

**HISTORY OF BRADFORD,
MASS., FROM THE
EARLIEST PERIOD TO
THE CLOSE OF 1820**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9781760577919

History of Bradford, Mass., from the earliest period to the close of 1820 by Gardner B. Perry

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

GARDNER B. PERRY

**HISTORY OF BRADFORD,
MASS., FROM THE
EARLIEST PERIOD TO
THE CLOSE OF 1820**

HISTORY OF BRADFORD, MASS.,

FROM

THE EARLIEST PERIOD

TO THE CLOSE OF 1820,

BY

GARDNER B. PERRY, A. M.

(As contained in his Historical Sermon delivered Dec. 30, 1820.)

Haverhill, Mass :
C. C. MORSE & SON, BOOK AND JOB PRINTERS,
1852

Most of the facts contained in this discourse have been gathered by personal enquiry. It is not improbable there may be a trifling inaccuracy in some of the dates, though I can hardly think after all that has been done to get to the truth, there will be found many very important errors on this subject. But as the memories of men are not always to be depended upon, it may be proper to observe, I have endeavored to state the truth, and believe I have taken proper pains to ascertain it. With these observations, I now commit the discourse to my beloved people, for whose entertainment it was at first written, with my best wishes for their temporal and spiritual welfare.

THE AUTHOR.

DISCOURSE.



2 KINGS XX. 20.

AND THE REST OF THE ACTS OF HEZEKIAH, AND ALL HIS MIGHT, AND HOW HE MADE A POOL, AND A CONDUIT, AND BROUGHT WATER INTO THE CITY, ARE THEY NOT WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE CHRONICLES OF THE KINGS OF JUDAH ?

THE countenance afforded in this and many other passages of scripture, to the habit of recording what men do, and the improvements they make in the various business of life, will be my support in calling your attention this day to some of the events connected with the history of this town.

It is well known to you, that two hundred years have now rolled away, since the first settlement was made in Plymouth by a company of men, whose object, as expressed by themselves, was "to walk in all the ways of God made known or to be made known to them, according to their best endeavours." This prepared the way for others to come; and in the year 1628, the proprietors of that section of this country, which constitutes the greater part of this commonwealth, sent over Mr. Endicotte with about a hundred planters, who arrived at the place now called Salem, the 6th of September the same year, and laid the foundation of that town. The next summer, this new Colony received an accession of above three hundred planters more, and with them, two eminent divines, Mr. Francis Higginson and Samuel Skelton. Soon

after their arrival, that is, on the 6th of August, the persons proposing to unite in church relation, gave their public assent to a confession of faith, and then solemnly covenanted with God and each other, to walk in the ordinances of Christ. Messrs. Higginson and Skelton were then set apart as ministers of said church, the former as teacher, the latter as pastor, at which solemnity the church at Plymouth assisted by their delegate. This was the first church fully organized in New England; that at Plymouth, the only one of an earlier date, had not a regular pastor till after this. On the 30th of July, 1636, Governor Winthrop, Lieutenant Governor Dudley, Mr. Johnson and Mr. Wilson, entered into a formal and solemn covenant of faith and practice, according to the gospel and laid the foundation of the first church in Charlestown, where on the 27th of August following, Mr. Wilson was ordained pastor, which was the first ordination in this state. In March, 1633, John Winthrop, son of the governor, with twelve men began a plantation at what is now called Ipswich, the next year a church was formed, and in April, the people being without a minister, the governor walked there on foot from Boston, spent the sabbath and exercised himself by way of *Prophesying*, that is in public teaching and exhortation. In 1634, Nathaniel Ward, from England, became their minister, and on the 20th of February, 1639, Mr. Nathaniel Rogers was settled in the same place as colleague with Mr. Norton, who succeeded Mr. Ward, and it was this last circumstance which led to the settlement of Rowley, of which this town formerly constituted a part; for when Mr. Ezekiel Rogers, with about sixty industrious families came from Yorkshire, in England, to this country, he was influenced in his choice of a place of settlement, by a desire of being near and enjoying the company of Nathaniel Rogers, who we have mentioned as settled in Ipswich. Mr. Rogers arrived in this country in the fall of 1628. He called the place of his settlement Rowley, after the place where he had formerly served in the gospel of Christ. As many of your ances-

tors sat under his ministry, you will feel a special interest in him when you attend to a short account of his life. He was a man of considerable note, as is evident from his preaching the election sermon in 1643, only about four years after his arrival. He was abundant in his labours, and for several of the first years of his ministry enjoyed much peace and comfort with his people, saw the work of God flourish and grow among them. But after the settlement of a colleague, which happened about ten or twelve years after his arrival in this country, and which seemed to be necessary from the numerous calls he had to attend to, there arose jealousies and contentions among his people, which rendered the remainder of his life unhappy. He experienced also domestic affliction, buried two wives, all his children, and had his house and most of his papers burned on the night following his third marriage. This last circumstance renders our information concerning the early history of this town less perfect than it would otherwise have been. He lost also the use of his right arm by a fall from his horse, and was obliged, late in life, to learn to write with his left hand. But he seems, through the grace of God, to have been generally patient and submissive under these manifold tribulations, and to adopt what I suppose was his own expression on the subject, 'to have believed and expected after having made the voyage of this life over a troubled sea, he should reach the haven of everlasting rest.' His last sickness was of a lingering nature, which he bore with christian patience, and died January 22, 1668, aged 79. He left his property, which was considerable, to the town of Rowley, for the support of the gospel. His will, which I have seen, is still in good preservation.*

Many of the inhabitants who came with Mr. Rogers, were weavers; and soon after their arrival in this country they set up a fulling mill, employed their children in spin-

* A part of this property, in consequence of the towns not having complied with a condition contained in the Will, has fallen to Harvard College.

ning cotton, and were the first who manufactured cloth in North America.

Just at what time this part of the town was settled I have not been able to ascertain. It was not however long after the first settlement in Rowley, and as it appears by some of the younger families who came to that place. The first house built in the town, was on the north of the road leading to Haverhill, and about 40 rods above Mr. Francis Kimball's, where the cellar may yet be seen. It was owned by a Mr. Jackson, whose christian name was probably William.

The first meeting for town affairs on record, was held the 20th of February, 1668. The name then given to this town was Merrinack. It was afterwards called Rowley Village. At a meeting held January 7, 1672, the vote passed to call the town Bradford, and the town was incorporated by this name in 1673. But though as we have said the first meeting on record was in 1668, it does not appear that this was, by any means, the first time the people on this river, met by themselves in town affairs, for at that time they had a meeting house erected and also a parsonage. Many circumstances render it probable that almost from the first settlement, though connected with Rowley, and acting with them in many common concerns, yet living at such a distance, they held town meetings, among themselves, chose their own officers, and managed all those concerns which did not interfere with the interest of the other settlement in town, according to their own discretion. And among the circumstances which renders this opinion plausible, is that Bradford and Boxford, though making but one town with Rowley, were not within the first patent granted to Mr. Rogers, but were the next year granted to him and to Mr. John Phillips, at the very earnest request of Mr. Rogers.

Bradford is about 8 miles long and 3 wide, and contains about 10,000 acres, and 1650 inhabitants.

The soil is generally good and sufficiently various for

the cultivation of most productions common to this latitude. The town is bounded on one side its whole length by the Merrimack, a most beautiful river, whose waters afford considerable quantities of salmon, shad, bass, sturgeon, alewives and a variety of other fish. And in the spring there is a vast number of seines employed in taking these inhabitants of the flood. The salmon caught here are esteemed the best of any taken in the waters of the northern states, and often fetch from 75 to 100 cents a pound in the market at Boston. The quantity of fish is at present much less than formerly. To an admirer of the works and ways of God, hardly any thing can be more interesting than what is called the run of eels in this river. This generally takes place between the two runs of shad. They go up the river the beginning of May, in a ribband or stream of about a foot wide upon the average, and three or four inches in depth, and every year in the same course. They are from two to six inches in length, move with considerable velocity, and continue to pass along without interruption for about four days; almost an inconceivable number must pass during this time; they are from the salt water, but how far they go up or what becomes of them I have not yet learned.

And now when upon the subject of the river, I think it proper to observe, that though in various ways this town in common with others upon its banks, derive great advantages from this noble stream, it is obvious to any person who will take the trouble to reflect upon the subject, that these advantages are much less than they might, indeed ought to be. I will mention among other things, that while there is not probably a more convenient place in the county of Essex for the lumber trade, nor one where, from local circumstances enterprise and industry in that business, would with more certainty be crowned with success than is afforded upon its banks in this parish; yet it is a fact, that for the want of such an establishment, the people, even in this town, to say nothing of Buxford,