

**AN ADDRESS DELIVERED IN
PETERSHAM, MASSACHUSETTS, JULY
4, 1854, IN COMMEMORATION OF THE
ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE INCORPORATION OF THAT TOWN**

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An Address Delivered in Petersham, Massachusetts, July 4, 1854, in Commemoration of the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Incorporation of That Town by Edmund B. Willson

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EDMUND B. WILLSON

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West Roxbury, March 5th, '55.

Dr. Davis,

Dear Sir, I have
been kindly permitted to look
for materials to fill out an
account of my native town,
in the College Library; I
know not that I can make
any other acknowledgment of
the favor more suitable than
an offer of the poor fruits of
my researches in the same.
Yours faithfully,

Respectfully Yours,

E. B. Williams,

AN

ADDRESS

DELIVERED IN PETERSHAM, MASSACHUSETTS,

JULY 4, 1854.

IN COMMEMORATION OF

THE ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

INCORPORATION OF THAT TOWN.

BY EDMUND B. WILLSON.

With an Appendix.

BOSTON:
CROSBY, NICHOLS, AND COMPANY,
111, WASHINGTON STREET.
1855.

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1855
Copy of Centennial
Address

PETERHAM, July 31, 1854.

REV. EDWARD B. WILSON, WEST ROXBURY.

DEAR SIR,—The undersigned Committee of Arrangements for the Centennial Celebration on the 4th of July, respectfully request for publication a copy of the able and interesting Address delivered by you on that occasion. The profound attention with which that great audience listened must convince you, more than any thing that we can express, of the deep interest that was felt in the Address.

WILLIAM PARKHURST,
CEPHAS WILLARD,
SETH HAPGOOD,
LEWIS WHITELEY,
PHINEAS W. BAKE,
JOSEPH G. PARKENYER,
DANIEL STOWELL,
WILLIAM H. BANCROFT,

EDWARD PETERHAM,
JOHN G. MUDGE,
J. P. PILLSBURY,
JOHN M. HOLMAN,
JESSE ROGERS,
WILLIAM COOK,
COLLINS ANDREWS,

Committee of Arrangements.

WEST ROXBURY, Aug. 3, 1854.

MESSES. WILLIAM PARKHURST, CEPHAS WILLARD, AND OTHERS, Committee.

DEAR SIR,—The Address delivered at our late Celebration is at your service. I shall have to ask a little time, however, to append a few notes, and such other related matter as belongs to it.

I have a lively and grateful recollection of the patient attention with which the Address was heard, despite the extreme heat and long sitting of that midsummer's day.

With much regard, I am yours,

E. B. WILSON.

BOSTON:
PRINTED BY JOHN WILSON AND SON,
22, SCHOOL STREET.

P R E F A C E.

THE act of incorporation, by which the plantation of Nichewaug became a town, bears date April 20, 1764. The day chosen for the celebration of its centennial festival was not, it will be perceived, the precise anniversary of the incorporation. The true day falling in a month when the weather is quite unsuitable for out-of-door rejoicings, when the roads are usually bad, — sometimes hardly passable, — and when, consequently, access to the town from distant places would be attended with much discomfort and difficulty, another day was substituted for it.

The writer of the following Address would have been glad to make something else of it, which should have been of more permanent value. He would have preferred to recast and expand it into the form of a somewhat complete Town History. But he did not see how this could be done for some years at least; while he did see that the present publication might indirectly serve the same purpose, by provoking a new and wider interest in the town's annals, and stimulating curiosity to a keener search after the materials from which a more complete account of the town could be made at some future day by some other hand.

The antiquarian experiences no greater difficulty in his researches, than that of making the inheritors of old family mansions, and attics full of miscellaneous papers and time-yellowed

MSS., believe that there can be any thing of biographical or historical value among their neglected stores. They will not believe that an old almanac, an account-book, a letter, an occasional sermon, a newspaper article, a political handbill, or a ballad once sung up and down their streets, can be worthy of notice, and are too often reluctant to let the stranger look among their "rubbish," because their garrets are not furnished in the style of a parlor. Indeed, the owner of the garret is often as ignorant of what it contains as the strangest stranger can be.

The following pages contain the record of many facts. It is not presumed that they will be found free from errors. The writer can but claim to have spent much time, and exercised a reasonable care, in their compilation. And even his error, as well as his truth, shall help his purpose, if it cause some other to come after him, who will set his wrongs right, and add more or fewer to the facts that are facts.

A D D R E S S .

CITIZENS OF PETERSHAM, —

To you belong these lands that lie around us, but not wholly to you. There are many of us here, who can show no title in the county records to a foot of all this soil, who, nevertheless, feel that we have, in some sort, a property and an interest in it as well as you. The acres, we admit, are yours. The memories that attach to them are ours as well. We have learned, may be, to call other places home. But, up and down your roadsides, on the slopes of your hills, and by your streams, we see the homesteads of our fathers, our own birth-places perhaps, the play-places of our childhood. We identify, very likely, the spot where we were schooled in "manners" and multiplication-table; and that to which we went, with sobered step, on calm, summer sabbath-mornings at bell-ringing. We find here, in your keeping, those sacred enclosures which the ploughshare never enters, where our dead and yours sleep. All around us are objects which awaken reminiscences and associations of the

profoundest interest to us; objects to be remembered as long as we remember any thing.

In all these, with their memories and histories, we have a joint inheritance with you. Wherever we have been scattered, eastward, westward, northward, southward, near and far, we have remembered these. We could not forget them. This ground was not to us as other ground. You will believe, then, that we heard with a willing ear, and not without a thrill of pleasure, your invitation to come and observe with you this day of commemoration. We have come. We were right glad to come. Our hearts go out to meet your welcome. They are as deeply in this occasion as yours. We shall not be a whit behind you in the zest and joyfulness with which we enter on the proceedings of this our common festival.

FRIENDS, who have come from beyond these borders; natives of this place; children and descendants of the native-born; you who have married wives out of these houses, or whose fathers did; you who have sometime dwelt here, tilling these fields and pasturing your herds on these hills; — all you who have come hither to-day, because you cared for Petersham; who cared for the place, because you cared for something that it contains or has contained, — I have taken upon me to speak in your behalf; to say that you have come in full-hearted gladness. Your numbers, your faces, give me warrant that I spoke truth. Now, in behalf of those who dwell here, I take the liberty to repeat their welcome to you. Welcome, all! for you are welcome. See it in the open doors,