

for you from J. Tullon

HISTORIC PLACES to VISIT...



THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR OFFICE

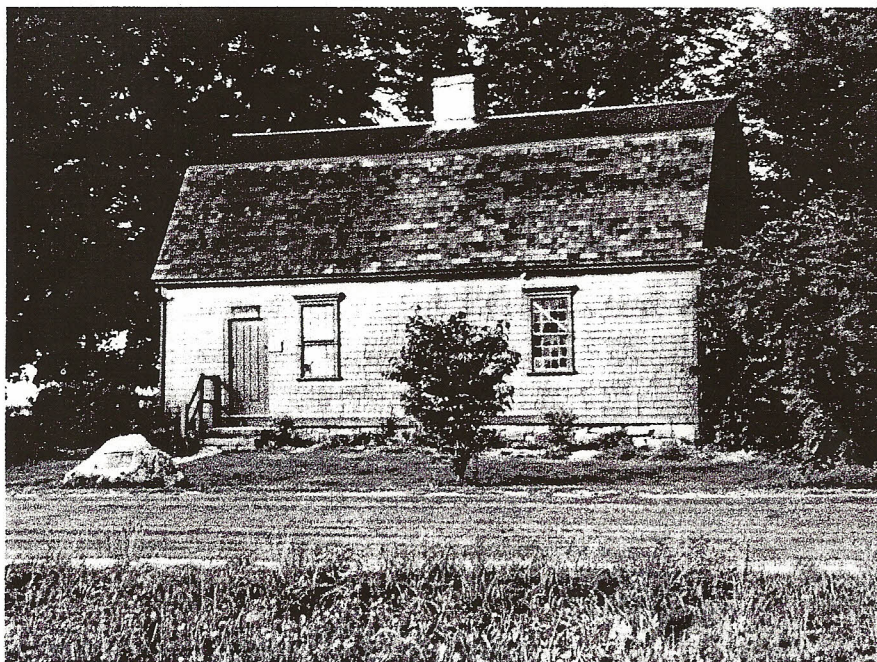
The Connecticut Society owns and partially maintains this remarkable structure in Lebanon that witnessed visits by leading figures of the Revolution. Its fascinating history is capably traced by Ray Henshaw, Secretary of the Society.

The story of the War Office begins with the purchase of a piece of land from Owanecho, Sachem of the Mohegan Tribe of Indians in 1698. This land, which is now a part of Lebanon, along with several other towns and villages became a part of a County called Windham in May, 1726.

The author, Charles Burr Todd, said of Lebanon: "The ashes of the past rest here undisturbed."

years of office, 1770 to 1784, there were 719 meetings in the building with the Council and the Committee of Safety.

The site of the War Office is one-quarter mile north of the "Brick Church" on Lebanon Green, listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The Green is at the intersection of State Highways 207 and 87 — the "four corners." A flag pole on the opposite side of West Town Street marks the location



Lebanon was the birthplace and home of Jonathan Trumbull, an early Connecticut Governor. It was the location of his counting house, several farms and a store. Half of the store became the War Office at the start of the Revolutionary War and was the base for receiving and shipping supplies to the Militia and the Continental Army, including troops at Boston. Author Todd has also said that the Office is as historic in its way as Faneuil Hall in Boston and the State House in Philadelphia. During the Governor's

of the building in which many vital decisions were made during Revolutionary War days, concerning the logistics of supplies as well as questions of strategy and policy.

This unique structure, timber-framed, of mortise and pin construction, with hip roof, was half store and the other half the once-upon-a-time office of the Connecticut Committee of Safety, doubling also as the Federal War Office. It is now rigidly contained within a stone and mortar wall approximately 40 x 100 feet.

Among many other visitors, General Washington, Adams, Hancock, Jefferson, Putnam, Greene and Rochambeau came here for meetings and consultation. In these quarters, an espionage system, which saved Connecticut from subversive measures by Tories, was conceived. Heat was and still is supplied by a centrally located fireplace and chimney. A plaque over the fireplace lists the names of many American Patriots who contributed their efforts to the cause of Independence. It must be mentioned that there is a primitive outside "facility" in northwest corner of the lot. Even today, there is no water or electric lights.

It is time to jump from the 1700s to 1891. These are excerpts from Volume 41, page 366 of the Lebanon records: "One Bethiah N. Wattles of Lebanon, the widow of John Wattles, on the 10th of March 1891 in consideration of \$1.00 did give, grant, bargain, and confirm unto Jonathan Trumbull of Norwich a piece of land with a building thereon, known as the War Office, in trust for the Connecticut Society of the Sons of the American Revolution with power to convey same as the Society shall direct."

On the 25th of March, 1891, Jonathan Trumbull duly transferred this property by Quit Claim Deed to the Connecticut Society and had this recorded in Book 39, on page 257. A report of the Annual Meeting of the Society held in the State Capitol Building in Hartford on May 11, 1891 included the following Resolution: "That this Society meet in Lebanon on the 15th day of June, and by appropriate measures and exercises dedicate the old War Office as a monument of the Revolutionary struggle and as a museum for the preservation of Revolutionary relics and records."

And now to the present. The maintenance and utilization of this historic building has become a joint venture. In general, the Connecticut Society maintains the building exterior; The Lebanon Historical Society takes care of the interior; and the DAR provides personnel for opening the doors to visitors and overseeing activities on Saturday afternoons (1:30 to 5:00) from Memorial Day to October 10. June is the peak month, with bus loads of school children arriving, frequently in groups of 40 to 50.

The guest book register shows guests from as far away as California, as well as visitors from England and Germany. In addition to the echoes of the past that can be clearly heard (figuratively), there is a display of artifacts including Colonial tools. An admission fee of 25 cents is charged those over 14 years of age. It is estimated that about 500 people a year pay homage to this relic of our Revolutionary War.

As an interesting sidelight, it should be pointed out that a painting of the War Office by Mrs. Dorothea Browne is in the permanent collection of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library at Abilene, Kansas. SARs are invited to view this striking work of art. Advance notice should be given to the Museum Curator prior to a visit to permit bringing the painting out of storage.

GOVERNOR JONATHAN TRUMBULL WAR OFFICE

DURING THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, THE FORMER STORE AND OFFICE WHERE JONATHAN TRUMBULL CONDUCTED HIS MERCANTILE BUSINESS BECAME THE HEADQUARTERS TO PLAN THE DEFENSE OF THE COLONY OF CONNECTICUT LOCATED NEAR THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF THE HARTFORD-NORWICH HIGHWAY (ROUTE 207) AND WEST TOWN STREET. A MARKER LOCATES THE SPOT.

HERE IN THE WAR OFFICE, AS IT CAME TO BE CALLED, GOVERNOR TRUMBULL CONVENED THE COUNCIL OF SAFETY TO DEAL WITH THE DAY-TO-DAY EMERGENCIES. MANY OF THE OVER 1,100 MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL WERE HELD IN THIS BUILDING FROM 1775 TO 1784.

THE GOVERNOR'S EXPERIENCE IN PROVISIONING AND HIS KNOWLEDGE OF SUPPLY LOCATIONS THROUGHOUT THE REGION SERVED HIM WELL WHEN CALLED UPON BY GENERAL WASHINGTON FOR SUPPLIES FOR THE CONTINENTAL ARMY.

MILITARY LEADERS WHO WERE KNOWN TO HAVE MET WITH THE GOVERNOR AND COUNCIL HERE IN THIS BUILDING WERE: GENERALS GEORGE WASHINGTON, HENRY KNOX, ISRAEL PUTNAM, SAMUEL PARSONS, JOSEPH SPENCER, AND JEDEDIAH HUNTINGTON; AND FRENCH ALLIES, MARQUIS de LAFAYETTE, COUNT ROCHAMBEAU MARQUIS de CHASTELLUX AND DUC de LAUZUN.

THE WAR OFFICE IS LISTED ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES. THE BUILDING HAS BEEN OWNED AND MAINTAINED BY THE CONNECTICUT SOCIETY OF THE SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION SINCE 1891.