

**HISTORICAL DATA
RELATING TO COUNTIES,
CITIES AND TOWNS IN
MASSACHUSETTS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649755134

Historical data relating to counties, cities and towns in Massachusetts by Anonymous

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Cover @ 2017

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ANONYMOUS

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The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

HISTORICAL DATA

RELATIVE TO

COUNTIES, CITIES AND TOWNS IN
MASSACHUSETTS

PREPARED BY THE

SECRETARY OF THE COMMONWEALTH, DIVISION OF PUBLIC RECORDS



BOSTON

WRIGHT & POTTER PRINTING CO., STATE PRINTERS
32 DERNE STREET

1920

HISTORICAL DATA RELATING TO COUNTIES, CITIES AND TOWNS IN MASSACHUSETTS.

In colonial and provincial times in Massachusetts groups of individuals within clearly defined areas, not strong enough to become a town, were often established by law as townships and districts, without certain town privileges, as the power of choosing Representatives, etc.

Chapter 3 of the Acts of 1775 (section 3), passed Aug. 23, 1775, declared "that every corporate body in this colony which in the act for the incorporation thereof is said and declared to be made a district, and has, by such act, granted to it, or is declared to be vested with, the rights, powers, privileges or immunities of a town, with the exception above mentioned of choosing and sending a representative to the great and general court or assembly, shall henceforth be, and shall be holden, taken and intended to be, a town to all intents and purposes whatsoever." (Prov. Laws, Vol. V, p. 420.)

Since that time there have been no districts or townships in the State. New towns set off from one or more towns are duly incorporated by law and their bounds fixed. Towns and cities may, of course, establish certain lines within their own areas as town and city limits (using the words in contradistinction to "country" or "outskirts") for the regulation of water, light or police service. These lines, however, would not properly be considered the corporate bounds of the town.

"Towns . . . became in effect municipal or quasi corporations, without any formal act of incorporation." (122 Mass. p. 349.)

March 23, 1786. "The inhabitants of every town within this government are hereby declared to be a body politic and corporate." (Acts 1785, chap. 75.)

Nov. 4, 1835. "All places now incorporated as districts, except the district of Marshpee, in the county of Barnstable, shall have all the powers and privileges, and be subject to all the duties to which towns are entitled by the provisions of this chapter." (R. S. chap. , sect. 9.)

The asterisk (*) following a date signifies that it is Old Style.

Many of the doings of the court are given in different volumes of the early records under different dates, usually, however, in the same year. The earliest date is given in these tables. The dates that appear in the column headed "First mentioned in the records of the State," etc., are those under which the several names as there given first appear in the records of the Colonies, Province, or State, although settlements under the same or different names might have been earlier made.

Names of cities are printed in small capitals; of extinct cities, towns and districts, in italics.

Under the provisions of chapter 101, Resolves of the May session, 1794, it was provided that as an accurate map of the Commonwealth would tend to facilitate and promote such information and improvements as would be favorable to its growth and prosperity, the several towns and districts were required to cause to be taken accurate plans of their respective towns or districts, upon a scale of 200 rods to an inch, to be lodged in the Secretary's office.

These plans were duly filed, with the exception of Chelsea, and are to be found in the Secretary's office, Division of Archives, Town Plans 1794, volumes 1 to 16.

By chapter 24, Resolves of 1797, May session, these plans were used as a basis for maps of Massachusetts proper and the District of Maine, which were published and distributed in 1801.

By chapter 50, Resolves of 1829, March 1, 1830, it was required that the city of Boston and the several towns and districts in the Commonwealth cause to be made accurate plans of their respective towns or districts, upon a scale of 100 rods to an inch, upon a minute and accurate survey, to be lodged in the Secretary's office.

These in turn were filed, with the exception of Carver, Chelsea, Littleton, Nantucket, New Bedford and Plympton, and are to be found in the Secretary's office, Division of Archives, Town Plans 1830, volumes 1 to 15.

The tables that follow were prepared in their present form by the late Robert T. Swan, Esq., Commissioner of Public Records, and were continued by his successor, the late Henry E. Woods, Esq.

COUNTIES, CITIES, AND TOWNS OF MASSACHUSETTS.

BARNSTABLE COUNTY. INCORPORATED JUNE 2, 1685.

CITIES AND TOWNS.	First mentioned in Records of the State, or therein recorded as Established or Incorporated.	From what Established or Incorporated, Change of Boundary, Incorporation as a City, Extinction, &c., according to Records of the State.
Barnstable,	Mar. 5,* 1638	Union land. June 17,* 1611 bounds between Barnstable and Yarmouth established. Mar. 2,* 1662 bounds between Barnstable and Sandwich to be established. Mar. 11,* 1658 Barnstable and Yarmouth accord upon bounds. June 3,* 1662 additional lands granted to Barnstable. June 10,* 1662 bounds between Barnstable and Sandwich to be established. Oct. 29,* 1672 bounds between Barnstable and Sandwich established. Jan. 22, 1795 bounds between Barnstable and the District of Mashpee established. Mar. 28, 1894 bounds between Barnstable and Mashpee established. April 24, 1906 bounds between Barnstable and Mashpee established and part of Sandwich annexed.
Bourne,	April 2, 1884	Part of Sandwich. April 14, 1897 bounds between Bourne and Wareham established.
Brewster,	Feb. 19, 1865	Part of Harwich. June 21, 1811 part of Harwich annexed. April 25, 1818 part annexed to Harwich. Feb. 29, 1864 bounds between Brewster and Orleans established.
Chatham,	June 11,* 1712	District of Manamoit. April 14, 1862 bounds between Chatham and Orleans and Chatham and Harwich established.
Dennis,	June 19, 1793	Part of Yarmouth.
Eastham,	June 7,* 1651	Name changed from Nawsott. Mar. 5,* 1678 Eastham and purchasers on both sides to settle the bounds. June 16, 1764 part established as the district of Wellfleet. July 14, 1772 part of Harwich annexed. Mar. 3, 1797 part of Eastham established as Orleans. Mar. 9, 1839 part annexed to Orleans. April 26, 1847 part annexed to Wellfleet. Mar. 23, 1867 bounds between Eastham and Orleans established and part of each town annexed to the other town. May 6, 1887 bounds between the waters of Eastham and Wellfleet established.

BARNSTABLE COUNTY — *Continued.*

CITIES AND TOWNS.	First mentioned in Records of the State, or therein founded as Established or Incorporated.	From what Established or Incorporated, Change of Boundary, Incorporation as a City, Extinction, etc., according to Records of the State.
Falmouth,	Sept. 14,* 1694	Name changed from Suckanesset though not recorded. Nov. 28, 1735 bounds between Falmouth and lands of the proprietors of Mashpee confirmed. Mar. 17, 1841 a tract of land formerly in the plantation of Marshpee annexed. Mar. 19, 1888 bounds between Falmouth and Sandwich established. June 18, 1885 bounds between Falmouth and Mashpee established.
Harwich,	Sept. 14,* 1694	Tract of land known as Sotucket. July 14, 1772 part annexed to Eastham. Feb. 19, 1803 part established as Brewster. June 21, 1841 part annexed to Brewster. April 26, 1848 part of Brewster annexed. April 4, 1862 bounds between Harwich and Orleans established. April 14, 1862 bounds between Harwich and Chatham established.
<i>Marshpee, District of,</i>	Mar. 31, 1824	Plantation of Marshpee. Mar. 17, 1811 a tract of land formerly in the plantation of Marshpee annexed to Falmouth. April 1, 1803 part annexed to Sandwich. Mar. 18, 1860 part annexed to Sandwich. May 28, 1870 district of Marshpee abolished and the town of Mashpee established.
<i>Mashpee, District of,</i>	June 14, 1762	Common land called Mashpee. Act of June 14, 1763 revised, to be in force until July 1, 1776. Nov. 16, 1770 the act again revised, to be in force until the end of the session of the General Court next after Nov. 1, 1775. Feb. 9, 1776 the act to continue in force until the end of the session next after Nov. 1, 1779. Nov. 25, 1779 the act again continued until Nov. 1, 1785. June 13, 1788 the above act repealed and three "Custodians to the Proprietors" appointed, the act now passed to be in force for ten years. Jan. 22, 1795 bounds between the district of Mashpee and Barnstable established. Mar. 7, 1797 the act of June 13, 1788 made perpetual until repealed by the legislature. Feb. 26, 1811 part of the "plantation of Marshpee" [sic] annexed to Sandwich.
Mashpee,	May 28, 1870	District of Marshpee. Mar. 19, 1872 part of Sandwich re-annexed. June 18, 1885 bounds between Mashpee and Falmouth established. May 27, 1887 bounds between Mashpee and Sandwich established and part of Sandwich annexed. Mar. 28, 1894 bounds between Mashpee and Barnstable established. April 29, 1905 bounds between Mashpee and Sandwich established and part of Sandwich annexed. April 24, 1916 bounds between Mashpee and Barnstable established.

BARNSTABLE COUNTY — *Continued.*

CITIES AND TOWNS.	First mentioned in Records of the State, or therein recorded as Established or Incorporated.	From what Established or Incorporated, Change of Boundary, Incorporation as a City, Extinction, etc., according to Records of the State.
Naussett,	—, 1648	Common land. Mar. 3,* 1645 certain common lands "lying between sea and sea" granted to those who go to dwell at "Naussett." June 2,* 1646 established as a township. June 7,* 1651 name changed to Eastham.
Orleans,	Mar. 3, 1797	Part of Eastham. Mar. 9, 1839 part of Eastham annexed. Feb. 20, 1861 bounds between Orleans and Brewster established. April 4, 1862 bounds between Orleans and Barnstable established. April 14, 1862 bounds between Orleans and Chatham established. Mar. 23, 1867 bounds between Orleans and Eastham established and part of each town <i>annexed</i> to the other town.
Provincetown,	June 14,* 1727	Precinct of Cape Cod. June 12, 1813 part of Truro annexed and bounds between towns established. Mar. 9, 1829 part of Truro annexed and bounds again established. Mar. 31, 1836 part of Truro annexed.
Sandwich,	Mar. 4,* 1638	Common land called "Sandwich." Mar. 2,* 1657 bounds between Sandwich and Barnstable to be established. June 10,* 1662 bounds between Sandwich and Barnstable to be established. June 7,* 1670 the bounds established Jan. 19,* 1663 ordered to be entered on the records of the court. Oct. 29,* 1672 bounds between Sandwich and Barnstable established. July 7,* 1681 bounds between Sandwich and Suckanesset established. Oct. 28,* 1684 bounds established. Nov. 28, 1735 bounds between Sandwich and lands of the proprietors of Mashpee confirmed. Feb. 26, 1811 part of the "plantation of Mashpee" [sic] annexed. April 1, 1839 part of the district of Mashpee annexed. Mar. 13, 1855 part of the district of Mashpee annexed. Mar. 19, 1872 part re-annexed to Mashpee. Mar. 19, 1886 bounds between Sandwich and Falmouth established. April 2, 1884 part established as Bourne. May 27, 1887 bounds between Sandwich and Mashpee established and part annexed to Mashpee. April 20, 1905 bounds between Sandwich and Mashpee established and part annexed to Mashpee. April 24, 1916 part annexed to Barnstable.
Suckanesset,	June 7,* 1670	Bounds mentioned. July 7,* 1681 bounds between Suckanesset and Sandwich established. June 4,* 1686 made a township with privileges of a town. Name changed to Falmouth though not recorded.

BARNSTABLE COUNTY — *Continued.*

CITIES AND TOWNS.	First mentioned in Records of the State, or therein recorded as Established or Incorporated.	From what Established or Incorporated, Change of Boundary, Incorporation as a City, Extinction, etc., according to Records of the State.
Truro,	July 16,* 1709	Common land called Pawnett. Oct. 21,* 1714 bounds between Truro and the Province Lands established. June 12, 1813 part annexed to Provincetown and bounds between the towns established. Mar. 2, 1829 part annexed to Provincetown and bounds again established. Mar. 30, 1836 part annexed to Provincetown. Feb. 22, 1837 bounds between Truro and Wellfleet established.
Wellfleet,	June 16, 1763	Part of Eastham established as the district of Wellfleet. Aug. 23, 1775 the district made a town by general act. Feb. 22, 1837 bounds between Wellfleet and Truro established. April 26, 1847 part of Eastham annexed. May 6, 1887 bounds between the tidewaters of Wellfleet and Eastham established.
Yarmouth,	Jan. 7,* 1639	Common land called Mattachusetts. June 17,* 1641 bounds between Yarmouth and Barnstable established. Mar. 11,* 1658 Yarmouth and Barnstable agreed upon bounds. June 19, 1763 part of Yarmouth established as Dennis.

BERKSHIRE COUNTY. INCORPORATED APRIL 21, 1761.

Adams,	Oct. 15, 1778	The plantation called East Hoosuck. April 16, 1780 the plantation called New Providence annexed. Mar. 14, 1793 part included in the new town of Cheshire. April 16, 1878 part established as North Adams.
Alford,	Feb. 16, 1773	Part of Great Barrington and certain common lands established as the district of Alford. Aug. 23, 1775 the district made a town by general act. Feb. 11, 1779 part of Great Barrington annexed. Feb. 6, 1790 bounds between Alford and Egremont established. Feb. 18, 1819 part of Great Barrington annexed. Mar. 17, 1847 part of West Stockbridge annexed.
Becket,	June 21, 1765	The new plantation called Number Four. Mar. 12, 1783 part included in the new town of Middlefield. Feb. 3, 1798 certain common lands lying between Becket, Blandford, Chester, and Loudon annexed. Mar. 1, 1810 part of Loudon annexed.
Bethlehem, District of,	June 24, 1789	The North Eleven Thousand Acres. June 10, 1809 district of Bethlehem and the town of Loudon united as the town of Loudon. Mar. 1, 1810 act of June 10, 1809 took effect.