

**ADDRESS DELIVERED BEFORE THE  
CITY GOVERNMENT AND  
CITIZENS, ON THE TWO  
HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF  
WORCESTER, OCTOBER 14, 1884**

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Address delivered before the city government and citizens, on the two hundredth anniversary of Worcester, October 14, 1884 by George F. Hoar

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**GEORGE F. HOAR**

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A D D R E S S

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

CITY GOVERNMENT AND CITIZENS,

ON THE

TWO HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY

OF

WORCESTER,

OCTOBER 14, 1884,

BY

*George F. Hoar*

GEORGE F. HOAR.

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WORCESTER, MASS.:

PRESS OF CHARLES HAMILTON,  
NO. 311 MAIN STREET.

1885.



## ADDRESS.

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I AM, this evening, but a voice. As we strive to clasp the two hands which seem to stretch out to us, on either side, through the mist,—the hand of our ancestry, and the hand of our posterity,—I can only imperfectly utter what is in the bosoms of all of you.

The hour is consecrated to simple and common emotions ; and yet to the emotions which most dignify and ennoble human life. The imperfect instinct of affection for parent and offspring, which nature has given to the brute, is confined to the period of infancy. In man, it becomes parental love and filial reverence. It is the tie that binds us together in the household. It extends beyond the grave, and reaches back to remote ancestors. It goes out with unspeakable yearning even to the soil where the ashes of those we have loved repose. It impels us to seek, with those who are our kindred, a companionship, even in death. “Where the heart has laid down what it loved most,” says the greatest of New England orators, “there it is desirous of laying itself down. No sculptured marble, no enduring monument, no honorable inscription, no ever-burning taper that would drive away the darkness of the tomb, can soften our sense of the reality of death, and hallow to our feelings the ground which is to cover

us, like the consciousness that we shall sleep, dust to dust, with the objects of our affections." But human love rises to its highest dignity, and reaches its profoundest depth of tenderness, when its object is that political being to which we give the endearing name of country, or the town which is our birthplace, or the city which we fondly call our home. There are men in this audience whose blood would fly to their cheeks at the charge that some little town where they were born, had committed an act of dishonor two hundred years ago, as if the imputation were upon one of their own kindred to-day. What tones of triumph and joy stir the heart like those which celebrate our country's glory? What note of sorrow comes down through the ages like theirs who wept when they remembered Zion?

I cannot, with the limits of this address, give in detail the history of Worcester for two hundred years. That has been done, in part, by an eminent scholar, whose family name has been honorably identified with this community for more than a century. Our learned and famous society, whose early labors attracted the attention and interest of Humboldt, which has thrown so much light upon the antiquities of the continent, has not altogether neglected those specially belonging to the locality of its habitation. A younger association of investigators, the Society of Antiquity, will leave no field of local interest unexplored. I content myself with an estimate of some of the moral forces which have determined the history of this community, and with considering, briefly, what ground we can find of

rational cheerfulness and hope, in contemplating the future.

After the settlement of a few towns on the coast, in the first half of the 17th century, the rich interval of the Connecticut attracted the eyes of the planters of New England. Midway between the sea and the river, the margin of our beautiful lake afforded a convenient stopping-place. This lake was well known to the Indians by the name Quansigemog—"fishing place for pickerel,"—Quonosuog was the Indian name for "long-nose," or pickerel; and amaug denoted a fishing-place.<sup>1</sup> In 1667, the General Court appointed a committee to "take an exact view," and report "whether the place be capable to make a village, and what number of families they conceive may be there accommodated." The next year the committee return that they have viewed the place, that it contains a tract of very good chestnut land, and that there may be enough meadow for a small plantation, or town of about thirty families;

<sup>1</sup> I am permitted to annex the following letter from the eminent antiquary and scholar, J. Hammond Trumbull, Esq., of Hartford, Conn. His authority is the highest in the country on all matters relating to the language of the North American Indians, and is decisive of this question:—

HARTFORD, September 2, 1884.

MY DEAR MR. HOAR:

"Quansigamug Pond" is so named in Mass. Records, iv. (2). p. 111; and as "Quansicamug," same vol., p. 293; "Quansicamug," p. 307; and "Quansicamog," p. 341,—whence by easy transition came the modern form, Quinsigamond. President Stiles, who had a good ear for Indian names, wrote this, in his Itinerary, "Quonsigemog."

Quonosu or Quonosu (plural Quonosuog) was the Indian name for pickerel—literally "long nose" and -amaug final, denotes a "fishing place." Quansigamug is "pickerel fishing-place," or "where they fish for pickerel."

I have indicated the composition of this name, in my paper on Algonkin place names in Coll. Conn. Hist. Society, ii., 18,—though without mention of these early forms of the name.

Very truly yours,

J. H. TRUMBULL.



that, if certain grants which the Court has made to the church of Malden and others be recalled, and annexed to it, it may supply about sixty families. They therefore conceive it expedient that it be reserved for a town, and land about eight miles square be laid out in the best form the place will bear.

The General Court adopted these recommendations. The committee were authorized to order and manage the new plantation. The Indian title was extinguished, and honorably paid for. A fort was erected. As early as 1673, the work of settlement began with some vigor. But Philip's war broke out in 1675. Brookfield, Mendon, Lancaster, and Westborough, were our nearest neighbors, the three former being our sole barrier against the Indian wilderness. Lancaster and Brookfield were utterly destroyed, and Mendon abandoned. The planters here deserted their possessions and dispersed among the larger towns. On the 2d of December, 1675, the Indians destroyed the little village of six or seven houses, all that then existed of Quinsigamond.

The war ended with the death of Philip, August 12th, 1676. The broken remnant of the Indians submitted to the power of the colony. The proprietors and the committee soon renewed their scheme for settlement. A meeting of proprietors was had in Cambridge, in 1678, a survey made in 1683, and an agreement entered into April 24, 1684, to regulate the settlement, then fairly in progress.

The General Court, at a session begun October 15th, 1684, granted the request of the committee, Daniel

Gookin, Daniel Henchman, and Thomas Prentice, that their plantation at Quinsigamond be called Worcester.<sup>1</sup> This has been commonly supposed to have been in honor of the city of Worcester in England. We might well account it an honor to be the namesake of that beautiful town upon the Severn, the "*civitas in bello et in pace fidelis*." Mr. Whitmore, in his essay on the names of towns, in the Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, for February 11th, 1873, says there is a tradition that the name was given by the committee to commemorate the battle of Worcester, the "crowning mercy" where Cromwell shattered the forces of Charles 2d, and as a defiance to the Stuarts. I do not know the source or the antiquity of this tradition. But it is not without probability. There is no reason to think that either of the staunch old Puritans who composed the committee, had the slightest connection with the city or shire of Worcester. Prentice is believed by his descendants to have learned the art of war under Cromwell. Gookin was its most important member. He may be called the founder of

<sup>1</sup> The limited time allowed for the preparation of this address made it necessarily extremely imperfect. One defect, of which the author is especially sensible, is the omission of any mention of Ephraim Curtis. He is entitled to be honored as the first settler of Worcester, notwithstanding the late discovery that a rude house had been built here prior to his settlement. It is clear that the owner of the house did not occupy it. What sort of a house it was, whether it was built for the surveyors, or for the committee who inspected the place to determine its fitness for habitation, or as a shelter for travellers on their way to the Connecticut, does not appear. But it is unlikely that any permanent settler would have dwelt there without leaving some trace of himself in the cotemporary record. Curtis represented an element which has not received full justice from New England history,—the brave and adventurous frontiersman. His exploit in saving the besieged garrison of Brookfield equals anything Cooper has imagined of the Leatherstocking.

His descendants, a highly respected family, bearing his name, still dwell on the spot where he settled. He was the ancestor, also, of the famous and eloquent orator, George William Curtis.

Worcester. He was the major-general of the colony. He is, to me, with the possible exception of John Winthrop, the most attractive character in our colonial history. His great qualities have never yet received their due from historians. He was the companion and protector of the regicides Goffe and Whalley, on the one hand, and an earnest advocate for justice to the Indians on the other. Goffe and Whalley came over in the same ship with him in 1660. While the founding of Worcester was in progress, they were dwelling at Hadley, in a hiding place of which he knew the secret. Whalley was own cousin of both Cromwell and Hampden. He had beaten Prince Rupert at Naseby, and led the horse in the army which compelled him to the surrender of Bristol. The loyalists of the English Worcester surrendered that city to him in 1643.

Gookin did not live long enough to take up his abode here. But his footsteps have been upon our fields. He watched over Worcester in its cradle, until his death. I hope his statue may some day grace our city. He was an old Kentish soldier, and had been the personal and highly trusted friend of the great Protector, who,

" Guided by faith and matchless fortitude,  
To peace and truth his glorious way had ploughed,  
And on the neck of crowned fortune proud  
Had reared God's trophies, and his work pursued,  
While Darwen stream, with blood of Scots imbrued,  
And Dunbar field, resound his praises loud,  
And Worcester's laureate wreath."

The year of which we are speaking was the year of the most serious attempt ever made upon the liberties