A BRIEF HISTORY OF
THE CONNECTICUT WESTERN RESERVE.

The Western Reserve of Connecticut lies between the parallels of 41° and 42° 2′ of north latitude, commencing with the western boundary line of Pennsylvania, and extending thence one hundred and twenty miles westward. The entire tract embraces an area of 7,440 square miles, nearly one-third of which is water. If the whole were land, there would be 4,761,600 acres. The land portion is composed of the Counties of Ashtabula, Trumbull, Portage, Geauga, Lake, Cuyahoga, Medina, Lorain, Huron, Erie, Summit (except the townships of Franklin and Green,) the two northern tiers of townships in Mahoning, the townships of Sullivan, Troy and Ruggles in Ashland and several islands lying north of Sandusky.

The portion consisting of water lies between the southern shore of Lake Erie and the 42° of north latitude, and is bounded on the east and west by the same parallels of longitude that form the east and west boundaries of the land portion. There have been several claimants to the land included in the Reserve. In addition to the red man's title, France, England, the United States, Virginia, Massachusetts, New York and Connecticut have all asserted ownership. Connecticut was the most reluctant and tardy of all the contesting states in sacrificing state pretensions for the common benefit. On the 14th day of September, 1786, her authorized delegates in Congress relinquished all the right, title, interest, jurisdiction and claim that she possessed to land within her chartered limits lying west of a line one hundred and twenty miles west of and parallel with the western boundary line of the State of Pennsylvania. The tract of land and water lying west of Pennsylvania for one hundred and twenty miles and between latitudes 41° and 42° 2′ north, was not conveyed—hence reserved by Connecticut and was called the Western Reserve, thus originated the name. As Connecticut's claim included nearly the whole of the northern half of the present State of Pennsylvania, it infringed upon the rights of the people of the latter state or colony, who alleged ownership by virtue of the charter to William Penn granted by James II. of England, in 1681. Both states strove for the occupancy of the disputed soil, and Connecticut sold to certain individuals seventeen townships, situated on or near the Susquehanna River, organized the tract into a civil township, called it Westmoreland and attached it to the probate district and County of Litchfield in Connecticut. Westmoreland representatives occupied seats in the Connecticut legislature. Pennsylvania protested, and when the Revolutionary contest closed, sent an armed force to drive the intruders from the lands. The shedding of blood resulted. The controversy was finally submitted to a Court of Commissioners appointed by Congress, upon the petition of Pennsylvania, as provided in the ninth article of the Confederation, which gave to Congress the power to establish a court for the settlement of disputed boundaries. At a session of the Connecticut Legislature held at New Haven in 1786 and in 1787, it was resolved to offer for sale that part of the Reserve lying east of the Cuyahoga River, the Portage path and the Tuscarawas branch of the Muskingum River, and a committee of three persons was appointed to cause a survey to be made and to negotiate a sale. Nothing, however, was immediately done. On the 10th of February, 1788, certain lands lying within the limits of the Reserve were sold to General Samuel H. Parsons, then of Middletown, Connecticut. This was afterwards known as the Salt Spring tract. (For description of which see page 13.)

In 1795 Connecticut sold all the Reserve, except the Sufferers' Lands and the Salt Spring tract to a number of men who came to be known as the Connecticut Land Company. The Sufferers' Lands, (now known as the Fire Lands) comprises a tract of 500,000 acres, taken from the western end of the Reserve, and set apart by the State Legislature on the 10th of May, 1792, and donated to the suffering inhabitants of the towns of Greenwich, Norwalk, Fairfield, Danbury, New and East Haven, New London, Richfield and Groton, who had sustained severe losses during the Revolution. Upwards of two thousand persons were rendered homeless from the incursions of the British, and their villages pillaged and burned. To compensate them for this great calamity, this donation was made to them. (For description of these lands see page 13.) An account of each sufferer's loss was taken in pounds, shilling and pence, and a price placed upon the lands, and each of the sufferers received land proportioned to the amount of his loss. The greater part of the losses resulted from fire, hence the name, "Fire Lands." A resolution authorizing the sale of the remainder of the Reserve was adopted at a session of the General Assembly of Connecticut, held at Hartford in May, 1795.

The following were appointed a committee to negotiate the sale: John Treadwell, James Wadsworth, Marvin Wait, William Edmonds, Thomas Grosvenor, Aaron Austin, Elijah Hubbard and Sylvester Gilbert. These eight persons were selected, one from each of the eight counties of the state. They effected a sale in separate contracts with forty-eight individuals, realizing for the state the sum of $1,200,000. Most of the purchasers made their bargains each separately from the others, although in some instances several associated together and received their deeds jointly. The contracts were made as follows with

Joseph Howland, Daniel Coit	30,461
Elias Morgan, Daniel L. Coit	51,402
Caleb Atwater	22,846
Daniel Holbrook	8,750
Joseph Williams	15,231
William Lowe	10,500
William Judd	16,250
Elisha Hyde, Uriah Tracey	57,400
James Johnson	30,000
Samuel Mather, Jr	18,461
Ephraim Kirby, Elijah Bordman, Uriel Holmes, Jr	60,000
Oliver Phelps, Gideon Granges	80,000
Solomon Griswold	10,000
William Hart	30,462
Henry Champion, 2nd	85,675
Ashur Miller	34,000
Robert C. Johnson	60,000
Ephraim Post	42,000
Nehemiah Hubbard, Jr	19,039
Solomon Cowles	10,000
Oliver Phelps	168,185
Ashael Hathaway	12,000
John Caldwell, Peleg Sanford	15,000
Timothy Burr	15,231
Luther Loomis, Ebenezer King, Jr.	44,318
William Lyman, John Stoddard, David King	24,730
Moses Cleaveland	32,600
Samuel P. Lord	14,092
Roger Newbury, Enoch Perkins, Jonathan Brace	38,000
Ephraim Starr	17,415
Syvanus Griswold	1,683
Jabez Stocking, Joshua Stow	11,423
Titus Street	22,846
James Bull, Aaron Olmstead, John Wyles	30,000
Pierpont Edwards	60,000
Amounting to	$1,200,000

Before this organized body of men lay the important work of obtaining a perfect title to their purchases, of causing a survey of the lands to be made, of making partitions of the same, and then of inducing colonies of men to undertake the settlement. In order to make sound their title, they must obtain from the United States a release of the government's claim, and to extinguish the title of the Indian, whose right to the soil rested upon the substantial base of actual occupancy. Whatever interest Virginia, Massachusetts and New York may have had in the Western Reserve, had passed to the United States, and if none of the claiming states had title, the dominion and ownership were transferred to the general government by the treaty made with Great Britian at the close of the Revolution. There was, therefore, a very reasonable solicitude upon the part of the Connecticut Land Company lest the claim of the United States would, if issues were made, be proven to be of greater validity than that of Connecticut, the Company's grantor. Another difficulty made itself felt. When an attempt was made to settle the Reserve, it was discovered that it was so far remote from Connecticut as to make it impracticable for that state to extend her laws over the same, or to make new ones for the government of the inhabitants.

Congress had provided in the ordinance of 1787, for the government of the North Western Territory; but to admit jurisdiction by the general government of this part of that territory would be a virtual acknowledgement of the validity of the government's title, and an indirect proof of the insufficiency of the Company's title. The right to such jurisdicton was therefore denied, and Connecticut was urged to obtain from the United States a release of the governmental claim. The result was that Congress on the 28th day of April, 1800, authorized the President to execute and deliver, on the part of the United States, Letters Patent to the Governor of Connecticut, releasing all right and title to the soil of the Reserve, upon condition that Connecticut should, on her part, forever renounce and release to the United States entire and complete civil jurisdiction over the Reserve. Thus Connecticut obtained from the United States her claim to the soil, and transmitted and confirmed it to the Connecticut Land Company and to those who had purchased from it, and for the purposes of government jurisdiction was transferred to the United States.

THE EXTINGUISHMENT OF THE INDIAN TITLE.

At the close of the Revolution the general government sought by peaceable means to acquire the red man's title to the soil northwest of the Ohio. On the 21st of January, 1785, a treaty was concluded at Fort McIntosh with four of the Indian tribes—the Wyandots, Delawares, Chippewas and Ottawas. By this treaty the Cuyahoga and Portage between it and the Tuscarawas were agreed upon as the boundary of the Reserve between the United States and the Indians. All east of the Cuyahoga was in fact ceded to the United States. The Indians soon became dissatisfied and refused to comply with the terms of the treaty. On January 9, 1789, another treaty was concluded at Fort Harmar, at the mouth of the Muskingum, between Arthur St. Clair, acting for the United States, and the Wyandots, Delawares, and Chippewas and Sac nations by which the terms of the former treaty were renewed and confirmed. But only a short time elapsed before the Indians violated their compact. Peaceful means failing, it became necessary to compel obedience by the use of arms. Vigorous means for relief and protection for the white settler were called for and enforced. At first the Indians were successful, but in 1794, General Wayne at the head of 3,500 men, encountered the enemy on the 20th day of August on the Maumee and gained a decisive victory. The Treaty of Greenville was the result. General Wayne met in grand council twelve of the most powerfal northwestern tribes, and the Indians again yielded their claims to the lands east of the Cuyahoga, and made no further effort to regain them. The Cuyahoga River and the Portage between it and the Tuscarawas constituted the boundary between the United States and the Indians upon the Reserve until July 4, 1805. On that day a treaty was made at Fort Industry, by which the Indian title to all the Reserve west of the Cuyahoga was purchased. Thus the Indian title to the soil of the Reserve was forever set at rest, and no flaw now existed in the Connecticut Land Company's claim to ownership of the lands.

SURVEY OF THE WESTERN RESERVE.

The title having been perfected, the Company made preparations to survey the portion of the Reserve lying east of the Cuyahoga. In the early part of May, 1796, the Company fitted out an expedition for this purpose of which Moses Cleaveland was the leader. The company was composed of about fifty men, five of them surveyors, one a physician and the rest chainmen and axemen. By previous arrangement they met at Schenectady, New York, at which point they commenced their journey, ascending the Mohawk in four boats, proceeding by the way of Oswego, Niagara and Queenstown to Buffalo, reaching the soil of the Reserve on the 4th of July, of the same year. The surveyors proceeded to the south line of the Reserve, and ascertained the point where the 41° of north latitude intersects the western line of Pennsylvania. And from the line of latitude as a base meridian, lines five miles apart were run north to the lake. Lines of latitude were then run east and west five miles apart, thus dividing the Reserve into townships five miles square. As the lands lying west of the Cuyahoga remained in possession of the Indians until the Treaty of Fort Industry, in 1805, the Reserve was not surveyed at this time farther west than the Cuyahoga River and the Portage between it and the Tuscarawas, a distance west from the western line of Pennsylvania of fifty-six miles. The remainder of the Reserve was surveyed in 1806.

The surveyors began at the southeast corner of the Reserve, and ran parallel lines north from the base line and parallel lines west from the Pennsylvania line five miles apart. The meridian lines formed the ranges, and the lines

The facts contained in this brief history are in part extracts from an address delivered by W. W. Boynton, at Elyria, O., July 4, 1876, also from the pen of Col. Chas. Whittlesey.