

**HISTORY OF SWANSEA,
MASSACHUSETTS,
1667-1917**

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History of Swansea, Massachusetts, 1667-1917 by Otis Olney Wright

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OTIS OLNEY WRIGHT

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1667-1917**

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M A S S A C H U S E T T S

1667 .. 1917

COMPILED AND EDITED

By

OTIS OLNEY WRIGHT

PUBLISHED BY THE TOWN

1917

EDITOR'S PREFACE

AT the annual Town Meeting, held March 2, 1914, the Rev. Otis O. Wright, Elmer S. Sears, Edwin P. Kershaw, Leroy J. Chace, and Lorenzo P. Sturtevant were appointed a committee to have charge of the preparation of a history of the town, to be published previous to the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of its incorporation, said committee to report at the next annual, or at a special meeting of the town, as to plans, expenses, etc.

The committee met in the Frank S. Stevens Public Library Building, May 1, 1914, and organized by choosing O. O. Wright Chairman, and Elmer S. Sears Secretary and Treasurer. Mr. Wright was appointed editor and historian of the work. It was agreed that since so much has been published concerning the Town, the work should be largely that of editing and compiling such records and other material as may be available and adapted to the special purpose of the contemplated anniversary and its celebration. It was thought that the volume should be limited to about 250 pages.

At the next Town meeting, March 1, 1915, the committee reported progress, and it was "Voted—To accept the report of the committee appointed at the last annual meeting relative to a town history, and to appropriate \$200 for the purpose of carrying on the work."

At the annual meeting held March 6th, 1916, the committee reported progress, and offered the following Resolutions: "Resolved, That the said Committee be authorized to complete, print and publish said history, of about 250 pages, on or before April 1, 1917, the expense of so doing not to exceed \$1000 for 500 copies bound in cloth, and 100 copies in sheets."

"Resolved, That the selectmen be authorized to make plans, appoint committees, and to have general charge of a celebration of the 250th Anniversary of the Incorporation of the Town, to be held on two successive days, between the first and fifteenth of September, 1917, as they may determine; and that all necessary expenses incurred by them for that purpose shall be paid by the Town upon their order."

The resolutions were adopted, and other citizens were then appointed to act with the Selectmen as a general Town Committee on the Celebration, *viz*: Charles L. Chace, Thomas

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Pomfret, the Rev. J. Wynne-Jones, Algernon H. Barney, Albert Belanger, and Charles A. Chace.

In accord with the original plan of the committee, the Editor has made free use of materials found in various works, together with Town Records, Plymouth Colony Records, Family Histories, Genealogies, and newspaper writings. He gratefully acknowledges all these contributions to this work, giving credit to each and all the sources from which he has borrowed, after the custom of those who edit and compile. By special permission, much interesting matter has been taken from that great work done by J. H. Beers & Company, of Chicago, *Representative Men and Old Families of Southeastern Massachusetts*. Such family records as pertain to the first permanent settlers still represented in the Town, have been brought to date; and a few who have been prominent in later generations, in public or professional service have been selected, as examples of history in the making. Others may have been just as worthy of mention, but limits forbade; and we have taken that which was most available. So far as practicable the sketches have been approved by someone representing each family presented. In the nature of the case some of the records will be found incomplete and unsatisfactory.

In some matters referring to this locality I have quoted from *The Pilgrim Republic*, a most interesting and valuable work by John A. Goodwin, edited by Wm. Bradford Goodwin. I am indebted to Miss Virginia Baker, author of *Massasoits Town Sowams in Pokanoket*, and *The History of Warren, R. I. in the War of the Revolution*. Miss Baker is experienced in genealogical and historical research. *A History of Barrington Rhode Island* by the Hon. Thomas Williams Bicknell, has been helpful not only because Barrington was included in Swansea until 1718, but for the reason that it is replete with information of events of interest to all students.

The Hon. John S. Brayton who was born in Swansea, and was always personally interested in the Town, secured the Muster Rolls of the Revolution, at large expense, and presented them, with the documents relating to the incorporation of Somerset, to the Swansea Free Public Library, where they may be found. Other valuable material, prepared or preserved by Mr. Brayton, has been kindly loaned by his son, John S. Brayton for this history.

Mrs. W. S. Winter, of Marion, Iowa, daughter of the late honored citizen, Job Gardner, has contributed papers left by her father, which will be of interest to many.

Valued assistance has been rendered by Miss Ida M. Gardner, Orrin A. Gardner, William J. Hale, Charles E. Allen,

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Miss Ruth B. Eddy, Miss Martha G. Kingsley, Joseph G. Luther, and others.

Matter pertaining to the Churches of this Town, the most of which was prepared by the late Rev. Joseph W. Osborn for the History of Bristol County, published in 1883, has been revised to date and embodied in this work, together with other materials suited to our purpose, from the same volume.

Mrs. Frank S. Stevens kindly allowed the use of some military papers of Col. Peleg Shearman, heirlooms of his family.

The following works relating to the Indians of this region have been consulted by the Editor: *Indian History, Biography and Genealogy*, by Ebenezer W. Pierce; *King Philip's War*, by Ellis and Morris; *Pictorial History of King Philip's War*, by Daniel Strock Jr.; *King Philip's War*, by Richard Markham; *A History of the American People*, by Woodrow Wilson Ph. D., Litt., D., L.L.D. Vol. 1. "The swarming of the English."

I have also quoted from the *Journal of William Jefferay, Gentleman*, on account of a visit to Thomas Willett; and from Prof. Wilfred H. Munroe's, *Some Legends of Mount Hope*, with reference to King Philip.

The selections from Goodwin's "The Pilgrim Republic" are used by permission of the publishers, Houghton Mifflin Company.

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