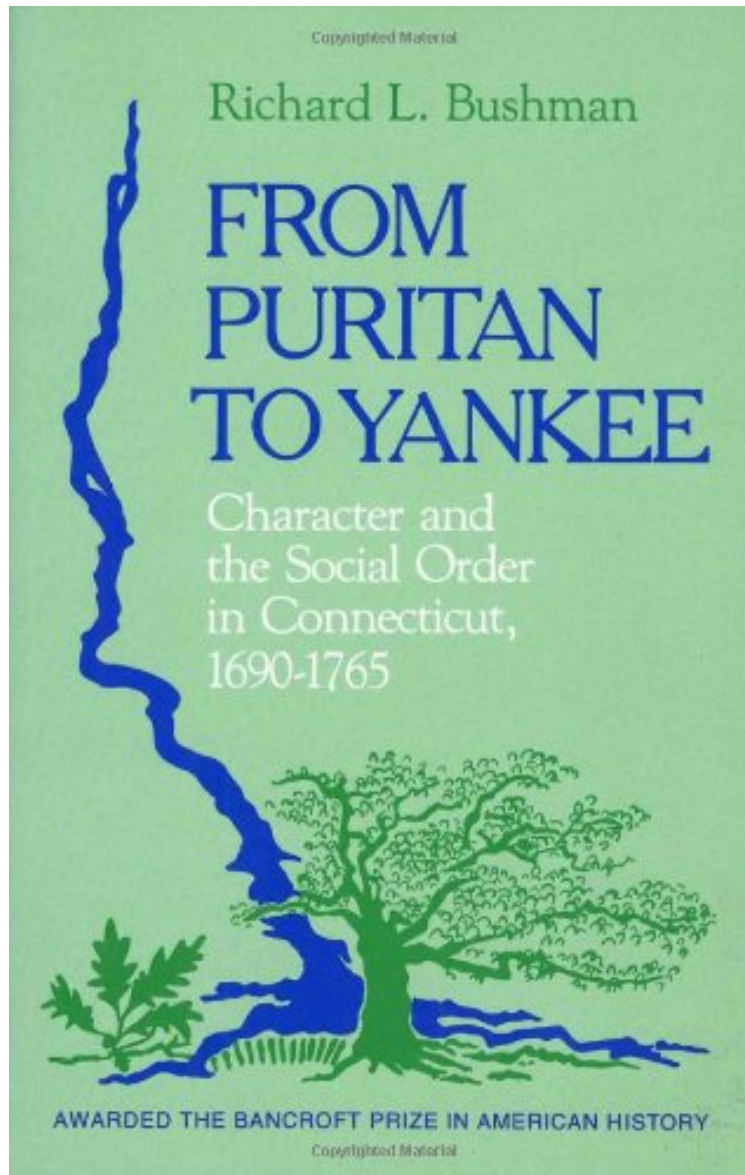


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(Center for the Study of the History of Liberty in America)

From Puritan to Yankee: Character and the Social Order in Connecticut, 1690-1765 (Center for the Study of the History of Liberty in America)

Richard L. Bushman

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Richard L. Bushman : From Puritan to Yankee: Character and the Social Order in Connecticut, 1690-1765 (Center for the Study of the History of Liberty in America) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it

would be worth my time, and all praised *From Puritan to Yankee: Character and the Social Order in Connecticut, 1690-1765* (Center for the Study of the History of Liberty in America):

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. equals its title, from Puritan to YankeeBy jmartinPerhaps the greatest question, at least in the mind of this reviewer, is how did the "character and social order" of the original, founding Puritans, and here especially those of Connecticut, fade into the grey category of "Yankee?" This book goes a long way in helping us to comprehend the question, and move toward an answer. I think Bushman proves his thesis on p. iv: "my thesis is that law and authority embodied in governing institutions gave way under the impact first of economic ambitions and later of the religious ambitions of the Great Awakening." Trade increased population, which moved further away from the towns, where Puritan control was most secure, to the fringes where people could and would ignore the central commands. Thus, the nation has always had the problem of integrating new-comers. The competition between the more settled big towns and the ex-urban fringes often came down to whether or not to issue paper money, and engage in speculation, or not. Of course, much of the divide between Puritan and Yankee can be traced to the Half Way Covenant of 1662, which allowed church members to be quasi-members, and their children baptized, even if the adults could not cite a definitive moment of emotional conversion to Christ. On p. 195, Bushman shows how the Great Awakening, under George Whitefield, taught that salvation does not come through human effort, which submarined the quasi-Pelagian efforts of community control of the Old Light Puritan pastors. One of my favorite quotes is on p. 204, when Brainerd said: "He [Old Light pastor] had no more grace than this chair." On p. 213, Bushman concludes that the ultra conservatism of the original Puritans spawned the liberalism of the next generation, which seems to fit the pattern of at least modern history. Bushman used excellent research of ancient town records to our advantage. 10 of 11 people found the following review helpful. Portrait of Connecticut before the RevolutionBy Brian O'MalleyIn England, the Puritans defied church and state. In America, ironically, the Puritans established colonies which came to emphasize deference to authority. In colonial New England, a rough equality in condition eased most tensions of hierarchy in status. By the eve of the Revolution, however, several factors--religious, political, economic and demographic--worked to rekindle the Puritan tradition of agitation and radicalism. The Protestant emphasis on the authority of individual conscience was revived. Richard L. Bushman explores these developments in Connecticut, providing a colorful social portrait. He brings to life arguments and controversies, illuminating the convictions and feelings of each side. Bushman's work proves very informative and quite readable. 3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. A help for Connecticut genealogistsBy A CustomerThis book is a wonderful addition for the amateur genealogist of Connecticut families. Many things are explained here that flesh out the "facts" gleaned from documents about various family members. I particularly found helpful the discussion on property and town formations.

The years from 1690 to 1765 in America have usually been considered a waiting period before the Revolution. Mr. Bushman, in his penetrating study of colonial Connecticut, takes another view. He shows how, during these years, economic ambition and religious ferment profoundly altered the structure of Puritan society, enlarging the bounds of liberty and inspiring resistance to established authority. This is an investigation of the strains that accompanied the growth of liberty in an authoritarian society. Mr. Bushman traces the deterioration of Puritan social institutions and the consequences for human character. He does this by focusing on day-to-day life in Connecticut--on the farms, in the churches, and in the town meetings. Controversies within the towns over property, money, and church discipline shook the "land of steady habits," and the mounting frustration of common needs compelled those in authority, in contradiction to Puritan assumptions, to become more responsive to popular demands. In the Puritan setting these tensions were inevitably given a moral significance. Integrating social and economic interpretations, Mr. Bushman explains the Great Awakening of the 1740's as an outgrowth of the stresses placed on the Puritan character. Men, plagued with guilt for pursuing their economic ambitions and resisting their rulers, became highly susceptible to revival preaching. The Awakening gave men a new vision of the good society. The party of the converted, the "New Lights," which also absorbed people with economic discontents, put unprecedented demands on civil and ecclesiastical authorities. The resulting dissension moved Connecticut, almost unawares, toward republican attitudes and practices. Disturbed by the turmoil, many observers were, by 1765, groping toward a new theory of social order that would reconcile traditional values with their eighteenth-century experiences. Vividly written, full of illustrative detail, the manuscript of this book has been called by Oscar Handlin one of the most important works of American history in recent years.

At the heart of history lies a vague but undeniable substance known as national character or social character. Richard L. Bushman has had the courage to offer his version of the evolution of the social character of Connecticut. The boldness of the attempt alone would make *Puritan to Yankee* an important book, but it is the general accuracy of its author's perception of the way the mechanism of historical change operates and the specific accuracy of his assessment of the results that makes the book one of the most fruitful historical studies produced in the last few years in any field of

history. (History and Theory) Professor Bushman's study of eighteenth-century Connecticut is a first-rate job of social history. He deals with large questions in satisfying detail. Energy in research is combined with courage in writing. (New England Quarterly) Employing his special training in psychology to advantage, Bushman has skillfully woven into his description and analysis of Connecticut society in the process of change, a bold interpretation of the impact of change upon individual character formation. The author has made a signal contribution to the history of liberty in America. (William Mary Quarterly)