

JOHN BISHOP (1661-1710)
 ABIGAIL WILLETT (-after 1725)

John Bishop, son of James and Mary (Lewen) Bishop (7-54), was born 17 May 1662 at New Haven, Conn. (map #5). He was the sixth child of his parent's seven children. He was two and a half years of age when his mother died after giving birth to his sister, Ruth, who was born in November of 1664. John's father was married again in 1665 to Elizabeth Tompkins and she, no doubt assumed the mother role for her husband's seven children ranging in ages from fourteen years of age to the youngest, an infant in arms. Elizabeth had four more children of her own by John's father, James Bishop.

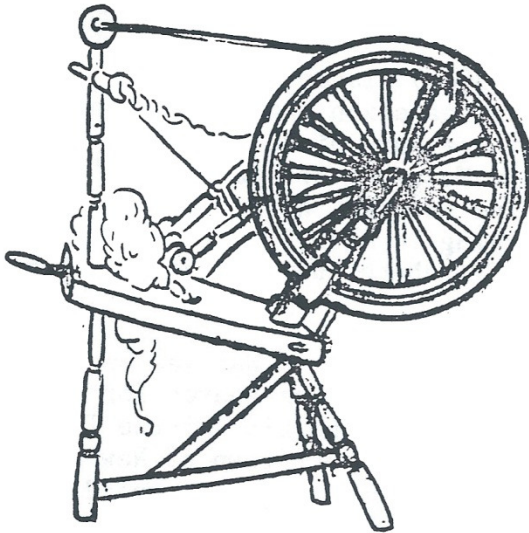
John was fourteen years old when the King Philip's War was waging and we can be sure he felt of the excitement that attended the search for Metacom and the traumatic silence that fell upon New Haven at the time of the Indian chief's trial and execution. John grew to manhood in the port town of New Haven, situated at the mouth of the Quinnipiac River. He saw the town expand and knew of the more inland settlements that were being surveyed and laid out for the increasing numbers of immigrants. However, the Bishops were to remain in New Haven for many generations. John's father was a great public servant and rose to the high office of Governor of Connecticut.

New Haven had many advantages and had been built upon a firm religious foundation. The covenants entered into by the members of the community were very binding and misdemeanors were held as felonious crimes, punishable by strict Puritan methods. The covenants required of the community resolved in all good manners and religious improvement by the strict observance of services on the Sabbath day (see appendix #7).

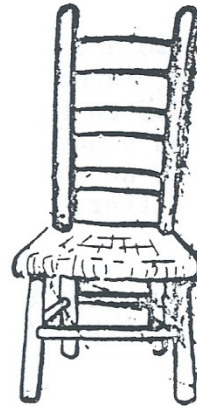
"Though young men were by law forbidden to draw the affections of any maid, without the consent of both parents, guardians, or, in the absence of such, of the nearest magistrate, whether it be by speech, writing, message, company-keeping, unnecessary familiarity, gifts, or any other way, yet every respectable young man knew of some house where he might meet, on Sunday evening, one of the maidens whom he had seen in the opposite gallery at a church in one town or another." ¹

It was probably in this manner that John met Abigail Willett of Hartford. The marriages of the young people were not solemnized by a minister of religion, but, according to the Puritan view of propriety, by a magistrate.

"A marriage implied a new home—perhaps a farm to be cut out of the primeval forest, and a house to be built with lumber yet in the log. A portion of the work had preceded the marriage, but a life-long task remained. The people were generally frugal and industrious, and the women in their sphere were as truly so as the men . . . Besides the house-work, the dairy-work, the sewing, and the knitting, there was everywhere spinning, and in some houses weaving. They spun linen and wool. Many of the settlers had been clothiers in England. . . Every farmer raised flax, which his wife caused to be wrought into linen; and wherever sheep were kept, wool was spun into yarn for the knitting needles and the loom. A young woman who could spin between sunrise and sunset more than thirty knots of warp or forty of filling was in high estimation among sugacious neighbors having marriageable sons. . . The music of the wheel was frequently accompanied with song . . .



Spinning-Wheel



cane-bottom chair

"Private religious meetings were weekday events held in private homes in a neighborhood of those who dwelt nearest together where the people met to give their accounts, one to another, of 'God's gracious work upon them', and prayed together and conferred, to their mutual edification." 2

Every plantation had in it from the first, those persons of polite manners to whom those of less culture looked up to with respect. Seats in the meeting-house were assigned according to social rank without any of the membership displaying disapproval. They seemed to enjoy having those of their members to whom they could show revered respect.

Abigail Willett was born in Hartford, Connecticut and was the daughter of Nathaniel and Hannah (Adams) Willett. (7-58) John and Abigail had eleven children. They are listed in "Families of Ancient New Haven" as taken from the New Haven Vital records:

1. Nathaniel Bishop, b. 1691, bp. 1691; died soon
2. Abigail Bishop, b. 5 June 1692, bp. 19 June 1692
3. John Bishop, b. 1 Nov. 1693, bp. 5 Nov. 1693; removed to Coventry
4. Nathaniel Bishop, b. 5 Oct. 1695, bp. Oct. 1695; died 1743, ae. 48; probably without issue
5. Willett Bishop, b. 17 Oct. 1697, bp. 21 Nov. 1697, died 1749; md. 17 Mar. 1729-30, Elizabeth Sturdevant, she md. (2) Joseph Ruggles (7-56)
6. James Bishop, b. 17 Feb. 1699-1700, died 15 July 1780 ae. 80; md. (1) 20 Jan. 1725-6, ELizabeth Brockett; md. (2) Hannah _____, who died 9 Nov. 1773; md. (3) 23 Feb. 1774, Mary Wheaton, wid. of Joseph Moulthrop
7. Thomas Bishop, b. 10 Dec. 1701; died young
8. Jeremiah Bishop, b. 7 Nov. 1703; rem. to Bolton, later to union; md. Martha _____

9. Sarah Bishop, b. 19 Nov. 1705; died 24 Apr. 1761; md. Wait Hotchkiss
10. Dinah Bishop, b. Mar. 1708; died 4 Oct. 1751; md. (1) 20 Feb. 1726-7, Moses Clark; md. (2) 27 Jan. 1737-8, Israel Dayton
11. Ebenezer Bishop, b. 29 July 1710; died before 1778; md. (1) 11 Aug. 1742, Elizabeth Hotchkiss; md. (2) Elizabeth Johnson, wid. of John Turner" 3

John Bishop died in 1710, the year that his youngest child was born leaving Abigail a widow with nine living children ranging in ages from 18 years to an infant baby. Abigail died in 1725, fifteen years after her husband's passing, and before some of the younger children were married.

1. #111 p. 17
2. ibid pp. 17, 20
3. #3 Vol. I p. 201