

*The*  
ELEVENTH GOVERNOR  
*of*  
C O N N E C T I C U T  
*was*  
JOSEPH TALCOTT

A son of Connecticut by birth and  
the first scion of the common-  
wealth to enter its politics in youth  
and through years of faithful service  
to receive steady promotion until  
he became governor of the colony

J O S E P H

T A L C O T T

**J**OSEPH TALCOTT was the first person to occupy the office of governor who was born in Connecticut.

John Talcott, his grandfather, was a member of the committee that sat for the first time with the Court of Magistrates in 1637, and he was deputy every year following until 1659. He was also an assistant and treasurer of the colony. His son, the governor's father, was treasurer of the colony and resigned in order to take command of the troops raised by Connecticut to participate in King Philip's War. He was one of the patentees named in the charter, and died full of honors July 23, 1688.

Joseph Talcott was born in Hartford, November 11, or 16, 1669, and was the fourth son of Colonel John Talcott and Helena Wakeman. His first appearance in public was when he petitioned the General Assembly in 1691 against the division of his father's property in Hartford. He claimed possession of all the real estate by right of primogeniture. At the age of twenty-three years, in 1692, Talcott was chosen selectman of Hartford, and in 1697 he was re-elected. From that time he held many offices in the colony.

When the alarm of the Indian war flashed through Hartford and the colony in 1704, Lieutenant Joseph Talcott was appointed on a

committee "to proportion and lay out to each person how much they shall make of the fortifications agreed on to be done on the north side of the river."

He was also for twenty years a member of the committee which managed the affairs of the Hopkins Grammar School in Hartford. In October, 1697, Talcott was appointed ensign of the Train Band in Hartford, "on the north side of the riverette," and also held various military offices until he was elected governor. In fact, he spent so much time in looking after military affairs of the colony that the General Assembly in 1724 voted him the sum of fifteen pounds "to be paid to his Honor out of the public treasury for his good services in that affair." First chosen as a deputy from Hartford in 1708, he was then elected speaker of the lower house in the May session of 1710, and was made an assistant May, 1711. This latter office he held until elected deputy governor in October, 1723. In 1725 he was chosen governor and held the office during the next seventeen years, until 1742.

Governor Talcott's service to the courts of the colony was extensive and able. In May, 1721, he was appointed judge of the Supreme Court, and was also chief judge of the County Court and judge of the Probate Court for Hartford county for a long course of years.

During the long administration of Governor Talcott the chief thing which attracts attention in the history of the colony was its

constant growth by the establishment of new towns. The town of Willington, destined to become the birthplace of one of the most famous of early American writers, started with twenty-seven inhabitants. The settlement of Somers, Cornwall, Salisbury, Canaan, Kent, Goshen, Torrington, Winchester, New Hartford, Hartland, Colebrook, Union, Barkhamsted, East Haddam, and New Fairfield, followed in rapid succession, and demonstrated the thriving condition of the community they enlarged. Governor Talcott died October 11, 1741, and was buried in the old cemetery in the rear of the Center Church at Hartford.

In commenting on Governor Talcott's career a writer has said : "In summing up Governor Talcott's character we may say that while not in any way a brilliant man he displayed sterling good sense, great faithfulness in performing the duties of his station, excellent judgment in managing the affairs entrusted to him, and a disinclination to follow extreme measures in any direction."

He left a large family, and many distinguished descendants have not allowed the luster of the name to grow dim.