

**HISTORY OF RAYNHAM,
MASS., FROM THE
FIRST SETTLEMENT
TO THE PRESENT TIME**

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History of Raynham, Mass., From the First Settlement to the Present Time by Enoch Sanford

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ENOCH SANFORD

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RAYNHAM, MASS¹⁷⁷⁵
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PRESENT TIME.

BY
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FAMILY."

PROVIDENCE:
HAMMOND, ANGELL & CO., PRINTERS.
1870.

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FOURTH PASTOR OF FIRST CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY, RAYNHAM.

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HISTORY.

IN July, 1621, Edward Winslow and Stephen Hopkins were sent, by the Governor of Plymouth Colony, to explore this section of the country, to visit Massasoit, the king of the Wampannoages, who lived where Bristol, R. I., now stands, to ascertain the number of the Indians and open trade with them. Having passed Middleboro' (then called Namasket), Winslow and Hopkins arrived at Titicut, where they exchanged hospitable offices with the natives, whom they found fishing. There they lodged one night, in the open fields on the banks of the stream, which were already cleared and adapted to cultivation. The ambassadors then proceeded six miles down the river, on the south side, to a fording-place near King's bridge. When preparing to cross they were opposed by two aged Indians on the opposite side, who were the only individuals surviving the pestilence which, two years before, had nearly depopulated the region. These two Indians, on being assured that Winslow, Hopkins and their Indian guides were friendly, received the travellers without further objection. These were the first Englishmen who set foot in Raynham. Here they ascertained the ebb and flow of the tide. Their Indian friends showed them clear springs of water, carried them across the river on their backs and transported the luggage. In passing along the southern border of the town, they discovered many places which had been tilled by Indians. The ground near the river was a natural meadow, with soil adapted to the corn cultivated by the natives, but the country was depopulated by the plague which had recently prevailed.

Taunton, which at first included Raynham and five other towns, was settled, in 1638, by emigrants principally from Taunton, in England. The lands of Mrs. Elizabeth Pool, one of the chief proprietors, were specially laid out by order of the Colonial government at Plymouth, in May, 1669. These lands had been bought from the Indians; and, in 1675, the owners set forth a declaration of their rights, with the following preamble:—"Whereas, by the providence of God, in the year 1638, it pleased God to bring the most part of the first purchasers of Taunton over the great ocean into this wilderness, from our dear and native land, and after some small time here, we found this place, called by the natives of the land Cohannet, in the Colony of New Plymouth, and of the Court of said Colony we obtained grants of tracts of land for a plantation or township, as by the record of said Court it may and doth appear, and then we also made purchase and bought the tracts of land, for our money, of the right proprietors and owners, the Indian sachems or princes of this part of the country, as by deed under their hands it may appear; and in honor and love to our dear native land, we called this place Taunton; and owing it a great mercy to God to bring us to this place, and setting us on lands of our own, bought with our own money, in peace in the midst of the heathen, for a possession for ourselves and for our posterity after us."

Settlements were made in Raynham, in 1652, by James Leonard, Henry Leonard and Ralph Russel, who came from Wales and first settled in Braintree. October 21st, 1652, the following entry appears in the records of Taunton:—"It was agreed and granted, by the town, to the said James and Henry Leonard and Ralph Russel, free consent to come hither and join with certain of our inhabitants to set up a bloomy work on the Two-mile River." Then no stranger could become an inhabitant without permission. "It was agreed and granted, by a free vote of the town, that such particular inhabitants as shall concur with said persons, in their design, shall have free liberty from the town to do so, to build and set up this work, and that they shall have the woods on the other side of the Two-mile

river, wheresoever it is common on that side of the river, to cut for their cord-wood to make coals; and also to dig and take mine or ore at Two-mile meadows, or in any of the commons appertaining to the town where it is not proprietary."

In accordance with this vote and the permission granted, the above-mentioned individuals erected works for the extraction of iron from the native ore, being the first iron manufactory established on the continent. These works continued in the possession of the Leonards and their descendants a hundred years; were enlarged by additional furnaces, and subsequently converted into an anchor forge.

The original projectors, Henry and James Leonard, attracted by more abundant ores in New Jersey, removed there and established the first foundry in that province.

During the Indian war of 1675, which desolated many of the towns of Plymouth and Massachusetts Colonies, the inhabitants of Taunton were exempt from attack. Philip, the chief instigator of that war, had a summer hunting-seat near the Fowling pond. The Leonards had supplied him with beef, repaired his muskets and furnished him with such simple tools as the Indians could use. These acts of friendship were remembered, and when other towns suffered from savage incursions, Raynham and Taunton escaped. Philip's influence and friendship protected them. The people, however, were on their guard, and constructed fortified houses capable of resisting an Indian siege. A house belonging to Samuel Leonard, which stood a few rods east of the forge, was surrounded by palisades and provisioned. A fort, also, was built on the farm now owned by Samuel Hathaway, on Pleasant street. The towns of Barnstable, Yarmouth and Eastham, on account of their position, were secure from Indian depredations. The inhabitants of these Cape towns invited the people of Taunton, Rehoboth, Raynham and Bridgewater to leave their settlements and live with them for greater safety. Taunton replied thus:—"We bless God that he hath given us much room in your hearts, that you so freely tender to us a part with you in your houses,

fields and provisions, at such a time when the Lord is threatening us with the bereavement of our own. It much comforteth us, in this day of darkness and distress. We shall want no succor you are able to afford us. We therefore return you all serious thanks for your sincere and abundant love, beseeching the Lord to continue and increase your ability, peace and promptness to relieve distress in this evil day. Nevertheless, upon our serious and mature deliberation upon, and consideration of your great offer, we cannot at present comply with a motion to remove and quit our places and leave our habitations to be a desolation, and that because we fear, in so doing, we should be wanting to the name of God and interests of Christ in this place, and betray much difficulty and cowardice, and give the adversary occasion to triumph over us to the reproach of that great and fearful name of God which is called upon us."

This conscientious, elevated reply was signed by Richard Williams, Walter Deane and others, and shows the spirit of the times. These records disclose the character of the men who established the early settlements. Their leading object was to maintain the truths and institutions of the Christian religion, and in pursuing this design they could bear danger and hardships with indomitable fortitude.

TINK TOWNSHIP.

The act of the General Court, setting off Raynham into a distinct township, declared that it was "competently filled with inhabitants." It embraced thirty families. Abraham Jones was a principal agent in the separation, his name appearing first on the petition. His house was near the forge, upon the farm now owned by Emory S. Wilbur. It does not appear that any party spirit or political difference produced the separation. It arose principally from the position of the people. At that time parish and town lines were usually the same, and as most of the inhabitants were too far from Taunton to attend public worship there conveniently, it was desirable to form a new town and parish. The General Court incorporated the

new town of Raynham, with the provision, "that the inhabitants of said town do, within the space of three years from the publication of this act, procure and settle a learned and orthodox minister of good conversation, and make provision for his comfortable and honorable support, and likewise provide a schoolmaster to instruct their children to read and write." The act of incorporation was granted by the council and representatives, in General Court assembled, April 1st, 1731, and consented to by T. Belcher, the Provisional Governor, April 6th, 1731. The council ordered Ebenezer Robinson, one of the principal inhabitants, to warn a meeting of the citizens, in order to choose town officers. The warrant was issued under the authority, and in the fourth year of the reign of His Majesty George II.

At the first town meeting, Samuel Leonard, Jr., was chosen town clerk, and John Staples, Samuel Leonard and Ebenezer Robinson, selectmen.

In 1732, John White was chosen clerk of the market.

Elijah Dean and Thomas Baker were elected tithing-men, and sworn for the faithful discharge of their duty.

It was voted that sheep and hogs may go at large.

CHURCH ORGANIZATION AND PASTORS.

Anticipating the duty of supporting public worship, the people had erected and partially finished a meeting house two years before the town was incorporated. The first town meeting, for choice of officers, was held April 22d, 1731. On the 10th of May, following, the town voted to pay all the expenses which individuals had incurred in building the meeting house, and a tax was levied for that purpose. At the same meeting, Mr. John Wales, who had been preaching there one year and a half, was chosen minister.

His salary was fixed at £100 per annum in bills of credit, and £200, settlement. His income was subsequently increased to £100, equal to £53, 6s., 8d., lawful money, or about \$266. It was also voted to finish the church by plastering it, con-