

Oliver Wolcott
Governor of Connecticut, 1796-1797

Born: December 20, 1726 at Windsor, Connecticut

College: Yale, 1747

Politics: Federalist

Offices: Deputy Governor, 1787-1796.

Died: December 1, 1791 at Litchfield, Connecticut

Oliver Wolcott was one of Governor Roger Wolcott's fifteen children. He was born in Windsor in 1726, but later made his home in Litchfield. He graduated from Yale in 1747 and married Lorraine Collins that same year. They had five children, including future governor Oliver Wolcott, Jr. Wolcott became active in Connecticut's colonial government as well as its militia. He was first elected to the General Assembly in 1764 and became a member of its Upper House in 1774. In 1775 he was elected to the Continental Congress and was a signer of the Declaration of Independence. After he left Philadelphia to return to Litchfield he picked up the statue of King George III that had been dismantled in New York City. At his home it was melted and made into ammunition to be used against the British. Wolcott also served in the American Revolution and rose to the rank of major-general. He was a member of Connecticut's Council of Safety along with Governor Trumbull and future governors Matthew Griswold and Samuel Huntington.

In 1786 Wolcott received some votes for the position of governor, but in denying Governor Griswold another term, the General Assembly chose Huntington as the new governor and made Wolcott lieutenant governor. Wolcott supported the administration of President George Washington and when he became governor in early 1796 he informed Washington: .whatever official duties you shall require of me, will be strictly observed.. Wolcott was reelected in 1796 and 1797. However, he was too ill to attend the October 1797 session of the General Assembly, and he died in December. He is buried at Litchfield's East Cemetery. Wolcott's Litchfield house still stands and is privately owned. The town of Wolcott is named in his honor as is the state's technical school in Torrington.

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Wolcott, Samuel. Memorial~ HenryWolcott (1861).

Portrait

48" x 58" in its frame, painted ca. 1784 by Ralph Earle. It was given to the State of Connecticut in 1830 and it is regarded as the first painting that makes up this portrait collection.

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