalArchives.gov. The dates for the 1775 Continental Association agreements were December 1 (nonimportation), March 1 (non-consumption), and finally September 10 (nonexportation).

²⁸ Collier, *Roger Sherman's Connecticut*, 109.

²⁹ Suzanne Carlson, "The 'Provision State': Connecticut Resources Fed Struggle for Independence," *Hartford Courant*, May 4, 2014. <https://www.courant.com/courant-250/moments-in-history/hc-connecticut-revolution-20140503-story.html>.

Revolution personally with several of his sons serving in the military, giving him an added incentive to work day and night on numerous committees for supplying the army.³⁰

In addition to being the only signer of every major founding document, Sherman would also be the only delegate to serve on the Board of War and Committees to draft the Declaration of Independence and Articles of Confederation. Sherman was on many more committees besides these big three, but perhaps his most famous membership was that appointed on June 11, 1776: the Committee of 5 to draft the Declaration of Independence. While Sherman's exact contributions are unclear, because the proceedings and debates on the Declaration in the Continental Congress were not published, he offered his full support to the completed document and undoubtedly put forth edits and comments as part of this committee.³¹

On June 12, 1776, one delegate from each state was selected to draft a document for the Confederation of the colonies. Sherman was selected for Connecticut.³² Again, someone else, this time John Dickinson, was the primary writer of the Articles, but again, much of the Congressional deliberations on this document remain unknown. Sherman's proposal for the legislative, however, is well documented. In the succeeding debate for representation in the Confederation, Sherman proposed an early version of the Connecticut Compromise, once again ahead of the crowd.³³ He would also defend the Articles anonymously in his "Connecticut Farmer" letters. This issue would be resolved under the new constitution in the Convention of 1787-1789.

³⁰ *Roger Sherman Papers*, Sherman's Diary, Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford. Sherman's schedule records a wake-up time of 5am and a work schedule of 7am to 10pm.

³¹ Hall, *Sherman and the Creation of the American Republic*, 54; Boyd "Cordwainer Statesman."

³² Hall, *Sherman and the Creation of the American Republic*, 71.

³³ *Ibid.*, 73.

Amidst these vital national debates and management of affairs, Roger Sherman continued to take on important roles as a Judge and Legislator in Connecticut. His assignment to revise the entire Connecticut legal code in 1784 proved one of his most vital, legislative acts for the developing state. His laws reflected a reverence for Christian piety while also relaxing some of the harsher penalties for breaking lesser crimes. His record in Connecticut and national legislative debates and propositions also reflect a high regard for the dignity of all peoples: he advocated for policies that held national standards and accountability to United States treaties with Native Americans, and he promoted antislavery measures.³⁴ Despite this, Sherman sometimes chose pragmatic politics for union over equality for all Americans, and the forming of the national legislative and justice system would become Sherman's strongest legacy.

Upon the 1787 Constitutional Convention, Sherman held a difficult position. He was a federalist, believing in the strength of a national government as the practical solution to the discrepancies of the Confederation. However, he also believed in the sovereignty of the states and sought to ensure the rights of his somewhat isolationist state. The role of elder statesman likewise fell to Sherman, as the second oldest delegate present, after Franklin (81) who was getting to the point where he could not handle as much of a workload as Sherman (66). Additionally, Sherman was simultaneously acting as Connecticut representative, mayor of New Haven and Connecticut Superior Court judge. Sherman's extensive experience lent all the more to his revered reputation for practical wisdom.

Sherman can be considered America's "First Great Compromiser." Forming the new national government, he proposed the Connecticut Compromise and was the main balance and dissent to Madison. The old New Englander advocated for small state representation, a limited

³⁴ Ibid., 80-83, 128-130.

executive, and continually sought to place the brunt of government operations under the authority of the states. He insisted that the Bill of Rights be added as amendments rather than implemented into the text as Madison advocated.³⁵ His *Letters of a Countryman*, published in the *New Haven Gazette*, refuted common attacks on the Constitution and served a similar purpose to the Federalist Papers but specifically crafted for his Connecticut countrymen to gather support for ratification.³⁶ In his last years, Sherman continued to deal with economic issues in the Convention and first Congress under the Constitution. He desperately sought to create sound currency, motioning and even pleading to rely on taxation rather than printing money to pay off the nation's debt.³⁷ Returning to Connecticut on a trip back from his advocacy in the national legislature, Sherman continued to serve in local events as mayor until his death in the spring of 1793.

Sherman represented Connecticut in its culture, intellectual developments, religious Congregationalism, and politically independent-minded persona. His climb up the ladder in Connecticut gave him necessary experiences and connections to serve in a variety of roles on the national level. These humble origins earned Sherman both respect and disdain, which is perhaps common in the life of any great statesman. Sherman was ahead of his time in Revolutionary thought and served in strategic roles to pass compromises over issues that well could have dissolved the union of states. Frequently in a behind-the-scenes capacity or by ineloquent addresses, Sherman seemed to always get his way or predict the course of events correctly. As he

³⁵ Keith L. Dougherty and Jacquelyn C. Heckelman, "A Pivotal Voter from a Pivotal State: Roger Sherman at the Constitutional Convention," *The American Political Science Review* 100, no. 2 (May 2006): 297–302.

³⁶ "Connecticut Ratification," Center for the Study of the American Constitution, University of Wisconsin-Madison, CSAC.history.wisc.edu. <https://csac.history.wisc.edu/states-and-ratification/connecticut-2/>.

³⁷ Jack N. Rakove, *Original Meanings: Politics and Ideas in the Making of the Constitution* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1996), Chapter 11.; Collier, *Roger Sherman's Connecticut*, 174.

is recorded to have told a colleague, “When you are in the minority, talk; when you are in the majority, vote.”³⁸

Sherman was a Great Compromiser in the Continental Congresses & Constitutional Convention; his Connecticut Compromise being just one of his great accomplishments there, as he served as a major buffer to Madison’s expansion of federal power, while still being a member of the federalists. His practicality and negotiable manner won essential votes to his point of view on many issues, and his reputation as a good and wise man superseded his noticeable ineloquence. Despite his awkward persona, Sherman made incredible waves in the formation and legacy of the American founding. For his contributions and influence in debates that still continue throughout America, Sherman should be remembered, taught, and examined.

A deeper investigation of forgotten founders like Sherman could impact American jurisprudence. The founding fathers remain relevant in the broader issues of national discourse, both as symbols of the American mindset and the balance between the founders’ original intentions and an ever more complex world often restless for change. For instance, in Supreme Court Cases interpreting the Establishment Clause, the justices “turned to history” and “referenced Sherman only three times. By way of contrast, Thomas Jefferson, a man who played no role in drafting or ratifying the amendment, is referenced 112 times.”³⁹

Sherman’s lack of self-aggrandizement and effort to secure his public legacy are both a reason for why he is forgotten and an argument for why he should not be. Most Americans would think of George Washington, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson as the key founding fathers, for good reason, but the founders are not limited to presidents. One may counter with

³⁸ “Silent Hero of Independence,” Hartford Courant, July 4, 2001.
<https://www.courant.com/news/connecticut/hc-xpm-2001-07-04-0107040394-story.html>.

³⁹ Mark David Hall, “Roger Sherman: An Old Puritan in the New Republic,” January 26, 2017, LawLiberty.org. <https://lawliberty.org/roger-sherman-an-old-puritan-in-the-new-republic/>.

Benjamin Franklin, but he also was a man noted for a larger-than-life persona, a jovial and witty intellect with a spirit for revelry. Many other men vital to the fledgling democracy served in the founding deliberations. Some died before the nation's independence (in military sacrifice or from other causes), and those who did not hold a high office later or capture attention on the national stage were also essential to the founding and creation of the democratic process. These were the men hashing out ideas and representing different state interests without which the nation could have been quickly disbarred by regional and factious grievances. Sherman was one of these men; very prominent, though humble and quiet, he served in a variety of roles both countering and compromising with men like James Madison and representatives of the Southern states.

When one looks at the numbers of signers of the Declaration and Constitution (56 and 39 respectively), it becomes clear that limiting the scope of America's founders to a noteworthy few negatively impacts our historic understanding of the American Revolution and the formative period which carried it through. If a nation only remembers those who seek to be remembered, rather than those who sought to effect the most change, national memory can easily turn to the loudest voices rather than the most impactful. Likewise, founders holding the pinnacle of wealth and power such as the presidency, while very important to our history, may be less reflective of the founders as a whole in their philosophy and perspectives. Studying Sherman and other framers and founders sheds further light on many who identified as committed Christians rather than the Deists' perspective generally attributed to prevail at this time. Such individuals hold a larger part of the American story than current trends of historiography reveal. It is thus important to reimagine our understanding of the founders, adding more founders' voices to the conversation, before truncating their beliefs writ large based on three to five men.

Source material on Sherman is primarily found in excerpts and references of Revolutionary-era literature. The four monographs written on Sherman specifically are somewhat limited to about one author per century since his lifetime. Eighteenth-century sources are primarily those written by Sherman himself, including his almanacs, writings on depreciation (“A Caveat against Injustice”) and ratification (his “Countryman” letters).⁴⁰ Sherman’s letters and the diaries of his contemporaries also provide many examples of his interpersonal relationships, character, and reputation.

Many men left long statements in the historical record about Sherman which exceed, in length and praise, anything Sherman wrote about himself. John Adams’ *Collected Works* in particular highlight Sherman’s statements and contributions, and Adams frequently highlighted his personal warmth and friendship. Founders including Thomas Jefferson, Fisher Ames, Patrick Henry, Benjamin Rush, and Jonathan Edwards, Jr. also stated various notes on Sherman’s wisdom, character, and contributions to the country that help weave together a modern understanding of Sherman’s reputation and influence during his lifetime.

On his Connecticut life, Sherman’s reflection of Connecticut society can best be seen through his own writings as well as Connecticut histories. His almanacs reflect his connection to and impact on Connecticut culture; not only Sherman’s intellectual connections to Yale and men of learning, but also his prose on God, man, and country. His sermon on the taking of communion with a right heart is another very valuable source in investigating his devotion to the church and his faith.⁴¹ Many journal articles on colonial history, Connecticut law, and notable

⁴⁰ Sherman, *Almanacs*; Roger Sherman, “A Caveat Against Injustice, by Philoeunomos” 1752, in *Collected Works of Roger Sherman*, 39-50; Roger Sherman, “Letters of a Countryman,” 1787, https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Letters_of_A_Countryman. The latter two were both published under a pseudonym.

⁴¹ Roger Sherman, “A Short Sermon on the Duty of Self-Examination: Preparatory to Receive the Lord's Supper,” 1789, in *Collected Works of Roger Sherman*, 747-760.

sermons contribute a deeper understanding of Sherman's life and times. Sherman's colonial writings are the focus of this paper with his "Caveat Against Injustice" on depreciation, his almanacs, and his articles and statements on land disputes and the Intolerable Acts serving as the lens for studying his relationship to Connecticut culture.

To research how he represented his colony and later state, the Connecticut Bicentennial Histories, published in Hartford in the 1970s, are very helpful in understanding colonial and revolutionary Connecticut's culture and contributions to the nation. Richard Bushman's *Puritan to Yankee* is a seminal work on Connecticut's identity and development from first settlers to its more industrious, Yankee character. While not discussed in detail in this work, Sherman fits into the narrative of Connecticut identity almost exactly. A work that bridges this gap is *Roger Sherman's Connecticut*. The scholarship of Christopher Collier, who served as the official Connecticut State Historian from 1984 to 2004 and professor of history emeritus at the University of Connecticut, is fundamental reading to students of Sherman. In his 1971 book, *Roger Sherman's Connecticut: Yankee Politics and the American Revolution*, he not only provides a detailed account of Sherman's life, but also a narrative of Connecticut and New England politics.⁴² His other related works include *Decision in Philadelphia*, and *All Politics is Local* on the Constitutional Convention, in which Sherman is highlighted significantly.⁴³

Coalescing smoothly with primary documents, Henry Lewis Boutell's 1896 biography is a source-driven work that provides many of the letters between and about Sherman and his colleagues from his early years to the end of his life.⁴⁴ The founding documents themselves are

⁴² Collier, *Roger Sherman's Connecticut*, xiii-386.

⁴³ Christopher Collier, *All Politics is Local: Family, Friends, and Provincial Interests in the Creation of the Constitution* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 2003); Christopher and James Lincoln Collier, *Decision in Philadelphia: The Constitutional Convention of 1787* (New York: Random House Publishing, 1986).

⁴⁴ Boutell, *Life of Roger Sherman*, ix-361.

useful in analyzing Sherman's contributions as are Congressional proceedings from the Continental Congress (when available) to the Constitutional Convention. In these notes and statements, one can see the repeated theme of Sherman presenting ideas much before their adoption and his proclivity to compromise. Articles including Julian Boyd's "Roger Sherman: Portrait of a Cordwainer Statesman," Scott D. Gerber's "Roger Sherman and the Bill of Rights," and the Constitutional scholarship of Stanford historian Jack N. Rakove further add to the historiography of Sherman's role in creating the national institutions, tradition of debate and discourse, and political heritage of America.⁴⁵

Sherman's personal life and philosophy has largely been analyzed only in more recent works. Roger Sherman Boardman, a descendant and statesman himself, published a 1938 biography which looks more into Sherman's personal life and provides more of a narrative, with discussion of his friends, family, and finances.⁴⁶ Though Sherman was well-known to be a pious man by contemporaries, it was not until Mark David Hall's 2013 *Roger Sherman and the Creation of the American Republic* that much ink has been spent on Sherman's religious life. In this insightful, intellectual history of Sherman's life and faith, Hall detailed the impact of Sherman's and his contemporaries' Reformed theology on the founding, specifically via Sherman and his sense of duty to serve in public roles. Hall also shed light on numerous other forgotten founders, noting the vast gap in the historiographical selection of which framers have received acclaim.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Boyd, "Cordwainer Statesman," 221–36; Scott D. Gerber, "Roger Sherman and the Bill of Rights." *Polity* 28, no. 4 (1996): 521–40; Jack N. Rakove, "The Great Compromise: Ideas, Interests, and the Politics of Constitution Making," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 44, no. 3 (1987): 424–57; Jack N. Rakove, *Original Meanings: Politics and Ideas in the Making of the Constitution* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1996); Jack Rakove, *Revolutionaries: A New History of the Invention of America* (Boston: HarperCollins Publishers, 2011).

⁴⁶ Boardman, *Signer and Statesman*, v-396.

⁴⁷ Hall, *Sherman and the Creation of the American Republic*, ix-219.

In 2016, Hall published Sherman's *Collected Works* which remains the only accumulated source of Sherman's writings, highlighting his most notable letters, laws, and proposals. Even seemingly small contributions of Sherman's include drafting and passing America's first copyright law, an act that led to Connecticut's complete abolition of slavery, and statutes on religious liberty. This collection along with the sources at the New Haven, New Milford, Sherman, and Hartford archives in Connecticut lend valuable documentary support in analyzing Sherman's state service, national offices, and remembrance.

Roger Sherman encapsulates a forgotten segment of the league of founders, men whose role is so obvious it is almost seen through, rather than analyzed on its own merit. Sherman served like the mortar between bricks, his participation was not flashy or eloquent, but his simple wisdom and tried experience allowed him to keep Congress together and moving towards an independent, efficient, and limited government. His reputation was renowned among other leaders and statesmen, his opinions and ideas were often ahead of their time, and his service in forming and working towards every major founding document of the United States makes Sherman, by definition, an essential founder. Perhaps for these reasons Adams deemed the simple cobbler and Old Puritan, Roger Sherman "The Mount Atlas of Independence."⁴⁸

⁴⁸ *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society: Connecticut's Ratification of Federal Constitution* (Worcester, MA: American Antiquarian Society), 25 (April 1915): 82-83.

I. The Cobbler's Rise to Prominence: Sherman in Colonial Connecticut

Roger Sherman held a wide array of jobs in his life before serving in the Continental Congress. A “cautious revolutionary,” Sherman resisted rebellion until he believed there was ample evidence to justify detachment from the Crown.¹ Steeped in the Puritan Congregational culture of Connecticut, Sherman was a deeply pious man who brought his Protestant work ethic and biblical foundation for life into his civic service. With public support and a stated will to seek justice, Sherman took on issues of interstate economics before and during his role as a state official, and in his other roles he sought to advocate for the common welfare in Connecticut.² He was adeptly able to connect pragmatic issues of state to man's moral responsibility. Roger Sherman's foundations in the state helped form his views on the founding of the United States, and his commitment to public and private wellbeing of his constituents echoes his ideological and geographical roots. Sherman connected to Connecticut culture through his involvement in many different civil service posts, his writings, and religion. He embodied a holdover from the stricter times of Puritanism while also embodying the Yankee and Patriot cause. Through his civil service and writings in Colonial Connecticut, Sherman reflected his colony in both its Puritan underpinnings and a stirring turn towards an independent, Yankee personality.

Early Life

Roger learned the trade of shoemaking from his father, William, and they worked together on their farm in Newton, Massachusetts through Roger's teen years. Sherman's pastor, Reverend Samuel Dunbar, provided access to his library, and Sherman's education consisted of

¹ Joseph J. Ellis, *American Creation: Triumphs and Tragedies in the Founding of the Republic* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 2007), 1-5. Ellis defines Sherman as one of a number of cautious revolutionaries.

² James D. German, “The Social Utility of Wicked Self-Love: Calvinism, Capitalism, and Public Policy in Revolutionary New England,” *The Journal of American History* 82, no. 3 (1995): 970-971. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2945108>.

“common country schools” and Dunbar’s mentorship.³ From there, he taught himself sciences, history, philosophy, theology, and law, and a bit of Latin primarily to aid him and his “love of Bible study.”⁴ Upon the death of his father, Roger moved with his family to New Milford, Connecticut where his shoemaking work prospered, and he was appointed as county surveyor for New Haven from 1745 to his resignation in 1758.⁵ This profitable work was his first appointment to an official civic position and helped him gain considerable wealth.⁶

His surveyorship was a lucrative business, and he invested both time and money into the region. Investing and purchasing several hundred acres of land in the county, he bought tracts for his brother, William, and turned his attention to serving the community. Sherman “filled all sorts of town offices” including “grand juryman, list-taker, leather sealer, fence viewer, selectman [town executive authority and committee leader], gauger, treasurer for a new meeting-house, clerk pro tern,” and he handled boundary disputes, frequently going to the site of inquiry himself and appealing to the General Assembly if discrepancies arose.⁷

Sherman maintained a constant presence in the churches he attended. Due to his relocation, Sherman was “dismissed” from his Stoughton church two months after leaving the area and “recommended to the church in New Milford.” This is an important aspect of Sherman’s move, since church membership was a commodity granted to those with ample evidence of salvation and discipline, and church absenteeism was a notable crisis in many a Connecticut church. Laws and custom prevented long-term membership at a church that was not near the member (to ensure steadfast participation), and Solomon Stoddard had opined that men

³ Lewis Henry Boutell, “Chapter II: Life in Stoughton” in *The Life of Roger Sherman* (Chicago, A. C. McClurg and Company, 1896), 19.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., Chapter III: New Milford Period (1743-1761), 24-26.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

should only move to a new plantation if “obtaining the Ordinances” (finding a local church) would occur in a short amount of time, noting “it is quite Unwarrantable, where there is no such prospect.”⁸

Shortly after joining the New Milford congregation, Sherman became clerk of the Ecclesiastical Society (a role he served in until he moved to New Haven). He also served on the “School Committee,” disciplined a Reverend Nathaniel Taylor for being absent too frequently, and also became a deacon in 1757.⁹ Sherman was frequently called upon to complete these tasks due to his high regard in the congregation and town. In addition to this mass of committee work (something Sherman would again be a major actor in during his time in Congress), Sherman used his connections to become more of an entrepreneur.

Economics: Depreciating Justice

Opening the first store building in New Milford with his brother, Sherman came face to face with an issue he would write frequently on: depreciation. It was at this time Sherman took up the pen in his fight against economic injustice and social change. Since the British followed a mercantile policy, they wanted to have more specie and precious metals than the colonies.¹⁰ With this shortage of hard money backed currency, each colony issued paper bills which led to inequity of exchange rates from one colony to the next. As each colony circulated these notes, they occasionally entered intercolonial trade. New England, however, had closer economic interconnections than the rest of the colonies and Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island circulated their notes “to such an extent that they constituted a single money

⁸ Solomon Stoddard, “An answer to some cases of conscience respecting the country. By Solomon Stoddard, A.M. Pastor in Northampton, 1643-1729.” Evans Early American Imprint Collection: University of Michigan, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/evans/N02009.0001.001/1:1?rgn=div1;view=fulltext>.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Specie, or “hard money” refers to a currency based on an item with inherent value such as gold or silver coins. Fiat money, or currency based on external value (like the present-day U.S. dollar) was a major source of contention for Sherman and his contemporaries.

stock.”¹¹ Rhode Island and New Hampshire’s bills of credit were even more depreciated than other colonial bills, and there was no set standard for monetary value. Writing under the pseudonym, Phileunomos (meaning “lover of good law”), Sherman wrote about the problems of the varying New England currencies.

In his 1752 “A Caveat against Injustice,” Sherman stated that some have been “so far prejudiced in Favour of a sinking Medium” while others are ignorant of the “true State of the Case,” not realizing that the currencies of Rhode Island and New Hampshire flood into Connecticut businesses and cause a serious injustice. In a legal manner, he put forth the arguments of the plaintiff/creditor versus the debtor (in this case, supposing one was paying back a loan from Connecticut in depreciated Rhode Island currency). The treatise described feeling betrayed that his government (Connecticut) was not protecting property by their law, but enabled “fraud at the Pleasure of other Governments who have no Right of Jurisdiction over us” now controlled men’s livelihoods.¹² Within one specific and brief economic work, Sherman revealed his character and the philosophy of Connecticut’s founders by implementing Puritan Congregational morality, specifying the blessing of their unique geography and character, and demonstrating a desire for government to serve like a protecting father.¹³

¹¹ Ron Michener, “Money in the American Colonies,” Economic History Association, <https://eh.net/encyclopedia/money-in-the-american-colonies/>.

¹² Roger Sherman, “A Caveat Against Injustice, by Philoeunomos,” 1752, in *Collected Works of Roger Sherman*, 47.

¹³ “Religion and the Founding of the American Republic,” Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/religion/rel05.html>. “The responsibilities of the state were understood in an early work like Bishop John Jewel's Apologie of the Church of England (1562) to be comprehensive, including imposing the church's doctrine on society. The term "nursing father" was used in all American colonies with established churches. It appeared in the Cambridge Platform of 1648, the "creed" of New England Congregationalism; in numerous Anglican writings; and in the Presbyterian Westminster Confession. By the time of the American Revolution, the government was no longer expected to maintain religious uniformity in its jurisdiction, but it was expected to use its resources for the church's benefit.”

Sherman concluded that the state should ban Rhode Island and New Hampshire bills of currency from circulating in the state after setting a quick period of time to phase the other bills out of Connecticut circulation, and Sherman argued that the state should heavily tax alcohol as another means to protect Connecticut prosperity. To those who say the state could not survive with restricted currency, Sherman wrote with revolutionary flair,

To this I answer, that if that were indeed the Case we had better die in a good Cause than live in a bad one. But I apprehend that the case in fact is quite the reverse, for we in the colony are seated on a very fruitful soil, the product whereof with our labor and industry, and the divine blessing thereon, would sufficiently furnish us with and procure us all the necessaries of life, and as good a medium of exchange as any people in the world have or can desire.¹⁴

Sherman noted that hard-working Connecticut tradesmen were being robbed by the injustice of depreciating bills. He emphasized Connecticut's unique role according to Divine Providence and God's allowance for their welfare. Sherman reminded readers that fair practices would continue God's blessing on them, allowing Connecticut to prosper in righteousness and subsequent blessing. Here, Sherman partook in the Puritan, intellectual tradition surrounding New England geography.

Puritan rhetoric regarding settlement in the New England wilderness frequently identified purpose with the Israelites in the desert, on a mission to the promised land. If America was "not the New Eden," it was at least "a potential paradise," and a fresh start.¹⁵ This possible haven could only be transformed by the heavy burden of Christian responsibility. A duty to be holy was both to serve as a shining "city on a hill...and more also" to the world and for self-

¹⁴ Sherman, "Caveat," 48.

¹⁵ Peter N. Carroll, *Puritanism and the Wilderness: The Intellectual Significance of the New England Frontier 1629-1700* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), 15.

preservation.¹⁶ Reverend John White noted that “piety and godliness” could emerge from the struggle, unlike morally corrupt England with “riche soile,” by “hard labour and industry.”¹⁷

Christian morality in labor and trade was something deeply intertwined in Sherman’s culture. Connecticut officials sought to keep their constituents from sin, they thus viewed their role as protectors of public and private virtue. Indeed, the first legal code in Connecticut sought to order their governance based on Scripture, borrowing “heavily from the Massachusetts Bay’s Body of Liberties of 1641” and from “Mosaic law and English civil and ecclesiastical law—all modified to meet the needs of the wilderness.”¹⁸ Related to Sherman’s point on alcohol, the 1643-1647 Order of the General Court stated that vendors were responsible not to sell to anyone above a reasonable amount. Sellers had to be prepared to testify in court that the served amount was not enough to cause their customer to sin.¹⁹ By the legal code of 1650-1784, if someone lied about the amount of alcohol he or she consumed, that individual could be fined and publicly whipped. With Sherman and Richard Law’s reworking of the legal code in 1784, they adapted the punishment to solely a fine of “eight shillings and the stocks.”²⁰ The General Court order which remained until 1784 stated that no one should stay in a “common victualing house...above

¹⁶ John Winthrop, “A Modell of Christian Charity,” 1630, Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society: Hanover Texts Collection, <https://history.hanover.edu/texts/winthmod.html>.

¹⁷ John White, *Planter’s Plea Or The grounds of Plantations Examined, and Usall Objections Answered Together with a Manifestation of the Causes Moving Such as Have Lately Undertaken a Plantation in New-England: for the Satisfaction of Those that Question the Lawfulness of the Action*,” Early English Books Online: University of Michigan, 32. <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A15097.0001.001?rgn=main;view=fulltext>.

¹⁸ Scott D. Gerber, “Law and Religion in Colonial Connecticut.” *The American Journal of Legal History* 55, no. 2 (2015): 156. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24465906>.

¹⁹ Lawrence Henry Gibson, “Criminal Codes of Connecticut,” *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 6, no. 2 (1915): 188. <https://scholarlycommons.law.northwestern.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1362&context=jclc>.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 185, 188.

half an hour at a time in drinking wine, beer, or hot waters.”²¹ Law and custom warned against leisurely time and corrupt idleness.

The sin of idleness led to drunkenness, selfish ambition, and a host of other snares, but “labor and industry” with righteousness brought forth blessing, and unjust weights and measures were punished by the law of God and men.²² Sherman lumped drunkenness along with depreciation as the main plagues of his society, as he continued in his “Caveat Against Injustice,” saying that laying a heavy excise on “all Rum imported into this Colony or distilled herein” would save morals, wealth, and even lives. He noted that defeating this “growing Evil among us” that is “leading to almost all other Vices,” was a similar effort for the public good, concluding that “I doubt not but that if those two great Evils...were restrained we should soon see better Times.”²³

The Code of 1650 lists idleness as a crime that should be met with “a suitable punishment by the court” as a root of other evils.²⁴ Time was seen as something of inherent value and a moral responsibility to God and others. Historian Paul B. Hensley argues that the Puritan “time discipline,” was firmly in place before industrialization (when this sense of the ordered day, shift work, and communal rhythms greatly developed in many other states). Part of Puritan’s strict management of time came from a firm belief in God’s Providential timing and purposes in their trades and occupations. Since God had “led men to their callings, hard work and a wise use of

²¹ *The True Blue Laws of Connecticut and New Haven and the False Blue-Laws Invented by the Reverence Samuel Peters to Which are Added Specimens of the Laws and Judicial Proceedings of Other Colonies and Some Blue-Laws of England in the Reign of James I*, ed. J. Hammond Trumbull (Hartford, CT: American Publishing Co., 1876), 155.

²² Sherman, “Caveat,” 44.

²³ Sherman, “Caveat,” 49; Hall, *Sherman and the Creation of the American Republic*, 45. In 1755, his goal from “Caveat” passed, and Rhode Island and New Hampshire bills of credit printed from December 6, 1749 onward were banned from use in Connecticut; Sherman moved on to other moral and religious ills he saw in society. The second substantial piece of legislation passed in this session of Congress met Sherman’s other goal as Phileunomos: heavier taxes on alcohol.

²⁴ Gibson, “Criminal Codes,” 180.

time were nothing less than expressions of Christian duty” and “arduous labor was instrumental to the entire conversion process.”²⁵ Working with efficiency unto one’s calling, rising early to dedicate time to devotion, and ordering holidays to remind them of their roots all combined to make time holy and reinforce the community’s sense of duty.²⁶ As the Puritans sought to follow Philippians 2:12 and “work out their salvation,” they had to keep in step with God’s calling to use time wisely and justly.

To New England Puritans, the wilderness symbolized lessons on the unregenerate soul, but the enclosed lands of Connecticut (and the rest of New England) was a reminder of the protection of God, the “hedge of Grace” lost to immoral England and now bestowed upon the Puritans.²⁷ Indeed, on their mission as the “last citadel of doctrinal purity,” settlers and later Connecticut Congregationalists alike saw wonder, blessing, and religious purpose in the New World. On the other hand, the struggles of an unknown geography contributed to their sanctification and affirmed that they were still God’s children, being chastened for a purpose.²⁸ It is for this reason Sherman saw the special duty of Connecticut to regulate the trade, for the success of this people and the continuing of their role in God’s plan. He wrote that depreciation and the foreign bills of credit give “no Profit” but rather are a “Cheat, Vexation, and Snare to us” causing injustice and moral depravity.²⁹ Connecticut leadership sought to promote God’s will amongst the settlers to avoid God’s wrath and foster obedience that would lead to blessing, and so this close-knit group focused on image and survival regulated public and private life.

²⁵ Paul B. Hensley, “Time, Work, and Social Context in New England.” *The New England Quarterly* 65, no. 4 (1992): 535. <https://doi.org/10.2307/365821>.

²⁶ David Hackett Fischer, *Albion’s Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 164-166. See Fischer’s commentary on the Puritan ideas of “improving the time,” working in the most efficient manner, and “numbering the days,” ordering schedules and being mindful of man’s limited lifespan.

²⁷ Carroll, *Puritanism and the Wilderness*, 114, 94-95.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 117.

²⁹ Sherman, “Caveat,” 48.

Connecticut Puritans viewed their government as akin to a protective father, keeping their children/populace from harm, including their own sins. Richard Bushman notes that “The hedge of laws thus both contained and protected each individual” much like the Puritan characterization of the wilderness.³⁰ There was thus a high standard for magistrates and civil leaders. To promote the “Civil and sacred order,” the public good was to be interpreted by wise leaders.³¹ Just as the father was the leader of the household, officials were the protecting leaders for the people. As colonial scholar J. William Frost noted, Americans, specifically New Englanders, “were thankful that they could perceive the difference between creeping authoritarianism and necessary order.”³² Both domestic and civil authority was to be loving yet firm; the opposite of obedience to these powers was chaos.³³

Freedom from religious persecution in England bred a love of open practice of purity and submission to godly authority, not rugged individualism. Sherman illustrates this notion as he urged the government to protect its people, not letting them succumb to suffering and sin. He noted that the Assembly has failed in this role as he described that they themselves “don’t Esteem such *Bills of Credit* as Money” and “have made Provision how they shall be paid exclusive of such Bills” but yet have not undertaken to prevent their circulation among the common people.³⁴ Sherman’s understanding of government’s role in economic issues was deeply related to the Puritan mindset, and he sought to further the public good by eliminating both ignorance and callousness on the issue of depreciation.

Cloudy Morality: Social Consciousness in Sherman’s Almanacs

³⁰ Richard L. Bushman, *From Puritan to Yankee: Character and the Social Order in Connecticut, 1690-1765* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), 7.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 9.

³² J. William Frost, *Connecticut Education in the Revolutionary Era* (Chester, CT: Pequot Press, 1974), 4.

³³ Bushman, *From Puritan to Yankee*, 5, 13.

³⁴ Sherman, “Caveat,” 46-47.

Many of the ideas in Sherman's "Caveat" were also echoed in the moral and political writings of his almanacs. Sherman connected his self-education to the Connecticut culture when "at the Desire of many" of his "Friends and Acquaintance" he was "induced" to publish his first almanac.³⁵ Almanacs were fundamental to colonial culture. They informally educated many Americans, and "next to the Bible, the almanac was the most widely read literary production in Colonial America."³⁶ While Benjamin Franklin's *Poor Richard's Almanac* is widely regarded as the seminal work for colonists to find wit and wisdom, Nathaniel Ames was actually the most successful almanac writer of the time.³⁷ Massachusetts printer, Isaiah Thomas "the leading publisher of his day," notable for printing over one hundred children's books (and "tens of thousands of copies" of them), also published almanacs and his own history of the colonies.³⁸ He wrote in his *History of Printing* that Ames' almanacs exceeded Franklin's publication numbers six fold.³⁹

Ames and Franklin were both noteworthy for forming a greater sense of the "American" patriotic identity and developing a common culture.⁴⁰ Roger Sherman corresponded with Ames and even contributed mathematical calculations to Ames' 1753 almanac.⁴¹ Ames, Sherman, and

³⁵ Roger Sherman, *Almanacs*, 5.

³⁶ Robert T. Sidwell, "Writers, Thinkers and Fox Hunters: Educational Theory in the Almanacs of Eighteenth-Century Colonial America." *History of Education Quarterly* 8, no. 3 (1968): 275, 286. <https://doi.org/10.2307/367428>.

³⁷ James Ciment, *Colonial America an Encyclopedia of Social, Political, Cultural, and Economic History* (Armonk, NY: Sharpe Reference, 2006), 1209.

³⁸ "Isaiah Thomas, The Baskerville of America," Graphic Arts Collection: Special Collections, Firestone Library, Princeton University, <https://graphicarts.princeton.edu/2013/09/09/isaiah-thomas-the-baskerville-of-america/>.

³⁹ Chester E. Jorgenson, "Almanacs of Ames and Franklin," *New England Quarterly* 8, no. 1 (1935): 555, <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fscholarly-journals%2Falmanacs-ames-franklin%2Fdocview%2F1290823886%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D12085>. While Benjamin Franklin published 10,000 editions annually (from 1732 to 1757), Thomas argues that 60,000 Ames' almanacs were circulated yearly.

⁴⁰ Marion Barber Stowell, "The Influence of Nathaniel Ames on the Literary Taste of His Time," *Early American Literature* 18, no. 2 (Fall, 1983): 143. <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fscholarly-journals%2Finfluence-nathaniel-ames-on-literary-taste-his%2Fdocview%2F1299935088%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D12085>.

⁴¹ "Roger Sherman to Nathaniel Ames, July 14, 1753," in Margherita Arlina Hamm's *Builders of the Republic: Some Great Americans Who Have Aided in the Making of the Nation* (New York: J. Pott, 1902), 153.

Thomas Clap (first president of Yale College) all corresponded on lunar observations and comets, adding to Sherman's repertoire of contacts among intellectual and social influencers. Within this context, Sherman very humbly introduces his mathematic and farming calculations as something he started doing as a hobby. In his almanacs, published from 1750 to 1761, Sherman connects to his Puritan culture throughout as he focuses on the value of honesty, temperance, and delves into current events facing Connecticut at the time.

One matter involving Sherman's deep regard for honesty has to do with the Almanac's printing. Henry DeForeest was Sherman's publisher in New York for his first four perennial publications. Sherman was in a rush to send his copy to DeForeest to meet a publishing deadline for the 1750 edition, and thus gave his printer the liberty to make changes/additions that he found necessary. However, Sherman was appalled at DeForeest's observations added before Sherman's monthly calculations. DeForeest wrote quips and fanciful comparisons mixing both moralism and scandalous description. For the January section, DeForeest describes "suspicious weather" like a sour mistress catching a husband and maid stealing kisses behind closed doors and the "turbulent weather" making the house hot just as the wife berates her unfaithful husband and servant.⁴² While he does include several moral comments on avoiding the love of money, laziness, and empty flattery, his comments on women in particular strike a discord with the Puritan mind and sexual ethic.⁴³ Sherman saw this as a matter of public deception and dishonesty to attribute this to his name.

⁴² Sherman, *Almanacs*, 7. DeForeest and Sherman had worked well in the printing of "Caveat" in 1752 as well. The turn in this relationship is highlighted since, pivotally, DeForeest writes in the first person in these passages, making the reader assume these parts in particular were also of Sherman's hand.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 8-10. DeForeest writes to avoid marrying "whores" and "sluts," describes the fickleness and inconsistency of Women's minds, and describes that satisfying one's physical hunger in harvest is better than the satisfaction of being able "to kiss the fairest lady in the whole universe." Needless to say, even in a society less cautious about gender discrimination and derogatory remarks about women, the Puritan Sherman did not want this language on infidelity and women of ill repute attributed to him.

Evidently, DeForeest's attempt to spice up Sherman's writings was unappreciated; a 1907 introduction to the collected *Almanacs* states that "the Dutch printer had different standards of taste than the Puritan author of Connecticut."⁴⁴ Sherman wrote a statement to the *New York Gazette* noting that DeForeest dishonestly attributed several "Progniferous Observations" to his name when he meant for DeForeest to add some specific dates like "Courts, Fairs, and Quaker's meetings."⁴⁵ DeForeest responded with a note in the *New York Evening Post* one week later quoting Scripture about the dangers of slander, the biblical basis of which was surely meant to strike Sherman.⁴⁶ In 1754, there was another instance where Sherman wrote to the public that his printer, Timothy Green of Boston, made a mistake in its publishing. Perhaps due to the commonplace occurrence of almanacs being republished without due credit or compensation to the writer and these instances of printing mistakes, Sherman co-wrote the first copyright law in America in 1783.⁴⁷ Clearly, honesty and public regard were important to Sherman, something the Puritan society that had evolved in mid-eighteenth-century Connecticut found fundamental to public leaders. A budding force in Connecticut state politics and law, Sherman would be held to a similarly high standard of integrity and religious purity. Indeed, this is reflected in the prose Sherman wrote in his almanacs. The connection of physical issues and spiritual meanings is similar to Sherman's writings on depreciation, and "Caveat" was published within Sherman's almanacs as well as independently in papers. His poetical extracts reveal his concerns on spiritual and political matters, something he saw as intertwined.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁴⁵ Roger Sherman, *New York Gazette*, January 22, 1750, in *Almanacs*, 12. He also notes that DeForeest cut some of his calculations on the Moon.

⁴⁶ Henry DeForeest, *New York Evening Post*, 245, January 29, 1750, in *Almanacs*, 13.

⁴⁷ Roger Sherman, "An Act for the Encouragement of Literature and Genius," in *Collected Works of Roger Sherman*, 96.

In addition to spiritual matters, Sherman used the Almanac to reach his audience politically in support of their French and Indian War soldiers. Puritan belief held that duty to God also meant service to the Commonwealth. Sherman relates to this loyal, Connecticut culture as he writes in epic, heroic language on the brave generals advancing with “dauntless Courage” and unity to “Turn the war, and tell *Aggressing* France, How *Britain’s* and *New-England’s* Sons can Fight.”⁴⁸ It is curious that even here, Sherman separates the two identities. However, he believes and praises religious unity and fatherly protection from “most gracious King” George, “both Great and Good,” who saved them from “the En’m’y’s barb’rous Hands” who “are against the Prot’stant Cause combin’d.”⁴⁹ He repeatedly calls upon God to bless their cause, noting that one day war will end, but today good citizens should praise their leaders and chiefly God to whom they “owe the Triumphs of the Day.”⁵⁰

In these proverbial sayings and short essays, Sherman discusses how the second coming of Christ, “the great Judge,” is closer with each passing year and that Providence, prophecy, and God’s nature are revealed in the patterns of the seasons. He echoes Augustine’s writing on contentment in God as Sherman writes in his description for July:

He that true Peace and Happiness would find
In every Scene of Life must be resign’d
Unto the Will of God in Providence,
And that with full compleat Acquiescence.⁵¹

Sherman’s strong regard for God’s providence is rooted in Calvinist theology and the Reformed tradition, commonplace among and spearheaded in America by the Puritans. To be cognizant of

⁴⁸ Ibid., 37.

⁴⁹ Sherman, *Almanacs*, March and April 1760 Notes, 38.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 39.

⁵¹ Roger Sherman, “A Poem on Drunkenness,” in Sherman, *Almanacs*, 34. Augustine famously wrote in his *Confessions* that “You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.”

God's role as both Provider and Judge, was to live with rightmindedness, with focus on this God revealed in the order of nature.

Shunning the things of earth is a repeated theme in Sherman's "Poem on Drunkenness" published at the end of his 1755 Almanac. The poem reveals Sherman's high regard for temperance. He writes that man "wholly turns a Beast" when "Circean Cups thy mind's possesst," which wrecks one's soul and "infect[s] the heart," mind, and various organs. If one continues in drunkenness, he or she will be "To Foes a Laughter, to thy Friends a Shame" and "if thou dost not from this Vice refrain," it will "prove thy Ruin and eternal Bane."⁵² Sherman did drink wine, and many Puritans drank and produced alcohol, but they were opposed to drunkenness and wild excess.⁵³ Sin's control was something harmful to both the physical and the spiritual body, a dishonor to oneself, one's neighbors, and a willful devolution into something against their position as creatures made in the image of God.

Excerpts in the appendix of Sherman's almanacs describe his Puritan fear of a covetous and licentious populace. Sherman warns that "A poor Spirit's worse than a poor purse"⁵⁴ and that "Profaness Intemperance & Injustice presage Calamititious Times."⁵⁵ Yet again, one sees Sherman's Congregationalist eye as he viewed his society, and an increased pursuit of worldly treasures over heavenly ones, to be an indicator of disastrous times for his colony. The connection between private morality and the public good was considered to be so vast that it could predict the preservation of order and existence for the colony. Historian Jack Greene writes that the Puritan governments limited and sometimes revoked privacy to quell individual

⁵² Sherman, *Almanacs*, 36-37.

⁵³ Sherman's ledger and finance notes while in Philadelphia specifically record him paying back a Mary for "my share of the wine."

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 45.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, Appendix.

wrongdoing, maintain control on the “unruly forces of the market,” (lessening covetousness and indulgence), and to “achieve a degree of communal unity virtually unknown in the fluctuating world of early modern England.”⁵⁶ The economic expansion of the late seventeenth and entire eighteenth centuries caused moral-spiritual crises among Congregationalists who saw the pursuit of wealth supersede godly concerns. These feelings of “spiritual inadequacy” led to a social and personal tension caught in between these pursuits.⁵⁷ Avoiding entanglements with the love of money meant that the society could become more efficient and seek the good of each other’s neighbor.

Other independent proverbial phrases in Sherman’s almanacs note the good of the people, in both spiritual and temporal means. Sherman describes that “Reason & passion answer one great Aim, and true self love & social are the same.”⁵⁸ This point is echoed in his letters on self-love to Samuel Hopkins (something he saw as the golden rule, and thus love for one’s neighbor and society).⁵⁹ He notes that the good of the people, their “Health and Welfare” is “the chiefest law,” and that such motivations should undergird the order of society. Civic service and involvement as a duty is thus an extension of this idea, believing that good men are required to seek justice and Christian purity in their society.

During Sherman’s service in the General Assembly’s lower house (in 1755 and 1758-1761), he sought the public good by supporting colonial defense in the French & Indian War. In his 30s at the time, Sherman was vigorous in the cause of colonial defense. In his almanacs, Sherman published prose on the glorious capture of Quebec. He highlighted the various generals

⁵⁶ Jack P. Greene, *Pursuits of Happiness: The Social Development of Early Modern British Colonies and the Formation of American Culture* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina, 1988), 37.

⁵⁷ Richard Bushman, “The Great Awakening in Connecticut,” in *Colonial America: Essays in Politics and Social Development*, 3rd ed. eds. Stanley N. Katz and John M. Murrin (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983), 487.

⁵⁸ Sherman, *Almanacs*, 45.

⁵⁹ “Roger Sherman to Samuel Hopkins, New York, June 28, 1790,” in *Collected Works of Roger Sherman*, 778.

but repeatedly referred to a sense of distinctly American identity by stating “The Troups lying on their Arms all Night...we secured the Bridge of Boats...we broke Ground...we had every Thing prepared.”⁶⁰ Sherman went on praising General Wolfe but primarily the greatly outnumbered Connecticut and New England men who fought all the “more glorious” by being outnumbered with 12,000 French forces to 4,500 of their men.⁶¹ Though he did not fight himself, he took his role as legislator and leader to rally the means and morale needed. Efforts to support the British war forces while also preserving English rights for Connecticut was a hard line to walk. The Connecticut General Assembly passed legislation raising and quartering troops and later called for a day of Thanksgiving unto God for the war’s victory. However, Connecticut noted as they raised revenue and troops for the war a “desire to be reimbursed by the Crown for the expense.”⁶² This balance of loyalty and a growing “testy” and “passionate” independence defined the Connecticut Yankee spirit, and Sherman individually, by 1765.⁶³

Knowledge and Civilization of the Heart

As Noah Webster later remarked, “Knowledge alone” was “less important than civilization of the heart.”⁶⁴ Instructing Connecticuters in religion and the law of their colony was essential to good order and blessing from the Lord. The General Assembly revised Connecticut’s laws on education in 1750, insisting that everyone be literate so they would know capital laws. This also mandated that children and all citizens be able to at least comprehend the catechism and answer questions about it. This was a liberalizing of a previous law that instated weekly catechizing of children and servants.⁶⁵ Rather than a harsh ruling sentenced from the elite, each

⁶⁰ Sherman, *Almanacs*, 30-31.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² Hall, *Sherman and the Creation of the American Republic*, 45.

⁶³ Bushman, *From Puritan to Yankee*, 287.

⁶⁴ Frost, *Connecticut Education*, 12.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 13.

community enforced these laws with social pressure and validating the importance of young moral and civil instruction. Within this framework, education was seen not as a privilege of the elite, but as a necessity for order, morality, and thus, survival.

Of profound notoriety and personal connection to Sherman stood the famous Yale university. Founded in 1701, Yale heightened the caliber of Connecticut education, specifically in theology. Roger Sherman's personal connection to Connecticut education began with his move to New Haven in 1761. The then President of Yale, Thomas Clap, was in a predicament in which most Old Lights were scheming against him, calling for his resignation and the closure of the school due to grievances against Congregationalists and his supposed mishandling of rowdy students and meetings.⁶⁶ Clap decided to ally himself with the more prominent New Light faction in New Haven. Sherman, a strong mind in a new area, took kindly to many in the New Light camp (and undoubtedly shared their views on true conversion over the Half-Way Covenant).⁶⁷ Clap's favor granted Sherman the position of Yale Treasurer in 1765, a position Sherman continued in through 1776.⁶⁸ Sherman's home and store was also conveniently located

⁶⁶ George C. Groce, "Benjamin Gale," *The New England Quarterly* 10, no. 4 (1937): 700. <https://doi.org/10.2307/359933>. Benjamin Gale, a physician with contempt for the Calvinist Congregationalists, saw Clap as the embodiment of hypocritical and vile doctrine. Gale attempted to have Yale entrusted to the General Assembly's jurisdiction rather than Calvinist leaders like Clap. With New Lights attacking "heresies of such Old Lights as Gale," Gale was angered to the point of attacking Yale's board members and president. Gale viewed Clap as a tyrannical man seeking to merge his power over every fundamental component of Connecticut: religion, education, and civil society. Gale and Clap engaged in pamphlet wars on this matter and the management of Yale. Gale used his power in the Assembly to pass legislation denying appropriations to the college for the duration of Clap's presidency (Clap served in this role from 1745 to three months before his death in 1766, appropriations were withheld from 1755-1766). However, Clap was not completely defeated: Yale continued to be a Congregationalist institution, and Clap had allied himself with powerful, up-and-coming minds.

⁶⁷ Collier, *Roger Sherman's Connecticut*, 33, 37. Sherman even defended his New Milford Old Light pastor (Nathaniel Taylor), serving on a committee to investigate the New Light rabblers. Seemingly with a change of heart, Sherman joined the New Lights in New Haven. Though authors like Christopher Collier claims this was a move of realpolitik, it is likely that Sherman saw influential leaders and intellectuals less likely to subvert moral order than the divisions in his former church. Sherman's sermon written in his later years reflected his concern for being in a right state before taking communion; in this work he highlighted the necessity of introspection and prayer to see if one is truly saved and repentant.

⁶⁸ "Yale Officers: Treasurers," Yale University Library, <https://guides.library.yale.edu/c.php?g=296064&p=1973568>. Sherman was the fifth treasurer of Yale.

a stone's throw from Yale, and this positioning helped him rub elbows with students and other intellectuals. In this atmosphere, Sherman read up on the latest scientific, political, and theological works. He also contributed and petitioned for the construction of Yale's chapel, earned an honorary Master's Degree from Yale in 1768 and remained a benefactor of the school throughout his life. Sherman supported two of his brothers and several other relatives to study to become ministers at the college. Prior to the Revolution, Yale served as a hub of patriot thought, Congregationalist theology, and other intellectual debates. Sherman's involvement at Yale and move to New Haven in general paved the way for him to have an immense impact among Connecticut leaders.

Law & Order: Sherman's Early Legal and Judicial Career

Roger Sherman was elected to the General Assembly in May 1755, and this position would further mesh his role as Congregationalist and public servant. Anti-Catholicism and moral issues reinforcing a Reformed Protestant worldview were some of the most distinctive hallmarks of Sherman's legal and judicial careers. Often, these responses were already established precedents in Connecticut culture and law rather than new initiatives. Sherman as a judge frequently dealt with cases of morality including limiting divorce to cases of cruelty, adultery, and abandonment, and cases of defamation against the respected clergy.⁶⁹ Religious means, yet again, were the basis of law and legal action.

While more toleration was granted to separatists in the later 1760s, Catholics were never granted such leniency. The 1766 legislature meeting even adopted an oath requiring members to swear:

I do from my heart abhor, detest and adjure, as impious and heretical, that damnable doctrine and position, that princes excommunicated or deprived by the Pope, or any

⁶⁹ Hall, *Sherman and the Creation of the American Republic*, 47-48. In this case, a "Mr. P" was charged with being an Arminian, a serious slander in Sherman's Connecticut.

authority of the See of Rome, may be deposed or murdered by their subjects...I do believe that in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper there is not any transubstantiation of the elements of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ.⁷⁰

This loyalty oath to Protestant propositions was rooted in historical and political fears as well as concerns for orthodoxy.

Sherman and other Congregationalists feared state religion, whether from Catholics or other Protestant denominations. He opposed an Episcopal bishop being instituted in the colonies, which could enact state religion. This position also concerned many New Englanders because of the history of Bishop's Courts in England, many of which persecuted the Puritans and led to their fleeing to America. There was fear of bishops inheriting a similar form of governance in the colonies and potentially even enacting Catholic church governance if a Catholic monarch should take the throne. On this issue, Sherman wrote to his close friend and fellow Connecticut representative, William Samuel Johnson, "we are not of intolerant principles." Indeed, Sherman wrote the most religiously tolerant laws in Connecticut up to that time in 1784 when rewriting the state's legal code, and he also received flak from his readers for including Quaker and Anglican holiday dates in his almanacs. Yet, Sherman continued in this letter to state that if the Episcopalians receive a Bishop from England, without his authority checked by Parliament, they may establish deeper governance. He referenced the "tyranny of Bishops' Courts" in which many of his fellow New Englanders escaped to America.⁷¹ Sherman wrote William Samuel Johnson:

Will the numerous Colonies who came here for the sake of freedom from ecclesiastical oppression, and by whose toil a great increase of dominion and commerce hath arisen to the mother country bear to find themselves divested of the equality and liberty they have

⁷⁰ "Religious Oath of the Connecticut General Assembly, 1766," in Hall, *Sherman and the Creation of the American Republic*, 46.

⁷¹ Boutell, *Life of Roger Sherman*, 30. He specifically references Archbishop Laud who served as Charles I's Archbishop of Canterbury. He was later arrested and executed for treason by the London Parliament of 1640 in the leadup to the English Civil War.

so long enjoyed and brought under the power of a particular denomination and see them monopolize all important places of trust in order to secure that power?...⁷²
 Free practice of Congregationalism and the open allowance for other denominations kept Connecticut's peaceful coexistence of religious sects. This freedom was the reason that many of New England's first settlers came to America, and the colonies have contributed so much to Great Britain and submitted to their authority, that there is no justification to revoke or threaten their highest pursuit. Thus, religious liberty was always stirring in the back of Sherman's mind as the ultimate right to be protected at all costs.

Sherman even personally launched a "minor propaganda campaign" against an Episcopal Bishop, printing and circulating pamphlets with sermons by Congregational ministers Charles Chauncey of Boston and Noah Welles of Stamford.⁷³ Perhaps partly due to Sherman's efforts and the voices from the Connecticut General Assembly, Connecticut forestalled any such action of Parliament installing a bishop.⁷⁴ It was a theme of the generally softspoken man to take action when cultural tides were shifting that might endanger his home church and congregation, and it can be argued that Sherman even saw his town and state as akin to his congregation and spiritual community entrusted to him. Fear of Catholic rule and tyranny were deeply ingrained in the Puritan populace, especially in the legislative bodies. Religious concerns remained in the back of the public mind, but territorial disputes would soon come to a head.

⁷² "Roger Sherman to William Samuel Johnson, 1768" in Boardman, *Signer and Statesman* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1939), 104.

⁷³ Lindsay Bellack, "Charles Chauncey (1705-1787)," SMU.edu; John S. Oakes and David D. Hall. "Mayhew, Chauncey, and Revolutionary Change." In *Conservative Revolutionaries: Transformation and Tradition in the Religious and Political Thought of Charles Chauncey and Jonathan Mayhew*, 1st ed. (The Lutterworth Press, 2016), 239. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvj4sww0.14>. Chauncey would later become a unitarian believing in universal salvation. Perhaps his Arminian streak influenced him towards questioning civil society as well as embracing heterodoxy religiously. Regardless, he was a strong voice for religious and civil liberty. "Noah Welles 1718-1776," Stamford Historical Society, https://www.stamfordhistory.org/dav_welles.htm. In Welles' "Patriotism Described and Recommended" (an election sermon he delivered before the Connecticut General Assembly in 1764), he advocated for confrontation between the nations to defend American rights. He also would minister to British POWs and died from an illness he contracted in those prisons.

⁷⁴ Collier, *Roger Sherman's Connecticut*, 73.

Politics: Territory & Tyranny

In 1774, Sherman involved himself in another Connecticut debate known as the Wyoming/Susquehanna Controversy. Since 1753, settlers and political officials debated and wrestled over if Pennsylvania or Connecticut had the right to settle in the Wyoming Territory, near the Susquehanna River, as Charles II had given charters to both colonies that included this region.⁷⁵ When settlers from Connecticut's Susquehanna Company bought land from the inhabiting Native Americans there, increasing numbers of Connecticut citizens began to establish themselves in that area. Notably, the Susquehanna Company was not legally chartered, but was rather a "shareholders democracy" in which members voted on all issues, tempered only by a standing committee which handled much of the logistical end of the company's ventures.⁷⁶ This added to the feeling of it being a battle for the common man, but Pennsylvania saw this strife as an intercolonial conflict, with trespassers encroaching, perhaps to take over more of their land.

In 1753, Richard Peters (the Pennsylvania provincial secretary) described to colony proprietors that Connecticut inhabitants had "made great disturbance among the People" and warned that by the spring they would return "with a Thousand Men and settle those lands."⁷⁷ By 1763, Thomas Penn, a Pennsylvania proprietor, "objected to the settlements" and managed to get the Crown to pass an order making all Connecticut settlers leave the Wyoming valley.⁷⁸ More Connecticut settlers settled themselves in the area, which led to vigilante Pennsylvanians fighting

⁷⁵ *Charter of the Colony of Connecticut, 1662* (Hartford, CT: Lockwood & Brainard Company, 1900), 19. https://www.cga.ct.gov/hco/books/Charter_of_the_Colony_of_CT_1662.pdf

⁷⁶ Paul B. Moyer, "'Among Quarrelsome Yankees, Insidious Indians, and Lonely Wilds,'" 17.

⁷⁷ "Richard Peters to the Pennsylvania Proprietors, Nov. 27, 1753," in Paul B. Moyer, "'Among Quarrelsome Yankees, Insidious Indians, and Lonely Wilds': Natives, Colonists, and the Wyoming Controversy," in *Wild Yankees: The Struggle for Independence along Pennsylvania's Revolutionary Frontier*, 1st ed., 18. Cornell University Press, 2007. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt7z5p0.8>. Pennsylvanians also denied the claims of purchases from Native Americans, stating that

⁷⁸ Hall, *Sherman and the Creation of the American Republic*, 46.

the “Connecticans as illegal invaders” in 1769.⁷⁹ Thus the Susquehanna/Wyoming Controversy is also known as the Yankee-Pennamite Wars.⁸⁰ Ten years after Penn’s Royal order securing his side’s status, a formal declaration in 1773 supported Connecticut claims to the region.

Eventually, the matter fizzled out with the Revolutionary War, but it was a cause of major colony and class division at the time.⁸¹

In April 1784, Sherman wrote an article on the issue for the *Connecticut Journal* about the controversy. In this piece he argued that Connecticut had a legal right to the land based on the Charter. He deemed those who opposed Connecticut’s claim to the land as disloyal to the colony and cautioned that “every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation.”⁸² Unity within the colony was important to Sherman, and he noted the precautions Connecticut took to preserve the welfare of the settlers and their neighbors.

The colony’s General Assembly ordered that any new settlers needed special permission to go towards the Wyoming territory.⁸³ Sherman also noted that Connecticut had a right to govern its people if they were living there, that the Connecticut assembly was seeking the best for the public good, and that making these people leave would lead to poverty and suffering.

Sherman argued that those that would make the Connecticut settlers leave were the forces of monopoly and anti-republicanism, those against the people’s welfare. He asserted that “it will

⁷⁹ “December 28: When Eastern Pennsylvania Belonged to Connecticut,” Today in Connecticut History: Office of the State Historian, December 28, 2020, <https://todayinthehistory.com/2020/12/28/december-28-when-eastern-pennsylvania-belonged-to-connecticut-3/>.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Hall, *Sherman and the Creation of the American Republic*, 47. “In 1782, a court of commissioners established under Article IX of the Article of Confederation resolved the dispute in Pennsylvania’s favor. ...Connecticut did not give up all of its western land claims until it was compensated with approximately 3. 5 million acres in Ohio—land which was eventually sold to support public education in the state.”

⁸² Roger Sherman, “Article from *The Connecticut Journal*, April 8, 1774,” in *Collected Works of Roger Sherman*, 60. Sherman is quoting Matthew 12:25.

⁸³ “The Pennamite Wars,” The Society of Colonial Wars in the State of Connecticut, <https://www.colonialwarsct.org/1769.htm#:~:text=1769%20%E2%80%94%20SUSQUEHANNA%20COMPANY,p reparations%20were%20made%20for%20development.>

not be easy to persuade the people of this colony, who know the value of freedom...that it would be best for them to give up the lands acquired for them by their ancestors, for the privilege of enjoying the same lands as tenants under the proprietaries of Pennsylvania.”⁸⁴ His experiences as a surveyor and lawyer allowed Sherman the credibility to comment on the controversy, though he argued based on loyalty as well. This pattern of defending Connecticut’s rights continued as Sherman took to the pen, to the Assembly, and to the people in the cause of defending colonial, constitutional rights.

Civil Disobedience: The Stamp Act

Shortly after March 22, 1765, with the passing of the Stamp Act, many colonies mobilized politically to defend their rights. The Stamp Act Congress (October 7-October 24, 1765) was the first intercolonial meeting which resulted in protest documents including a Declaration of Rights and Liberties as well as a Petition to the King. Each colony continued in publishing various declarations against the Stamp Act in their respective governing bodies.⁸⁵

On October 25, Connecticut published the “Connecticut Resolves,” connecting the work of the Stamp Act Congress to their colony. Passed by the Connecticut House of Representatives, which Sherman was a member of at this time, this document, like other Stamp Act documents, highlights taxation “only by Consent, given in Person or by their Representatives,” the claim that the “only legal Representatives” of Connecticut are those elected to serve in the General Assembly, and the entitlement of all colonists to the rights as Englishmen.⁸⁶ Its unique

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 63.

⁸⁵ C.A. Weslager, *The Stamp Act Congress* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 1976), 71, 108. Massachusetts led the call for the colonial gathering, but only 9/13 colonies attended: Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and South Carolina. All delegates were chosen by their state legislature. For Connecticut that was: Eliphalet Dyer, William Samuel Johnson, and David Rowland.

⁸⁶ “The Connecticut Resolves, October 25, 1765,” in Edmund S. Morgan, *Prologue to Revolution : Sources and Documents on the Stamp Act Crisis, 1764-1766* (Williamsburg, Virginia: University of North Carolina Press, 1959), 54-55.

Connecticut character shined forth as it defined “the well being and greatest Security” of the colony depending “(under God) on our Connections with Great Britain.” The Assembly wrote, “We conceive to stand upon the same Basis with the grand Charters and Fountains of English Liberty” and the Stamp Act “tends...to deprive us of the most interesting, important, and essential of those Rights...”⁸⁷ These documented rights and formerly guarded securities fostered “mutual Prosperity,” not “founded on Speculation only” but “verified in Fact, and by long Experience...to promote the best good” and the “real Glory of the grand whole, which constitutes the British Empire.”⁸⁸ Sherman helped draft this appeal to the colonists’ delineated rights, history of loyalty, and concern for the public good, and he advocated active, but non-violent, protests as well.

Sherman sought reconciliation within these heated debates and protests from a firm yet civil form of resistance. He believed Parliament had no right to tax the colonists, and he decided to act and state his mind on the issue. Sherman led a New Haven town meeting instructing delegates to oppose the Stamp Act.⁸⁹ In the General Assembly, Sherman served on the committee that made a petition to the king and instructed Connecticut’s agent in Great Britain insisting that “the colonists had not forfeited the ‘sacred and inviolable’ rights of Englishmen, so they could not be taxed without their consent.” Only five dissented to this petition in the Connecticut General Assembly.

The Sons of Liberty made it clear that they wanted more than just words and boycotts; they wanted immediate change. A Wallingford division threatened that they would oppose the

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Hall, *Sherman and the Creation of the American Republic*, 49. Sherman and Samuel Bishop were New Haven’s delegates.

act to “the last extremity, even to the field.”⁹⁰ A New London chapter of the Sons of Liberty even warned fellow Connecticut citizens to encourage protests of all kinds stating, “It is presumed no Person will publickly, in the Pulpit or otherwise, inculcate the Doctrine of passive Obedience or any other Doctrine tending to quiet the Minds of the People in a tame Submission to any unjust Impositions.”⁹¹ The tax on “all records, writs, pleadings, and other proceedings in all courts” and general texts stung lawyers and the religious-intellectual leaders, like Sherman, especially hard.⁹² While he was unwilling to compromise on the Stamp Act’s legality, believing it to be unconstitutional and unjust, he was not yet advocating taking up arms. If he would, Sherman was one who would favor an organized resistance, with deference to elected authority, over mob rule.

Upon members of the Sons of Liberty continually protesting for the resignation of Jared Ingersoll, Connecticut’s Stamp Agent, Sherman tried a reasoned approach to civil disobedience. He wrote fellow Councillor, Matthew Griswold, that “great numbers of people Assemblying and assuming a kind of legislative authority tend to weaken the authority of the government which may lead to disorders and confusion.” While he insisted these threats to Connecticut’s Standing Order should not be tolerated, he did indicate his agreement with the goals of the protestors writing: “...I have no doubt of the upright intentions of those gentlemen...which I suppose were principally intended to concert measures to prevent the introduction of the Stamp papers, and not in the least to oppose the laws or authority of the government.”⁹³ Though he was for breaking

⁹⁰ “The Sons of Liberty, Wallingford, Connecticut, January 13, 1766,” *Connecticut Courant*, February 3, 1766. In Edmund S. Morgan, *Prologue to Revolution: Sources and Documents on the Stamp Act Crisis, 1764-1766* (Williamsburg, Virginia: University of North Carolina Press, 1959), 114-115.

⁹¹ “Sons of Liberty: New London, Connecticut, December 10, 1765.” *Connecticut Courant*, December 30, 1765. *Ibid.*, 115.

⁹² “Great Britain: Parliament - The Stamp Act, March 22, 1765,” Lillian Goldman Law Library: Avalon Project, https://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/stamp_act_1765.asp.

⁹³ John G. Rommel, *Connecticut’s Yankee Patriot: Roger Sherman* (Hartford, CT: The American Revolution Bicentennial Commission of Connecticut, 1979), 15-16.

with Britain before either John Adams or Thomas Jefferson, he was still ever the Puritan Congregationalist, seeking orderly rebellion.

As Parliament repealed the Stamp Act in March 1766, Whitehall released a flurry of other mandates demanding submission from the unruly colonies. With the Declaratory Act, Quartering Act, and Townshend Acts, Sherman drafted another petition to the king “challenging the legality of the legislation.” Writing to his friend and Connecticut’s agent in Great Britain, William Samuel Johnson, Sherman stated that no “Colonial Assembly on this continent will ever concede that the Parliament has authority to Tax the colonies.”⁹⁴ This was one of the first statements Sherman would make questioning British authority. At this time Sherman not only denied Parliament’s power to tax the colonies, but he also believed that any external regulations must be agreed upon by each local legislature. He held this belief well before many more famous figures and eloquent voices caught up with him.⁹⁵ Governor Trumbull agreed with Sherman, noting that Britain and the colonies must “assuredly persue their own” interests, and conservative statesman Benjamin Gale also wrote “The Stamp Act has laid the foundation for Americas being an independent state.”⁹⁶

Meanwhile, individual colonies began nonimportation of British goods. Boston and New York’s boycott protests led the way in August 1768 and New Haven followed in July 1769.⁹⁷ Though late to adopt the agreement of her New England sisters, Connecticut “would keep it now she was committed.” In June 1770, New Haven merchants resolved to also boycott Rhode Island merchants for violating the Non-Importation agreement until they “came to a better mind.”⁹⁸

⁹⁴ Hall, *Sherman and the Creation of the American Republic*, 49.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 50. James Wilson and John Adams would popularize this position much later. See also Sherman’s comments to Thomas Cushing on page 50 of this paper.

⁹⁶ Ezra Stiles, *Literary Diary*, I, (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1901), 393; Collier, *Roger Sherman’s Connecticut*, 72.

⁹⁷ Boardman, *Signer and Statesman*, 106.

⁹⁸ Roger Sherman, “Report to the Merchants, July 26, 1770,” in *ibid.*, 108.

Sherman again took to the pen as head of a Connecticut Committee of 6 on the matter, writing to invigorate Connecticut merchants:

It is the cause of our country, it is the cause of liberty, it is the cause of all; and our country betrayed, our liberty sold, and ourselves enslaved, what have we left? With what can New York supply us that we can't be had on equal advantage and perhaps on a more generous footing from our natural friends and neighbors of Boston, whose manly fortitude and persevering measures justly claim our preference.⁹⁹

Sherman urged fellow merchants in Connecticut to stand strong in their colony's boycotts even after the Townshend Acts were repealed in 1770. He wrote to businessmen at Weatherfield and Hartford, imploring them not "to forsake the cause of liberty for 'the prospect of a little wealth.'"¹⁰⁰ He later joined a Committee of 38 that considered the state of the boycott and the colony's well-being, noting that not enough people were able to be supplied by homespun clothing.¹⁰¹ For his part, Sherman wore homespun clothes, and his simple uniform never changed with status. He would also lead and participate in expanded boycotts in the coming years.

Further representing Connecticut's rights, Sherman wrote against what he viewed as tyrannical rule of the Intolerable Acts in 1774. To Sherman, one of the most alarming pieces of legislation was the Quebec Act, which granted religious toleration to Catholics in French Canada. Specifically, Article VII stated that Catholics did not need to take a religious oath, which ran contrary to what many Puritans viewed as a protective measure from subversion and potential religious tyranny.¹⁰² Likeminded Puritans and many of the Reformed tradition had a

⁹⁹ Ibid., 108.

¹⁰⁰ Roger Sherman on New Haven Committee of 6, "Letter to Merchants at Hartford and Weatherfield," in Hall, *Sherman and the Creation of the American Republic*, 49; Collier, *Roger Sherman's Connecticut*, 70. Slightly under the radar, however, Sherman bought a significantly large order for his store and personal needs from New York importers before the boycott went into place (which one can view as self-motivated but perhaps also to add to the numbers and show a sharpened decline).

¹⁰¹ Boardman, *Signer and Statesman*, 109.

¹⁰² "Parliament - The Quebec Act: October 7, 1774: An Act for making more effectual Provision for the Government of the Province of Quebec in North America," Lillian Goldman Law Library: The Avalon Project, https://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/quebec_act_1774.asp. While the brand of religious freedom that Sherman advocated still included fear of Catholicism, he advocated more religious toleration than almost all of his peers. His

strong fear of Catholic tyranny, and worried that England might institute a Catholic Bishop in America or that a Catholic King might bring Catholicism as the state religion. As a member of the lower house, Sherman had already written about his fears for religious freedom in New England, writing: ““But Quere If the Succession according to the present Establishment Should cease for want of an Heir or if the Parliament should alter it and admit a Papist to the Crown would not the Colonies be at Liberty to joyn with Britain or not?””¹⁰³ Sherman would match this revolutionary tone as he wrote on the other Intolerable Acts.

Sherman embodies the tension within Richard Bushman’s thesis of Connecticut’s state identity. Bushman argues that the Connecticut mind was transformed from one of predominantly Puritan concerns of self-denial and communal purity to a more Yankee identity, concerned with “defensive independence,” ambition restrained by “regard for the public good,” and a “hardheaded rationalism.”¹⁰⁴ Sherman falls within this transition of public attitudes. He was a Puritan without some of the harsh associations, and he argued for moral and religious causes (even of seemingly very tangible issues) throughout his life and in various offices of legislative and political positions. He believed fiercely in the rights of the colonists against tyranny, especially religious tyranny, and yet he praised the protecting nature of the Crown. He wrote and acted in accordance with Connecticut Blue Laws in his time as Judge and in his own life. Sherman honored the Sabbath and would not travel even for political matters anywhere besides church on a Sunday.¹⁰⁵ He saw moral law and public good as the basis for all government action based on the duty of man to obey God and love one’s neighbor as himself. A man of humble

primary motivation was not to rid the colonies of all Catholics, but a fear of an established state religion common in the Catholic states of Europe.

¹⁰³ Collier, *Roger Sherman’s Connecticut*, 76.

¹⁰⁴ Bushman, *From Puritan to Yankee*, 288.

¹⁰⁵ Boyd, “Cordwainer Statesman,” 230.

origins who grew to succeed in business as well as socio-political status, Sherman's early roots infiltrated his views on freedom, always a loyal citizen of Connecticut.

II. Roger Sherman & The Mechanics of Independence

While at first approaching the notion of separation from the mother country with caution, Sherman became one of the strongest patriots, stating before contemporaries such as Jefferson and Adams that reconciliation was no longer an option. Sherman's sense of personal, religious, and political offices aided his position to be able to affect change. Under the mounting taxes and Acts from Whitehall, Sherman increasingly turned to resistance, but not violence. He sought reconciliation and redress of grievances through several petitions but ended up seeing their futility and the need for colonial unity. Sherman's involvement in the Continental Congresses and at home (where he remained a member on the Upper House of the Assembly, Governor's Council, and State Committee of Safety as well as Judge on the Superior Court) was significant. Signer of the Articles of Association, Declaration of Independence, and Articles of Confederation, Sherman was also instrumental in the Revolution itself and was the only representative to serve on the Committee to draft the Declaration, the Board of War and Ordinance, and the Committee to write a new document of governance (what would be the Articles of Confederation). Holding these prestigious and notable roles, he also served on many other committees.

Sherman's prominence in the Continental Congress and Revolution was rooted in his reputation of pragmatism and his devotion to seeing the cause through to completion. His dedication to the cause can be seen in his early turn away from Britain during the Stamp Act Crisis. Increasing the public's confidence in his abilities, he was entrusted with even more responsibility to handle the touchy issues of supply, documents of national governance, finance, territorial conflicts, and representational disputes. His loyalty to individuals, his state, and his

nation would come to the forefront in this time of transition, and Sherman's civic duty would help form the young nation.

Caution & Connecticut

Connecticut was home to few loyalists by the early 1770s. The Sons of Liberty furthered vigilante justice with public displays of tar and feathering, and even the Connecticut government pursued questionable punishments. For instance, the New Gate prison (used specifically for Tories) was an abandoned copper mine in which prisoners were lowered into by rope, into almost complete darkness. The prison gained such a reputation that Massachusetts, New York, and New Jersey sent prominent Tories there.¹

The Sons of Liberty frequently took matters into their own hands, but many of their members were also in the Assembly and had a large presence there. Sherman, while heartily for the cause, questioned the means and expressed concern about preserving legal conduct within Connecticut.

One of the first and strongest voices behind Connecticut's turn to Revolution, Sherman still saw risk in unbridled hatred for the British. In January 1766, he wrote to Matthew Griswold (a member on the Council of Assistants), warning that the Sons of Liberty should be careful not to discredit the very cause they were fighting for.² Sherman continued, telling Griswold that without any restraint on assemblies of large groups, their liberty may turn to license, hurting the

¹ Patrick J. Mahoney, "Connecticut's Loyal Subjects: Toryism and the American Revolution," CTHistory.org, <https://connecticuthistory.org/connecticuts-loyal-subjects-toryism-and-the-american-revolution/>. "Connecticut consisted of six counties and 72 townships. According to the census of 1774, throughout these counties and townships, there existed some 25,000 males between the ages of 16 and 50, of whom about 2,000 identified themselves as Tories."

² "Letter to Matthew Griswold from Roger Sherman, January 11, 1766," in Boardman, *Signer and Statesman*, 91; "[Matthew Griswold](https://www.museumofcthistory.org/matthew-griswold)," [Museum of CT History, museumofcthistory.org](https://www.museumofcthistory.org). states that "Griswold was a member of the Sons of Liberty and may have been one of the nearly five hundred citizens of Lyme that accompanied the Sons of Liberty when they met Jared Ingersoll, the Royal Stamp Distributor, and demanded he resign his position."

community and endangering their freedom. Ever the loyal Puritan, Sherman focused on order and the health, spiritual and physical, of his community. He noted that the people “assuming a kind of legislative authority...tend to weaken the authority of the government and naturally possess the minds of the people with such lax notions of civil authority as may lead to such disorders and confusions as will not be easily suppressed or reformed especially in such a popular government as ours.” Essentially, Sherman reminded his fellow patriots that orderly protest alone would signal a true cause to England and keep unity, order and safety within Connecticut. Sherman even invoked the Connecticut Charter to remind Griswold of all that was on the line should they create havoc to the point of anarchy, in which case democracy would fail and a more powerful strong-arm government would prevail.³

Another note on the atmosphere of some more trigger-happy Connecticut citizens at this time is embodied through a false report that reached Connecticut of a “bloody encounter” at Boston. In September 1774, Israel Putnam apparently rallied a “considerable force,” an estimated twenty thousand men of Connecticut that began to march towards their fellow patriot hub before realizing it was a false alarm. As Sherman’s biographer, Roger Sherman Boardman notes, “That colony was in a fighting mood.”⁴

Influenced by this environment to be sure, and having spoken on this growing separation for years, Sherman saw the writing on the wall and held to a firm conviction that a break with the mother country was coming. He believed the Americans were Englishmen and deserved to be treated under the rights listed in the British constitutional system.

³ “Letter to Matthew Griswold from Roger Sherman,” in Boutell, *Life of Roger Sherman*, 22-23; Boardman, *Signer and Statesman*, 91.

⁴ Boardman, *Signer and Statesman*, 113.

In 1772, Sherman wrote one of the most succinct and earliest statements of American rebellion. In an April letter to Thomas Cushing, Speaker of the House of Representatives of Massachusetts, Sherman argued that “it is a fundamental principle in the British Constitution, and I think must be in every free State, that no laws bind the people but such as they consent to be governed by.” To be held to laws created without their consent would be a state of slavery, a denial of lawful privilege.⁵ In the same letter, Sherman expounds that “all concessions which may be construed as a disclaimer” (giving into the new Intolerable Acts and thereby legitimizing Parliamentary authority over taxation) “ought to be carefully avoided.”⁶ Here, Sherman parallels Patrick Henry’s famous phrase “no taxation without representation,” as he fervently sought to show others that Parliament’s recent taxes and acts were uncompromisable issues. Sherman was one of the first of the Revolutionary leaders to show a “clear-sighted vision that the only logical position for the colonies to take was a complete denial of the right of King and Parliament to legislate for the colonies.”⁷ His pragmatic thinking was also underpinned by a sense of Christian civic duty.

To protect the order and well-being of his populace, Sherman drew upon many sources and his Christian values synchronously. He upheld the virtue of the consent of the governed and enjoyed reading many of the Enlightenment and academician works he sold in his bookshop, but in Sherman’s eyes, the whole duty of man was to serve others for the glory of God. Thus, his purpose stemmed from his biblically-minded perspective. When individuals would try to sway Sherman by their numbers, Sherman was known to stand his ground. He would however reason together with those who disagreed with him, filtering ideas through his biblical morality and

⁵ “Roger Sherman to Thomas Gushing, New Haven, April 30, 1772” in Boutell, *Life of Roger Sherman*, 27.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 28. “Roger Sherman to Thomas Gushing, New Haven, April 30, 1772.”

⁷ Boardman, *Signer and Statesman*, 118.

common-sense nature. The line in the sand would be when Parliamentary acts continued to impinge on Americans' God-given and Charter-written liberties.

The Coercive/Intolerable Acts led to intercolonial calls for an American Congress. The threat of Americans being tried in England or the *Gaspee Affair* led many Americans to question the mounting injustice against supposed countrymen.⁸ Silas Deane, Sherman's future co-delegate, remarked that if they would try to subvert justice in this way without full power, one could only imagine how this foretaste would manifest, should the colonies consent to stronger British authority. Deane writes, "however seriously disposed the Ministry are to fix such a Court on the Colonies, it is the Wildest and most impracticable of all their schemes, and at best will only Shew Us To what Lengths they would willingly go, had they the power to give force to their projects."⁹

The Connecticut General Court agreed, having issued "A Day of Humiliation and Prayer" upon the first news of the Intolerable Acts.¹⁰ At a May 23, 1774 session, Connecticut Assemblymen voted for an intercolonial meeting to "assert and defend the liberties of British American and...cooperate with our sister towns in this and other colonies in any constitutional measures thought conducive to the preservation of our invaluable rights and privileges."¹¹ Concern and anger was fomenting in Connecticut as citizens of all ranks saw their rights as Englishmen being disregarded. While Sherman privately believed that these excesses went too far for reconciliation, he and his fellow officials sought to attempt a show of force against Britain

⁸ William R. Leslie, "The Gaspee Affair: A Study of Its Constitutional Significance," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 39, no. 2 (1952): 246. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1892182>.

⁹ Collier, *Roger Sherman's Connecticut*, 87,

¹⁰ Boardman, *Signer and Statesman*, 113.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

by means of an American unified front. The Connecticut government would soon get its wish for intercolonial protest in the Continental Congress.

The First Continental Congress (September 5 to October 26, 1774)

Sherman was not supposed to serve in the Continental Congress. Eliphalet Dyer, William Samuel Johnson, Erastus Wolcott, Silas Deane, and Richard Law were all chosen to go to Philadelphia. However, Wolcott, Johnson, and Law all declined stating health reasons or prior commitments.¹² Sherman and Joseph Trumbull were elected substitutes, and Sherman, Deane, and Dyer ended up going to the convention.¹³ This gathering that was designed to address grievances from the Intolerable Acts, respond to the Suffolk Resolves, and reconcile with the mother country, would soon turn into deliberations for independence.

Sherman was a man of high esteem, yet he also would make some enemies in Congress. In his proposed land of liberty, some dissension within the state was inevitable, with some of Sherman's personal friends and colleagues having mixed or negative feelings towards the cause. William Samuel Johnson, Sherman's friend and mentor in the law as well as agent to London, declined an offer to go to the Continental Congress stating "previous engagements." This, notes historian Christopher Collier, was "a barefaced lie designed to cover his lack of sympathy for the cause."¹⁴ Johnson wrote Richard Jackson (lawyer and politician in the British House of Commons) that he thought it ill-advised to make one colonial Assembly, with negligible "legality or expediency."¹⁵ Silas Deane also corresponded to Johnson writing that a meeting

¹² Boutell, *Life of Roger Sherman*, 82. Sherman's mentor, William Samuel Johnson, avoided attendance claiming other obligations but his loyalist position was well known.

¹³ "Significant Events in Connecticut History," Office of the House Clerk: Connecticut General Assembly. <https://www.cga.ct.gov/hco/histimeline.asp#:~:text=Silas%20Deane%2C%20Eliphalet%20Dyer%2C%20and,Connecticut%20at%20First%20Continental%20Congress.&text=Samuel%20Huntington%2C%20Roger%20Sherman%2C%20William,Jonathan%20Trumbull%20support%20the%20Declaration.>

¹⁴ Collier, *Roger Sherman's Connecticut*, 89.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

deciding the Continental delegates was most curious and characterized others there (but not himself) as “schemers” who might seek to undermine the Connecticut government through their nominations.¹⁶ Silas Deane was one of those against Sherman’s nomination. Several others stated that Sherman was too useful as Superior Court Judge to go, but in John Adams’ diaries, he writes that Deane slyly maneuvered his own nomination under the guise of not implicating members of the Connecticut legislature in treasonous activity.¹⁷

Eliphalet Dyer differed from Sherman in both attitude and approach in the cause of American rights. Dyer’s wild and unreserved zeal for Connecticut’s affairs undermined some of his advocacy for independence. Madison described him as one with noble traits, well-traveled and well-read, but otherwise “not of very sound principle.”¹⁸ Dyer was an adamant defender of Connecticut’s claims to the Susquehanna/Wyoming territory and did not make many friends on this front. Adams said of Dyer that he was “longwinded...obscure and cloudy, very talkative, and tedious yet an honest, worthy man, means and judges well.”¹⁹ Diverging demeanors notwithstanding, Sherman still had more in common with Dyer than with Silas Deane.

Sherman held no family name, no formal education, and no sense of high society. For Sherman, heading to Philadelphia was his first time traveling beyond New York.²⁰ Silas Deane wrote frequently to his wife of Sherman’s inadequacies in the social sphere. Deane was a foil to

¹⁶ Ibid., 90.

¹⁷ Ibid.; Rommel, *Yankee Patriot*, 21. Adams also visited Sherman’s New Haven home before the Connecticut representatives made their way to Philadelphia. Adams recorded in his journals, astonished at Sherman’s simply, yet radical statements: “He said he read Mr. Otis’ Rights &c. [Mass. Representative James Otis wrote intellectual defenses of American Independence and decried British tyranny] in 1764, and thought he had conceded away the rights of America. He thought the reverse of the declaratory act was true, namely that the Parliament of Great Britain had authority to make laws for America in no case whatever. He would have been very willing that Massachusetts should have rescinded that part of their Circular Letter where they allow Parliament to be the Supreme Legislative over the colonies in any case.”

¹⁸ Ibid., 91

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Boardman, *Signer and Statesman*, 118.

Sherman; the well-to-do colonial aristocrat and Yale graduate was contrary to Sherman in everything except location. Deane's letters reveal an oft-exasperated reaction to Sherman's unpretentious nature, as Deane noted that Sherman's odd speaking habits and his "New England cant" made people look strangely and even swear. When Sherman delayed their travels so that the delegates would not be riding to Philadelphia on the Sabbath, Deane fumed to his wife that Sherman delayed them and kept him awake at night with snoring.²¹ If one needs more evidence that sometimes the effectiveness of government runs down to interpersonal squabbles and a snoring roommate, one need look no further than the Deane-Sherman dichotomy.

Sherman experienced a decent amount of vitriol regarding his humble background from others at the Convention as well. For instance, William Goddard of Baltimore wrote that "When a man, who is only fit to 'patch a shoe,' attempts to 'patch the state' if he 'fancies himself a Solon or Lucurgus... he cannot fail to meet with contempt."²²

In contrast, fans of Sherman, like John Adams noted his common sense and single-minded devotion to Independence. Adams recalled Sherman as "one of the most sensible men in the world" and "one of the strongest pillars of the Revolution."²³ Benjamin Rush also wrote that Sherman "was so regular in business and so democratic in his principles that he was called by one of his friends 'a Republican machine.'²⁴ As this 'Republican machine,' Sherman wrote and spoke frequently for the rights of the colonies, and later states.

Though Adams noted Sherman's ineloquence and awkward manner, he was one of Sherman's biggest allies and proponents.²⁵ Adams recorded a speech of Sherman in his diary on

²¹ Collier, *Roger Sherman's Connecticut*, 93.

²² *Ibid.*, 92.

²³ *Ibid.*, 93. This is perhaps a note on Sherman's large stature diplomatically and physically.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 94.

²⁵ Boardman, *Signer and Statesman*, 123. Adams wrote: "Sherman's air is the reverse of grace; there cannot be a more striking contrast to beautiful action, than the motions of his hands; generally he stands upright, with his hands before him, the fingers of his left hand clenched into a fist, and the wrist of it grasped with his right. But he

September 8, 1774, in which Sherman lays out another legal claim supporting government by consent of the governed: “Mr. Sherman: The ministry contend that the Colonies are only like corporations in England, and therefore subordinate to the legislature... The Colonies not bound to the King or Crown by the act of settlement, but by their consent to it. There is no other legislative over the Colonies but their respective assemblies.” Sherman concluded: “The Colonies adopt the common law, not as the common law, but as the highest reason.”²⁶ This succinct phrase encapsulated the literature Sherman absorbed throughout his personal studies as well as the growing intercolonial unity, but beyond this sentiment there were varying visions of what came next.

Connecticut representatives, like the assembly at large, had divisions; Sherman and Dyer tended to vote along with the radicals while Deane tended to vote with conservatives.²⁷ Historians struggle to place Sherman within the radical or moderate camp, most likely because he was first and foremost a pragmatist. Sherman was radical in the means of independence, and he cemented his position amongst the revolutionaries by driving home his belief that the colonies may be loyal to the King but not a Parliament usurping the colonies’ customary rights as free-born Englishmen.²⁸

Another man aligned with the radicals and a good friend of Sherman’s was Patrick Henry. Upon Henry asking him why Connecticut citizens were “more zealous in the cause of liberty than the people of other states,” Sherman answered, “Because we have more to lose than

has a clear head and sound judgement; but when he moves a hand in anything like action, Hogarth’s genius could not have invented a motion more opposite to grace; --it is stiffness and awkwardness itself, rigid as starched linen or buckram; awkward as a junior bachelor or a sophomore.”

²⁶ Boutell, *Life of Roger Sherman*, 29.

²⁷ Collier, *Roger Sherman’s Connecticut*, 95. Conservatives in unofficial bargaining spoke of making Deane their choice for potential Congressional secretary.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 96

any of them.”²⁹ By this, Sherman was referring to their Charter. In 1662, Charles II issued Connecticut their charter which allowed them to elect their own local leaders and create laws. The liberal language of the charter even ensured to Connecticut’s citizens “all liberties and immunities” of the realm of England.³⁰ Additionally, it granted sea-to-sea land rights to the colony, perhaps to punish Massachusetts or announce the symbolic authority of coast-to-coast claims to other European powers.³¹ Another grievance Charles II worked out through the charter was having Connecticut incorporate the formerly independent New Haven Colony (another possible revenge as several judges who sentenced his father to death were given refuge in New Haven).³² After Charles’ death, however, James II took the throne and sought to remove the Charter to gain more control over the virtually autonomous colony. Legend has it that James II sent Sir Edmond Andros in 1687 to revoke the Charter, but when Andros arrived and was in heated deliberations with colonial leaders, all the room’s candles went out and the Charter was whisked away and hidden in a white oak tree. This legend is celebrated in Connecticut even today and the Charter is still revered.³³ Sherman’s concern for Connecticut’s liberties, specifically those generously enacted via their Charter, was the fortress of security he would risk his life to defend. It was also a grassroots concern among most of the Connecticut governance as well.

²⁹ Collier, *All Politics Is Local*, 11.

³⁰ “Charter of Connecticut – 1662,” Yale Law School: Lillian Goldman Law Library, Avalon Project, https://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th_century/ct03.asp.

³¹ Boardman, *Signer and Statesman*, 160.

³² Dave Pelland, “Judges Cave, New Haven,” December 18, 2012, <http://ctmonuments.net/2012/12/>. Three Judges Cave: Three judges by the names of Dixwell, Whalley, and Goffe hid in a rock formation now known as “Three Judges Cave” and were later given shelter by Reverend Davenport. The trail to the cave is called “Rigicides Trail,” and each judge also has a street named after them in New Haven. Perhaps this can be seen as another indicator of Connecticut fostering independence sentiment early on.

³³ William S. Walsh, *A Handy Book of Curious Information* (Philadelphia: J.P. Lippincott, 1912), 195-196. Mark Twain published a humorous speech about Connecticut’s “local patriotism and chief object of self-congratulation,” writing that one Hartford man told him that just about everything was made from the Charter oak, and even the man’s son was named after the Charter Oak.

Thus, to Roger Sherman (who denied the legislative authority of Parliament already), defining the rights of Americans was his priority at the Continental Congress.³⁴ Patrick Henry similarly agreed that the Congress should forge ahead in creating a new government. To others, this was simply a meeting to gather more support to pressure Parliament to rescind the recent unreasonable acts. Convinced that America and Britain were beyond reconciliation, Sherman and like-minded individuals still signed documents petitioning the crown for the practical sake of consensus and internal unity. Thus, the main significance of the Continental Congress was organizing an official intercolonial agreement against the British.

The Congress created the Association of 1774, also known as the Continental Association. Its first proposition promoted the boycott of all British goods, establishing Committees of Correspondence/Councils of Safety to enact these changes.³⁵ Sherman supported non-consumption as well as total non-exportation at Philadelphia.³⁶ The second provision of the Association was designed to enact the phasing out of slavery in America, something New England Puritan abolitionist, Sherman supported full-heartedly and would speak of more later at the Constitutional Convention. The Association was the first major founding document that Sherman signed.

Sherman also signed and was on the committee to create Congress' "Declaration of Rights," or "Declarations & Resolves," sent to the King decrying the Intolerable Acts from Parliament without colonial consent.³⁷ Finally, Sherman also signed the Congressional Petition

³⁴ Evarts Boutell Greene, *The Foundations of American Nationality* (American Book Company & Universal Digital Library (Archive.com), 1922), 434.

³⁵ "1773 to 1774: Documents from the Continental Congress and the Constitutional Convention, 1774 to 1789," Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/collections/continental-congress-and-constitutional-convention-from-1774-to-1789/articles-and-essays/timeline/1773-to-1774/>.

³⁶ *Journals of the Continental Congress*, II, 473.

³⁷ Rommel, *Yankee Patriot*, 22. Dyer and Sherman served on the Declaration of Rights committee. One of Sherman's biggest claims to fame is signing the Association, Declaration, Articles, and Constitution, but as further evidence here will suggest, he signed many more very important documents.

to the King, beseeching the King to address their grievances, and explaining that these issues warrant Royal attention because God has not called George III nor his populace to be slaves.³⁸ Adding to his legacy of being ahead of the curve, not only had Sherman stated that Parliament had “authority to make laws for America in no case whatsoever,” but Sherman also supported immediate organization and armament of the militia.³⁹

Thus, Sherman was nominated to serve on the Committee of Safety in the First Continental Congress, which he remained on throughout the war.⁴⁰ In Connecticut, the Committee of Safety became the Governor’s military advisory council. Connecticut stood apart from the other colonies as the only one to retain its government, featuring Jonathan Trumbull (the only colonial rebel Governor) as its executive. The committee strictly monitored the purchase of luxury goods such as stockings, shoes, rum, sugar, and molasses. Beginning in 1777, Connecticut civilians had to have express permission from the Council for these goods.⁴¹ The militia needed immediate supply and support, so the Committee stepped in for the legislative and, out of necessity, also managed recruitment. In fact, Connecticut retained its Council longer

³⁸ “The Petition of the Grand American Continental Congress, to the King’s Most Excellent Majesty,” Massachusetts Historical Society, https://www.masshist.org/database/viewer.php?item_id=663&pid=2. Here one can see the call to both God & King calling on their Divinely given rights and the duty therefore of the King to guard them: “...Had our Creator been pleased to give us existence in a land of slavery, the sense of our condition might have been mitigated by ignorance and habit. But, thanks be to his adorable goodness, we were born the heirs of freedom, and ever enjoyed our right under the auspices of your Royal ancestors, whose family was seated on the *British* Throne to rescue and secure a pious and gallant Nation from the Popery and despotism of a superstitious and inexorable tyrant. Your Majesty, we are confident, justly rejoices that your title to the Crown is thus founded on the title of your people to liberty; and, therefore, we doubt not but your royal wisdom must approve the sensibility that teaches your subjects anxiously to guard the blessing they received from Divine Providence, and thereby to prove the performance of that compact which elevated the illustrious House of *Brunswick* to the imperial dignity it now possesses... The apprehension of being degraded into a state of servitude, from the pre-eminent rank of *English* freemen, while our minds retain the strongest love of liberty, and clearly foresee the miseries preparing for us and our posterity, excites emotions in our breasts which, though we cannot describe, we should not wish to conceal. Feeling as men, and thinking as subjects, in the manner we do, silence would be disloyalty. By giving this faithful information, we do all in our power to promote the great objects of your Royal cares, the tranquillity of your Government, and the welfare of your people...”

³⁹ Collier, *Roger Sherman’s Connecticut*, 97; *Journals of the Continental Congress*, II, 473.

⁴⁰ Collier, *Roger Sherman’s Connecticut*, 88.

⁴¹ Agnes Hunt, *The Provincial Committees of Safety of the American Revolution* (Cleveland, OH: Western Reserve University, 1904), Chapter V.

than any other state besides New Hampshire. With the British still positioned in New York after Cornwallis' surrender, Connecticut's defense needed to secure the south and west frontier of their state.⁴² This experience on the Council of Safety (and his continued service on the Council throughout his service in Congress), allowed for Sherman to specialize in the logistics of war supply.

The First Continental Congress agreed at the close of its session that the boycotts would begin on December 1, 1774 and that it would meet again on May 10, 1775. The next meeting of Congress followed the bloodshed at Lexington & Concord, and more representatives were willing to discuss American independence.

The Second Continental Congress (May 10, 1775 to March 1, 1781)

News of patriot bloodshed at nearby Lexington and Concord led to heated debate among the New Haven members of the Town Meeting. This area of intense, even violent, patriotic fervor also had a significant conservative faction. Roger Sherman was elected moderator of the meeting by one vote, and it was all he could do to edge out the conservatives who advocated for neutrality and avoiding sending any men to Massachusetts' aid.⁴³ On the exact flipside of that view was the hotblooded young Captain of the local militia, Benedict Arnold who marched to aid Massachusetts with fifty men, threatening to blow down the door of the powder house until they got supply and ammunition.⁴⁴

One major advantage to the patriot side in the colony of Connecticut was their governor. Governor Trumbull was the only colonial governor to be a patriot and thus, as previously stated, the only government of the colonies that remained throughout the Revolution. In April 1775,

⁴² Ibid. Connecticut kept her Council until October 28, 1783.

⁴³ Boardman, *Signer and Statesman*, 127.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

shortly after the news of the “shot heard round the world,” Sherman wrote and introduced a Resolution to have William Samuel Johnson and Erastus Wolcott deliver and wait for a reply from General Gage to Governor Trumbull’s letter. Trumbull’s letter asked Gage to “be so good as to explain” the recent events, practically demanding either a confession or a clear defense of their actions at Lexington and Concord.⁴⁵

With news of military action stirring back home, Deane, Dyer, and Roger Sherman went back to Philadelphia for the agreed-upon date, May 10, 1775. They largely represented the radicals, who gained more traction after the failure of the Olive Branch Petition. John Dickinson and his likeminded associates’ efforts of reconciliation via the Olive Branch Petition to the King was futile when met with George III’s Royal Proclamation deeming all the delegates present guilty of treason.⁴⁶ However, Americans’ shock has to be buffered by the fact that right after the Olive Branch petition’s creation at this meeting, there were simultaneous arrangements to prepare for armed conflict. This “end to all hope of reconciliation” was also preempted by the Continental Congress selecting the commander of the Continental Army.

The matter of selecting the General was a tricky business as Sherman’s home state had produced many veteran officers in the French and Indian War. Sherman’s personal friend, General Wooster was unfortunate in being the only man of the Connecticut militia leadership and veteran experience to receive a national demotion compared to his state position. In the Connecticut army, Wooster was a Major General but the Congress offered him a position in the Continental Army lower than his state status while Israel Putnam and Joseph Spencer both

⁴⁵ Ibid., 128.

⁴⁶ “Primary Document: ‘By the King, A Proclamation, For Suppressing Rebellion and Sedition’ (1775),” EncyclopediaVirginia, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/by-the-king-a-proclamation-for-suppressing-rebellion-and-sedition-1775/>.

received promotions to national Brigadier Generalships.⁴⁷ Sherman tried to console his friend writing that he wanted to promote him and advocated for him, but apologized that he could not get him the comparable rank.⁴⁸ Wooster, inconsolable on this issue, wrote to Sherman: “your friendship I never doubted, and this fresh instance I shall ever gratefully remember.”⁴⁹ He added his commission from Washington to Sherman’s letter, asking for him to kindly hand it back to the Senate.

Sherman’s loyalty to his fellow Connecticut men was strong, but after pitching his case, Sherman tried to keep the peace with the Generalship. Sherman dejectedly reported to Governor Trumbull, “Connecticut has more general officers than in proportion to the number of troops furnished by that State...”⁵⁰ However he may have warned against a Virginian leading New Englanders, Sherman personally liked Washington and voted for his unanimous approval once it seemed unlikely any Connecticut man would get the position. Washington and Sherman highly respected each other and would work together throughout the war, though they clashed on several issues. Sherman expressed a common opinion of the time when he stated “Enlistment for a long period is a state of slavery.”⁵¹ His opinion on efficiency in the army and the federal limit of paying officers’ pensions for life (as Washington would promise) would also become issues of contention. Sherman believed that the army possessed a great power that should be localized for

⁴⁷ Boardman, *Signer and Statesman*, 133.

⁴⁸ Paul Locher, "Gen. David Wooster: A Largely Forgotten Hero Of The Revolution," *Wooster (Ohio) Daily Record*, September 22, 2006. Wooster was very slighted and thanked Sherman for his loyalty. Wooster would go on to fight and die in the Battle of Ridgefield, CT in which his dying words were "I am dying, but with a strong hope and persuasion that my country will gain her independence."

⁴⁹ “Roger Sherman to David Wooster, Philadelphia, June 23, 1775” and “David Wooster to Roger Sherman, Camp near New York, July 7, 1775” in Boutell, *Life of Roger Sherman*, 86-89. Wooster also noted he was the only one from his state to receive a demotion from the Congress, and he decided to serve for Connecticut’s militia, dying at the Battle of Ridgefield, Connecticut in 1777. Dyer had favored Spencer and Deane pushed for Putnam (also noting his hopes that his stepson would be Putnam’s aide-de-camp).

⁵⁰ “Roger Sherman to Governor Trumbull,” in Collier, *Roger Sherman’s Connecticut*, 114.

⁵¹ Rommel, *Yankee Patriot*, 25.

efficiency and out of loyalty to his fellow New Englanders. Knowing his home well, he knew that no Connecticut native son would take kindly to orders shouted by a Southerner. None of these grievances between Sherman and the army's top men would halt his approval and leadership in a plethora of committees throughout the war.

Committees

As already stated, in addition to being the only founder to sign all four major founding documents (the Articles of Association, Declaration of Independence, Articles of Confederation, and the Constitution), Sherman was also the only member of Congress to serve on the three Boards of the Declaration, the Articles of Confederation, and the Board of War.⁵² He served in the Continental Congress from 1775-1781 and was then appointed the same year to fill in for a fellow Connecticut representative who died in office. This led Sherman to be in office in the Congress almost continuously from 1774 to his death in 1793.⁵³ Adams even recorded how the Congress was “continually changing until very few Faces remain that I saw in the first Congress” save for Sam Adams, Roger Sherman, Richard Henry Lee, Samuel Chase, and William Paca. “The rest are dead, resigned, deserted or cut up into Governors” and other state positions at home.⁵⁴

Indeed, Sherman was the only man out of the first three Connecticut representatives sent back to Congress. Dyer and Deane were replaced by Oliver Wolcott and Samuel Huntington (who were later replaced by Titus Hosmer and William Williams, again leaving Sherman as the sole remaining representative).⁵⁵ By personal conviction Sherman acquired a large amount of

⁵² Gregg Mangan, “Roger Sherman, Revolutionary and Dedicated Public Servant,” ConnecticutHistory.org, October 10, 2020, <https://connecticuthistory.org/roger-sherman-revolutionary-and-dedicated-public-servant/>.

⁵³ Rommel, *Yankee Patriot*, 28. In his nine years in Congress, Sherman served at least 1,543 days. Only four other men held such an attendance record: Sam Adams, Thomas McKean (PA & DE) Francis Dana (MA), and Theodorick Bland (NY).

⁵⁴ “Warren-Adams Letters,” I, 293 in Boardman, *Signer and Statesman*, 166.

⁵⁵ Boardman, *Signer and Statesman*, 142-143.

support for the war effort on a visit home to New Haven. He proposed raising and equipping a body of minutemen for Connecticut defense and punishing traitors in the fall and on another visit home, acquired \$100,000 from the legislature in Philadelphia and rode it home himself to direct towards paying Connecticut troops.⁵⁶ While an American patriot and later federalist, Sherman always remained a Connecticut man through and through and utilized his skills in economics and logistics for the state and nation's welfare.

Declaring Independence

Following George III's rejection of Congress' offers for peace and the bloodshed at Lexington and Concord, more and more men came to support Richard Henry Lee's sentiment that the colonies "are, and of right out to be, free and independent states."⁵⁷ Four days later, on June 11, 1776, Sherman was appointed to the Committee of 5 with the task of drafting the Declaration of Independence. Though not the primary drafter, Sherman helped form the document and he facilitated the Declaration's quick approval in Congress. No records of the deliberations of Congress exist, let alone those of the Committee of 5, but Sherman's role involved full-fledged support and the pragmatic understanding that the document needed to be written and written fast. Livingston approved of the Declaration but, true to his state of New York, was very cautious and questioned if the timing was right to move ahead in total separation.⁵⁸ Debates on the document were not published, but there is little reason to doubt that Sherman supported the document in the deliberations.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 143.

⁵⁷ "Lee Resolution, June 7, 1776," National Archives, <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/lee-resolution>.

⁵⁸ Boardman, *Signer and Statesman*, 146.

Articles of Confederation

On June 12, 1776, the day after his appointment to the Committee of Five, Sherman was appointed to a Committee of Thirteen (one delegate per state), charged with the task of drafting the Articles of Confederation.⁵⁹ John Dickinson wrote the first major draft. Again, few records of deliberations on the Articles exist but letters of committee delegates indicate that much debate occurred in committee, prolonging the passage of the Articles.

After debate and significant editing, the Articles were printed on August 20, 1776, but were not addressed in Congress until April 8, 1777.⁶⁰ Most of the debate on the Articles centered around giving too much power to the national government, with Americans fearing a new oppressor after escaping from British rule. Sherman believed simultaneously in the sovereignty of his state and the necessity of a national government with limited powers to keep the union together. Dickinson proposed and passed the one-state-one-vote policy, but it was here that Sherman first proposed his later famous “Connecticut Compromise.” Adams recorded that Sherman

Thinks we ought not to vote according to numbers. We are representatives of States, not individuals...The consent of every one is necessary. Three Colonies would govern the whole, but would not have a majority of strength to carry those votes into execution. The vote should be taken two ways: call the Colonies, and call the individuals, and have a majority of both.⁶¹

When Connecticut-born Pelatiah Webster published scathing attacks on the Articles in his pamphlet, “A Dissertation on the Political Union and Constitution of the Thirteen United States, of North-America,” Sherman yet again took to the pen in a pseudonymed-battle of words.

⁵⁹ Donald Applestein, Esq, “The Road to Union: America’s Forgotten First Constitution,” May 14, 2014, National Constitution Center, <https://www.sesp.northwestern.edu/msed/files/pdfs/theory-practice/National%20Constitution%20Center%20Blog.pdf>.

⁶⁰ Hall, *Sherman and the Creation of the American Republic*, 72.

⁶¹ John Adams, *The Works of John Adams*, ed. Charles Francis Adams, II: Diary (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1856), 499. August 1, 1776.

Webster, using the pen name “A Citizen of Philadelphia” combatted with Sherman, “A Connecticut Farmer” to debate the validity of the new constitution. Webster argued that a bicameral legislature was necessary and that the national government as it was currently would be a disastrous failure without sufficient power.⁶² Sherman countered that if the simplest legal code, that of the ten commandments, was ordained by God, then the limited scope of the Articles would suit the “true spirit and genius of republican government” for the United States.⁶³ He also expanded on the importance of protecting states’ “sovereignty, freedom, and independence,” which would be easier to achieve through a government in which citizens could “carefully and rigorously instruct their representatives to pay the strictest regard to the articles of our federal union.”⁶⁴ Sherman protested Webster’s criticisms as leading directly to “an ABSOLUTE MONARCHY [sic],” still, over time, Sherman would come to agree with some of Webster’s points by 1787 in the Constitutional Convention.⁶⁵

Logistics: The Currency of War

In another pivotal appointment of June 1776, Sherman joined the Board of War and Ordinance. Sherman dealt with many issues of supply, visiting the front and conferring with generals on numerous occasions.⁶⁶ He was appointed to a plethora of committees, another sign of his compatriots’ high regard and the trust they placed in him. One of these additional appointments was to the Board of Treasury.⁶⁷ Through his work on these boards (Treasury and War & Ordinance), he managed to save Congress money, investigating reports of fraud, and

⁶² Hall, *Sherman and the Creation of the American Republic*, 74.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁶⁴ Roger Sherman as ‘A Connecticut Farmer,’ “Remarks on a Pamphlet Entitled ‘A Dissertation on the Political Union and Constitution of the Thirteen United States of North American by a Citizen of Philadelphia,’” (New Haven: T.S. Green), 1784 in Hall, *Sherman and the Creation of the American Republic*, 75.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ Boardman, *Signer and Statesman*, 166.

⁶⁷ See Appendix A for a full list of all of Sherman’s Congressional Committees.

looking into unnecessary expenditures. Loosely speaking, this oversight committee was something akin to a Quality Control manager today. When dealing with matters of supply, Sherman surprised his coworkers with his knowledge about shoes, noting in his humble manner, “Why I was formerly a shoemaker myself,” and thus saving money for the country and attaining quality goods for the men with his expertise.⁶⁸

It is recorded that Sherman “rose at 5:00am, worked in committee from 7 to 10am, then took to Congressional sessions from 10am to 4pm, and then in committee again until 10pm.”⁶⁹ His close friends noted that this arduous work took eight years off his life.⁷⁰ Perhaps it was this schedule that led Sherman to write Governor Trumbull while seriously ill for a period, “My constitution will not admit of so close an application to business much longer, as I have been confined to for four months past.”⁷¹

Despite this plea, Sherman recovered and continued his service with occasional visits back to Connecticut (where he still served in the General Assembly). In 1778, he was assigned to specific committees as part of the Board of War to reform and organize the army. He served in a variety of roles to record rules and regulations, meet with Generals and soldiers, and assign proper promotions or demotions when needed. Many of these issues intertwined with financial concerns, as Sherman and his colleagues Oliver Wolcott and Samuel Huntington became involved in soldier pay.

⁶⁸ Boardman, *Signer and Statesman*, 167.

⁶⁹ Richard J. Werther, “Roger Sherman: The Only Man Who Signed All Four Founding Documents,” *Journal of the American Revolution*, September 28, 2017, <https://allthingsliberty.com/2017/09/roger-sherman-man-signed-four-founding-documents/>; Rommel, *Yankee Patriot*, 2.

⁷⁰ Roger Sherman Baldwin, “Roger Sherman” in *Founders and Leaders of Connecticut 1633-1783*, ed. Charles E. Perry (Boston: D.C. Heath and Company, 1934), 248.

⁷¹ “Roger Sherman to Governor Trumbull, Philadelphia to New Haven, October 1776,” in Boardman, *Signer and Statesman*, 169.

They held an unpopular but eventually correct view as they wrote to Governor Trumbull opposing lifetime half pay for soldiers and their widows. The practical men from Connecticut understood the emotional appeal this brought to many soldiers and the motivations of Generals to offer this incentive to their fledging forces, but they debated down the compensation to seven years, believing that lifetime half pay would so increase inflation that the money would be “dangerous as well as futile.”⁷² Congress set up pay for life offers again in 1780 but by 1783, realizing the unfeasible nature of the task, commuted the pay to full pay for five years.⁷³ While seemingly unfeeling to the many soldiers who counted on more pay to support their families, the efficiency and credibility of Sherman did have cracks in the shape of his closest friends.

Sherman’s loyalty to his friends cost him political standing at times. For instance, General Gates once called on Sherman to be able to speak to Congress, and Sherman believed and stated the reason to be for conveying “Intelligence of Importance.” This turned into Gates decrying in a very casual and upset tone how he “was in a disgraceful Manner superseded in Command.” It was moved and seconded that Congress dismiss Gates but Sherman spoke in favor of Gates. Though barred from appearing before Congress again, Gates (by the work of Sherman and his “Eastern friends”) were able to have him reinstated, after which Gates led his forces in the battles of Saratoga to victory.⁷⁴ Sherman celebrated his friend writing, “Your reappointment to the chief command in the Northern States gives great pleasure to the Friends of American Freedom in this part of the Country, I congratulate you on the success of our people in that

⁷² “Sherman, Wolcott, Huntington to Governor Trumbull from York, May 18, 1778,” *Mass. Hist. Soc. Colls.*, 7 ser. II 231, Burnett, III, 293. Boardman, *Signer and Statesman*, 174.

⁷³ *Journals of Congress*, XI, 502-503; *Ibid.*, XCIII, 960; *Ibid.*, XXIV, 207-208; Boardman, *Signer and Statesman*, 175.

⁷⁴ Boardman, *Signer and Statesman*, 177. New York representatives among others noted Sherman’s foolhardy acceptance of men of low standing to speak before the esteemed delegates to Congress.

Engagement, and at Fort Stanwix.”⁷⁵ This victory aside, Sherman’s boundless praise for Gates surely was not as efficient or objective as his examination of supply and training logistics.

Sherman’s loyalties also lay with his own children, three of whom were serving in the army. His son Isaac had the most notable record. After graduating from Yale in 1770, he worked in Massachusetts looking for business opportunities but with the war, decided to enlist. He wrote his father, “The goodness of the cause a desire of being an useful Member of society and of serving my Country—a thirst for Glory, real glory, were the grand incentives. I hope by the assistance of the Deity I shall be enabled to serve every useful End, never to reflect dishonor upon the Family or myself.”⁷⁶ Isaac had a similar eye for efficiency as his father and made a petition to the Connecticut legislature for leather caps over the flimsy hats the militia was given. His service in New York, Trenton, Princeton, Monmouth, and Stony Point led to Washington and Mad Anthony Wayne’s successful recommendations for Isaac’s promotion, and he left the war a Lieutenant Colonel.⁷⁷

Roger’s sons John and William also were in the army as paymasters, but Roger had to bail them out of trouble on a few occasions. John had trouble settling his accounts with the government, most likely due to unintentional miscalculations and William was court-martialed for helping a civilian acquire a smallpox inoculation that was meant for the troops. Roger Sherman wrote to General Gates appealing to him on behalf of his son that the mistake was unintentional and affirming William’s sound record in Canada as a Volunteer and in the present

⁷⁵ “Sherman to Gates, Aug. 20, 1777, Hartford, CT” in Boardman, *Signer and Statesman*, 177.

⁷⁶ “Roger Sherman, Brookline Fort at Sewalls Point, Sept. 8, 1775” in Boardman, *Signer and Statesman*, 136-137.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 138.

position. He must have been successful as William was reinstated and the only other record present is a form noting William had offered to resign.⁷⁸

Though well liked and praised by many a representative, Sherman did have some tense relations with Generals and colleagues. General Schuyler, angered at Sherman's monitoring on the Board of War wrote that "General Sherman" took plenty of initiative for having never fought in battle, and Schuyler was angered at what he deemed an impractical system, removing many officers from their ranks. Schuyler speaks both to Sherman's attention to detail and the stress of the army's leadership, writing that the "thousand little propositions which Roger has thrown together and...entitles a system" did nothing but harass Washington. Sherman, an efficiency-driven man, sought to balance both payroll logistics with smooth-running operations, and he attacked these issues through painstakingly detailed notes. To Schuyler, this came across as the man in the high tower instructing laborers on how to do their work. Sherman also had a bone to pick with Schuyler, who denied his son William's regiment pay, and Sherman had to petition Schuyler on the legitimacy of the regiment's formation.⁷⁹ This conflict of interest most likely led Sherman to examine Schuyler's funding all the more closely.

Within this management of the Board of War, a financial crisis was rising in the nation. Sherman had long raised awareness about the dangers of depreciation (publicly since his pamphlet "A Caveat Against Injustice in 1752). Sherman argued for financial grounding for more than just his own business this time. In Congress, he had repeatedly urged Congress to address the growing debt and strive to become financially secure. He argued that foreign trade needed to be second to a foreign treaty which would protect their shipping.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ *Journals of Congress*, July 16, 1779, in *ibid.*, 182.

⁷⁹ "Roger Sherman to Philip Schuyler, November 18, 1776" in *ibid.*, 179-180. William joined Colonel Seth Warner's regiment.

⁸⁰ Adams, *Works*, II, 485-486.

He stood against fiat money (that not backed by gold or silver) and repeatedly sought to propose plans to decrease the debt and depreciated currency. One of his first actions was immense support for the Treasury Department, which he was then appointed to every year of his service.⁸¹ The situation was so dire that \$40 Continental Currency became equivalent to \$1 of silver. By 1780, the rest of Congress caught up to Sherman's judgment and agreed that they needed to do something more than print money to lessen the blows of depreciation.

Like Sherman's writings in "Caveat" other founders noted the moral dilemmas bred from economic turmoil. Washington wrote that depreciation bred idleness, envy, and unjust business.⁸² Presbyterian minister and New Jersey representative, John Witherspoon bemoaned conditions in which creditors fled from their debtors: the latter of whom were more than quick to pay back their loans in the depreciated bills.⁸³ Sherman agreed with the moral ills, concerned for those creditors who were cheated out of full payment and the threat to the national survival, and he again took to the pen to advocate taxation over printing.

Sherman affirmed taxation was the best and most likely only measure to combat this moral ill. He wrote that "if something is not immediately done, the currency will be worth nothing; but it may be easily supported by sinking the Bills of the particular States, and taxing high and often to defray the expenses of the War."⁸⁴ To Samuel Adams, Sherman declared the idea of taxing during the war and timing these measures to start America on the right footing

⁸¹ Boardman, *Signer and Statesman*, 85.

⁸² "Letter to B. Harrison, Philadelphia, Dec 30, 1778" in *Washington's Writings*, ed. Jared Sparks, VI, (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1855), 151.

⁸³ John Witherspoon, *The Works of the Rev. John Witherspoon*, IX, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1973), 36. Like Jonathan Edwards, Witherspoon was another influential theologian in the public eye who served as President of Princeton (then, the College of New Jersey). Like Sherman, Witherspoon feared an Episcopacy being appointed over American church affairs. He was the only college president and clergyman to sign the Declaration of Independence. He also served as Chaplain of the Continental Congress upon appointment by John Hancock.

⁸⁴ "Roger Sherman to William Williams, August 18, 1777" in Boutell, *Life of Roger Sherman*, 104.

rather than be indebted to other countries as well. Sherman noted that people were willing to sacrifice more during the war.⁸⁵

Sherman shortly summarized his plan to Benjamin Trumbull on multiple occasions writing that: "I think a reasonable time ought to be fixed for sinking all the outstanding bills, and sufficient funds by annual taxes provided for bringing them in. That would fix their credit..." He planned to first allow people to obtain the bills at a cheap rate to pay their taxes until the Bills could gradually be "restored to their original value."⁸⁶ He restated "I know of no practicable method...but calling on the States to raise their Quotas of money to defray the whole of the public expenses" (15 million every 3 months" Thus, he proposed raising about 15 million dollars every 3 months, raising taxes by each state, and then loaning on its own credit. He concludes his correspondence to Benjamin Trumbull, noting that what will be "adopted is uncertain ---but it is pretty certain it will not do to increase the paper currency much more."⁸⁷

Unfortunately, Sherman's wisdom was before his time, unpopular, and ignored (like several other issues where Sherman turned out to be correct). The United States eventually did increase taxes but delayed doing so due to the political disfavor high taxation would bring to a republic just freed from a tyrannical, taxing Parliament. Franklin received loans from France and Adams from the Dutch, and domestic creditors also loaned to the new nation. The Department of Finance (established in 1781) reported two years later that the debt from the war stood at \$43 million. War debt would not be eliminated until Andrew Jackson's Presidency.⁸⁸ Sherman's warnings and proposed plans came from a sense of duty to his fellow Americans and to his

⁸⁵ "Roger Sherman to Samuel Adams, Aug 25, 1777," *ibid.*

⁸⁶ "Roger Sherman to Benjamin Trumbull, Aug 18, 1778" in *ibid.*, 106-107.

⁸⁷ "Roger Sherman to Benjamin Trumbull, July 22, 1780," in *ibid.*, 111.

⁸⁸ "Timeline of U.S. Federal Debt Since Independence Day 1776," Debt.org, <https://www.debt.org/faqs/united-states-federal-debt-timeline/>.

constituents, seeking their welfare. Sherman would also be called on to work on behalf of other states and other peoples.

Compromiser: Land & Peoples

In 1775, Sherman dealt with the Susquehanna Company/Wyoming territory disputes in the beginning of his term in the Continental Congress. He sought to uphold Connecticut's legal and moral claim to the land in the disputed region. Sherman wrote, "It is a little extraordinary... that those who profess to be so very zealous for the public good, should use every method in their power to defeat its success." Clearly seeing this land as opportunities and homes for many of his citizens and therefore under his protection, Sherman clarified that his goals were personal but not financially motivated. He wrote, "I have no interest in the affair but in common with every freeman in the colony" and attacked those

"gentlemen, who love to monopolize wealth and power, think it best for lands to be in a few hands, and that the common people should be their tenants but it will not be easy to persuade the people of this colony, who know the value of freedom, and of enjoying fee-simple estates, that it would be best for them to give up the lands acquired for them by their ancestors, for the privilege of enjoying the same lands as tenants under the proprietaries of Pennsylvania..."⁸⁹

This issue fell by the wayside during the war, as the Congress focused on fighting their common enemy before settling interstate squabbles and territorial disputes.

Sherman's concern for the public good of Connecticut did meet a resigned acceptance of the public good for the country as Sherman pressed the matter only until a 1784 Congressional Committee deemed the lands to be rightfully Pennsylvania territory, after which he disappointedly accepted the national finding.⁹⁰ Sherman would write later on about his wishes

⁸⁹ Roger Sherman, "Response to Jared Ingersoll on the Wyoming Controversy," *Connecticut Journal*, 1775.

⁹⁰ This was the first case of a decision by arbitration of any controversy between two states of the U.S.

for peace for the Connecticut settlers living in the then-Pennsylvanian claimed territory.⁹¹

Meanwhile, others noted the case and acceptance of the verdict as a sign that the Confederation might work out after all. President John Dickinson of Pennsylvania stated that the verdict was “a test of the strength of the union, reflecting honor upon the Confederation and giving proof of its political energy.”⁹²

Sherman’s own faith in the Confederation was tested with the case, and it proved him to be a nationalist and peacekeeper. Though an ardent Connecticut supporter, Sherman’s duty-bound conscience to the general welfare proved to be an interstate ideology and obligation to serve his compatriots across state lines. Sherman, along with Oliver Ellsworth, even drew up a plan before the Declaration was signed offering New Jersey, Rhode Island, Delaware, and Maryland’s state militiamen land from Connecticut’s Western claims as incentives to join the union. However, this plan was shot down by Connecticut, who later used this land to exclusively reward her own militiamen.⁹³

Sherman would gain some enemies in another territorial dispute involving Connecticut settlers in an area soon to be known as Vermont. Indeed, it could be said that that state as well owes their founding to Roger Sherman. An area contested between New York and Connecticut, a region known by its population as “the New Hampshire grants” sprung up and its constituents sought statehood.⁹⁴ New York protested that their “Revolters” should not be given a platform

⁹¹ Sherman was still grieved by the finding’s details: The case was decided by the “Decree of Trenton” and Connecticut settlers were decidedly not citizens of the Commonwealth, could not vote, and were to give up their property claims.

⁹² “The Connecticut-Pennsylvania Territorial Dispute,” NationalArchives.org, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-06-02-0369-0001>.

⁹³ Boardman, *Signer and Statesman*, 171.

⁹⁴ “New Hampshire Land Grants,” Vermont Historical Society, <https://vermonthistory.org/explorer/vermont-stories/becoming-a-state/the-new-hampshire-grants>. The New Hampshire Grants (also known as the Benning Wentworth Grants) were land grants made between 1749 and 1764 by the colonial governor of the Province of New Hampshire, Benning Wentworth, the colonial governor of New Hampshire, made land grants of areas west of the Connecticut River, but this land was also claimed by New York.

from which to discuss their claims as if they were valid. These same representatives were shocked when “an unexpected field of debate was opened” and “some of our neighbors (R.S. in particular) discovered an earnestness and solicitude that did not belong to Judges between a State and discontented members.”⁹⁵ On June 7, 1777, a committee of New Hampshire Grant citizens banned together and made their own constitution, forming a republic known as New Connecticut for its first six months. It was largely ignored due to more pressing matters until in 1781, when the discontented settlers threatened to make a separate peace with Britain unless they received statehood. Sherman headed a committee on Vermont being added to the Confederation in August 1781. Vermont was not admitted until 1791, but their case was pled significantly and effectively by Sherman so that they were essentially autonomous in the period until Congress officially approved them as a state.⁹⁶

Sherman was sympathetic not only to the settlers as independent-minded settlers seeking a better life, but also because a large proportion of these settlers were former Connecticut citizens. This special bond also was balanced with a desire for national unity and a “speedy and amicable settlement of the controversy” for the “peace and welfare of the United States.”⁹⁷ As historian Hiland Hall writes, “Roger Sherman saw and felt that the cause of the inhabitants of Vermont was founded on the principle of justice and equity and he did not hesitate to declare it.”⁹⁸

Sherman was loyal not only to Americans but firstly to his sense of morality. A Puritan New Englander through and through, he was one of America’s first federal abolitionists, and he

⁹⁵ “James Duane to Robert R. Livingston, July 1 1777,” NY Public Library, George Bancroft transcripts of Livingston papers.

⁹⁶ Boardman, *Signer and Statesman*, 181.

⁹⁷ “Roger Sherman to Josiah Bartlett of New Hampshire from Philadelphia July 31, 1781” in *ibid.*, 180.

⁹⁸ Hiland Hall, *Early History of Vermont* (Albany, NY: J. Munsell, 1868), 253.

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=miun.aja2019.0001.001&view=1up&seq=3&skin=2021>.

argued for the abolition of slavery to be in the early founding documents. Assigned to committees on Indian Affairs, Sherman argued that justice would best be served if only national treaties could be made with Indian tribes. Thus, this would remove much of the contrary claims and disreputable Americans finding loopholes in treaties made by other states and ignoring Indian rights since the documents therefore technically did not apply to them.

Sherman also had concerns about more of his former Connecticut citizens living in an incorporated area proclaimed the State of Westmoreland (a group of Susquehanna/Wyoming Territory settlers who attempted to secede). They wrote him asking for defenses, ammunition and manpower to protect against British and Indian attacks, particularly after General Schuyler's negotiations with the local Indians failed.⁹⁹

Sherman's dedication to keeping the union together would mold and enhance his ability to compromise. He was motivated by the public welfare, underpinned by a religious responsibility to love his neighbors and to serve them by his position. His humble origins and work up the ladder in Connecticut paved the way for him to have expertise in matters of supply and compromise. Though sometimes maligned for his country mannerisms, detailed examinations, and pragmatic thinking, these also came to be some of his greatest strengths and sources of praise. He was a frontrunner of Revolutionary sentiment and holds the exclusive accomplishment in his resume of signatures and drafting many laws, policies, and documents. Sherman also led in matters of logistics within the Revolution, leveraging his position in supply, finance, land disputes and treaties to encourage loyalty to Connecticut and the nation these men were fighting for. Ahead of his time in many ideas, the compromises and pleas of Sherman in the

⁹⁹ "Application from the Committee of Westmoreland: to the Honourable Roger Sherman and other Delegates from Connecticut now at Philadelphia, August. 6 A.D. 1776," Manuscripts: The American Revolution Institute of the Society of the Cincinnati Digital Library Collections. <https://societyofthecincinnati.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16923coll3/id/1692/>.

Continental Congress were the birth pangs of his immense contributions in the Constitutional Convention.

III. America's First Great Compromiser

Roger Sherman was selected to be one of Connecticut's representatives to the Constitutional Convention much like he was selected to be on the Continental Congress committee, as a substitute. Connecticut chose three representatives of various revolutionary vigor. William Samuel Johnson, the old conservative Tory, is a surprising selection when viewed through contemporary glasses. However, Johnson had recently become a force in the burgeoning nation's politics. The future Columbia College President gained popular support to represent Connecticut at the Constitutional Convention due to his extensive work in supporting Connecticut land claims.¹ In contrast to Johnson, the elder statesman, Oliver Ellsworth had earned his national experience as "Connecticut's young man of the Revolution" before ever serving in his state. The future Supreme Court Chief Justice would work closely with Sherman in proposing the Connecticut Compromise. The final selection was to be Erastus Wolcott, who refused the offer due to his aversion of assemblies. Connecticut's Revolutionary gusto had settled as the United States enjoyed her infancy. Within the political climate of Connecticut at the time, moderation was favorable. Men of property refused to support either "wild democrats" or "aristocrats," as they sought a steady patriot voice. Roger Sherman filled the role and was appointed to the Convention.² While Sherman would be labeled an "anti-nationalist" compared to the "context of opinion throughout the United States," in Connecticut he was "just slightly on the national side of center."³ This group of Connecticut men would essentially represent all of New England, furthering Congressional power to create stability and security while still

¹ Collier, *Roger Sherman's Connecticut*, 230-231.

² *Ibid.*, 228.

³ *Ibid.*, 230.

advocating for the preservation of states to hold their own governance. Sherman, the antifederalist of the federalists, would become America's first great compromiser.

In some ways, Sherman stood between Ellsworth and Johnson as both a mentor and protégé. As a young lawyer, Sherman wrote to Johnson throughout his time in court and into the Revolutionary period, despite knowing that Johnson was much more wary and mistrusting of colonial rebellion. To Ellsworth, Sherman was a model of civic service. John Adams recorded of Ellsworth, "It is praise enough to say, that the late Chief Justice Ellsworth told me that he had made Mr. Sherman his model in his youth. Indeed I never knew two men more alike, except that the Chief Justice had the advantage of a liberal education, and somewhat more extensive reading."⁴ With various degrees of education, this Connecticut delegation headed into the Convention with a remarkable level of moderation and experience.

The call for the Convention was controversial. Despite the inefficient model of a unicameral legislature and no executive or judicial branch, as well as the rising rebellion in Western Massachusetts led by Daniel Shays, it was very difficult to get states to agree to come to the Convention. The voice of Sherman's "Caveat against Injustice" seemed to haunt the new nation as financial instability wrought sufferings and violence. Connecticut's neighbor, rebellious and wary Rhode Island, would hold out through the entirety of the Convention, boycotting the 1787-1789 proceedings and debates, even refusing to hold a statewide ratification convention and instead giving the vote on the matter to individual towns.⁵ For Connecticut, the matter was to be a conservative affair, preserving the best of the Articles and editing it to protect the public good, starting with the nation's finances.

⁴ John Sanderson, *Biography of the Signers to the Declaration of Independence*, rev. and ed. Robert T. Conrad, II (Philadelphia: Thomas, Cowperthwait & Company, 1846), 61.

⁵ Nellie M. Gorbea, "US Constitution," Rhode Island Secretary of State, <https://www.sos.ri.gov/divisions/civics-and-education/for-educators/themed-collections/ri-and-us-constitution>.

Sherman, like the majority of the delegates, went into the Constitutional Convention believing that the Articles could be amended. He sought to keep the national government under the authority of the state legislatures, and as will be seen in his other debate points, Sherman balanced the rest of the federalists by advocating that the states be the ultimate voice in the new government.⁶ Longtime political adversary, Jeremiah Wadsworth, noted Sherman's aptitude for political maneuverings when he wrote:

I am satisfied with the appointment— except Sherman, who, I am told, is disposed to patch up the old scheme of Government. This was not my opinion of him, when we chose him: he is as cunning as the Devil, and if you attack him, you ought to know him well; he is not easily managed, but if he suspects you are trying to take him in, you may as well catch an Eel by the tail.⁷

Wadsworth, former Commissary General for the Continental Army, businessman, and zealous federalist thought Sherman would be seeking a feeble government unable to care for Connecticut's financial and other needs. However, he misjudged Sherman, who had noted years prior many significant changes needed for the Articles.

While in the Continental Congress, adding to Sherman's resume of pragmatic foresight, he noted that the Articles needed vast editing for interstate financial oversight and political logistics. His manuscripts record the following amendments he believed were necessary for the government to persist:

That Congress be allowed to regulate interstate commerce and the commerce of the United States with other nations; to impose duties on imports for revenue, regulation, and debt payment.

That Congress be able to make laws on the people, and all officials, in "all cases which concern the common interests of the United States: but not to interfere with the government of the individual states, in matters of internal police which respect the government of such states only, and wherein the general welfare of the United States is not affected..."

⁶ Hall, *Sherman and the Creation of the American Republic*, 96.

⁷ *The Records of the Federal Congress*, ed. Max Farrand, III (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1911), 33-34. Letter dated Hartford, June 3, 1787.

That states may not print or use their own forms of money... that the eighth article of the Confederation should be amended so that states contribute to the national treasury based on number of inhabitants rather than land value...

That the legislation should have authority to tax individuals should states refuse to comply with enforcing taxes or “furnish[ing] its quota of supplies”

That the legislature should have power to make laws for calling forth state contributions in money or goods

That no person shall be tried in another state than where the crime was committed and they should not be deprived of “the privilege of trial by a jury, by virtue of any law of the United States.”⁸

His reverence for state authority, financial security, and the public welfare, and legal justice would all be discussed and for the most part, enacted, in the coming proceedings.

The Connecticut men arrived for the proceedings on May 30th, about sixteen days later than the Convention had arranged, and five days after a quorum was finally met on the 25th. The ‘Committee of the Whole’ that day set out to debate the Virginia and Pinckney plans proposed the day prior, just before Connecticut arrived. The Virginia Plan, drafted by James Madison and presented by Edmund Randolph, famously created interstate division by size, as it presented Southern interests with voting and representation in both houses of the legislative branch based on population. Among other notable points, the Virginia plan was the first to propose the Judicial branch, with supreme and inferior tribunals, and provision for amending the Articles “whenever it shall seem necessary.”⁹

The Pinckney plan, named after South Carolina’s Charles Pinckney, presented some thirty suggestions for amending the Articles. While the document does not exist today, later notes by John Quincy Adams from convention records on the Plan provide most of the information for modern scholars. Pinckney proposed the “perpetual union” of the nation, with the Articles only being edited where absolutely necessary. In this editing, he proposed making

⁸ Boutell, *Life of Roger Sherman*, 133; Sherman, Manuscripts for Amending the Articles, Personal Notes.

⁹ “Virginia Plan (1787),” National Archives, <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/virginia-plan>.

the legislative two branches, the Senate and a House of Delegates. The latter was to be proportional (one delegate per thousand persons), and the Senate would break representation of the union into four districts. Pinckney proposed the 3/5 compromise for the first time, and Pinckney proposed the executive branch with its various departments and Presidential head. Similar to the British Prime Minister, he saw the President coming potentially from Congress.¹⁰ Pinckney also described various other powers for the President and Congress; his plan included congress regulating the militia, solving interstate disputes, establishing the Post Office, and carrying out impeachments.¹¹

With the Southern states carrying the day with proportional representation plans and clear changes to the Articles leading to a much more centralized government, the New England delegates were already scrambling to catch up and promote small state interests without creating havoc and dissembling the unity of the different states. Sherman's fellow Connecticut delegate, William Samuel Johnson, wrote to his son that night. "It is an affair of high and agitated expectation throughout the Continent, but what will be the issue of it no man can yet foresee."¹²

Connecticut not only entered the convention with two large-state plans already proposed, but now her delegates had the duty to try to undo the momentum of the large state plans from moving forward to completion. Though Sherman exuded an air of peaceful compromise and reason, he had no qualms about placing himself in the center of the fray to assert his position,

¹⁰ "Charles Pinckney's Plan," U.S. Constitution, https://www.usconstitution.net/plan_pinck.html#:~:text=Pinckney's%20Plan%20envisioned%20a%20bicameral,delegate%20for%20each%20thousand%20persons.

¹¹ "The Plan of Charles Pinckney (South Carolina), Presented to the Federal Convention [Quoted from American Historical Review, Vol. IX, p. 741-747]," Yale Law School Lillian Goldman Law Library: The Avalon Project, https://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/pinckney.asp.

¹² "William Samuel Johnson in a letter his son William, May 30, 1787" in "May 30, 1787: Committee of the Whole," Independence National Historical Park, <https://www.nps.gov/articles/constitutionalconvention-may30.htm#:~:text=Wednesday%2C%20May%2030%2C%201787%3A,the%20Committee%20of%20the%20Whole>.

when the occasion called for it. Sherman's proposed peaceful resolutions to bitter debates on representation won him both animosity and admiration. He was one of the most vocal delegates at the convention, with his number of statements in the Convention record exceeded by just three other delegates.¹³ On May 31st, before Patterson's plan, Sherman proposed electing senators (one per state) by the state legislatures.¹⁴ On June 2nd, Sherman proposed that in voting for the executive (as recorded by John Dickinson) that "each State would retain an equal voice, at least in one branch of the national legislature."

The coming debates over these plans from May 30 to June 14 featured intense division, debates, and decisions on issues that would affect every state and citizen. Congress considered Randolph and Madison's Virginia Plan and voted to create a bicameral legislature, with representation being debated. June 9th, Sherman first proposed his Connecticut Compromise representational scheme, but it was defeated by a vote of 6-5. Immediately after, James Wilson proposed voting proportionally in both houses, and his suggestion was supported by a vote of 6 to 4 on June 29.¹⁵ The Connecticut delegates would have to fight to undo these changes and preserve the rights of the small states.

Sherman in Debate

Sherman was not the imaginary egalitarian that Jefferson or Madison claimed to be, but he was a man of the people. He had known what it meant to work rather thankless jobs, support a large family, and work his way up the ladder of business and law pursuits. His civic service records were bolstered by public approval and calls from his townspeople for him to serve. Within this context, Sherman was a populist by means of the state government, which he

¹³ "Constitutional Convention, 1787," *Historical Magazine* 5 (January 1861): 19.

¹⁴ Boutell, *Life of Roger Sherman*, 138.

¹⁵ Andrew C. McLaughlin, "James Wilson in the Philadelphia Convention," *Political Science Quarterly*, 12, no. 1 (March 1897): 8.

considered to be the best avenue for pursuing the public good. His fear of tyranny and reverence for British legal tradition combined as Sherman sought to help create a system that would balance powers between the different branches, preventing the chaos and anarchy of Shay's Rebellion, financial turmoil, and the tyranny of the majority.

Entering the Convention, Sherman saw a remedy through significant amendments, and had even earlier under the Articles in Congress drafted a set of amendments to grant Congress the power to levy taxes, create a Supreme Court, and make laws binding on all people.¹⁶ As noted, Wadsworth disdained Sherman's intention of "patching up" the old system, but Sherman wanted to change as little as was necessary. Puritan beliefs left him wary of man's corruptible nature, and the need for checks and balances, most especially in the executive branch, where he feared too much power in the hands of a single individual. Most likely for this reason, Sherman entered the Convention with the goal of simply adding some powers to the legislature and judiciary, and his efficiency and financially minded sense always advocated for the means that would most quickly sustain a stable form of government. The judicial branch, he believed, would justly support the law in matters of national importance. Upon hearing Madison's Virginia Plan, which was in debate when the Connecticut delegation arrived, Sherman realized that countermeasures were needed and that a new constitution was in the works entirely.¹⁷

Through the legislature, he foresaw a stable republic as long as states sought morally-guided representatives and kept them accountable through the election process. Through each section of governance, it all came down to the states. Sherman believed that the election of all

¹⁶ Boutell, *Life of Roger Sherman*, 133.

¹⁷ Hall, *Sherman and the Creation of the American Republic*, 94; Scott D. Gerber, "Roger Sherman and the Bill of Rights," 524-525.

Congressional delegates should be by the state legislatures, but he relented so that the House of Representatives would be directly elected by the people. He also favored having the president be elected by the national legislature only, and he sought to ease the process of removal so that the executive was almost entirely dependent on legislative support.¹⁸ Sherman further sought to keep the power of the purse amongst the states, when he proposed that the states pay their representatives. Upon backlash, he compromised that the national treasury pay representatives five dollars a day, but any further payment be from the states.¹⁹ Sherman pleaded for state courts rather than the creation of inferior courts, as he argued that they would fulfill the same purpose. He relented on this point, but continued advocating that state legislatures oversee the inferior courts and be used instead whenever possible.²⁰ In voting for the President in case of a tie, Sherman proposed voting by state in the House of Representatives with each state having one vote. This was also adopted.²¹

With Shay's Rebellion serving as a case study of mankind's proclivity to join the mob, Sherman and others believed that popular elections and decisions in legislation could be dangerous. However, he still entrusted the people more than the executive or national government. In a speech given June 6th, Sherman explained, "If it were in view to abolish the state governments, the elections ought to be by the people. If the state governments are to be continued" as he surely thought was essential, "it is necessary, in order to preserve harmony between the national and state governments, that the elections to the former should be made by the latter. The right of participating in the national government would be sufficiently secured to

¹⁸ Boutell, *Life of Roger Sherman*, 156.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 157.

²¹ *Ibid.*

the people by their election of the State legislatures.”²² Continuing in this speech, Sherman delineated his vision for the powers of the federal government. He saw them as defense against foreign danger, resolving internal disputes and violence, making treaties with other nations, regulating foreign commerce and “deriving revenue from it.” He stated that in every other realm, “all other matters, civil and criminal, would be much better in the hands of the States.”²³

When John Rutledge of South Carolina argued that inferior courts were encroachments on state courts, Sherman added that the cost of these courts was impractical and another financial burden on the people.²⁴ Sherman and Ellsworth both suggested that “the largest states were too big to govern well” and by extension implied that the national government would create an even less sufficient system.²⁵ Sherman supported the motion, observing “that the particular States would thus become interested in supporting the National Government and that a due harmony between the two Governments would be maintained.”²⁶ He admitted that the two ought to have separate and distinct jurisdictions, but that they ought to have a mutual interest in supporting each other.”²⁷ John Dickinson, close friend of Sherman, despite previous differing beliefs on Revolution, took up the states’ cause writing that the national system was like the solar system, and thus states as planets “ought to be left to move freely in their proper orbits.”²⁸

Between Sherman’s and Dickinson’s efforts, George Mason, one of Madison’s allies and fellow Virginians, began to admit that the state legislatures needed to serve as a balance to the

²² “Speech of Roger Sherman to the Constitutional Convention, June 6, 1787” in Boutell, *Life of Roger Sherman*, 158.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ “June 5, 1787,” *Records of the Federal Congress*, I, ed. Farrand, 124-125, 220, 364, 369.

²⁵ David Robertson, *The Original Compromise: What the Constitution’s Framers Were Really Thinking* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 71.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ “June 6,” *Records of the Federal Congress*, I, ed. Farrand, 137.

²⁸ Robertson, *Original Compromise*, 71.

national government. Mason conceded that a central government would struggle to enforce equal justice to various states, and within a week, “Sherman used Mason’s words against the Virginia Plan, insisting that ‘each State ought to be able to protect itself.’”²⁹

Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Delaware and possibly Maryland’s delegates created the New Jersey Plan, which William Patterson formally presented to Congress on June 15th. This small state, or confederate, model saw a legislative branch in which each state had one vote in Congress. The plan put forth the added powers of the legislature to raise revenue, regulate commerce, and govern foreign affairs. Specifically, it made provisions adding unto many components of the Virginia Plan’s judiciary and bolstering the national government’s authority. The first point called for revision of the Articles to make them “adequate to the exigencies of Government and the preservation of the Union.”³⁰ Additionally, the document called for import taxes and other revenue taxes, the legislative one state-one vote system with the proportional free population (and 3/5 slave population) apportionment for taxation. Details about the judiciary and the supremacy of the Articles as the law of the land, admitting new states, creating a system for naturalization and interstate equality before the law were also admitted; adding some more authority and power to enforce laws of the Confederation.³¹ The two plans representative of small and large states now in play, the Convention debated these visions for four days.

Madison and Hamilton attacked the plan as a weak rewording of the original Articles, noting its lack of enforcement power and ability to maintain order. Madison’s eight points

²⁹ Ibid., 72.

³⁰ James Madison, “Monday, June 18, 1787,” in *Madison’s Journals: The Records of the Federal Convention of 1787*, vol. 1, ed. Max Farrand (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1911), 281.

³¹ “June 15, 1787: The New Jersey Plan,” National Park Service, <https://www.nps.gov/articles/constitutionalconvention-june15.htm>.

repeatedly asked “Will it secure...” alluding to the idea that the New Jersey Plan would further rebellion in the states, and potentially lead to a quick conquering by stronger nations, thus leaving “the door open for the like pernicious machinations” of being overtaken like other confederations throughout history by internal petty divisions.³² Hamilton responded by proposing his own plan, far more radical in broad nationalism than both the drafters of the New Jersey plan and Madison’s group. Hamilton’s plan consisted of eliminating state sovereignty entirely and integrating all the states into a single nation. He proposed a bicameral legislature with the lower house elected by the people for three years and the upper house chosen by electors who would serve for life. His vision of the executive was a “Governor” who would serve for life with an absolute veto power. The New Jersey Plan delegates saw this as absolute nonsense and a complete return to British-style tyranny. William Samuel Johnson only wrote in his diary about Convention proceedings twice, and on the day of this proposed plan he followed the routine notation "In Convention" with one word: "Hamilton."³³

With Mason’s concern for state sovereignty, Sherman was able to focus the argument on the disastrous effect proportional representation would have on many smaller states. He emphasized this point, noticing that the broad nationalists were wary of it, explaining that the Senate’s equal voting was needed to “secure the rights of the lesser States; otherwise three or four of the large States would rule the others as they please.”³⁴ Jack Rakove noted that small state advocates argued both that the “integrity of their states would be lost if the equal vote was not retained” and that “state governments deserved protection against federal encroachments, and

³² James Madison, “Reply to the New Jersey Plan, 19 June 1787,” FoundersOnlineArchives.gov, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Madison/01-10-02-0036>.

³³ “June 18, 1787: Hamilton Speaks,” National Park Service, <https://www.nps.gov/articles/constitutionalconvention-june18.htm>.

³⁴ “June 20, 1787,” in *Records of Federal Congress*, ed. Farrand, I, 342-343.

since those governments were equal in stature” they deserved an equal vote in at least one House.³⁵ With the vastly different views on representation, Congress needed a plan suitable to all states.

On June 11th, Sherman first proposed the basic idea of the Connecticut Compromise: that the House of Representatives be based on state’s proportional population representative and that the Senate be based on equal representation, with each state having two senators. Sherman pointed to a British precedent in defending the Compromise proposition, noting that “the House of Lords in England... had certain particular rights under the Constitution, and hence they have an equal vote with the House of Commons, that they may be able to defend their rights.”³⁶ Sherman, seconded by Ellsworth, moved to have this plan taken to a vote later the same day. It failed by a vote of 6 to 5, but Sherman would not give up on this compromise system. More than the mind behind the plan, Sherman was also the plan’s avid defender in debate until its hard-won adoption.

Sherman’s statements on the Connecticut plan emphasize a pragmatic approach to equal protection of state rights. In the debates he argued that the question is not what rights naturally “belong to a man but how they may be most equally and effectually guarded in society.” Sherman thought sacrifice on the parts of some to prevent the disenfranchisement of others was essential to a united nation. “If some give up more than others, there can be no room for complaint... To do otherwise, to require an equal concession from all, if it would create danger to the rights of some, would be sacrificing the end to the means. The rich man who enters into society along with the poor man gives up more than the poor man; yet, with an equal vote, he is

³⁵ Rakove, *Revolutionaries: A New History of the Invention of America*, 370.

³⁶ Boutell, *Life of Roger Sherman*, 138.

equally safe.”³⁷ Protection for all states’ rights, rather than the promotion of wealth and large state interests then should be the guiding principle of union. These statements ring similar to Sherman promoting the boycotts among wealthy Connecticut merchants, and the tension in the Puritan-Yankee identity, to choose freedom over personal gain.

William Samuel Johnson supported Sherman asking, “Does it not seem to follow, that if the States, as such, are to exist, they must be armed with some power of self-defence?” Johnson went on, saying that the States and individual citizens should be “combined—in one branch the people...in the other, the States.”³⁸ Historian David Brian Robertson deemed Sherman and his likeminded colleagues as “narrow nationalists,” delaying Madison’s agenda and creating a defensive “political coalition to protect the states’ influence.”³⁹ Here can be seen the crucial role of Sherman as a delegate willing to extend the central government but limit its scope.

Using the fears of Madison’s allies and small state delegates, Sherman focused the issue to one of pragmatism and liberty. He argued that the smaller states’ representation was the “main difficulty” and that, rather than the expansive Virginia plan’s proposals, the issue could be resolved with minor changes, just allowing one house of Congress to be equal in voting so that the many small states would be protected and would agree to this new document.⁴⁰ Along with Johnson, he also used rhetoric comparing the state to the individual citizen. Just as the local government exists to preserve the freedoms and wellbeing of each citizen, so the national government exists to uphold the sovereign states and their unique qualities as distinct entities. Sherman stated that “each state like each individual had its peculiar habits usages and manners, which constituted its happiness” and “it would not therefore give to others a power over this

³⁷ Ibid., 143.

³⁸ Ibid., 145.

³⁹ Robertson, *The Original Compromise*, 68.

⁴⁰ “June 20, 1787,” in *Records of Federal Congress*, ed. Farrand, I, 342-343.

happiness, any more than an individual would do, when he could avoid it.”⁴¹ This appeal to republican values thus extended to each individual delegate rather than even appealing to the smaller and mid-size states. Johnson further confronted the Virginia Plan delegates in this tone, asking that they demonstrate how their plan would protect each state’s sovereign individuality.⁴² He went on noting that the government is formed for the states and the states for the individuals, and that this single large political Society of various states created the correct order and relationship for healthy dialogue and action. A government in which individuals and states are gathered to serve the national unit flipped the proper order of sovereignties and threatened the very notions of liberties. Sherman and his cohorts had successfully placed the Virginia Plan delegates on the defensive.

Madison’s defense centered on the idea of a dissolving, weak union should the small states get their way. He stated that the people being citizens of thirteen small Republics rather than one great one would put too much pressure on the states, incapable of handling complexities related to a world power. Madison foresaw that the United States would far exceed British Parliament in powers exercised on the States, especially in levying taxes directly on the people, and that the selfish interests of small state delegates wanted an ineffective, stagnated government with the national government and state relationship more akin to that of a state and her counties.⁴³

Abraham Baldwin, a delegate from Georgia, swayed the vote in favor of the Connecticut Compromise. Baldwin was born and educated in Connecticut and had just moved to Georgia in

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Robertson, *Original Compromise*, 78.

1784.⁴⁴ Baldwin's time as a minister and tutor at Yale overlapped with Sherman's service as Treasurer (Baldwin served from 1775-1779 and Sherman from 1765-1776).⁴⁵ These close connections undoubtedly influenced his mind and helped sway him towards voting via concern for small state representation. This further gives credit to the term Connecticut Compromise. With this swing vote, Sherman's notion for the legislature written in his notes eleven years prior became the system of the United States government on July 16th, 1787.

The Bill of Rights

Sherman was the force behind adding the Bill of Rights as a separate document to the end of the Constitution.⁴⁶ This was not because Sherman was against the protection of individual rights but rather because he thought Congress had no authority whatsoever to restrict or revoke these God-given liberties. Like Madison on this point, he believed that including the Bill of Rights within the main body of the Constitution would imply that the Congress did indeed have the power to alter, change, or restrict liberty within the states.⁴⁷ By his model, if the people elect their representatives at the state level, only choosing the most moral men of society as he believed was done in Connecticut, then those state representatives electing national Congressmen

⁴⁴ E. Merton Coulter, *Abraham Baldwin: Patriot, Educator, and Founding Father* (Arlington, VA: Vandamere Press, 1987), 35. In fact, so many Connecticut natives moved to Georgia, specifically Augusta, Georgia (Baldwin's new home), that the city was dubbed "The Connecticut Reserve of Georgia." It is thought that Baldwin was also encouraged to move to the state by former Yale President Ezra Stiles and Rhode Island's General Nathaniel Greene. Greene was gifted a deserted loyalist estate in which Eli Whitney would invent the Cotton Gin. Baldwin also may have been encouraged by the economic factors in the state and encouraged by Lyman Hall and Nathan Brownson (two Connecticuturs who became Georgia governors). Lyman Hall specifically would encourage Baldwin to develop Georgia's state education system, due to his notable experience at Yale.

⁴⁵ "Abraham Baldwin: The Founding Father of Public Higher Education in America," University of Georgia, <https://news.uga.edu/abraham-baldwin-the-founding-father-of-public-higher-education-in-america/>. Baldwin was also a graduate of Yale. His close connections with Noah Webster and Sherman allowed him to pass one of the nation's first copyright laws in Georgia, though the movement and first American copyright law was passed by Sherman. See "An Act for the Encouragement of Literature and Genius," in *Collected Works of Roger Sherman*, 96-97.

⁴⁶ Gerber, "Roger Sherman and the Bill of Rights," 524. Also, as historian Scott Gerber argued, "Coming from Connecticut, 'the Land of Steady Habits,' Sherman also was opposed to amending the Constitution before it had been tried."

⁴⁷ Roger Sherman, "The Letters of a Countryman, II" *New Haven Gazette*, November 22, 1787, 40.

would create a system worthy of trust. Sherman colleague, William Samuel Johnson, also believed that they should avoid these also opposed prohibition of any *ex post facto* law, because that clause would imply “improper suspicion of the National Legislature.”⁴⁸ Despite his cautions, once a Bill seemed necessary for ratification, Sherman helped in the process, and the only handwritten copy of the Bill of Rights is written in his hand.⁴⁹

Slavery

The story of Sherman’s involvement in the three-fifths compromise and ensuring the continuance of slavery is a curious navigation of personal philosophy and pragmatic politicking. Sherman, a man who was morally repelled by slavery due to his Christian convictions, would also remain politically neutral on the matter. Connecticut enacted its gradual abolition law three years prior in 1784, with a Nonimportation Act and a Gradual Abolition Act being the work of Sherman and his co-editor of Connecticut’s legal code, Richard Law.⁵⁰ Sherman regarded “the slave trade as iniquitous,” but held to a states’ rights position stating that ““as the States were now possessed of the right to import slaves, as the public good did not require it to be taken from them... it [was] best to leave the matter as we find it’ in order to avoid objections to the whole scheme of government.”⁵¹ The Delegation’s Compromise for the union seemed to also compromise Congregationalist morality.

It can be argued that Sherman was looking for the interests of Connecticut over the moral responsibility for justice throughout the nation, and Connecticut’s other delegates were certainly

⁴⁸ “William Samuel Johnson,” U.S. Army Center of Military History, <https://history.army.mil/books/revwar/ss/johnson.htm>. *Ex post facto* laws retroactively make criminal conduct that was previously not illegal into a criminal offense.

⁴⁹ Herbert Mitgang, “Handwritten Draft of a Bill of Rights Found,” *New York Times*, July 29, 1987, A, 1. <https://www.nytimes.com/1987/07/29/us/handwritten-draft-of-a-bill-of-rights-found.html>.

⁵⁰ David Menschel, “Abolition Without Deliverance: The Law of Connecticut Slavery 1784-1848,” *The Yale Law Journal* 111, no. 1 (Oct. 2001): 193.

⁵¹ Collier, *All Politics is Local*, 70. Indeed Pinckney would say that if slavery was banned South Carolina would “never receive the plan...”

more avid components of keeping the slave trade for economic and political reasons. His earlier work with John Rutledge of South Carolina in an effort to preserve the union and state sovereignty led to his involvement in yet another compromise. Financially, he completely agreed that there should be a prohibition on export duties. William Samuel Johnson was a slave owner and had many personal friends amongst the southern delegates. His statements in debate frequently back the interests of other southern states.⁵² Looking at Connecticut's interests, the delegates of this state whose economy depended on exportation, saw common ground with states like South Carolina who also opposed export taxes. Ellsworth, serving on the Committee of Detail, also approached the issue as a states rights matter, saying that the "morality or wisdom" of the practice was up to each state.⁵³ The young lawyer and politician believed that regardless, slavery would soon not be "a speck in our country."⁵⁴ Sherman simply believed that it was better to allow importation in the southern states than create a divide and lose membership in the union.⁵⁵ Unlike Ellsworth's assessment, Sherman's prediction that it was necessary for the nation to be united at present would be correct. While the Convention delayed fomenting grievances on this shadowy presence hanging over it until the Civil War, another battle would need to be fought state by state for the Constitutional Republic in the present: ratification.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 69; Coulter, *Baldwin*, 180-181. Baldwin would later use his time in the Constitutional Convention to ironically both promote French immigration and protect his state's vested interests in slavery. He said that Article I section 9 barring any laws on slavery until 1808 specifically avoided the word "slaves" because many objected finding it contrary to the Declaration of Independence and American ideals. Baldwin argued against the Alien Acts of 1798 saying that states alone could choose who could enter or not, because the wording applied to not only slaves but all immigrants.

⁵³ *Records of the Federal Congress*, ed. Farrand, II, 220, 364, 369.

⁵⁴ Collier, *All Politics is Local*, 70.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* Sherman said: "it was better to let the S. States import slaves than to part with them, if they made that a sine qua non," which the southern states did.

Ratification

Sherman played an instrumental role in trying to persuade his home state to ratify the Constitution. In his *Letters of a Countryman*, published by the *New Haven Gazette*, Sherman anticipated Connecticut rebuttals and responded to men like Jeremiah Wadsworth, who saw the new Constitution as yet another ineffective system. Sherman addressed the “People of Connecticut” directly, and he applied his own sense of duty to the entire citizenry as he wrote, “You are now called on to make important alterations in your government by ratifying the new federal constitution.”⁵⁶ This sense of investment was continued as he addressed the reasonable caution his fellow statesmen may have felt toward “a system not yet experienced.”

Sherman noted that while each state approached attachment to different size states with great consternation, he envisioned this lack of complete independence as a useful asset, which would strengthen and better protect all states, thus serving the public good. He repeatedly referred to the model of state government. As each town fits into the state, so will each state fit into the Union, for the betterment of the smaller units: “Does any person suppose that the people would be more safe, more happy, or more respectable, if every town in this State was independent, and had no State government?”⁵⁷ He noted that in the large states as well as small states, the legislatures are “as careful not to over-burden the people with taxes.” Sherman noted that the risk of tyranny exists if Connecticut does not join the new nation, “If the United States were one single government, provided the constitution of this extensive government was as good as the constitution of this State now is, would this part of it be really in greater danger of

⁵⁶ Roger Sherman, “The Letters of a Countryman, I” *New Haven Gazette*, November 14, 1787, 39. https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Letters_of_A_Countryman/A_Countryman_I.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

oppression or tyranny, than at present?”⁵⁸ He promoted the idea that the state would still be governed by its own men as well as sending its own representatives to the capital. He wrote, “would not the people be as safe, governed by their representatives...in New York or Philadelphia, as by their representatives assembled in Hartford or New Haven?” Indeed, Sherman viewed more representatives as another protective measure for liberty; he noted that smaller bodies in authority tend to focus only on the benefit of those men, but in “every instance” in history such as the union between England and Scotland, the representatives of the smaller state actually were, as a result, “much more secure, happy, and respectable? If then, the constitution is a good one, why should we be afraid of uniting, even if the Union was to be much more complete and entire than is proposed?”⁵⁹ Madison also discussed the increase of representatives as a safeguard for liberty, writing that more representatives “guard against the cabals of a few” but their limited number also guards against the “confusion of a multitude.” The fact that more citizens will elect representatives would likely mean that the best men with the “most attractive merit and most diffusive and established characters” would be elected.⁶⁰ Additionally, both men emphasize the necessity of virtuous leaders for the new republic.

Published about a week later, Sherman wrote the second of his *Countryman* letters.⁶¹ Sherman’s fear of mob rule and his sense of duty to uphold order can be seen in these writings. In this appeal to the people, he praises his fellow citizens for being above the fray of “newspaper politicians” who try to distress the public with a “torrent of impertinence and folly.”⁶² He praised

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ James Madison, “Federalist Papers No. 10 (1787),” Bill of Rights Institute, <https://billofrightsinstitute.org/primary-sources/federalist-no-10>.

⁶¹ Roger Sherman, “The Letters of a Countryman, II” *New Haven Gazette*, November 22, 1787, 40. https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Letters_of_A_Countryman/A_Countryman_II.

⁶² Ibid.

his fellow Connecticutians: “You are too well informed to decide by the opinion of others, and too independent to need a caution against undue influence.”

Sherman stated that the rights delineated in the Bill of Rights are “much too important to depend on mere paper protection.” He noted that the nature of government and maintaining representatives of high moral standard is the ultimate goal. Sherman regarded these enumerations as mere words on a page. He cautioned that men could “guard such privileges by the strongest expressions,” but noted that “still if you leave the legislative and executive power in the hands of those who are or may be disposed to deprive you of them—you are but slaves.”⁶³

Sherman noted that the largest defense of American rights lies in the separation of powers found in the new system, with more efficiency but still a restrained executive. The idea of covenant plays into Sherman’s understanding as he notes that the government’s protection of rights is akin to the marriage vow, necessitating both parties being fully committed. Should one “suffer any man to govern you who is not strongly interested in supporting your privileges, you will certainly lose them.”⁶⁴ The character, then, of nationhood and this moral, representative government was the recipe for success. Sherman drove this point home, as he stated: “if you are about to trust your liberties with people whom it is necessary to bind by stipulation, that they shall not keep a standing army, your stipulation is not worth even the trouble of writing.”⁶⁵

Sherman asserted his belief that representatives would have a vested interest in the freedom and prosperity of the United States, and thus citizens should not fear Congressional tyranny. He conceded that the power given to the federal congress would be enough that “if

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

abused,” it would “do the greatest injury.” He wrote, “If you cannot prove by the best of all evidence...by the *interest of the rulers*, that this authority will not be abused...you must by no means adopt the constitution. No, not with all the bills of rights and with all the stipulations in favor of the people that can be made.”⁶⁶ However, Sherman declared that the new constitution would affect “them as much as it does us” thus “we need not apprehend that they will usurp authorities not given them to injure that society of which they are a part.”⁶⁷

The third *Countryman* letter, published again one week apart, reiterated Sherman’s main points and specific concerns for Connecticut citizens. He wrote that the General Assembly had as close to unlimited authority as possible but worked efficiently because the governors and the governed shared a common interest. Translated to the national stage, Sherman wrote that “careful attention” must indeed “be given” to “how far the members are under your control,” but it should run the same way as the General Assembly.⁶⁸

In the fourth letter, Sherman highlighted the ideas of Connecticut’s General Assembly being akin to the new Congress. The trust in public officials and diligence of the people in electing moral representatives was the ultimate need as the General Assembly, who they already lived under, had close to ultimate authority. Sherman wrote “Have you any power which is not already granted to your General Assembly?”⁶⁹ Nothing, he reiterated, prevent a misuse of power “save that the interest of the members is the same as yours.”⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Roger Sherman, “The Letters of a Countryman, III,” *New Haven Gazette*, November 29, 1787, 41. https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Letters_of_A_Countryman/A_Countryman,_III.

⁶⁹ Roger Sherman, “The Letters of a Countryman, IV,” *New Haven Gazette*, December 6, 1787, 42. https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Letters_of_A_Countryman/A_Countryman,_III.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

In his concluding letter, Sherman revealed out some of his quiet personality as he began: “You do not hate to read Newspaper Essays on the new constitution, more than I hate to write them.” This then “will be short - - - which I have often found the best expression in a dull sermon, except the last.”⁷¹ He explained that the Connecticut Compromise representational system provides for protection of smaller states, and that while Congressmen serve longer terms than the General Assembly, they have more to do, and the people are still vastly more free than the average British citizen. Sherman simply stated “Philosophy may mislead you. Ask experience. Are not the liberties of the people of England as safe as yours? — They are not as free as yours, because much of their government is in the hands of hereditary majesty and nobility.”⁷²

Looking to Scripture and history was a fundamental piece of the New England consciousness, and the founders repeatedly referenced the commands of the Old Testament forming a basis of justice. Others noted how Charles I of England “unkinged himself” due to a wanton “lust for power” and unrighteous, tyrannical leadership.⁷³ Dickinson, a reluctant patriot, found history to point to a need for the monarch to establish liberty in the constitution, and in 1775, did not see the Continental Congress to have a precedent worthy of emulation. Fellow Pennsylvanian, James Wilson saw the matter more akin to Sherman’s view. Wilson argued that America had a unique position in history. Following the tradition of justified rebellion, America fought to preserve “the constitutional rights of the Colonies” they were legally obligated to, and

⁷¹ Roger Sherman, “The Letters of a Countryman, V,” *New Haven Gazette*, December 20, 1787, 44. https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Letters_of_A_Countryman/A_Countryman,_V.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Jonathan Mayhew, *A Discourse Concerning Unlimited Submission and Non-Resistance to the Higher Powers: With Some Reflections on the Resistance to King Charles I...* (Boston 1750), 45.

he emphasized “law as a historical science” was more effective in practice and “superior to speculative philosophy.”⁷⁴

With men of experience in office like Sherman, who worked their way through various levels based on public approval, there was little to worry about. To Sherman, the essential component of this new Republic was the elected officials seeking their constituents public good and being personally invested in the nation’s welfare. As he completed his final letter to the *Gazette*, Sherman was concluding the last of his letters to the public, and likewise his final contribution to the Constitution.

On September 17, 1787, Sherman along with thirty-eight other delegates signed the United States Constitution. Leaving the Convention, Sherman now held the record for the sole individual who had signed every major founding document of the American Revolution and New Republic. His pragmatic mind and humble demeanor which led to fellow men of importance calling him to serve in the Continental Congress and Constitutional Convention would carry on as he continued in his position as the first mayor of New Haven from 1784 until his death in 1793. He would also serve in the national Congress from 1789 to his death, advocating New England protective tariffs and advocating for the assumption of state debts by the federal government. The very terminology of federal government is owed largely to Roger Sherman, a man who believed in the union but feared the role of a national government enveloping the states. As his *Countryman* letters concluded, Sherman could himself “ask experience” as he repeatedly came to embody the moderation and compromise needed for the democratic process.

⁷⁴ Trevor Colbourn, *The Lamp of Experience: Whig History and the Intellectual Origins of the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1965), 151. James Wilson, *An Address to the Inhabitants of the Colonies*, February 13, 1776. University of Wisconsin.

The Old Puritan, as John Adams had termed him, had served and fought for the preservation of Connecticut first, but now for his country.

IV. The Disparity of a Legacy

Unlike some younger founders who went on to serve important roles in the executive branch, Sherman was nearing his death when he returned to his home in New Haven in the Spring of 1793. He still served in Congress and as Mayor of New Haven but had taken ill earlier in the season. On July 23, 72-year-old Sherman succumbed to typhoid and passed away while sleeping in his New Haven home. The man who continually served in the national legislature for nineteen years, and in some Connecticut office for thirty-nine years had finally gone to rest.

His legacy solidified with the bicameral legislature and his efforts largely granted with limiting federal powers, Sherman's work in Connecticut was not yet done. The same year Sherman was present to ratify the Treaty of Paris, he had also rewritten Connecticut's Legal Code with Richard Law.¹ In this new code, they provided a law for emancipation of slaves in Connecticut, religious toleration, and America's first copyright law.² After the Constitutional Convention's close in 1789, he returned in the First Federal Congress from June 13, 1791 (filling in when William Samuel Johnson resigned) to his death in 1793. In the first Congress, Sherman fought to maintain a small House of Representatives and investigated misconduct and defeat in Native American fighting in Ohio. He also consulted with Simeon Baldwin, his son-in-law, on possible appointment to the judiciary, and the meaning of that branch to the new nation.³ Despite this accomplished public record, Sherman did experience personal hardships in his last years.

¹ The treaty was signed on September 3, 1783 and ratified on January 14, 1784. The legal code drafting also took place from 1783-1784.

² "An Act Concerning Indian, Molatto, and Negro Servants and Slaves," in *Collected Works of Roger Sherman*, 119-122; "An Act for Securing the Rights of Conscience in Matters of Religion, to Christians of every Denomination in this State," in *ibid.*, 80-81; "An Act for the Encouragement of Literature and Genius," in *ibid.*, 96-91.

³ Hall, *Sherman and the Creation of the American Republic*, 146.

His three eldest sons experienced personal failures in business, marriage, and family responsibilities.⁴ His first son, John, failed in his business endeavors, “became an alcoholic, and was divorced by his wife.” His second son, William, plunged Sherman’s New Haven store into bankruptcy and was divorced, and his third son, Isaac (of Revolutionary war status), failed financially though he never married. These familial hardships led to Sherman writing John Witherspoon on the matter of biblical allowances for Christian divorce. The death of his son William also led to him reaffirming to his family the need for them all to seek God’s salvation through repentance and faith in Christ.

The financial straits of his sons were somewhat paralleled in Sherman’s own accounts. His mayorship providing little more than a notable title; Sherman also was not paid what he was promised from Congress. This led to him even asking the citizens of Vermont (who previously promised him a grant of land for all of his efforts supporting their statehood), if they might make good on that promise. They did not. Despite being paid less than he was promised in state and local office, Sherman’s final homecoming at his memorial procession was met with large crowds paying tribute to their mayor one last time.

On July 25, 1793, Sherman was buried with “New Haven’s equivalent of a state funeral.”⁵ In his sermon that day, Sherman’s minister, Jonathan Edwards Jr. noted that God’s sovereignty covers all matters, over and through human suffering and loss.⁶ His sermon focused on how God is mankind’s “refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble.”⁷ Edwards

⁴ Hall, *Sherman and the Creation of the American Republic*, 147; “Correspondence with John Witherspoon, July 10, 1788 New Haven and July 25, 1788, Princeton, NJ,” in *Collected Works of Roger Sherman*, 738-740; “Letter to Rebecca Sherman, June 29, 1789, New York,” in *ibid.*, 741: on the passing of his son William.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 148.

⁶ Jonathan Edwards Jr., “A Sermon Delivered at the Funeral of the Honorable Roger Sherman, Esq., Senator of the United States of America, who Deceased the 23 of July 1793: A Funeral Sermon,” (New Haven, CT: Abel Morse Printing on State Street, n.d.), New Milford Historical Society.

⁷ *Ibid.*; Psalm 46:1, ESV. “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.”

stated his intention being to discuss which troubles “we are most liable,” to consider how God is “our refuge and strength,” and to “show that he is a *very present* help in trouble.”⁸

Edwards spoke of the deep, overwhelming loss of the mourning-words that came from a heartfelt loss for his own close friend. This was a grief he could personally attest to as he said, “To separate some of the nearest connections of life is like separating soul and body, or tearing man from himself. Yet there is no discharge in this war.”⁹ He noted that, for men like Sherman, the impact of their loss extended beyond family and friends, leaving a deep void which diminished entire communities. This “publick calamity to which we and all men are liable is the loss of wise and faithful magistrates. And this is a very great Calamity. *A Faithful man, who can find?* When we have found him and found him in the office of a principal magistrate, we ought highly to prize him, and when he is taken from us, to consider it as a great frown of divine providence.”¹⁰ However, Edwards offered the mourners the same hope Sherman attested to throughout his life.

Edwards conceded relief in this struggle: “Do we meet with losses? God who gave us all we have or ever have had, has a perfect right to take it all from us, and at such time and in such manner as he pleases. And if God deprive us of temporal good things, still he has provided for us eternal good things...”¹¹ Edwards continued that while under such distress, “we may as safely leave our national, as our primary concerns” with the God who “reigns over nations as well as over individuals.”¹² After sketching out a description of God’s sovereignty beyond one’s grief,

⁸ Ibid., 1.

⁹ Ibid., 5.

¹⁰ Ibid. Italicized portion is quoting Proverbs 20:6.

¹¹ Ibid., 12-13.

¹² Ibid., 14.

Edwards provided a personal portrait of Sherman and his far-reaching impact on New Haven and the new nation.

He described Sherman as a paragon of moral and civic virtue, giving a brief biography as means of a testimony. Continuing, Edwards stated, “The present is a time of trouble and affliction. The death of that eminent and excellent man, whose remains are now to be laid in the dust, is a source of affliction in several respects.”¹³

As he spoke to the audience, noting that this affliction “is so to his family,” Edwards could see Sherman’s children and grandchildren mourning. They mourned a man who, though absent for large portions of their lives for his time in Congress, remained an active father. His frequent visits home must have stunned some fellow delegates, but Sherman was devoted to his many roles in his family, his state, and the nation. Records of Sherman spending his time playing with his children and shopping for them in Philadelphia and providing them books of moral instruction and Bibles upon every journey home, indicate a loving and involved husband, father, and grandfather.¹⁴ Occasionally regarded as cold by those not in his immediate circle, reflections by his close friends reveal Sherman to be warm and welcoming, and many joked about his manner of making short quips and using as few words as necessary. Of his fifteen children, eleven were alive at the time of his death.

As a dedicated public servant, he also left such grief “to all his friends, to the church of which he was a member, to this city, to the State and to the United States.” Edwards stated

¹³ Ibid., 15.

¹⁴ “Correspondence-Outgoing, Copies of Letter to his Wife Rebecca, 1790,” MSS #108, Box 1 Folder G. Sherman Family Collection, 1745-1945, New Haven Colony Historical Society. Sherman shopped for ribbons, toys for the grandchildren and wrote a loving if brief note for her birthday declaring “It is your birthday...let us honor God today and every day...”

summarizing Sherman's wide-ranging impact, "In this death they have all sustained a loss."¹⁵ To "rightly estimate this loss and be properly humbled under the divine chastisement" of the Lord removing Sherman from their midst, Edwards offered a "brief survey of his life and character."¹⁶

Looking to Sherman's unassuming beginnings, Edwards recollected how "his superior improvements arose from his superior genius, from his thirst for knowledge and from his personal exertions and indefatigable industry in the pursuit of it." This man who began with next to nothing, working as a shoe cobbler, excelled to the point of mastery in "his native language...logic, geography, mathematics...philosophy, history theology, and above all in law and politics."¹⁷ His abilities were "remarkable, not brilliant, but solid, penetrating and capable of deep and long investigation" with "patient and unremitting application and perseverance."¹⁸ This constant striving marked Sherman and allowed him to be so effective.

Edwards recounted how Sherman took care of his mother and siblings at age nineteen upon his father's death. His "filial piety" and "fraternal affection" appeared in "an unusual degree" and Edwards noted how Sherman put the needs of his family and community above his own, providing for the advanced education of two of his brothers while he himself went straight into every job he could find.¹⁹ The procession of Yale students, graduates, professors, and benefactors present at the funeral surely felt the personal impact and loss of former Treasurer and benefactor Sherman as well.²⁰ It was only three months prior that Sherman had his last public

¹⁵ Edwards, "Funeral of Sherman," 15.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid., 16.

¹⁸ Ibid., 20.

¹⁹ Ibid., 17.

²⁰ *Forgotten Founders on Religion and Public Life*, eds. Daniel L. Dreisbach, et al. (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press 2009), 255. Like other officers of the college, Sherman presumably had to subscribe to the Westminster Catechism, the Saybrook Confession of Faith, and, particularly, "give Satisfaction to them [the trustees] of the Soundness of their Faith in opposition to Armenian and prelatical Corruptions or any other Dangerous Consequence to the Purity and Peace of our Churches."

act, laying the cornerstone for South College at Yale.²¹ Sherman not only supported his brother's educations at Yale (to go on to become ministers), but he also taught theology at the school, and advocated for Yale to construct a chapel on campus.²²

To Edwards, the overwhelming legacy of Roger Sherman was his "Profession of religion, which he adorned through his life and motivated his actions."²³ He observed that many have seen Sherman's overflow of study into dialogue with others on theology. Edwards stated that he was "much improved by his observations on the principal subjects of doctrinal and practical divinity."²⁴ Sherman's declaration of faith was matched by a will to defend "doctrines of grace... Therefore in his death, virtue, religion and good men have sustained the loss of a sincere, an able and a bold friend, a friend who was in an elevated situation and who was therefore by his countenance and support able to afford them the more effectual aid."²⁵ Perhaps Edwards recalled some personal aid in this statement as well, as Sherman single handedly kept Edwards in office on multiple occasions.²⁶ Doctrinally speaking, Sherman was an apologist as Edwards attested. In

²¹ Hall, *Creation of the American Republic*, 148. This was on April 15, 1793.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Edwards, "Funeral of Sherman," 18.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 20.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 22; Collier, *Roger Sherman's Connecticut*, 201. Edwards urging Sherman to run for New Haven mayor was one such example of Sherman serving in a prominent position and this being useful for his contacts, church, and at least in Edwards' eyes, the country. Edwards pleaded with Sherman to run to defeat Thomas Howell stating, "If you refuse it...Mr. Howell would certainly be chosen...I cannot bear that the first Mayor of this infant city should be a tory."

²⁶ Sherman, "Letter to Simeon Baldwin, February 4, 1790, New York," in *Collected Works*, 769-770; "Letter to Simeon Baldwin, January 4, 1791, Philadelphia," in *ibid.*, 799; "Letter to David Austin, March 1, 1790, New York," in *ibid.*, 771-773. Sherman essentially kept the Congregation at bay from removing Edwards Jr. on multiple occasions. Loyal to the church authority and hating division or disrespect to elders and authority, Sherman had been slow to convert from Old to New Light in the 1760s, though his beliefs much more closely aligned to the New Light devotion to personal conversion as evidence for church membership. Dealing with Edwards in the 1790s, Sherman appealed to his congregants and defended Edwards' study while also privately encouraging him to be present at the church and in his duties more vigorously. Edwards Jr., while defending the orthodox position of atonement, also participated in controversial debates as a member of the New Divinity movement. For this and various reasons, the Congregation wanted to withhold pay to make Edwards leave, but Sherman petitioned for the Congregation to pay Edwards what he was due.

Sherman's later years, he pursued the topic, having more time to devote to writing on the theological issues he studied throughout his life.

Men of learning and even ministers asked his advice. For instance, Sherman's niece's husband, Justus Mitchell, inquired into Sherman's opinion on an issue of salvation and judgment. Mitchell served as minister of the Church of Christ in New Canaan from 1782-1806.²⁷ He asked Sherman in 1790 about a sermon Sherman's brother (and Mitchell's father-in-law) gave before his death.²⁸ In this exchange, Mitchell not only asked for Sherman's thoughts on his brother's writing and theology, but also for aid in forming a local library and acquiring needed goods for the family. He concluded to Sherman, "excuse my freedom---I want to write with the same freedom as though I were your equal...as if you were parent to us all..." thus showing the familial warmth and loyalty the Old Puritan had for his connections.²⁹

Sherman responded with an answer on man's responsibility for accepting the gospel. He reaffirmed his and his brother's belief that all men are held liable to God's judgment, especially after hearing and comprehending Christian doctrine and awareness of their status as sinners in need of a Savior.³⁰ Sherman also said in this letter that he would continue to aid Mitchell in

²⁷ "Letter from Justus Mitchell to Roger Sherman, January 26, 1790, Canaan," Roger Sherman Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress; *Collected Works of Roger Sherman*, 761- 763. Mitchell married the daughter of Sherman's brother, Josiah Sherman. Sherman had aided Josiah's education at Yale, after which Josiah became a minister in Litchfield, CT.

²⁸ Roger Sherman, "Letter to Justus Mitchell, February 8, 1790, New York," Roger Sherman Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress; *Collected Works of Roger Sherman*, 764. It appears Mitchell was sent this letter by Sherman to publish it, but the former had some concerns about the contents and was wary of distributing it should there be something leading people away from a biblical understanding of salvation. Sherman advises him to use a different copy for the press.

²⁹ "Letter from Justus Mitchell to Roger Sherman," 763.

³⁰ The confusion laid in Josiah Sherman's notes being close to illegible and Roger noted that his brother was perhaps a bit too zealous to be understood. Roger quoted another of his brother's sermons in which Josiah illustrated that though all men are born into sin, with a spiritual disease and impurity, men are still under the law for their actions until they accept Christ's cure for the disease.

providing books and means for beginning a new library in his town.³¹ Confirming Edwards' praise of Sherman's passions, Roger's concern for family, education, and spiritual edification created the fundamental drive for his private and public life.

In addition to conversations with close contacts, those who did not ask his advice sometimes received it anyway when Sherman took fault with the dissemination of unorthodox theological writings. Samuel Hopkins, a "hyper-Calvinist" minister in Newport, Rhode Island, published, in his *An Inquiry into the Nature of True Holiness* (1733), the notion that true Christians should be willing to give up their salvation in submission to God's sovereignty.³² Hopkins also dismissed the notion of self-love as a selfish desire to promote man over God, and concern with one's own soul over concern with Divine sovereignty was contrary to true holiness.³³ Other Christians were outraged at this proposition, but Sherman was the only nonprofessional minister to debate Hopkins on the fine points of his theological framework. Sherman was appalled at this radical theory that an essential qualification of spiritual election was one's willingness to be damned. In a series of letters exchanged between Samuel Hopkins and Sherman, Sherman stated that he read Hopkins' book and contested Hopkins' points on "the nature of self-love" and the idea "that it is the duty of a person to be *willing* to give up his eternal interest for the Glory of God." Sherman argued that self-love is not in and of itself evil, and that Hopkins ill-defined it as something inherently malicious. Sherman remarked that seeking to wish both self and others "the highest possible degree of good and happiness which

³¹ Roger Sherman, "Letter to Justus Mitchell," in *Collected Works of Roger Sherman*, 764- 765.

³² Robert Caldwell, "New England's New Divinity and the Age of Judson's Preparation" in *A Bicentennial Appreciation of the Pioneer American Missionary* (Nashville, Tennessee: B&H Publishing Group, 2012), 31-35. This was the idea of "disinterested benevolence," when one was led by the Spirit to love others and be disinterested in his own selfish desires and wellbeing.

³³ Roger Sherman and Samuel Hopkins, *Correspondence between Roger Sherman and Samuel Hopkins*, 7. Hopkins also had very controversial theology towards the atonement of Christ and imputed sin (the sin on all humanity from Adam and Christ's ability to eternally cover sin and restore relationship with God).

they are capable of enjoying and to rejoice in the Infinite happiness of the Deity” is a very positive way of life, not the greatest sin.³⁴ By this, Sherman demonstrated a sophisticated lay understanding of high theology and noted that the Bible should be the ultimate authority in these matters. He extended this argument to Scripture by noting that the reality of self-love can be loving, which is the basis of why God commands all people to love their neighbor as themselves (Mark 12:31).³⁵ Guiding the public towards morality not only played a role in Sherman’s defense of religious liberty and local-level support for Christianity, but he took this responsibility personally.

Serving as deacon, supporter, and doing other work for ecclesiastical affairs for White Haven church, from which Edwards Jr. preached Sherman’s funeral service, Sherman had written what appear to be drafts of the church’s confession of faith and a church covenant.³⁶ Thus, it is presumable Sherman had a hand in creating the church’s platform. Similar to White Haven’s doctrinal documents, Sherman wrote and sold a “Short Sermon on the Duty of Self Examination preparatory to Receiving the Lord’s Supper.”³⁷

Sherman wrote a sermon on the duty of self-inspection before taking part in communion in 1789. In this work, Sherman affirmed major doctrines and biblical passages that describe the necessity of testing oneself and repenting of sin before partaking in communion. While historians

³⁴ “Roger Sherman to Samuel Hopkins New York, June 28, 1790” in *Correspondence between Sherman and Hopkins*, 8. He extrapolates on this issue stating: “That a God of infinite Goodness can (through atonement) have mercy on whom He will, consistent with the honor of His law and Government and all of His perfections, is a much better ground of hope than the denial of self-love.”

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ “Confession of Faith in Sherman’s Hand”; “Confession of Faith Adopted by White Haven, 1788”; “Church Covenant in Sherman’s Hand, c. 1788”; “Church Covenant Adopted by White Haven, 1796” in *Collected Works of Roger Sherman*, 732-737.

³⁷ Roger Sherman, “A Short Sermon on the Duty of Self Examination preparatory to Receiving the Lord’s Supper,” in *Collected Works of Roger Sherman*, 747-760.

like Christopher Collier cite Sherman's writings on Christianity later in life to mean he only took his faith seriously while approaching death, Sherman's history shows consistent study and examination of theology throughout his life. It is true, though, that Sherman was hurting for money later in life, which may be one of the reasons he published this sermon rather than simply sharing it as he did other materials in letters with friends like Edwards.³⁸

Edwards showed how Sherman's legacy could be seen through public esteem. He cited Sherman's record of holding "so many different offices in civil Government" elected by his citizens, and how he was never voted out of an office once elected, except for a few terms in the Legislature, which, Edwards remarked "we all know, is almost constantly shifting."³⁹ Thus, "both his abilities and his integrity merited their confidence."⁴⁰

While Edwards highly valued Sherman's piety and study of theology, he stated that Sherman's "proper line was politics." Edwards credited Sherman's "acute discernment...sound judgment" and understanding of human nature allowed him to time and attain whatever measures he sought. This "rare talent of prudence...perseverance and his indefatigable application, together with his general good sense and known integrity" combined to form his success.⁴¹ Edwards concluded that Sherman was both privately and publicly given to hospitality, service, and honor. Whether, Edwards stated, "we consider him in public or private life; whether we consider him a politician or a Christian, he was a great and a good man[.] The words of David

³⁸ *Memoir, Autobiography and Correspondence of Jeremiah Mason*, 16 in Boardman, *Signer and Statesman*, 330. Sherman noted that he was not provided with the payments promised for federal and state offices. With his large family to provide for, he sold this sermon to be published. He declined any offers of land from Vermont while working for their statehood but wrote them in his last years that he would not decline the offer being extended to his children.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 21-22.

concerning Abner may with great truth be applied on this occasion; *Know ye not, that there is a great man fallen this day in Israel?*”⁴² His role throughout so many offices, and “ornament to Christianity,” was then a source of rejoicing. Edwards closed his sermon, reminding the gathering that still, “God lives and reigns” and God says he will comfort widows and orphans. Sherman’s death then may be a blessing in some way, as they remember his example and like Sherman, “think more of death and the eternal world...the necessity of preparation for death... by choosing God for their father and by making him their refuge and strength. Thus, their present loss, though great, may be the happy mean of their unspeakable gain.”⁴³ There was not a question among the many Christians in attendance at Sherman’s funeral that he was now in a place released from any pain.

Among the few notable remembrances of Sherman is his tombstone. Today, it is a beautiful large stone next to his grave and family’s plot at the Grove Street cemetery in New Haven. Evidently, the inscription on the Table Ledger (a refurbished version still stands next to the added stone) became illegible by the late 1930s, so a fund of descendants arranged funds to establish a new stone.⁴⁴ This “Roger Sherman Inscription Fund” fulfilled their goal, raising funds and running a ceremony for the event themselves. On Memorial Day 1941, Roger Sherman Boardman (descendant and the second biographer of Roger Sherman), commemorated this unveiling with a speech on Sherman’s contributions. He stated that this day, like the writing of

⁴² Ibid., 23.

⁴³ Ibid., 24.

⁴⁴ “Roger Sherman Inscription Fund,” September, 1940, Sherman Family Letters, New Haven, CT Museum.

his biography, fulfilled a dream, but “it seems what may be recorded about Sherman, doesn’t stay finished.”⁴⁵

Speaking on the eve of the Second World War, Boardman stated that Sherman’s life served as a lesson for troubling times, and his character is a necessity to endure through war and attacks on liberty. He continued, “we need those traits which Roger Sherman possessed and laid on the altar of his country...courage, self-reliance, readiness to sacrifice...yet possess a constant, determined faith in the providence of God and the ultimate triumph.” Concluding, Boardman encouraged his family members, and surely hoping, posterity, that this “patriotic service” is an homage to the forebears and fallen soldiers of American history, whom “we recall on this Memorial Day, to whom we owe our dearly bought liberties, and not least among them him to whom we here pay tribute-ROGER SHERMAN.”⁴⁶ Boardman seems to almost echo his ancestor who said, “Sad will be the day when the American people forget their traditions and their history, and no longer remember that the country they love, the institutions they cherish, and the freedom they hope to preserve, were born from the throes of armed resistance to tyranny, and nursed in the rugged arms of fearless men.”⁴⁷ Sherman would thus surely be fond of this gathering and their speeches, though he would probably have deflected such attention to someone else.

The tombstone at the Grove Street cemetery now reads:

In Memory of the Honorable Roger Sherman, Esquire. Mayor of the City of New Haven and Senator of the United States, he was born at Newtown in Massachusetts, April 19th 1721, and died at New Haven July 23rd AD 1793, Aged LXXII, Possessed of a strong clear penetrating Mind, and singular perseverance. He became the self-taught Scholar eminent for Jurisprudence and Policy. He was nineteen years an assistant and 23 years a judge of the Superior Court in high Reputation. He was Delegate in the first Congress

⁴⁵ “Roger Sherman Boardman at the Unveiling of a New Stone with Original Inscription at Grave of Roger Sherman, Grove Street Cemetery, New Haven,” Memorial Day-May 30, 1941, New Haven Museum and Archives.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ “Roger Sherman and The Declaration,” MadisonLiberty.org, <https://madisonliberty.org/2019/07/04/we-maintain-the-declaration/>.

signed the glorious act of Independence many years displayed superior Talents & Ability in the National Legislature He was a member of the general Convention and served his Country with fidelity & honor in the House of Representatives and in the Senate of the United States. He was a Man of approved Integrity a cool discerning Judge prudent, sagacious Politician a true faithful and firm Patriot. He ever adorned the profession of Christianity which he made in Youth and distinguished thro Life for public usefulness and died in the prospect of a blessed immortality.⁴⁸

Sherman's familial line produced several men that carried on Sherman's goals and service. For instance, his grandson Roger Sherman Baldwin and John Quincy Adams would work together, extending the Adams-Sherman friendship into several generations. Adams and Baldwin defended the captured Africans in the *Amistad* case, justifying their "mutiny" against their Spanish captors. As Mark Hall writes, "Sherman, the opponent of slavery, would have been proud..."⁴⁹ In addition to Sherman's tombstone, a family effort, only a few other public displays honor the Puritan Patriot.

His primary portrait, now in the Yale University Art Gallery (not on display), was painted in 1775 by Ralph Earl. An early work of Earl, it is not as detailed and demonstrates a limited grasp on perspective, but somehow it fits Sherman. He sits in a Windsor armchair, "wearing a simple muslin cravat and an old-fashioned homespun suit," with "his awkward pose and plain clothing." The work itself signals his devotion to the American identity, "his unambiguous

⁴⁸ "Roger Sherman Grave Marker," New Haven Grove Street cemetery.

⁴⁹ Hall, *Sherman and the Creation of the American Republic*, 147; Boardman, *Signer and Statesman*, 332, footnote 25; Sherman Genealogy, William Tecumseh Sherman's Genealogical Research, in "Sherman Family Records," New Haven Museum & Archives; "John Sherman: A Featured Biography," Senate.gov, https://www.senate.gov/senators/FeaturedBios/Featured_Bio_Sherman.htm. Other notable relatives and descendants include Roger Sherman Jr. who served in the Connecticut Assembly, Sarah Sherman's husband Samuel Hoard (Connecticut lawyer and statesman), Roger Sherman's nephew Roger Minott Sherman (lawyer and statesman), and son-in-law Jeremiah Day (Yale President and Reverend). Sherman's family also featured many Yale graduates, including his brothers (whose education he sponsored), Roger Sherman Loomis (a literary scholar of the 1900s), and others. Readers will recognize the famous Civil War era figures of General William Tecumseh Sherman and his brother John Sherman as notable descendants. John Sherman was a Senator, Secretary of the Treasury under Hayes and Secretary of State under McKinley as well as author of the Sherman Antitrust Act. W.T. Sherman wrote New Haven contacts to confirm his bloodline connection.

rejection of continental elegance and, by extension, European values.”⁵⁰ Other paintings of Sherman are copies based off of Earl by artists in training, and there is a contemporary portrait painted in the 1980s in the New Milford Town council room. On the national scale, Sherman has a statue sculpted by Chauncey B. Ives in 1872, in the vaulted space beneath the Capitol rotunda, known as the Crypt.⁵¹ This positioning however limits the public recognition of a figure so prominent in his own day.

The disparity of his contributions to his remembrance is so vast that modern scholars should look at this gap in the historiography like a hole in a boat, threatening to bring down the whole telling of the American founding. With only four biographic monographs on Sherman, (published with wide gaps in timing: 1896, 1938, 1973, and 2013), Sherman has been delegated to footnotes and afterthoughts. The reasoning behind this is worthy of examination as well.

Sherman did not live to hold an important position in the executive, and based on his advocacy for a strictly limited executive branch, it is questionable if he would have accepted such a position. He was not a “flashy person” but rather a man of few words. Not a stirring orator, but a man of pragmatic action. It can also be argued that Sherman comes from a state often overlooked in most diplomatic analyses of the Revolution. When Connecticut is addressed in the founding, it is most often from a look at her Generals and figures like Nathan Hale, Israel Putnam, Ethan Allen and Benedict Arnold.

With his relevance in matters of the founding, it is also surprising and potentially detrimental to accurate investigation of the founders’ positions that he is left out of modern

⁵⁰ “Roger Sherman (1721–1793, M.A. [Hon.] 1768), Ralph Earl Portrait, 1775,” Yale University Art Gallery, <https://artgallery.yale.edu/collections/objects/2448>.

⁵¹ “Roger Sherman Statue,” Architect of the Capitol, <https://www.aoc.gov/explore-capitol-campus/art/roger-sherman-statue>.

jurisprudence on issues like the first amendment. Mark Hall argues that a potential explanation for this is his unpopular views in the modern climate. His dedication to the church advocated less of a “wall of separation” and more of a helping hand. The threat of religious tyranny was such that Sherman did not even want the federal government to have any related enumerated power. This idea of a quiet life and limited government, and state sovereignty holds very different to the modern understanding of complete separation of church and state, political celebrity, and the vast scope of the military-industrial complex. Perhaps for this reason in Supreme Court cases on the first amendment since 1947, jurists have made historical references to Madison 189 times, Jefferson 112, and Sherman only 3.⁵² Yet he was the only founder of this group to play a part in drafting, passing, and arranging the 1st Amendment.

The quote from Judge Ingersoll, recorded by Yale President Timothy Dwight, then stands out all the more. Dwight recorded Ingersoll saying of Sherman, “He had no fashionable opinion and could never be persuaded to swim with a tide. Independent of everything but argument he judged for himself and rarely failed to convince others that he judged right.”⁵³

Those who value and remember Sherman have much more to say on his legacy than the humble statesman had to say about himself. Historian William Garrott Brown poignantly reflected that

A single brilliant exploit in the field, a single eloquent sentence on some dramatic occasion, would doubtless have done more to keep alive the memory of a man like Ellsworth or his colleague Sherman, than all the patience, judgment, energy, and devotion with which through many weary weeks and months, they gave themselves to the things

⁵² Mark David Hall, “Jeffersonian Walls and Madisonian Lines: The Supreme Court’s Use of History in Religion Clause Cases,” *Oregon Law Review* 85, no. 563 (2006): 568-569. Hall, *Sherman and the Creation of the American Republic*, 145. Additionally, there have only been 21 cumulative references to all other First Congress members in 1st amendment cases.

⁵³ Mark David Hall, “Roger Sherman and the Creation of the American Republic,” New Haven Museum, June 25, 2021, YouTube video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ORbIfvP8tH8&t=1550s>.

which no one wished to do, yet which must be done, and could only be done by men of first-rate ability.”⁵⁴

As Mark Hall closed his 2013 biography of Sherman, “Sherman was not a radical thinker, a great author, or a stirring orator---realities that diminished his contemporary and future fame.

Nevertheless, anyone who wishes to understand America’s founding cannot afford to ignore the contributions this old Puritan made to the formation of a new nation.”⁵⁵

John Adams, with his detailed records of Congressional proceedings and characters deemed Sherman the “Mount Atlas of Independence.” Upon his death, Ezra Stiles (another former Yale President) stated that “a bright Luminary set in New Haven... He went thro’ all Grades of public Life & grew in them all & filled every Office with Propriety, Ability, & tho’ not with showy Brilliancy, yet with that Dignity which arises from doing every Thing perfectly right...He was an extraordinary Man---a venerable Uncorrupted Patriot!”⁵⁶ In every way accomplished, in high regard, leaving a legacy to his family, state, and nation, Sherman deserves a place in the American historical dialogue, as a forgotten founder no longer.

⁵⁴ William Garrott Brown, “Oliver Ellsworth in the Continental Congress,” *American Historical Review*, X, 763 (July 1905).

⁵⁵ Hall, *Sherman and the Creation of the American Republic*, 153.

⁵⁶ Ezra Stiles, *Lit. Diary*, III (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1901), 499-500.

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Appendix A¹

Roger Sherman Continental Congress Committees

1775-1780 (Pre-Confederation)

1774: To state the rights of the Colonies

1775: Ways and Means for Militia's Defense

Considering the Susquehanna Company

New Hampshire Forming local government

Considering Treaty with the Indians by commissioners of the Northern Department

Consider papers from Mass. General Court

Inquire into Frauds in army contracts

Inquire into the needs of the inhabitants of Nantucket for fuel and provisions

1776: May 6: Ways and Means to get 10 million dollars

Prepare regulations and restrictions on trade of Colonies after 1st of March next year

Consider letter of Gen. Washington (January 19)

To consider best method of subsisting New York troops, etc.

Consider orders given by naval committee to Commodore Esek Hopkins

May 25: Concert plans with General Washington, Gates, Mifflin for ensuing campaign

June 11: Committee of 5 for Declaration

June 12: Prepare Articles of Confederation (1 representative per colony)

June 13: Board of War & Ordinance established

~John Adams, Roger Sherman, Benjamin Harrison, James Wilson, Edward Rutledge

¹ * Information from Boardman, *Signer and Statesman*, 348-356. There are other committees Sherman served on which can be found on the Library of Congress's Website: "Records of the Continental and Confederation Congresses and the Constitutional Convention," National Archives, <https://www.archives.gov/research/guide-fed-records/groups/360.html>.

June 24: Committee Inquiring into Cause of the Miscarriage, prepare instructions for committee appointed to go to **Canada**

Sept. 20- Committee of 3 to visit HW and inquire into the **Army's Status and Best Means for Supplying It**

Roger Sherman early advocacy of Compromise Plan and Vote taken 2 ways Colonies and Individuals (Majority of Both)

Consider counterfeit bills submitted by NJ delegates

Consider letters from Washington & others; prepare address to foreign mercenaries; and other matters

Consider letter of Joseph Trumbull, commissary general (Sept 7)

Repair to HQ and enquire into state of army

1777: February 11: Committee of 7 to **devise ways and means to support credit of the Continental Congress & Supply Treasury with \$**

March 13: Committee of 5 to confer with **General Gates on the general state of affairs**

April 23: Committee of 6 to Consider means of speedily **Reinforcing** General Washington's army

June 3: Committee of 3 to devise means to **supply army with shoes, hats, and shirts**

June 5: **Added to the Marine Board**

Placed on Board of War

Regulating several boards of business

Prepare resolution to regulate impressing of wagons & horses for public service

Consider proceedings of committee from 4 New England states

Consider resolution regarding Washington's proclamation to require British sympathizers to withdraw within enemy's lines

Devise ways and means of supplying army with fresh beef

1778: Committee of 3: **Instructions to commissioners to foreign courts**

Committee of 5: Consider the **report of the committee of \$**

Committee of 3: Plan for **procuring reinforcements** to supply the place of men whose term of service would expire in the winter

12 Oct 78: Blue law recommendations to states

16 Oct: no actor may hold US office

Examine evidence & state charges against general officers in Northern department when Ticonderoga was evacuated

Consider report from Board of War relative to managers of lottery

Consider letter of June 5 from la Fayette

Placed on Board of Treasury

Consider matters related to cloathier general's department (GW's letters of Aug. 3-4)

Placed on committee of arrangement (of army)

Consider Board of War's order on clothing return & report of committee on GW's Aug 4 letter

Consider report of committee on finance

Consider letter of Commissary General Jeremiah Wadsworth

Investigate truth of report that Saratoga prisoners were granted paroles for \$ considerations

Investigate charges of fraud in quartermaster general's department

Elected to Board of War [served Nov. 4-Dec. 16]

1779: Committees of Indian Affairs

Consider **report of the Board of Treasury on Finance**

Created Treasury board

Devise further **ways & means for supplying the Treasury**

23 June 1780: Became **member of the Treasury Board**

Wait on minister plenipotentiary of France to congratulate him on birth of a princess

Enquire into establishments & expenses of boards, dpts, etc.

Consider plans offered in consequence of report of Board of Treasury

Consider remonstrance from NJ

Examine person whom Laurens told Congress had important intelligence

Prepare instruction for minister to negotiate with Spain for permission for US to take salt from Sal Tortuga

Consider and report sums to be paid into Continental Treasury to secure fifteen million dollars

Consider report from council & general assembly of NJ

Placed on Committee of Post Office

Consider letter of Nov 24 from Don Juan de Miralles (Spanish Arms dealer who became friends with George Washington during the war)

Committee of memorial of general officers relative to allowances

Consider letter from president and council of Pennsylvania-to-Pennsylvania delegates

Consider letter from GW of Dec 15

1780: Committees on Western frontiers

Consider papers from governing bodies of MD, NY, VA and to report opinion thereon so far as they respect the W frontiers mentioned

Estimating the expenses of the present and ensuing year & raising/making provision for funding it

On Maryland's request, discussing to the delegates about the Act of Confederation

Placed on Board of Treasury

Consider letter of Jan 3 from Richard Bache, postmaster general

Apportion to states their quotas of bills of credit

Confer with committee from general assembly of PA on supply of flour demanded of PA

Consider letter from president of council of Mass. Bay of June 13

Consider memorials of auditors of army & commissioners of chamber of accounts

Consider letter from Board of War of Jan 31 & letters from Mr. Jean Holker (France), relative to **supplies needed for fleet of France**

Prepare and report recommendation to States to observe the last Wednesday in April as a day of fasting

Confer with Board of War regarding contract that is secret but highly beneficial to the US*

Consider letter from Gen. Washington (March 26)

Consider plan for conducting quartermaster-general's department

Placed on Board of Treasury

Consider report of committee on letter from Governor Trumbull of June 8

Consider report of committee on sale of Spanish vessel

Consider terms on which Timothy Pickering should serve as quartermaster-general

Consider report from the Board of War regarding department of commissary and military stores

Report salaries of judges of the court of appeals and others, and payment for them

Estimate expense of present & coming year & provide ways and means for supply

Devise ways and means to prevent further issues of certificates, etc.

Consider motion regarding cession of Western lands by VA, NC, GA (Chairman)

Consider motion of NY Delegates regarding relief of the treasury of NY

Placed on Committees on Ways & Means, Post Office & Treasury

Confederation Congress

1781: Placed on the committee of the week for June 11

To consider report of Board of Treasury regarding burning bills of the old emission

To consider report of Board of War on allowance for depreciation to staff

To consider resolutions for improving efficiency of the Navy

To confer with Robert Morris, superintendent of finance, regarding letter of Morris, of June 28

On election of a Secretary of Marine

To consider report of the Board of Admiralty

To consider letter from the president of New Hampshire of June 20, regarding the New Hampshire grants [Vermont]

To consider letter of General Washington of August 8 regarding exchange of General Burgoyne and other prisoners

To consider report of Board of Treasury regarding Continental money

To consider letter from Silas Deane of May 15

To prepare and report a Thanksgiving proclamation

To confer with minister plenipotentiary of France regarding memorial and letters from said minister and report

To inspect Treasury accounts

To consider letter of Sept. 21 from superintendent of finance regarding hospital department

To consider report of Board of Treasury regarding du Coudray claims

To take order respecting temporary safekeeping of Treasury papers until elected officers qualify for post

To consider papers relative to order on Dr. J. Witherspoon regarding money due U.S. from prisoners to be paid for educating Indian youth at Princeton College

To apportion quotas for War Department and civil list to the several States of \$8,000,000

To consider letter of Oct. 13 of Captain John Barry regarding navy court martials

1784: To consider report of Robert Morris as superintendent of finance

To consider powers of the committee of States

To report requisitions on States for interest payments on national debts

To appoint a deputy secretary for foreign affairs.

To consider motion of E. Gerry regarding foreign affairs office and papers

To consider letter of Jan. 31 from Governor George Clinton (New York) regarding garrison for Western posts

To consider letter of paymaster-general J. Pierce regarding claims of officers for half pay

On accepting Virginia cession of Western lands

To devise ways and means to discharge part of public debt

On Western claims, recommending their transfer to the U.S.

To consider letters of Franklin of Nov. 1 and Dec. 25, 1783

To consider letter of Arthur Lee of March 10 [1784] regarding compensation for services

To consider letter from Baron Steuben regarding Lt.-Col. Ternant

To consider letter of New York delegates regarding New Hampshire Grants and Vermont controversy

To consider education of Hugh Mercer, son of General Mercer

To consider letter of Oliver Wolcott and R. Butler of April 29, commissioners for India treaty

To consider petition of Dr. William Gordon to have access to documents in government archives for writing history

Placed on committee of States

To Consider reports on Wyoming Territory adjudication at Trenton, November 1784

To consider petition from Massachusetts regarding appoint of court to decide boundary between their own state and New York

To consider Jacob Read's motion regarding troops for the north-western frontier

To consider letter from the Minister of France of May 5 regarding Charleston Consulship

To consider accounts of the State of Pennsylvania

Federal Congress

First Congress: 1789-1791 (Representative)

First Session

Committee on standing rules and orders of House proceedings

To confer with committee of Senate to prepare system of rules to govern the two houses in case of conference and to regulate the appointment of chaplain

To confer with the committee of Senate on the proper style or titles to be annexed to the office of President and Vice President

To prepare an address to express to the President congratulations on his unanimous election

To confer with Senate committee on disagreement regarding titles for President and Vice President

To consider and report on the state of unappropriated lands in the Western territory

To report bill for regulating collection of duties on imports

To consider proposed amendments to the Constitution

To arrange amendments adopted by Congress for submission to the States

To manage a conference with the Senate on amendment to bill providing for compensation of members and officers of both houses (Chairman)

To prepare bill to amend act regulation duties on ship tonnage and imported goods (Chairman)

On joint committee of both houses to wait on President to request recommendation for a day of public thanksgiving

Second Session

To examine journal of first session and report such matters of business as were then depending and undetermined

To confer with committee of Senate regarding uniform rule of procedure as to unfinished business of previous session (Chairman)

To consider bill to create a census

Placed on committee of elections

To secure copyright of books to authors and proprietors

To consider memorial of Robert Morris

To inquire into reports and expenditures of public moneys during administration of R. Morris (Chairman)

To report bill embodying certain adopted resolutions on the public debt

To prepare bill or bills to carry out adopted resolutions on import duties

Third Session

To prepare for establishing post offices and post roads of the United States (Chairman)

To consider memorial of public creditors, holders of loan-office certificates (Chairman)

Second Congress: 1791-1793 (Senator)

First Session

To report bill for determining time for choosing electors of the President and Vice President, and day for voting and method of transmitting votes to seat of government

To consider House of Representatives bill entitled "An Act making appropriations for support of government for 1792"

To consider memorials of Illinois and Ouabache land companies

To consider bill for bank and other cod fisheries, and for regulation of fisherman employed therein

To consider with committee of House of Representatives business necessary for present session, and what may be deferred to next session

To consider bill to alter time for holding certain circuit courts of United States, with instructions regarding rotation in attendance of judges

To consider expediency of bill respecting fugitives from justice and from service of masters

To consider H. of R. bill authorizing of lands to Ohio Company

To consider H. of R. bill relative to compensation of officers employed in collecting duties of imposts and tonnage

Placed on committee on enrolled bills

Second Session

To consider H. of R. bill providing for widows and orphans of persons killed by Indians under sanction of flags of truce

To consider H. of R. bill providing for regulation of claims to invalid pensioners

To consider bill explaining and amending act enabling officers and soldiers of the Virginia line, on Continental establishment, to obtain titles to lands lying northwest of the river Ohio