

Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station
New Haven, Connecticut

A HISTORY
of
CONNECTICUT AGRICULTURE

by
E. H. JENKINS
Director Emeritus

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PRELIMINARY

THIS paper is rather a sketch of the course of Connecticut agriculture than a complete history of it.

A history should cover the economic, political and social relations which went with and greatly affected its practice and its prosperity. But such a history would of itself be a volume and not, like this, a single paper among many others relating to the State.

However, great the temptation to discuss the broader aspects mentioned, it has been necessary therefore to confine the work simply to the story of the development of the art of farming, with only the barest reference to the economic and political conditions of its environment.

To set forth the effect on agriculture of the expansion of manufacturing, the embargo and non-intercourse acts, the opening of the west, the development of transportation and the six wars cannot be discussed here.

Yet they all deeply affected the course of agriculture. They were like the buffetings of heavy waves, with agriculture now on the peak and then in the trough of the sea, constantly conning the helm and trimming its sails to avoid shipwreck. Of course this experience is not peculiar to farming; all kinds of business are affected in the same way. But these great disturbances bore with a special severity on the farmer because of his inexperience in transacting business. For more than a century and a half farming was not a commercial business, but a domestic affair of each house-holder, chiefly confined to providing food and clothing for his own family.

Business acumen and the methods of trading have to be learned by long experience and they are a comparatively recent acquisition of the farmer.

