REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON TOWN SEAL, AND REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON NAMING THE STREETS OF CANTON

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Report of the Committee on Town Seal, and report of the Committee on Naming the Streets of Canton by Various

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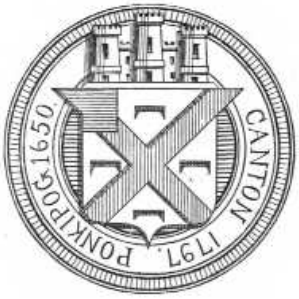

CANTON:
PRINTED BY WILLIAM BENSE,
1881.

THE Committee appointed by the Town of Canton at its annual meeting in April, 1880, to prepare a suitable design for a corporate seal of the Town, have attended to that duty, and present for the consideration of its citizens the following

REPORT.

IT appears that shortly after the Norman Conquest, the use of seals became common, in consequence of their presence being required to give validity to every species of legal document. They were engraved with some design which was peculiar to their owner, and was presumed to refer to some real or supposed service. From this custom, seals for cities and towns originated.

In this country, we are at liberty to adopt any design for a seal, and many towns represent on their seals some incident of their early history or subsequent

development. Your Committee were at first disposed to represent on the town seal some event connected with Canton history, such as "Eliot preaching to the Indians at Ponkipog." "An incident in the life of Gridley." "A picture of the Doty Tavern." "The Ride of Paul Revere." "Roger Sherman signing the Declaration of Independence," or "A View of the Viaduct;" but they decided that it was impossible to represent in proper proportion, in the space usually alloted to a seal, the picture of any event. If the seal was to be painted upon the walls of the Town Hall, a picture might be represented to advantage, but when reduced to the size of a newspaper column, at the head of the town warrant, it would be impossible to distinguish the design.

Your Committee have therefore decided to follow the principles and laws which governed the designing of seals in ancient days, and have looked to the science of Heraldry for information,—a symbolical and pictorial language, in which figures, devices and color are employed, instead of letters. They have devised a seal which shall represent, when properly understood, the History of Canton, the designs upon which can be clearly distinguished.

In 1866,—four years before she breathed her last, —our mother, or more properly speaking, our grandmother town, Dorchester, settled in 1630, adopted a

seal, and for a crest, took the triple-towered castle, "in respectful memory" they say "of Dorchester in old England, on whose seal this is the principal charge," and from which town the early settlers of Dorchester, in New England, immigrated.

The town of Dorchester has condescended to be merged in Boston, and her seal is covered with rust. Your Committee have, in respectful memory of Dorchester in New England, adopted this triple-towered castle as the crest of our town seal, because we were from 1630 until 1726, a part of Dorchester, and many of the early settlers of our town came from there.

In 1726 our town received the name of Stoughton, a name highly to be prized. It was so designated in honor of LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR WILLIAM STOUGHTON, whose remains lie in the old Dorchester Burying Ground. Our town is the original Stoughton, and never should have relinquished its birthright. Your Committee have adopted and placed upon the shield of our town seal, the arms that are engraved upon his tomb-stone and stamped upon his will.*

It was also a custom in ancient days to choose a device for a shield, which should be connected in some way with the name of the bearer; this was

* These arms are described in heraldry as follows: "Ar. on a saltire gu. between four door staples sable, an escallop. or."

called "canting" heraldry. A division of a shield, smaller than a quarter, usually the right, formed by a perpendicular line from the top of the shield meeting a horizontal line from the side, is called a canton, and your Committee have adopted this allusive custom of old, and placed on the shield a canton, alluding to the name of the town.

On the border which surrounds the shield we have placed the word "PONKIPOG," and spelled it as JOHN ELIOT spelled it, which was the name the Indians called the territory we now call Canton; and the date "1650," at which we find the earliest mention of it.

On the opposite side we have placed the present name of our town, "CANTON," and the date "1797," when it received its Act of Incorporation, signed by SAMUEL ADAMS.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

Committee, { DANIEL T. V. HUNTOON,
ELIJAH A. MORSE,
G. WALTER CAPEN.

Under Article 5th of the warrant for Town Meeting, April 4, 1881:

VOTED,—That the report of the Committee on Town Seal be accepted and the design adopted as the Seal of the Town of Canton.

ATTEST, WALTER AMES,
TOWN CLERK.

Report of Committee on Streets.