

Thaddeus Burr

## The Burr Family

You may have visited the Burr Mansion in Fairfield for an “Enchanted Castle” or a Holiday Festival. Did you know that this building also has a historic past? The Burr Mansion is named for Thaddeus Burr (1735 – 1801), who married Eunice Dennie Burr (1732 – 1805) on March 22, 1759.

Thaddeus Burr is a **descendent** of Jehu Burr II who arrived in Fairfield from Massachusetts with his brother John in the early 1640s. Both John and Jehu married, perhaps even twice, as it was common when a spouse passed away from childbirth or illness. At this time most people remarried. It was a necessity for a family to work together, have children and **prosper**. Jehu had five children with wife Elizabeth and John had ten children.

Thaddeus Burr of the Burr Mansion was the great-great grandson of Jehu Burr II. The family was very successful and held important positions in local and state government. Many of the men in the family were lawyers and also served as officers for the British government. John Burr was the Sergeant-Major of Fairfield County. Peter Burr, son of Jehu Burr II, was a Major of the Militia in 1704 and a Judge for the Fairfield Probate Court in 1724.

Thaddeus was the cousin of the famous Aaron Burr, Jr., who was the 3<sup>rd</sup> vice-president of the United States alongside Thomas Jefferson as President. Thaddeus’ grandfather and Aaron’s grandfather were brothers Daniel and Peter. Cousin Aaron attended school in Litchfield, CT and visited Thaddeus in Fairfield often. Aaron Burr,



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Jr. is known today through his portrayal in the popular play “Hamilton,” where he shoots Alexander Hamilton in a **duel**.

Thaddeus and Eunice Burr entertained at their grand **estate** on the Old Post Road and hosted many **prominent** people from the Revolution. This includes **George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Marquis de Lafayette, John Adams and Aaron Burr**. After the Battle of Lexington on April 19, 1775, news of the event traveled fast. Thaddeus Burr was the first person in Fairfield to receive the news from a rider. Many people wanted to escape the British in Boston. Thaddeus Burr’s good friend, John Hancock (signer of the Declaration of Independence), was among them.

The battle occurred just as John Hancock planned to marry Dorothy Quincy in her home in Boston. Dorothy was urged to escape the town to stay with Thaddeus and Eunice Burr in Fairfield. According to one legend,

“His marriage to Dorothy was a very romantic affair ... The Quincy house in Boston had been completely refurnished for the occasion. Then the Revolution broke out and the future husband was forced to flee to Lexington, where he was later joined by Dorothy and Lydia Hancock, his aunt and chaperone to Dorothy. A lovers’ quarrel between John and Dorothy broke out. Hancock would not permit Dorothy to return to Boston. In the midst of this quarrel .... Lydia Hancock and Dorothy went to Fairfield, Connecticut. There she met Aaron Burr, who became such an **ardent** suitor that Lydia Hancock became alarmed and sent word to her nephew. In spite of John Hancock’s protestations of undying love, Dorothy continued her flirtation with Aaron Burr. It was not until a second and more alarming plea from his aunt that Hancock hurried to Fairfield where he and Dorothy were finally married on August 28, 1775.”



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The Burr Mansion that stands today on Old Post Road was built by Daniel Dimon of Fairfield. Dimon was well-known as an architect and carpenter. There is a legend that John Hancock offered to supply the glass and the timber for the house on one condition. The condition was that the house would build it in a similar style to Hancock's house. The Burr Mansion has a central hall, dormer windows and a gambrel roof. Today it hosts special events, weddings, and offices.

**Burr Elementary School** was named after Jehu Burr, Jr., who served for more than a decade as a Fairfield "townsman," which was similar to today's first selectman. Born in 1625, Burr introduced legislation to provide subsidies for schools.

When you visit the Fairfield Museum, you will find out more about Thaddeus and Eunice Dennie Burr!

### **Vocabulary:**

**Ardent** – Enthusiastic or passionate

**Descendent** – Preceding from a family member

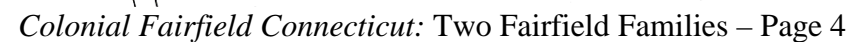
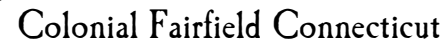
**Duel** – A conflict between two people (sometimes involving weapons)

**Estate** – Large home

**Prominent** – Important

**Prosper** – To do well

**Subsidies** - support or money







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## **Student Questions:**

On the map of “Owners as of ... ” how many properties are owned by a Burr?

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Was Thaddeus Burr working for the British government or the Colony?

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Name a few prominent people who visited the Burr Mansion.

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Why was it important for John Hancock to marry Dorothy Quincy?

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What two things do you want to know about Thaddeus and Eunice Burr?

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_



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