

**HISTORY OF
FARMINGTON, MAINE,
FROM ITS FIRST
SETTLEMENT TO 1846**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649026937

History of Farmington, Maine, from Its First Settlement to 1846 by Thomas Parker

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Cover @ 2017

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THOMAS PARKER

**HISTORY OF
FARMINGTON, MAINE,
FROM ITS FIRST
SETTLEMENT TO 1846**

HISTORY
OF
FARMINGTON,
MAINE,
FROM ITS SETTLEMENT TO THE YEAR
1846.

BY THE LATE THOMAS PARKER, JUDGE OF PROBATE.

SECOND EDITION.

$\frac{c}{a}$ FARMINGTON;
J. S. SWIFT, PUBLISHER.

1875.

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CHRONOLOGICAL NOTES.

- 1776— Stephen Titcomb and others made the first "cutdown" in Farmington. Battle of Bunker Hill.
- 1781— First families moved into Farmington and first sawmill built.
- 1782— Stephen Titcomb born, Nov. 14, being the first white child born in Farmington.—First gristmill built. Abraham Wyman settled in Chesterville.
- 1785— Great freshet in October.
- 1786— Wm. Thorn died in Autumn, the first death among the settlers,
- 1790— Township purchased of the State.
- 1794— Town incorporated Feb. 1.—Frost, June 16, killed all the corn in the low lands.
- 1795— Great winter freshet in Jan. broke up the Kennebec and Sandy Rivers, causing much damage at Hallowell. Bread scarce in consequence of frost.
- 1799— Great freshet June 8. Remarkably wet season.
- 1800— Bread very scarce.
- 1801— Washburn drowned at the center of the town; found April 21 near James Butterfield's.
- 1804— Dysentery prevailed; very mortal; from thirty to forty died.
- 1806— Sept. 10, frost killed the corn; none ripe; some saved on high lands. June 16, great eclipse of the sun.
- 1808— Corn killed by frost in some places.
- 1810— Cold Friday, Jan. 19.
- 1814— Cold or typhus fever appeared and prevailed to great extent in this and adjacent towns.
- 1816— Cold season; very little corn raised.
- 1817— Great scarcity of bread.
- 1820— Great freshet in October; water rose seventeen feet.
- 1825— Dysentery prevailed the second time; not so mortal as in 1804.
- 1828— Caleb Sprague killed, March 28, by a fall from his wagon; aged 73.
- 1830— William Tilton died at the age of 85.
- 1831— Joseph Fairbanks, 1st, killed by falling from his wagon in Augusta; Sept. 12.
- 1832— Asiatic Cholera made its appearance in Quebec and Montreal, and soon after in the United States.
- 1833— Nov. 4; Solomon Adams killed by being thrown from his carriage in Vienna.
- 1836— Jan 20; Dinah June died at the age of 104.
- 1838— County of Franklin organized.
- 1846— Aug. 8; Tremendous hail storm in the easterly part of the town; more water fell than was ever before known to fall in town in the same space of time; crops much injured.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

JUDGE PARKER'S History of Farmington and Sketches of other Towns in Franklin County was published in 1846. Almost thirty years have since elapsed.—The edition then published was very limited, and the work has been for several years out of the market, and the original publisher has been often urged to issue another edition. And indeed the necessity for a second edition has become urgent. Years ago Judge Parker was called to that more perfect world, where, during an unselfish and a long life, he had accumulated eternal treasure in cheerful, happy, and holy memories; and the aged cotemporaries from whom with unwearied industry he gathered facts and incidents—are no longer accessible to mortals; and the very existence of the mass of important and interesting facts—the result of his observations and collection, depends entirely upon the only history of Farmington ever yet written.

This preface is not the place for a Memoir of Judge Parker, and while assigning a place for an attempt to do justice to his memory in an Appendix and Continuation of his History, the publisher will here merely say that Judge Parker was conspicuous for one ruling trait of character—a love of usefulness—a consecration to usefulness. To this trait we are in-

debted for this history, and for the peculiarities of the work. In the immense labor of accumulating the materials he sought no remuneration—nor in its publication did he receive any—excepting a few copies for distribution among a few particular friends. Literary considerations he sought not. Embellishment he never attempted, and imagination he studiously suppressed. With the mere object of usefulness in rescuing facts from oblivion he made his book a vast magazine of facts and dates upon which future historians may draw indefinitely. Thus he has left us, within a narrow compass facts numerous enough to have tempted others to stretch them through a ponderous volume.

It was the dying wish of Judge Parker, expressed to the publisher a few days before his death—that when another edition might be called for, the original work—with a few corrections indicated—should appear in its original simplicity, while such additions as it might seem to need should be appended rather than incorporated. This explains the plan of the issue of this second edition. Only a very few changes—these merely for correction—and occasionally a few explanatory words in brackets are incorporated, while a continuation of the history, through thirty years succeeding its first publication, and additional facts associated with older dates, may be expected to follow the publication of this edition in the form of an appendix. The change of the divisions into numbered and titled sections, is necessary to facilitate references in the appendix.

Farmington, Me., 1875.

PUBLISHER.

HISTORY OF FARMINGTON.

1.—*Situation and Boundaries.*

FARMINGTON, the shire town of the County of Franklin, is located in that section of the State of Maine commonly called the Sandy River, situated thirty miles from Augusta, the capital of the State, and about seventy miles, something east of north from the city of Portland. Farmington is bounded west by the towns of Wilton and Temple, north by Strong and Industry, east by Industry and New Sharon, and south by Chesterville.

2.—*The Sandy River.*

Farmington is drained by the Sandy River and its tributaries. The Sandy river takes its rise in the highlands which divide the waters of the Kennebec from those of the Androscoggin. Mount Abraham, Saddleback and Mount Blue, summits of this highland range, are among the highest elevations in the State. The westerly or principal branch of the Sandy River takes its rise in the Sandy River Pond, a small pond south of Saddleback, and running in a south-easterly direction through the eastern part of Letter E, and Madrid to Phillips, unites with the eastern branch, which taking its rise in and about Mount Abraham, runs through Phillips and Avon to Strong, where it unites with the north-east branch, and runs to Farmington Falls, dividing Farmington nearly in the center. From Farmington Falls the river flows in a north-easterly direction through New Sharon, Mercer

and Starks, and discharges its waters into the Kennebec, opposite the Monument. Mills have been erected on this river in Starks, New Sharon, Farmington, Strong, Phillips, and Madrid.

3—*Wilson Stream.*

The next considerable stream is the Wilson Stream. It rises in Saddleback and Bald Mountain in Carthage and the highlands in the south part of Temple, and after falling into Wilson and Varnum Ponds in Wilton, the waters are discharged at the southern extremities of each, and uniting near the Lower Village in Wilton, run in an easterly direction through Wilton, Farmington and a small part of Chesterville and form a junction with the Little Norridgewock, when the united rivers run in an easterly direction, dividing the towns of Farmington and Chesterville, and fall into the Sandy River just above Farmington Falls. On this stream are some of the best mill sites in this section of the State. It now has four sawmills and three gristmills in Wilton, with two starch factories, and a woolen factory, besides other machinery. It has also a gristmill, a fulling-mill and carding-machine in Chesterville, and a sawmill in Farmington. It is crossed by two bridges connecting Farmington and Chesterville, and by several others of less note.

4.—*Davis' Starling, or Temple Stream.*

The Davis'—formerly Starling's Mill Stream—takes its rise on the southern slope of Mount Blue, in Temple, being mostly fed by springs. The different branches unite near the outlet of Drury Pond in the east part of Temple, the stream running in a southerly direction through the remaining part of that town and a part of Farmington, and falling into the Sandy River a little below the center of the town. This stream is also favorable for mills. It now has several saw-

mills and one gristmill in Temple, and one starch factory; and a starch factory, sawmill, gristmill and a clover-mill in Farmington. Numerous bridges cross this stream both in Temple and Farmington.

5.—*Fairbanks' or Jones' Mill Stream.*

The Fairbanks'—formerly Jones' Mill Stream—rises in New Vineyard Mountains and fills a small pond in Industry. Running in a south-west direction it discharges its waters into the Sandy River a short distance below Fairbanks' Bridge. On this stream are a tannery, a sawmill, gristmill and clover-mill, and it is crossed by a bridge on the river road.

6.—*Blunt's Brook—Beaver Dam Brook, &c.*

In addition to waters already named may be reckoned Blunt's Brook, and Beaver Dam Brook, which run from the north-easterly part of the town in a southerly direction, and fall into the Sandy River between the Center Village and the Falls. Small streams and springs everywhere abound, affording water to every farm and family in town. Good water may be found in almost any place at a moderate depth.

7.—*Fish; Salmon; Alewives.*

Salmon were formerly plenty in the Sandy River and were the only fish of much consequence to the inhabitants. They were taken by seines and spears to advantage as late as 1792 or 1793, after which date they decreased rapidly in consequence of the erection of mills. Few if any now get above the Falls at the lower extremity of the town. Alewives were formerly taken as high up as Titcomb's Mills on the Davis' Mill Stream, but have now become extinct in this region. The salmon-trout and pickerel are the principal fish now taken from the Sandy River and its tributary waters, and with which many of the ponds and streams abound.