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**THE SETTLEMENT  
of  
NORWALK, CONNECTICUT**

**AN ABSTRACT OF  
A THESIS  
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The story of the settlement of Norwalk, Connecticut between the years 1640-1700 began as the result of a series of circumstances, chief of which was the Pequot Indian War. The coming of English settlers to Hartford, Connecticut brought enmity with the Pequot Indians who had long dominated the area. A series of skirmishes between the Pequots and the English colonists led to the formation of a colonial army to attack the Pequots. After a surprise attack by the colonists succeeded near Mystic the Pequots retreated along the coast until they reached Fairfield. Here the Pequot power was crushed forever.

The war naturally brought many Hartford men to Southwestern Connecticut and one of these was Roger Ludlow who was much impressed by the region. He established Fairfield and went on to explore what is now the Norwalk area. He purchased the land on the eastern side of the present Norwalk River in the year 1640.

Ludlow has long been given credit for the original purchase of land in Norwalk. This idea has since been proven a fallacy due to a difference in the calendar in use at that time. The original purchaser was actually Daniel Patrick, a representative of the newly formed New Haven Colony. He had established a colony at Greenwich and stopped at Norwalk, earlier in the year 1640 than Ludlow did, on the way back to New Haven. At that time he purchased the land on the west bank of the Norwalk River.

Curiously the land remained unoccupied by white men for ten years until, in the year 1651, a group of Hartford citizens traveled down to Norwalk and purchased most of Ludlow's land. Later on they purchased Patrick's land as well.

The first settlers of Norwalk were truly pioneers in every sense of the word. They found the area to be a raw wilderness. They settled in the region now called East Norwalk where there were plains suitable for farming. Like so many early New England colonists they built temporary shelters much like the Indian wigwam and the log dugout. Their primary concern had to be food and they immediately set about the planting of their first crops. Fortunately they found that the area abounded in game and sea food which satisfied their immediate needs.

The meeting house was erected and became the center of their community and home lots were assigned around it according to the social importance of the citizens. The community was made up, for the most part, of people who were not politically important in Connecticut but only sought the opportunity to make a new life for themselves.

Slowly the town grew and prospered moving eventually northward into the area now called Norwalk. Its citizenry grew more affluent and soon larger, more impressive homes were built. The meeting house became the center of community life both politically, educationally, and religiously. Life resembled that in the typical Puritan community. Over the years the townspeople had to solve many problems including boundary disputes with neighboring communities.

In 1675 King Philip's Indian War turned most of New England into a battleground. Norwalk knew the danger of Indian attack but fortunately never experienced it directly except through the men who represented Norwalk in the army.

With the conclusion of the war the town continued to grow and prosper. More elegant furnishings appeared in the homes and the town had a new meeting house, a bridge across its river, a fine minister's house, a corn mill, a saw mill, an ash house and a school. Most of the town's first inhabitants lived to a ripe old age, experiencing little in the way of disease despite the lack of medicines and doctors.

By 1700 Norwalk's period of settlement was completed. The growth of the town was typical of most Connecticut towns and in seeing Norwalk's beginnings we see the pattern established for the formation of many of the New England settlements.