

**THE CENTENNIAL  
CELEBRATION OF THE TOWN  
OF NORTHBOROUGH,  
MASS., AUGUST 22, 1866**

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The centennial celebration of the town of Northborough, Mass., August 22, 1866 by Various

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**VARIOUS**

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AUGUST 22, 1866.

PRINTED FOR THE COMMITTEE.

1866.



## ADDRESS.

By Rev. Joseph Allen, D. D., of Northborough.

In the beautiful month of June, in the year of our Lord 1636, might have been seen from the hills in the southeast part of this town a strange phenomenon. It was a company of men, women and children—one hundred in all—driving before them a herd of cattle, one hundred and sixty in number, which supplied them with milk on their long and toilsome pilgrimage. "They hewed their difficult way," says the historian (J. S. PALFREY), "through thickets; and their simple engineering bridged with felled trees the streams which could not be forded. Tents and wagons protected them from the rain and sheltered their sleep. Early berries, which grew along the way, furnished an agreeable variety in their diet; and the fragrance of Summer flowers and the songs of innumerable birds beguiled the weariness of the pilgrimage. It occupied a fortnight, though the distance was scarcely a hundred miles. Mrs. HOOKER, by reason of illness, was carried in a horse litter."

This Mrs. HOOKER was the minister's wife, and this goodly company was composed of members of his congregation in Newtown, now Cambridge, and of the neighboring churches of Dorchester and Watertown, and their destination was the fertile banks of the Connecticut, where they laid the foundations of three flourishing towns—Hartford, Wethersfield, and Windsor; at first named from the towns they had left, Newtown, Watertown, and Dorchester.

An aged citizen of this town, forty years ago, pointed out to me what, in the old records, is spoken of as "the Népmuch road, that formerly led toward Connecticut." It passed through the southeast corner of this town, over Rock Hill, by the dwelling-house of SAMUEL SEAVER and the State Reform School, through

Westborough and Hassanamesitt, now Grafton, and so on to the place of their destination.

A smaller company had preceded them in the autumn of 1635, and had probably taken the same route. These two companies of emigrants were the first of English descent who set foot on soil included within the boundaries of this town. From Rock Hill and the beautiful heights on which stands the State Institution in our neighborhood, they looked down upon Great and Little Chauncey, and pathless forests, which have since been reclaimed and are now converted into cultivated farms. They may have had glimpses of the stream, dignified by the name of a river, the Indian name being still retained, that winds its way through our pleasant village, which, with its tributaries, now furnishes water-power to mills and factories of different kinds. They must have had a full view of what is justly regarded as one of the chief ornaments of the village—the hill, that rises so gracefully and stands so majestically before us, worthy of the new name by which it is now known, and destined, we trust, as the village grows in size and wealth, to receive the embellishments of enterprise and taste.

The great landmarks remain. The hills and valleys and streams are the same, in their main features, as when looked upon for the first time by civilized men, two hundred and thirty years ago. All else how changed! The tide of emigration advanced steadily from the settlements on the borders of the sea. From Watertown to Concord and Sudbury the way was not long or difficult, and the extensive meadows bordering the streams that then flowed unobstructed by mill-dams through those towns into the Merrimac, held out strong attractions to the new settler. Sudbury was incorporated in 1638, only two years after the emigration of the band of pilgrims to the banks of the Connecticut, of which I have spoken. The town increased and flourished for eighteen years, before another remove was undertaken. At length, in May, 1656, two hundred and ten years ago, the following petition was presented to the General Court, in more respectful terms than are used in these *degenerate* days:

“The humble petition of several of the Inhabitants of Sudbury, whose names are hereunder written, humbly sheweth: that whereas your petitioners have lived divers years in Sud-

bury and God has been pleased to increase our children, which are now divers of them grown to man's estate, and wee, many of us, grown into years, so as that wee should be glad to see them settled before the Lord take us away from hence, as also God having given us some considerable quantity of cattle, so that wee are so straitened that wee cannot so comfortably submit as could be desired; and some of us having taken some pains to view the country, wee have found a place which lyeth Westward about eight miles from Sudbury, which wee conceive might be comfortable for our subsistence.

"It is therefore the humble request of your petitioners to this kind Court, that you would bee pleased to grant unto us eight miles square, for to make a plantation.

"If it shall please this Hon'd Court to grant our petition, it is further than [then] the request of your petitioners to this Hon'd Court, that you will be pleased to appoint Mr. THOMAS DANFORTH or Lieut. FISHER to lay out the bounds of the plantation, and wee shall satisfy those whom the Hon'd Court shall please to employ in it. So apprehending this weighty occasion, wee shall no further trouble this Hon'd Court, but shall ever pray for your happiness."

Of the thirteen persons whose names are subscribed to this petition, one, at least, THOMAS GOODENOW, subsequently lived within the borders of this town, and several others have descendants still living among us.

The petition was granted; a Committee was appointed to fix the boundaries of a plantation "six miles or otherwise," the record states, which, however, was to be forfeited unless "there be a town settled with twenty or more families within three years, so as an able ministry may bee there maintained."

The plantation of six miles square included, besides Marlborough proper, most of the territory comprising the towns of Westborough, Southborough, Northborough, and the new town of Hudson.

Till its incorporation in 1660, the plantation was known by the name of *Whipsuppenicke*, as the Indian plantation of six thousand acres adjoining on the northeastern border was called *Ockoocungansett*. This plantation, with several other tracts of land on the northern and western borders, was afterwards annexed to the original grant of six miles square.

In the meantime, "several families," as stated in the history of Marlborough, had settled, at an early day, west of Assabet and

near Chauncey pond, and had done so with an assurance, given as early as 1688, that they should be erected into a parish as soon as they were able to support a minister: and the people of Marlborough, in the spirit of liberality, had designated the line for division "at the cartway at Stirrup brook, where the Connecticut way now goeth, and to run a parallel line with the west line of the bounds of the town."

As early as 1660, *Cold Harbor Meadow* had received its name and had been laid out in thirty-four lots, which was probably the number of the proprietors of Marlborough plantation; and in 1672 grants of land were made to SAMUEL GOODENOW, JOHN and SAMUEL BRIGHAM, and JOHN REDIAT, all within the bounds of this town. SAMUEL GOODENOW's grant comprised the farms of the late Deacon JONAS BARTLETT and GILL BARTLETT on the Marlborough road. The tragical fate of his daughter MARY, and the almost miraculous escape of her companion, Mrs. MARY FAY, when overtaken by a band of ruthless savages, are too well known to require further notice. The grave of Miss GOODENOW still remains without a monument, and may soon become obliterated and unknown.

JOHN REDIAT's daughter, MEHTAREL, was married to NATHANIEL OAKES, who inherited his estate, and who lived on what is known as the *Old Parsonage*, having been in possession successively of the first two ministers of this town, JOHN MARTYN and PETER WHITNEY.

HANNAH, a daughter of NATHANIEL OAKES, was married to GERSHOM FAY, Jr., and was the mother of the late THAD. FAY, whom some of us remember as a *nonagenarian* nearly half a century ago.

SAMUEL BRIGHAM lived on the farm east of the Great Chauncey, now belonging to the State Reform School, and was the ancestor of the late Dr. SAMUEL BRIGHAM of Marlborough. His brother THOMAS lived in the westerly part of Marlborough.

Another brother, JOHN, received a grant of land in this same year, 1662, on what is called in the old records "*Licor Meadow Plain*," so called, I suppose, from its vicinity to the hill which was already known by the familiar name of *Liquor Hill*, now *Mt. Assabet*. Mr. BRIGHAM is understood to have been the first

settler in that part of Marlborough which forms the two towns of Westborough and Northborough. He built a log cabin, and set up a saw-mill on Howard brook, which, from that time, has been used as a mill-site, and where can be seen, or could a few years since, the remains of the cellar where JOHN BRIGHAM'S cabin once stood. Here he lived for many years a solitary life, until fear of the savages forced him to leave; soon after which, the cabin was burnt to the ground. His daughter MARY was married to GERSHOM FAY, Sr., grandfather of the late NAHUM FAY, Esq., who lived on the "Coram Farm," as it was called, some fifty rods this side of the west school-house. A large elm tree, growing in the cellar, marks the spot where once stood the house of GERSHOM FAY, the father of a large family, many of whose descendants are still with us, and whose farm, with subsequent additions, still remains in the possession of his descendants.

Among the first settlers of Northborough was SIMON HOWARD, whose house stood a few rods west of this church, where the remains of the cellar are yet visible, and whose land extended on the north to the brook which is called by his name, and on the east to the road leading to the saw-mill. It formed the northern boundary of the meeting-house common, a triangular piece of land, consisting of two or three acres, given by JAMES EAGER, another of the first settlers, who lived on the spot now occupied by the dwelling-house of J. H. MCINTIRE.

Another of the early settlers was WILLIAM HOLLOWAY, who, with his father ADAM, lived on the spot where stands the dwelling-house of GEORGE H. WILLIAMS. One of the daughters, MARY, was married to JONATHAN BARTLETT, and was living at the time of my settlement in this place. She died in 1821, at the age of 95. I recall, with pleasure, a social party at my house, consisting of ten or twelve of the more aged persons of my parish, at which were present, among others, Madam BARTLETT and Madam WHITNEY, the widow of my respected predecessor in the ministry.

HEZEKIAH TOMLIN lived on Tomlin Hill; his brother ISAAC, on the spot now occupied by the dwelling-house of GEORGE C. DAVIS, Esq.