

**HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF
NATICK, MASS. FROM THE DAYS
OF THE
APOSTOLIC ELIOT, M DC L, TO
THE PRESENT TIME, M DCCC XXX**

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History of the town of Natick, Mass. From the days of the apostolic Eliot, M DC L, to the present time, M DCCC XXX by William Biglow

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WILLIAM BIGLOW

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HISTORY

OF

THE TOWN OF NATICK, MASS.

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THE APOSTOLIC ELIOT,

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BY WILLIAM BIGLOW.

BOSTON:

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1836

ADVERTISEMENT.

As there is much excitement, at the present time, respecting the rights of the Indians and the treatment, which they ought to receive from the government and people of these United States, it is thought that many will be desirous to know, as far as can be ascertained, the circumstances which accompanied the gradual decrease and final extinction of the first tribe, that was brought into a state of civilization and christianity, by a Protestant missionary. To gratify, in a degree, this desire, and to preserve some of the most interesting facts, relative to this town, is the object of this publication.



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HISTORY OF NATICK.

TOPOGRAPHICAL DESCRIPTION, PRESENT STATE, &c. NATICK lies in the *County of Middlesex*, south-west-erly from Boston. The central meeting house is sixteen miles distant from the State House, and about fourteen miles from the Court Houses, in Concord and Cambridge. It is bounded N. by East Sudbury; E. by Weston, Needham and Dover; S. by Dover; S. W. by Sherburne; W. and N. W. by Framingham. It contains about 11,000 acres. Deducting for water, 635 acres, leaves 10,365 acres of land. A neat lithographic map of this town, executed at Pendleton's office, Boston, in 1829, has served, as a model, for several other towns to imitate. On this are laid down all the houses, roads, ponds, principal streams, wood lands, &c.

ROADS, MAILS, &c.—There are three principal roads through this town, leading from Boston to Hartford, Connecticut; namely, Worcester Turnpike, through the north part; Central Turnpike, through the centre; and the Old Hartford road, so called, through the south part. On the Worcester Turnpike, the great southern mail passes each way daily. Several other mail and accommodation stage coaches are very frequently passing. On the Central Turnpike, Boston and Hartford Telegraph line of stage coaches passes every day, Sundays excepted, up one day and down the next. On the Old Hartford road, Boston, Mendon and Uxbridge daily line of stage coaches passes, and continues

on to Hartford three days in the week, and returns to Boston on the other three. This line makes the Christian Sabbath a day of rest.

There are two Post offices ; one on the Worcester Turnpike, and the other on the Old Hartford road, where a mail is opened daily, Sundays excepted.

One survey of a rail road from Boston to Albany passes through the centre of the town, parallel to the Central Turnpike, a few rods distant from it. A survey of a canal from Norwich, in Connecticut, to Boston passes a few rods in front of the south meeting house, but the present generation have not high expectations of reaping very great advantages from this project.

SOIL, PRODUCTIONS, &c.—The soil in the south part is generally loam, inclining in some parts, to clay ; in the central and northerly parts, it is a sandy loam. In all parts of the town are found lands, favourable to the raising of grass, Indian corn, rye, barley, oats and fruits of all kinds, usually produced in this climate. There is little or no waste land in the town. Wood lots are becoming scarce ; but meadows, affording an inexhaustible supply of excellent peat, the use of which is yearly increasing, insures an ample supply of fuel for future generations. The soil, in its original state, produced all kinds of forest trees, usually growing in New England. Formerly a great variety of nuts and berries were produced spontaneously ; but these productions have been greatly diminished by the hand of judicious cultivation.

SURFACE OF THE COUNTRY, &c.—Natick is the aboriginal name of the township, and signifies *a place of hills*. This name is very descriptive, especially of the southerly part of it. At the S. E. corner, about a mile

from Charles river, next to Dover, Pegan hill rises, in a beautiful conical form, and is capable, like all the other eminences in the town, of profitable cultivation to its summit. From the top a very extensive and elegant prospect is presented. The land, as far as the eye can reach, is well cultivated, excepting a due proportion of woodlands; and from fifteen to twenty village churches appear scattered in various directions. The romantic meanders of Charles river may be traced for several miles, and a number of ponds are interspersed in the surrounding scenery. At the distance of thirty and fifty miles, the Wachuset and Monadnoc mountains tower in pleasing majesty; and many others, hardly distinguishable from azure clouds, skirt the distant horizon. Between this and Charles river, Perry's hill, considerably less elevated, slopes gently down to the margin of the water. On the opposite bank, Carver's hill gradually rises to a corresponding height, and beyond this, Broad's hill, a twin brother of Pegan, appears, at the distance of a mile from the river. About half a mile north of the south meeting house, Train's hill, similar to Carver's and Perry's, in shape and elevation, adds to the beauty of the variegated prospect. In plain sight of these, are Bullard's hill in Needham, and Brush hill in Sherburne, near the bounds of Natick, which were undoubtedly taken into view, when the place received its significant name. On and around these hills, the celebrated Eliot apportioned the lands among his Indian converts; and here was the principal scene of his pious labors.

In the middle and northern parts of the town the land is agreeably undulating; but there are no hills so elevated, as those already described, or which are distinguished by proper names, excepting the beautiful one

in the northwest corner of the town, which is called Tom's hill, from its having been owned, in olden time, by a celebrated Indian, who went by the name of Captain Tom. From many of these heights the prospect is similar to that from Pegan, though not so extensive.

Three plains may be deemed worthy of particular notice. One, about half a mile square, spreads east of the south meeting house, and is sometimes called Eliot plain, in remembrance of the 'Apostle to the Indians.' Another lies south and west of the central meeting house, is about a mile square, and is called Pegan plain. This and Pegan hill were so called from their being formerly owned and inhabited by two distinguished Indian families of this name. Boden plain, so named after William Boden, Esqr. stretches about three miles in length, from the westerly side of Long pond to Framingham line, and is about one mile in breadth. There are several smaller plains scattered among the hills in all parts of the town.

MINERALS, &c.—Bog iron ore has recently been found in several places, near the centre of the town, and transported to the foundery in Chelmsford, in considerable quantities. A quarry of limestone was opened during the revolutionary war, which was burnt to advantage; but since that time it has been neglected, owing to the diminution of fuel, in its immediate vicinity, and its distance from a market. In the westerly part of the town, on the west margin of Long pond, there is a very valuable brick yard. Four hundred and fifty thousand bricks have been burnt here in one year; but the average number is from three to four hundred thousand.

There is an indication of clay, suitable for the same purpose, on the eastern side of the pond. It is said that there are appearances of mountain iron ore, in some parts of the town. But as no professed geologist has ever, to my knowledge, examined these parts attentively, I shall make no further observations under this head.

PONDS, BROOKS, RIVER.—About one half of LONG POND, lies in Natick, covering 450 acres. The remainder is in Framingham and East Sudbury. The Indian name of this was COCHITUATE. Its English name is descriptive, as the pond is not far from 6 miles in length, and the breadth varies from a few rods, to a mile, or more. Its outlet is at the north end, in Framingham, on which mills are erected. Formerly shad and alewives were taken in this pond; but, for some years past, the mill dams have prevented them from reaching it. DUG POND, lies south of the above, at the distance of about a quarter of a mile, and covers 50 acres. It is so named, from its resemblance to an artificial excavation. This has no natural inlet, excepting from the clouds above, or springs beneath; and no outlet, but by evaporation, or absorption. For a few years past, however, a small rivulet has been conducted into it, by an artificial channel; and a drain has been made to conduct its waters into Long Pond. Thus it serves as a reservoir, in which to lay up water for the use of mills in Framingham. NONESUCH POND, lying partly in Weston, covers 50 acres in Natick. How this pond obtained its name is not known. Though there may be none exactly such, yet there are many, which, to a common observer, appear very similar.

SNAKE BROOK, so named from its serpentine wind-