

AARON BENEDICT

"The transformation of the insignificant village which some of us remember, into the busy and prosperous city which now fills the valley and overspreads the hillside, is due to Aaron Benedict more perhaps than to any other man."

— Waterbury American, February 10, 1873

It has been said of Aaron Benedict that the prosperity of Waterbury as a manufacturing town dates from the formation in 1823 of the firm A. Benedict, in partnership with Bennet Bronson and others, for the manufacture of gilt buttons. Born in Waterbury on August 9, 1785, Benedict's first business was the making of bone and ivory buttons, an undertaking which, after several years' trial, proved unsatisfactory. However, each successive business venture generated further success, granting Benedict a significant role in the transformation of Waterbury into a booming center of industry in the nineteenth century.

Contemporary accounts of Benedict's character may be summed up in one word - "deliberate." In 1829, he formed the Benedict & Coe Co. which was succeeded in 1834 by the firm of Benedict & Burnham, known primarily for the production of copper and brass in the form of sheets and wire as well as brazed and seamless tubing. Among the many companies whose origins came from Benedict and Burnham are the American Pin Co., Waterbury Button Co., Waterbury Watch Co., and the Waterbury Clock Co. The Waterbury Clock Co. (later U.S. Time and then Timex) developed into the largest manufacturer of wristwatches in the world. The American Brass Co. acquired the Benedict and Burnham Co., the Waterbury Brass Co., the Holmes, Booth and Haydens Co., and many others while becoming the largest producer of copper and copper alloys in the world.

In addition to serving as president of the Benedict & Burnham Manufacturing Co., Aaron Benedict served for many years in the State Legislature and Senate. He was an active member of the First Congregational Church where he retained the post of deacon for fifty years. Philanthropically inclined, Benedict gave generously to the State Industrial School for Girls and other benevolent and religious organizations. He died on February 9, 1873.

