

JOHN DIGGINS, son of Jeremiah Diggins (or Dickins), Junior, of East Windsor, Connecticut, was born in that parish in 1717, and was prepared for College by his pastor, the Rev. Timothy Edwards.


By 1747 he had settled in Hartford, and in 1753 he removed from Hartford to that part of Middletown, Connecticut, which is now the town of Portland. The title of "Captain" by which he was then known may imply that he had seen military service, or may point to a seafaring experience.

His wife Hannah died in Middletown, June 5, 1754, aged 24 years; and he himself died in Chatham (now Portland), August 20, 1773, at the age of 56.

His second wife, Ann, survived him, with one son and one daughter. She died April 23, 1813, in her 87th year.

AUTHORITIES.

Edwards Memorial, 94. *F. F. Starr*, Windsor Farms, 95.
MS. letter, April 15, 1885. *Stoughton*,



ELIPHALET DYER was born in Windham, Connecticut, September 14, 1721. He was the second child and only son of Colonel Thomas Dyer, a native of Weymouth, Massachusetts, who settled in Windham about 1715, and was often Deputy to the General Assembly; and a grandson of Deacon Joseph and Hannah (Baxter) Dyer. His mother was Lydia, second daughter of John and Mary (Bingham) Backus, of Windham.

After graduation he studied law in Windham, was admitted to the bar in 1746, and settled in practice in his native town. He was already town-clerk; in 1745 had been appointed to a captaincy in the militia; and in 1746 was made a Justice of the Peace. He was chosen Deputy to the General Assembly in May, 1747, in October, 1749, and

at three sessions in 1752 and 53 ; and in the latter year was advanced to the rank of Major. " His real entry into public life was through his connection with the project of establishing a Connecticut Colony in the valley of the Susquehanna. He was an active and influential promoter of this enterprise, an original member of the Susquehanna Company formed in 1753, one of the committee to purchase the Indian title to the land selected for the proposed colony, at Wyoming, and one of the Company's agents to petition the General Assembly, in 1755, for permission to settle on these lands, which were then believed to be within the chartered limits of Connecticut. The operations of the Susquehanna Company were interrupted by the war with France. In August, 1755, Mr. Dyer was appointed lieutenant-colonel of one of the regiments sent by Connecticut to assist in the reduction of Crown Point." He was again in the Assembly in four sessions in 1756-58, and in March, 1758, was made Colonel of a regiment sent against Canada. In the same year he was for the first time put in nomination for the Upper House of Assistants, and after serving for two more sessions as Deputy, was elected an Assistant in 1762, and was continued in that office by annual re-election until 1784.

In August, 1763, he went to England, as agent of the Susquehanna Company, to obtain a confirmation from the Crown of the Company's title to the Wyoming region. He returned the next year, not having succeeded in his mission, though one personal result was his appointment in that year as Comptroller of the Port of New London.

In September, 1765, he was the first-named of the three Commissioners from Connecticut to the Stamp-Act Congress ; and a few days after the dissolution of this Congress, when the Connecticut Assistants met at Governor Fitch's call to assist in his taking the oath to carry out the provisions of the Stamp Act, Colonel Dyer with a majority of the council withdrew, rather than witness what they believed to be an abandonment of the rights of the colonists. At the

next election (May, 1766), the governor and those who had abetted him were left out of office; Colonel Dyer was promoted to a judgeship of the Superior Court, which he held until 1793,—being Chief Judge for the last four years. In October, 1766, as one of the ablest advocates in the Colony, he was appointed by the Assembly, a special agent, to proceed to England and conduct the case of the Mohegan Indians; but he declined the appointment.

He sat in the first Continental Congress, which met in September, 1774, and was the first named in the Connecticut delegation. He was re-elected to each succeeding Congress till 1783,—with the exception of those of 1776 and 1779. When not engaged in Congress, his time was largely occupied with the deliberations of the Governor's Council, and of the Committee of Safety,—on which committee he was placed at its formation, in May, 1775.

He was appointed Brigadier-General of the State Militia in December, 1776, but declined to serve on account of his civil engagements.

He withdrew from public life with his resignation from the bench at the age of 72; but his mental powers continued with unusual vigor until his death at Windham, after a brief illness, May 13, 1807, in his 86th year.

He married, May 9, 1745, Huldah, daughter of Colonel Jabez and Huldah Bowen, of Providence, Rhode Island, who died February 12, 1800, aged 70 years, and having borne issue five sons and one daughter.

Yale College conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Laws in 1787. His services as an earnest, prudent, christian patriot were invaluable; though he was neither brilliant nor eloquent. John Adams, in his caustic sketches of the Congress of 1775, says: "Dyer is long-winded and round-about, obscure and cloudy, very talkative and very tedious, yet an honest, worthy man, means and judges well."

He published (over his initials merely):—

Remarks on Dr. Gale's Letter to J. W. Esq. 1769. 16°, pp. 27.
[A. A. S. Libr. Co. of Philad.]

For the pamphlet to which this was a reply, see above, p. 479.

I have seen no other writings of his except two letters—one, of April, 1775, in the Collections of the Connecticut Historical Society, ii, 209, and one, of November, 1776, in Force's American Archives, 5th Series, iii, 475.

AUTHORITIES.

John Adams, Works, ii, 422. *A. Bradford*, N. England Biography, 156. *Caulkins*, Hist. of New London, 478. Conn. Hist. Society Collections, ii, 138, 142, 235, 239, 347, 350. Documentary Hist. of the Prot. Episc. Church in Conn., ii, 77. *Hinman*, Conn. in the Revolution, *passim*. *Larned*, Hist. of Windham County, i, 286, 561-63; ii, 49, 52, 174, 186, 215, 227, 411. *Miner*, Hist. of Wyoming, 81, 111. *Pease and Niles*, Gazetteer of Conn. and R. I., 206. Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, iii, 174-77. *Reed*, Life of Jos. Reed, ii, 388-89. *Stuart*, Life of Gov. Trumbull, 86, 91. *Weaver*, Hist. of Ancient Windham, 61.

AUGUSTUS ELIOT, third son of the Rev. Jared Eliot (Y. C. 1706), was born in Killingworth, now Clinton, Connecticut, June 18, 1720.

He studied medicine with his father and with his brother-in-law, Dr. Benjamin Gale (Y. C. 1733), and settled in Saybrook, Connecticut, where he died, unmarried, November 29, 1747, aged 27½ years. The inventory of his estate (which was distributed to his brothers and sister) amounted to about £2500. A sermon on the occasion of his death, by his father, was printed.

AUTHORITIES.

Eliot Genealogy, 68.

JOEL EVANS, a younger son of the Rev. David Evans (Y. C. 1713), of Great Valley, Chester County, Pennsylvania, and a brother of Samuel Evans, of the preceding Class, also studied theology, and was licensed to preach on the 17th of September, 1741, by the Presbytery of Philadelphia.