

**HISTORY OF THE TOWN  
OF HINGHAM,  
PLYMOUTH COUNTY,  
MASSACHUSETTS**

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History of the Town of Hingham, Plymouth County, Massachusetts by Solomon Lincoln

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**SOLOMON LINCOLN**

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**HISTORY**  
OF THE  
**TOWN OF HINGHAM,**  
**PLYMOUTH COUNTY,**  
**MASSACHUSETTS.**

—●—  
BY SOLOMON LINCOLN, JR.

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**HINGHAM :**  
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CALEB GILL, JR. AND FARMER AND BROWN.  
1827.

## PREFACE.



My design in the compilation of the following pages, has been to collect such facts relating to the settlement, subsequent history, and present state of the town of Hingham, as appeared to be worthy of preservation. The consideration that many of these facts were preserved only by tradition, or recorded in the decaying leaves of public and private records, rendered it desirable that an opportunity should be embraced to preserve them in a more durable form. Nearly two centuries have elapsed since this town was settled, and no full sketch of its history has ever been published. I have been desirous of noticing such individuals as have been distinguished in public or private life, and especially those of whom only traditionary information is preserved—and that fast fading from the memory of our aged fathers. It has been my endeavour to be scrupulously correct; but it will not be remarkable, if some errors in deciphering ancient manuscripts and in copying our town records (some portions of which have become almost illegible,) should have escaped me.

There may be much of this history, which, to some readers, will appear uninteresting, and perhaps some portions of it may be thought too trifling and unimportant to be given to the public. The consideration that we search with avidity for almost any facts which are rendered interesting solely on account of their antiquity, and that "the trifles of the present age become matters of weight with future generations," is a sufficient reason for the introduction of facts of this description.

While engaged in collecting the materials, I have been indebted to many gentlemen in this and other towns, for the readiness with which they have attended to my inquiries for information, and for the kindness with which they have loaned to me valuable manuscripts which have been of essential service to me in endeavouring to illustrate the early history of the town. I feel under particular obligations to Hon. JAMES SAVAGE, for the politeness with which he has furnished information from the public records in Boston, and for the loan of the manuscripts of the late JAMES OTIS LINCOLN; and to JOTHAM LINCOLN, Esq. Town Clerk of Hingham, for his unwearied patience in furnishing whatever I have desired from the town records. Other gentlemen, to whom I am indebted for much genealogical and traditionary information, will, I hope, find a sufficient acknowledgement of their kindness in the notes.

Influenced by no other motive but that of wishing to preserve for the gratification of the inhabitants of Hingham, whatever is worthy of preservation in the history of the town, or in the character of individuals, I trust that any imperfections will be regarded with candour; and shall think myself richly compensated for the time which I have devoted to the subject, if my readers can find any thing in the result of my labours, productive of instruction or amusement.

S. LINCOLN, JR.

*HINGHAM, December 1st, 1827.*

## HISTORY OF HINGHAM.



HINGHAM, a Post Town, in the County of Plymouth, Massachusetts, has the Bay, North,—Cohasset, East,—Scituate and Abington, South, and Weymouth, West. The greatest extent of the town from North to South, is seven miles and three quarters, and from East to West, about five miles—containing 13,775 square acres. The original limits of Hingham embraced the present town of Cohasset, which was set off and incorporated April 26, 1770. Until March 26, 1793, Hingham formed a part of Suffolk County ; at that time, it was annexed to the new County of Norfolk. By an act of the Legislature, passed June 20, 1793, repealing the former act, so far as it related to Hingham and Hull, Hingham again became a part of the County of Suffolk ; and by an act passed June 18th, 1803, Hingham was annexed to the County of Plymouth, of which it now forms a part. The distance from Hingham to Plymouth is 26 miles, and from Hingham to Boston, about 14 miles by land, and between 12 and 13 by water.

**SURFACE, SOIL, PRODUCTIONS, &c.** A considerable portion of this town is of an uneven surface. The north-



ern section of the settlement, is principally in a valley, between continued elevations of land, generally of easy ascent, but sometimes abrupt and rocky. Leaving the northerly section, and following the main road to Plymouth, we ascend to a higher and level tract of land, called the "Lower Plain." Leaving the "Lower Plain," we soon ascend again to high and level land, called "Glad Tidings Plain;" still higher and farther south, is "Liberty Plain." In the north part of the town, near the sea shore, there are several beautiful eminences, which afford excellent views of the metropolis of the State and its environs, of Boston Harbour, and of the adjacent country. The highest elevation of land is at Prospect Hill, in the southerly part of the town; and the next highest is at Turkey Hill, in the easterly part. Baker's,\* Otis's,† Squirrel and Pleasant Hills, in the north part of the town, command extensive and delightful prospects. The land at Hockley Fields, and in the western part of the town, has a beautifully undulating surface.

The soil, in many parts of the town, rich and productive. North of the main road from Hingham Bridge at the Back River, to Cohasset, (except at the eastern part,) the soil is uncommonly fertile, and produces abundant crops of grass, grain and vegetables, with the application of comparatively little labour. There is also, excellent land in the north-easterly part of the town, and upon the Plains; in the south-westerly and westerly parts the soil is lighter, and best calculated for grazing. In the southerly and easterly sections, there are extensive tracts of valuable woodland abounding with the pine, the oak, the

\* Baker's Hill derives its name from Nicholas and Nathaniel Baker who settled at its foot.

† Otis's Hill takes its name from John Otis, one of the first settlers of the town. Its original name was Weary-all Hill, on account of the abruptness of its ascent on the south side.

maple and the walnut. There are many enterprising and good farmers, whose skill and industry are richly rewarded. Considerable attention is paid to the cultivation of fruit trees, but the productions of the soil are not sufficient to supply the wants of the inhabitants.

Mechanical and mercantile pursuits have of late, attracted more attention than agriculture. In 1820, the number of persons engaged in agriculture, was 279, and in commerce and manufactures 540.

**STREAMS AND POND.** The only considerable collection of fresh water is *Accord Pond*, in the south part of the town. It is situated partly in Hingham, Abington, and Scituate. The principal stream of water which flows through the town, originates from this pond—it is called *Wear River*.\* A small brook which flows from the west part of the town, and empties into the Mill Pond at the Harbour, it is said, attracted the attention of the first inhabitants and induced them to settle in the valley through which it flows. *Weymouth Back River*, a navigable stream, separates Hingham from Weymouth. A bridge was thrown across this stream, in 1812, by the Hingham and Quincy Bridge and Turnpike Corporation.

**ISLANDS.** Within the limits of Hingham, there are five small islands, viz. : Bumkin, Chandler's (sometimes called Langley's,) Ragged, Sailor's (sometimes called Sarah's,) and Button island. Bumkin island, the largest and most valuable, is situated without the harbour, the others are within the harbour.

**MANUFACTURES, TRADE AND COMMERCE.** There are in Hingham, two manufactories of woollens—three grist mills—one furnace for the casting of hollow and other

\* Wear River takes its name from the fact that a *wear* was erected in this river to take alewives. The town authorized Thomas Loring, Clement Bates, Nicholas Jacob, and Joseph Andrews to erect a *wear* for that purpose, in 1637.

iron ware,—one brass foundry—several tanneries—one rope-walk—salt works—one saw-mill—a printing office—book store—and an extensive manufactory of umbrellas, &c.\* In addition to these, there is the usual variety of mechanics to be found in most towns of a similar size, viz. : iron smiths, silver smiths, wheelwrights, plough-makers, pump and block makers, sail makers, coopers, book-binders, cabinet and chair makers, saddle, harness and trunk makers, hat manufacturers, a clock maker, bakers, &c.

There is also, a large number of traders in English, American and West India goods.

There is but one Hotel, which is near the centre of the North Village. At the Harbour is a Ship Yard, in which one or more vessels are annually built.†

The shipping of the place is mostly employed in the cod and mackerel fishery,‡ and in the lumber trade and other coastwise navigation. There are four convenient Packets, which ply regularly between Hingham and Boston, for the transportation of passengers and goods.

\* In the "Hingham Umbrella Manufactory," there are made annually, about 25,000 umbrellas and parasols. The number of persons employed is from 35 to 40. Mr. Benjamin S. Williams, superintendant.

† William Pitts had liberty from the selectmen to build ships and other vessels at Konohasset (Cohasset) in 1675; and J. Blane in 1693 had permission "to build a vessel or two near the mill."—*Town Records.*

‡ Since the year 1815, there has been the number of *one hundred and fifty-nine thousand, seven hundred and thirty-five* barrels of mackerel packed in this town. The year 1817 is not included in the estimate; the number of barrels packed in that year not being known. These mackerel were all assorted into Nos. 1, 2, and 3—and the same Nos. are usually carried to the same markets each year. Nos. 1 are principally taken to Philadelphia—2 to the Southern States, and 3 to the West India Islands.

There are about forty sail of vessels owned in this place, chiefly employed in this business; and their trips are from one to six weeks, as the weather and their *fortunes* may be. The vessels average