

**A MEMOIR OF DANIEL  
LATHROP COIT  
OF NORWICH,  
CONNECTICUT, 1754-1833**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649346592

A Memoir of Daniel Lathrop Coit of Norwich, Connecticut, 1754-1833 by Various

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.

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**VARIOUS**

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of  
Daniel Lathrop Coit  
of  
Norwich, Connecticut  
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*Privately printed*

Norwich  
The Bulletin Press  
1907  
6.000 H.

*THIS story of the life of Daniel Lathrop Coit, compiled by one of his grandsons, is offered to his descendants who never knew him, as a tribute to his memory.*

*W. C. G.*

*E. S. G.*

*L. G. L.*

*Lowthorpe, Norwich, Conn.  
Christmas, 1907.*

## Daniel Lathrop Coit

**A** WISE man—was it Plutarch who in his time took many lives?—said “it is a desirable thing to be well descended but the glory belongs to the ancestors.”

However desirable it may be to give honor to whom honor is due, it is imperative to limit the number of the ancestors now to be commemorated, lest beginning our family tree, as Lord Chesterfield did, in the garden of Eden with Adam de Stanhope and Eve de Stanhope, we find ourselves burdened with a long list of forbears, of whom it may only be said “they lived and died,” a list scarcely more entertaining than the book of Chronicles. The particular ancestor to whom we are now to pay our tribute of honor is Daniel Lathrop Coit.

Nearly fifty years ago, his young-

est son, with a graceful pen, wrote a brief sketch of his life which was read to his children and grandchildren, assembled in his old home, at the Norwich Bicentennial Celebration in 1859. That sketch we cannot hope to improve, but we may extend and enlarge it, not without regret that, as none of his living descendants can supply any personal reminiscences, we can only collect and arrange such scattered fragments of his history as are found in remnants of his diaries, in faded old letters, and in time-stained family records.

Of his English ancestry we know next to nothing, nor is it probable that our knowledge will ever be increased, unless some enthusiastic genealogist with abundant means and leisure shall undertake the pious task of searching for treasures that must somewhere lie hidden in family or public archives in England.

John Coit, the pioneer of all the Coits in this country, came with his



wife and several children from Glamorganshire, Wales, to Salem, Massachusetts, as early as 1638. From thence he removed to Gloucester, where he became a selectman, and there he remained, says tradition, until he was driven off by Indians. He then came to Saybrook, and, in about 1650, with several other men of Gloucester, established himself in New London, where he died in 1659.

His son Joseph came to New London with him and spent the remainder of his life there, carrying on the business of shipbuilding. He married Martha Harris of Wethersfield, was a deacon in the Church and a constable, and died in 1704.

John Coit, son of deacon Joseph and Martha, born in 1670, died in 1744, married Mehetabel Chandler of Woodstock, in 1695. He lived an honorable life and continued in his father's business as a shipbuilder.

Joseph Coit, son of John and Me-

hetabel, born in 1698, died in 1787, married in 1739, as his second wife, Lydia Lathrop, daughter of Thomas Lathrop of Norwich, and sister of the Doctors Daniel and Joshua Lathrop. Joseph Coit's mother Mehetabel and sister Martha, whose note books and letters are in existence, have been fitly commemorated by the great granddaughters of Mehetabel. Following the family traditions he went to Boston at the age of fourteen, to learn to be a ship-builder, "but likt it not," and having been partly incapacitated by an injury to his foot which "spoilt him for a carpenter" he relinquished the business and went to sea, making nineteen voyages, three before the mast, five as mate, and eleven as master. Subsequently he engaged in various mercantile and commercial enterprises in New London, and was a manager of lotteries chartered by the Colony for public purposes at a time when good men regarded

them as means of beneficence, philanthropy, and grace.

His "daybook," a brief journal of part of his life, now in the Lowthorpe archives, records many pious reflections, his two marriages, the birth of his ten children, his hair-breadth escapes and "remarkable deliverances" from shipwreck and starvation; from lightning when the meeting house was struck, in 1735; and from the smallpox, which he had "so exceeding bad" that it seriously impaired his eyesight and, in his old age, reduced him to almost total blindness.

In 1775, physical infirmities, family ties, and business interests brought him to Norwich, the early home of his wife, where several of his children were already settled. After living for a time in Thomas Leffingwell's house, near what is now the corner of Washington Street and Harland Road, he and his wife made their home in the new house just built by