

**HISTORY OF WELLS, VERMONT,
FOR THE FIRST CENTURY
AFTER ITS SETTLEMENT;
WITH BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES**

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History of Wells, Vermont, for the First Century After Its Settlement; with Biographical Sketches by Hiland Paul & Robert Parks

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HILAND PAUL & ROBERT PARKS

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BY
ROBERT PARKS, Esq.

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INTRODUCTORY.

The writer of this brief and simple historical sketch was urged against his wishes to write the history of this town, and at first declined on account of his inability to do justice to the subject; but, after much entreaty of friends, finally accepted the task, though without change of opinion respecting his fitness. Adopting no particular plan in preparing this sketch, we have endeavored to write intelligibly and with simplicity, knowing that we could not, if we would, make "much ado about nothing."

We have been somewhat discouraged at times, at the small degree of interest manifested in this little work, which is written with no expectations of reward for time and labor spent in its preparation. We acknowledge that it is far from complete, for much of the early history of the town that would be interesting, has passed away in obscurity. Yet amid discouraging circumstances, we have persevered in preparing this sketch—our little work of good-will for our native town—foreseeing, that with the past already forgotten, the aged men who are with us to-day, will not probably long remain to refresh us with their memories of the more recent past, but may soon lie beneath the sods of the valley.

Though errors may exist, our aim has been to be correct in giving the facts, that would be of interest, so far as we have been able to obtain them. We hope this may be acceptable until another more worthy is written to succeed it.

Therefore, with all its simplicity, it is presented, hoping that it may meet with the favor of our towns-people; and in the dim future, be of some little interest to our successors.

October 8, 1868.

HISTORY OF WELLS.

This town is situated in the southwestern part of Rutland county, and is bounded on the north by Poultney and a part of Middletown, east by a part of Middletown and Timmouth, south by Pawlet, and west by Granville, N. Y. It is not at present known whence the name of the town originated, or to whom the honor of naming it belongs.

The Charter was granted by Benning Wentworth, then Governor of New Hampshire, September 15, A. D. 1761, and was in the form usually given in granting townships at that time—September 15, 1868, it was 107 years old—and may now be seen at the Town Clerk's office, and, although worn, by folding, into numerous fragments, is still legible.

There is also on record at said office a copy of the charter together with a plan of the town. The town was laid out six miles square, containing 38,040 acres, and the usual allowance was made for "highways and unimprovable lands by rocks, ponds, mountains and rivers, 1,040 acres free," etc. The north-east corner of the town was originally a short distance to the northward of what is at present Middletown village. The town was chartered to Capt. Eliakim Hall and sixty-three others, whose names are here given :

Rev. Edward Kales,	John A. Tertius,	Caleb Merriman,
Daniel Murwin, Jr.,	Aaron Parsons,	Dr. Isaac Hall,
Isaac Hall, Jr.,	Stephen Ives,	William Williams,
Thomas Murwin,	John Ives,	Nathan Williams,
John Hulls,	Stephen Pock,	John Pierce,
Reuben Ives,	Dr. Caleb Hall,	Asahel Thomas,
John Moss,	Joel Holcom,	Titus Culver,
Samuel Jerome,	Hasakiah Hall,	Nathan Hulls,

Samuel Hall, Esq.,	Thomas Tibbets,	Miles Johnson,
Joseph Murwin,	Jared Spencer,	Elakim Hall, Jr.,
Noah Andrus,	Titus Ives,	Abel Austin,
Bartholomew Andrus,	Hesekiah Wadsworth,	Benjamin Roys,
Asahel Beach,	Titus Beach,	Joseph Bishop,
John Avery,	Daniel Clark,	Samuel Bishop,
Abel Ives,	Jacob Parker,	David Lyman,
Stephen Murwin,	Andrew Beardsley,	John Beecher,
Sam'l Sharp Boedals,	Joseph Francis,	Zebulon Frisbie,
Caleb Culver,	Joseph Newmarch,	Joseph Brunson,
Levi Moss,	H. Wentworth,	Gersham Knot,
Stephen Hall,	Jared Lee,	Robert Hazard,
Dr. John Dickinson,	Abraham Parker,	Samuel Hall.

It is generally considered that very few, if any, of the original grantees settled in town, and the early town records show that most, if not all of them, resided in Connecticut.

In the charter there is a plan of the town, wherein we find a portion in the south-west corner laid out and marked "B. W.", and the following is recorded, viz: His Excellency Benning Wentworth, Esq. A tract of land to contain five hundred acres, as marked B. W. in the plan, which is to be accounted two of the within shares. One whole share for the incorporated society for the propagation of the gospel in foreign parts; one share for the Glebe for the church of England as by law established; one share for the first settled minister of the gospel, and one share for the benefit of a school in said town—making in all seventy shares or rights of land originally.

"The settlement of this town was commenced by Ogden Mallory, who moved his family here about the year 1768," (*Thompson's Vt. Gazetteer*). If so the present year would be the centennial anniversary of our town's settlement. "Daniel and Samuel Culver came into town in 1771 and moved their families here the following year."

ORGANIZATION.

This town was organized March 9, 1773, and the following business was transacted at the first town meeting, viz :

“ WELLS, March 9, A. D. 1773.

“ At a town meeting warned by the charter and held in said town—

“1st. Voted, Ogden Mallory, Moderator.

“2d. Voted, John Ward, Clerk.

“3d. Voted, Ogden Mallory and Abner How a Committee to look out a road, and mark out the same in the most convenient place through said town.

“4th. Voted, that the road shall be six rods wide through said town.

“5th. Voted, Ogden Mallory pathmaster for the south part of the town, and Abner How pathmaster for the north part of the town.

“6th. Voted, that Daniel Culver, Joseph Lawrence and Ogden Mallory should search and find a convenient place for a burying yard in said town.

“7th. Voted, that this meeting be adjourned to the first Monday in November next, at the dwelling house of Ogden Mallory.

“Per me JOHN WARD, Clerk.”

The adjourned meeting was held according to the previous vote, November 1, 1773, and “John Ward and Ebenezer Welton were appointed a committee to lay out a burying yard in a convenient place, and Ogden Mallory, Daniel Culver, Joseph Lawrence, Abner How and John Ward were chosen selectmen.”

At a town meeting held in regard to the affairs of the grants, February 25, 1774, Abner How and Joseph Moss were appointed a committee to attend the general meeting in Manchester. The meeting thus alluded to was held at Manchester, in March, 1774, when the committees there assembled, from the several adjoining towns, having considered “the

despotic act of the New York Assembly, for the suppression and apprehension of the Bennington mob," voted in reference thereto, "that as a country we will stand by and defend our friends and neighbors, who are indicted, at the expense of our lives and fortunes."

The "despotic act" above referred to, was passed March 9, 1774, wherein certain riotous acts were declared to be felony, for which the offender was to suffer death without benefit of clergy. The act names Ethan Allen, Seth Warner, and others, eight in number, who prepared an appeal to the public, showing the justice of their cause, and that they were determined to maintain it at all hazards.*

At the town meeting above mentioned the inhabitants here voted, that "there should be no York authority take place in said town," which plainly shows the spirit of the times that animated the early settlers of this town, in regard to the formation of an independent State. There were many long years of strife, anxiety and bloodshed after this vote was taken before Vermont became (in 1791) one of the United States; though in one sense it became an independent state from the years 1776-77, for the inhabitants would not recognize the authority of New Hampshire or New York, though both of these states claimed title to this disputed territory, which was then known as the New Hampshire grants.

At the time this town thus voted, history informs us, that the subject of making the grants an independent state began to be discussed, and in 1776 a convention was held at Dorset to consider this important measure; and after deliberation resolved "to take suitable measures, as soon as may be, to

*See Hillard Hall's History of Vermont.