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14 ALBUM, the Chronicle, Saturday, August 18, 2001

— HISTORY —

The tragic history of Faith Trumbull Huntington

Part two of four

Connecticut Gov. Jonathan Trumbull (1710-85) is one of Lebanon's best-known sons, and his illustrious career tends to overshadow the lives of his children. Trumbull and his wife, Faith Robinson Trumbull, had six children. Joseph (1737-78), Jonathan Jr. (1740-1809), Faith (1743-75), Mary (1745-1831), David (1751-1822) and John (1756-1843).

Jonathan Trumbull Jr., the second son, was a successful politician and merchant. He was governor of Connecticut from 1797 until his death in 1809, and gives his name to Trumbull County, Ohio. In 1777 he began remodeling his Lebanon house, and hired master craftsman, Isaac Fitch, to make the house fit for a gentleman and for entertaining illustrious guests.

George Washington slept at the house in Lebanon on March 4, 1781, en route to Newport, R.I., where the French army was quartered, to confer with General Rochambeau.



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Isaac Fitch added an ell to extend the north parlor into the "great room" where Jonathan Trumbull Jr. entertained his guests, and added a new kitchen ell. He also built a magnificent staircase from cherry wood, and crafted paneling and carvings in the downstairs rooms. His piece de resistance was a piazza, built in 1784, similar to that at Mount Vernon. Jonathan Trumbull Jr.'s home in Lebanon was recalled by his son-in-law, Benjamin Silliman, as a beautiful rural residence.

"The house was not an architectural structure according to the rules of art. It had indeed a colonnade with square pillars in imitation of Mount Vernon. There

were noble trees and ample fields and outhouses and an office detached from the mansion. A wide courtyard separated the house from the office. A long gate, or pair of gates for the admission of carriages seemed to swing almost voluntarily on the hinges and arriving friends drove in with full confidence of a kind and hospitable reception."

The Trumbulls' third child, Faith, was raised in Lebanon, and on May 1, 1766, she married Jedidiah Huntington (1743-1818). He was born in nearby Norwich and graduated from Harvard College in 1763. Huntington joined his father in his profitable West India trading, and then embarked upon a military career in 1769. By the outbreak of the Revolutionary War, Huntington was colonel of the 20th Regiment of Colonial Militia, and rose to the rank of brigadier general in the Continental Army.

Jedidiah and Faith Huntington



Capt. Jonathan Trumbull Jr. and his family. The painting was done by his brother John in 1777.

lived in Norwich, and contemporary letters and observations suggest that Faith Trumbull Huntington suffered from clinical depression, which in the 18th century was referred to as melancholia.

She became greatly concerned that her husband was involved in the Revolutionary War. Faith also seemed incapable of motherhood.

The Trumbull family raised her young son, Jabez, in Lebanon

while she remained in Norwich.

Faith became upset that her husband had left Norwich for the Lexington Alarm in April 1775 without informing her.

To relieve her dark mood, the Trumbull family took Faith to Roxbury, Mass., to be near her husband, but this trip coincided with the Battle of Bunker Hill.

She did not witness the battle, but the dramatic events unfolding around Faith plunged her deeper into despair. To try and improve her mood, Jedidiah arranged for Faith to stay in Dedham, Mass. and receive treatment.

She was greatly looking forward to spending Thanksgiving, 1775, with her husband, but Jedidiah was called away to a military emergency at Cambridge. Tragically, 32-year-old Faith hung herself early the following morning.

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