

A Historical Sketch of Kingston, Massachusetts.

by

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On the 27th day of June of the Centennial Year of our Nation, the sons and daughters of Kingston from different parts of New England assembled in this town to celebrate the 150th anniversary of its incorporation, and it then fell to my lot to give an historical sketch of my native place.

I told as I thought about all I knew which would be of interest at that time, so that when the committee of this newly established course of lectures invited me to speak on the history of Kingston, I felt at first that I must decline, knowing as I did that what I should say would necessarily be a sort of repetition of what had been given before and published in the proceedings of the celebration which I have referred to, but on being reminded that a score of years has passed since that festival day of 1876, bringing a new generation upon the stage, and feeling highly complimented by the urgent invitation of your committee, for which I now thank them, I have consented to give you a sketch of that part of Old Plymouth now the town of Kingston, for the first two centuries after its settlement by the Pilgrim Fathers and Mothers.

The territory now included within the limits of Kingston was known to Englishmen seventeen years before the settlement at Plymouth by the Mayflower pilgrims. Martin Pringe, a navigator of considerable note, set out from the city of Bristol with a small ship, the Speedwell, and a barque, the Discoverer, for the further discovery of the North part of Virginia in the year 1603.

We set sail from Milford Haven where the winds had detained them a fortnight, April 10, and in that space of time, the English Queen had died. This is the record of that event as given by one of the officers of the ship: "Though they were much crossed by contrary winds upon the coast of England and the death of that ever memorable miracle of the world, our most deare and soveraigne Lady and Queene Elizabeth, yet at last they passed by the Western Isles and about the 7th of June fell upon the North part of Virginia, about the degrees of forty-three, where they found plenty of most sorts of fish and saw a high country full of great woods of sundry sorts. As they ranged the coast at a place they named Whitson Bay, they were kindly used by the natives, that came to them in troops, of tens, twenties, and thirties, and sometimes more." They had provided themselves with articles to trade with the natives, but the principal commodity they were in search of for a return cargo, was sassafras wood, which was then highly esteemed in Europe, as it was considered a sovereign remedy for scrofula and kindred diseases. Europeans obtained that idea from the Indians as early as 1561.

Whitson Bay was probably none other than Plymouth Bay, but from an expression given by Capt. Pringe in his account of the voyage, Belknap the historian and other writers who followed him, considered that bay to be south of Cape Cod, now the harbor of Edgartown at Martha's Vineyard. It will be remembered that Bartholomew Gosnold discovered Cape Cod in 1602 and some of his officers or men were with Capt. Pringe in this later voyage we are speaking of. Pringe's own account of the voyage after leaving

the islands north of Cape Ann, or on the coast of Maine, is as follows:

"But meeting with no sassafras, we left these places with all the fore-said Islands, shaping our course for Savage Rocke, discovered the yeere before by Captaine Gosnold, where going upon the Mayne we found people, with whom we had no long conversation, because here also we could find no sassafras. Departing hence we bare into that greate Gulfe which Captaine Gosnold overshot the yeere before, coasting and finding people on the North side thereof. Not yet satisfied in our expectation, we left them and sailed over, and came to an anchor on the South side in the latitude of 41 deg. and odde minutes: where we went on Land in a certaine Bay, which we called Whitson Bay, by the name of the Worshipfull Master John Whitson then Maior of the Citie of Bristoll, and one of the chiefe Adventurers. Here we had sufficient quantity of Sassafras."

The statement that the vessel came to anchor on the South side, led Belknap to suppose it was on the South side of Cape Cod, rather than of the Bay, but modern investigators as far as I know are convinced that Pringe did not leave the great gulf or bay as Gosnold did, but bore into it, as he himself says, and sailed from the North to the South side of it and finally came to land after they had anchored in our Plymouth Bay. Captain Pringe continues his narrative by describing the natives, their appearance, mode of dress and the like, and then says: "Passing up a River we saw certaine cottages together, abandoned by the Savages, and not farre off we beheld their Gardens and one among the rest of an Acre of ground, and in the same was sown Tobacco, Pompions (Pumpkins, -Bailey's Dict. 1730), Cowcubers, and such like; and some of the people had Maiz or Indian Wheate among them. In the fields we found wild Pease, Strawberries very faire and bigge, Gooseberries, Raspices, Hurts (Hurtleberries, -Bailey), and other wild fruits."

This I consider is a description of Jones River and its adjacent territory, and if so, the portion of the Old Plymouth Colony which is now the town of Kingston, was first known to the civilized world in the summer of the year 1603.

The next European voyager who left an account of the coast around Plymouth Bay was Champlain the Frenchman who came hither two years later, in 1605. Then the bay was named by his company "Port St. Louis". He left a map of the harbor which is the earliest representation of Plymouth Bay in existence. On it the mouth of Jones River is clearly defined, but what seems to be of the greatest significance is the representation of numerous wigwams and groups of natives flocking to the shore or rowing in their canoes, which shows that then the country was well populated by the Indians.

It is well known that about the year 1617 or 1618, a great plague spread from the Kennebec to Narragansett Bay, making great havoc among the natives all along the coast and totally annihilating the tribes who inhabited this region, thus making way for the occupancy of the cleared lands by the English who were so soon to come.

For four weeks after the arrival of the Mayflower at Cape Cod, the Founders of New England were exploring the shores of that bay for a suitable place for habitation. On the night of December 8th (Old Style) the shallop with eighteen of these explorers on board, reached the island in the harbor after being in great peril for several hours and there they spent the next day, Saturday, and rested on the Sabbath.

On Monday, December 11th O. S. (or the 21st N. S.), "they sounded the harbor (I now quote from Bradford's journal) and found it fit for shipping and marched into the land and found divers cornfields and little running brooks a place (as they supposed) fit for situation; at least it was the

best they could find and the season and their present necessity made them glad to accept of it. So they returned to their ship againe with this news to the rest of their people, which did much comfort their hearts."

That day is now celebrated as the anniversary of the "Landing of the Pilgrims", or "Forefathers' Day", the time when the particular locality was selected for the building of their new colony, yet a few days after, when they had discovered Jones River, some of them seem to have changed their minds in regard to what would be the most favorable location for settlement, as will be seen by the following extract from Bradford's Journal

"Tuesday the 19th of December (O. S.) we went againe to discover further; some went on land and some in the shallop. The land we found as the former day we did and we found a creek and went up three English miles a very pleasant river. At full sea a bark of thirty tons may go up, but at low water scarce our shallop could pass. This place we had a great liking to plant in, but that it was so far from our fishing, our principal profit and so encompassed with woods, that we should be in much danger of the savages and our number being so little and so much ground to clear so as we thought good to quit and clear that place till we were of more strength, etc." Some of their number then expressed a desire to settle on the island in the harbor knowing that would certainly be a place of safety. At any rate, the question was not settled until the next day when they "came to a conclusion by most voices, to set on the main land, on the first place, on a high ground where there is a great deal of land cleared."

I have mentioned this action of the pilgrims to show that Jones River and its vicinity had such attractions for them that for a while it tended to unsettle their plan made at first and the final decision by a majority of voices was not made until December 20th O. S., corresponding to December 30th N. S.

Thus I have noticed all that is known of this region before the settlement at Plymouth and will proceed now to give an historical sketch of the same during the century that it remained a part of the latter town, and for the next century after its incorporation as the town of Kingston.

Within a few years after the settlement at Plymouth, the pilgrim colonists began to occupy the lots which had been granted them around the bay, so that as early as the year 1637 a sufficient number of people had settled on the Duxborough side to form a town, a church having been organized there five years earlier. At the same time so many were living on their estates at Rocky Nook and Jones River that the original town of Plymouth was left almost desolate, and the question of uniting the two towns at some central point was so seriously discussed that a committee was selected to report where that place should be and a majority, seven to two, decided that Jones River was the fittest place to build the town and meetinghouse. It was finally left for the churches to decide, but nothing more appears upon the records to show when or why the matter was dropped.

At this early date, several of the original Mayflower pilgrims were living, or were proprietors of lands at Rocky Nook or at Jones River and three of the number, viz., John Howland, William Bradford, and Stephen Hopkins were of the exploring party when the river was first discovered and it is not unreasonable to suppose that they were of the number who seemed inclined at the very first to lay the foundations of the new colony here. I have not been able to find the record of the first grant of land at Jones River to Mr. Bradford, the illustrious governor of the colony,

but he had a house on the north of Stony Brook as early as 1637 and a tract of land extending to the bounds of Duxbury on that side, besides other lots on the southerly side. It will be difficult to determine just when the governor resided at Jones River or when his residence was at his house in the town proper. A few items on the colonial records throw a little light, as for instance, in the year 1643, it was voted at a town meeting that "wolfe traps be made according to the order of Court in manner following: 1st. That one trap be made at Jones River by the governor's family, Mr. Hanbury, and Mr. Prence and Matthew Fuller and Abraham Pierce." In 1644, when Edward Winslow was governor, Mr. Bradford's family at Jones River was ordered "to furnish one person for a company in time of war or danger." From all that can be gathered from the records I think he was not living on his farm after 1646, for the next year he complains of his tenants not paying rent, and under date of October 26th, 1647, "The Court ordereth, and gives full power unto Mr. Bradford, Governor, to stay and seize upon all the goods, corn and grain that are in and upon his farm by Jones River, until his tenants have fully satisfied and paid unto him or his assistants all such rents and other dues, as are due and payable unto him from his now tenants there."

John Howland had lands at the river about 1638 and he dwelt at the Nook northerly from the house of the late Hezekiah Ripley (Grozinger place at Rocky Nook Park, ---E. F. D. 1919), where I am told the site of the dwelling house is still to be seen. He died in 1672.

Stephen Hopkins had a grant of land in the North Meadow by Jones River in 1640. He was a prominent man in public affairs, and died in 1644. Many of his descendants are living in this vicinity though not of the name, but as they have come by the marriages of his daughters, one to Andrew Ring, and another to Jacob Cook.

Isaac Allerton of the first comers and a very important man in the business affairs of the colony for the first ten years, lived in the northerly part of the Rocky Nook section, and his lands embraced a part of the present estate of Joseph A. Holmes (but especially Bay View Park, ---E. F. D. 1919). Mr. Allerton went from Plymouth to New Amsterdam and finally to New Haven where he died about 1659. The Cushman family descended from him, as his daughter, Mary Allerton, married Elder Thomas Cushman.

Samuel Fuller of the Mayflower and the first physician in the colony had a house and farm at Rocky Nook near Smelt Brook, although at the time of his death he dwelt on the first street laid out in town. Soon after the settlement of Salem, a general sickness prevailed there and Gov. Bradford sent Dr. Fuller to them in their great need of a physician. Soon after, Mr. Endicott wrote to Gov. Bradford under date of May 11, 1629, and in the letter occurs this passage: "I acknowledge myself much bound to you for your kind love and care in sending Mr. Fuller among us." As far as I have noticed, all the Fullers in this vicinity of the past and present generations have descended from Dr. Samuel, while others from some of the surrounding towns were of Edward Fuller's family, who settled on the Cape.

Elder Thomas Cushman resided on the farm that had previously belonged to his father-in-law, Mr. Allerton. The Elder's Spring is still to be seen near the railroad back of the residence of the late Samuel P. Cole (foot of Bay View Park, ---E. F. D. 1919), and is one of the few ancient landmarks that can be pointed out to the present generation. His wife, Mary Allerton, came a child in the Mayflower and was the last survivor of that renowned company, dying in 1699, aged 90 yrs.

The Elder died nine years previous and he was buried on the hill at Plymouth where his gravestone is still in a good state of preservation.

bearing the following inscription which as a late writer has said, "no modern hand can improve or embellish."

Here lyeth the body of that precious servant of God, Mr. Thomas Cushman, who after he had served his generation according to the will of God and particularly the Church of Plymouth for many years in the office of a ruling Elder, fell asleep in Jesus, December the 10th, 1691, and in the 84th year of his age.

John Doane and Thomas Willet had lands granted them at various times at Jones River. In 1639, they had one hundred acres apiece of upland and meadow "lying between Jones River and the pond to the Northwest of Jones River Swamp." The next year Mr. Willet was granted six acres of upland for his houselot at the little swamp on the north side of Mr. Doane's field towards Fresh Lake. There has been a tradition that the ancient portion of the house now standing at Triphammer, which belonged to the late Kilborn Faunce, was built by Mr. Willett and if so, I think it must be the oldest house now in existence within the bounds of Kingston, if not of Old Plymouth. Mr. Willett was a merchant and removed to New York where he became the first English Mayor of that place. He died in Swansey 1674.

Edward Gray the most prosperous merchant in the Colony at the time of his death in 1681, lived in Rocky Nook on the same estate where some of his descendants still dwell.

Major William Bradford, son of the governor, was one of the most important men in the Colony. He resided at Stony Brook and the location of his dwelling house, which was probably the same in which his father had dwelt, can now be distinctly seen on the rising ground between Foster's Lane and Maple Street, and directly back of the homestead of the late Thomas Bailey. (Owned by Miss Sophia Lewis,--E. F. D. 1919). Persons now living in the neighborhood recollect the old orchard of high top sweetings near the lane, one tree of which was living in 1876 and was noticed by the visitors at the celebration that year, for the public procession went through the fields so as to pass over the Old Bradford Homestead. But the poor lone tree, notwithstanding its great age, soon came to an untimely end, for a young boy in the neighborhood, overflowing with patriotism one Fourth of July, made a bonfire in its old hollow trunk, and its last vestige of life went up in smoke on that Independence Day.

In the year 1662, when Wamsutta or Alexander (which was his English name) was suspected of designs against the colonists, Major Bradford was with Major Winslow when he was surprised and taken prisoner (i.e. Alexander, --E. F. D. 1919). He was soon released, however, but was taken sick at Winslow's in Marshfield and brought from there to Major Bradford's, where he tarried awhile a few days, before his death which event occurred on the banks of Titicut River before he reached his own place.

The most eventful period of the Major's life was during the years 1675-6. He was Chief Commander of the forces from Plymouth at the time King Philip and his people were attacked and routed from their stronghold in the Narragansett Swamp. The details of that bloody battle cannot now be entered upon, but it is enough to say that on it seemed to depend the existence or destruction of the colonies. The English realized the situation, and in the depth of winter made one of the most desperate attacks on a savage foe that we find recorded in history. They gained the victory, but not without the loss of eighty men killed and one hundred and fifty wounded. In this engagement, Major Bradford was severely wounded by

receiving a musket-ball in his flesh which he carried the remainder of his life.

His estate comprised all the village of Stony Brook north of the brook, extending in certain places to the bounds of Duxbury, besides tracts of land in other parts of the town. The portion first mentioned was bequeathed to his four younger sons viz. Israel, Ephraim, David, and Hezekiah.

The first named built a house just northerly from the grove of pines which will be remembered as growing on the easterly side of the road beyond the present Stony Brook schoolhouse on the hill (lands of Briggs Cushman and Charles Childs,--E. F. D. 1919).

David built his house just opposite the schoolhouse and that stood until about 1766, when his son Nathan erected the house now owned by the heirs of Thomas Bailey (See Note page 5,--E. F. D. 1919).

Ephraim Bradford as is supposed, built with his brother-in-law, Dea. Wrestling Brewster, the house still standing on the estate of the late Elisha Brewster.

Hezekiah Bradford lived on the place nearly opposite the residence of the late Dea. Ira Chandler.

Major Bradford was deputy-governor of Plymouth Colony from 1682 to 1686 and from 1689 to 1692 when the Colonial government terminated. Afterwards he was chosen Counsellor of the Massachusetts government. He died February 20, 1704, and his gravestone is still preserved on the burial hill at Plymouth, bearing the following inscription:

Here lyes the body of
Hon. Major William Bradford
who expired Feb ye 20th 1703-4
aged 79 yrs.

He lived long but still was doing good
And in his country's service lost much blood
After a life well spent he 's now at rest
His very name and memory is blest.

Joseph Bradford, the youngest son of the governor, lived half a mile from the mouth of Jones River at a place called Flat House Dock. He died in 1715 and is buried at Plymouth, while his widow Mrs. Jael Bradford who died 1730 is buried in the old graveyard here and the inscription on the stone at her grave is still legible.

Major John Bradford, the eldest son of Major William, lived on the house which is still standing near the railroad at the "Landing". This house was set on fire by the Indians during King Philips War. The story is this: The Major had been removing his goods across the river to the Guard House (which may have been the ancient Cobb house lately destroyed by fire, as there is a tradition that it was formerly a garrison or fort) (the Cobb house above is the Allerton-Cushman house mentioned on page 4, later occupied by Ebenezer Cobb, who lived to extreme old age,--E. F. D. 1919), and was returning in company with others when he discovered his house burning and saw an Indian on the brow of Abram's Hill waving his blanket and shouting to his comrades that the white men were coming. They fled into a dense swamp by the frogpond at the base of the hill and were pursued by the Major who fired at them ~~but~~ and as one was seen to fall, he supposed he was killed, but on reaching the spot was surprized at not finding the body. As it proved, the Indian was only wounded and was able to crawl behind a log of fallen wood, or as one version of the story has it, he put his body

as much as possible under the water, and thus escaped notice. Some time after the war was over, the affair was explained to Bradford by the Indian and the marks of the wound in his side were shown. Major John Bradford, like his father and grandfather, was in public office often, being a deputy and representative to the General Court on several occasions. He was the principal founder of the new town and lived ten years after its incorporation, dying in 1736.

Francis Cook, the ancestor of the Cook family in this vicinity, should have been mentioned as among the earlier settlers at Rocky Nook, as he was one of the Mayflower pilgrims. He was one of the first "layers out of land" in 1627. Gov. Bradford speaks of him in 1650 as still living, a very old man, yet he lived until 1683. His son John, who also came in the Mayflower, lived at Rocky Nook, but afterward removed to Dartmouth or Reyhoboth. Another son, Jacob, who arrived in the colony soon after the gathering, had lands near Smelt Brook. He was one of a number of soldiers who were "willing to go upon service against the Pequots."

Caleb Cook, grandson of Francis, has a place in history in connection with the death of King Philip. He was a soldier who was placed with a friendly Indian by Col. Church to watch and if possible kill Philip. When the chance came, Cook snapped his gun, but it missed fire. He then bade the Indian fire, and the mighty chieftain was instantly killed. The Indian gave up the gun to Cook and it was kept in the family for several generations. Part of it is now in Pilgrim Hall as a relic.

Besides those who have been named here as the early settlers or land-owners in this vicinity, there were others who had grants of land at various times and the following names are found upon the records as connected with them:

Armstrong	Combe	Chauncey	Prence
Briggs	Crowe	Freeman	Winslow
Bartlett	Curtis	Lee	Winter
Brown	Cole	Paddy	Wright

It is pleasing to know that so many of the distinguished founders of the first permanent New England Colony have inhabited the soil of Kingston, and that the events connected with their lives can thus be perpetuated in the memory of their posterity, and others who may from time to time occupy these same lands once trodden by the Pilgrims.

Previous to the settlement of the country by the English, the Indians had their paths or trails connecting different points and the more distant regions one with another. In many cases, those paths were doubtless used by our forefathers in passing from place to place and portions of them finally became established roads. In the early records, "the payth to the Massachusetts" or the "Massachusetts path" is mentioned, which in later years would be called the Boston road.

The earliest record relating to highways is of the date May 10, 1637, and the following extract from it shows the routes laid out from Plymouth to Duxbury: "It is agreed that the heighways both for horse and cart shall be as followeth, From the town of Plymouth to Jones River as it was cleared provided it be holpen at Mr. Allerton's (See page 4, --E.F.D. 1919) by going through the old cove yard at the river, the place being commonly called the Old Wading Place, and so through a valley up the hill, and then to turn straight to Abraham Pierces ground and through his ground as it is now marked and so the old path to Massachusetts leaving Mr. Bradford's

house upon the west, and from Mr. Bradford's house to Stephen Tracey's ground as the way now lyeth, being already trenched a footway from the lower stepping stones to Stephen Tracie's the heighway lying through Stephen Tracie's feild now enclosed. Also we allow a way from Francis Billington's ground through the nooke as it now lyeth to the ferry and from the ferry to Stephen Tracie's house and so through the meadow to the bridg."

We will state in the first place that Stephen Tracy's estate was the same now occupied by Mr. John H. Parks (now owned by Cardinal O'Connell or the Roman Catholic diocese and called Miramar,--E.F.D. 1919) and it will be at once seen how these different ways just described would meet at that point of convergence. First, the way through Mr. Allerton's at the Old Wading Place was at a point near the present almshouse and the valley up the hill can now be plainly seen just at the northerly bounds of the land on which the dwelling house of the late Wiswall S. Stetson stands, (a clearer identification to the present generation would be to say that the valley up the hill is now made use of by Miss Betsey Beal as a drive to her summer home on the top of Abram's Hill, this drive following the course of the old path to the top of the hill,--E. F. D. 1919) then after reaching a point about where the new library building is being erected to turn straight towards the railroad depot where the land mentioned of Abraham Pierce was situated, and when the intersection with the old "Massachusetts path" had just been made, then following in nearly the same course as the Duxbury railroad towards Mr. Tracie's, would leave Mr. Bradford's house on the west.

The lower stepping stones were at a point just below the Fish Wharf (now the bank of the river at Mr. Wilbur Dewing's,--E.F.D. 1919) and there the second bridge was built, the first by the Wading Place being built in 1639. The ferry was near the mouth of the river and within a year or two, at extreme low tide the remains of the posts and stakes of the causeway or landing-place of the ferry have been seen in the bed of the river.

The King's Highway was laid out in 1684 and after passing from Plymouth town through Rocky Nook crossed the river at the stepping stones where the lower bridge was constructed, which we have mentioned. References to this bridge and the causeways on the marshes necessary for its approach are often seen on the early records, as frequent repairs became necessary. In 1707, the town voted "that it is a great burden and charge to maintain two bridges over Jones River when one might answer, and that application be made to the County Court and the Court of Barnstable that a bridge might be built higher up the river." The next year, 1708, the highway was changed to its present location, but not without some opposition, for the distance to be travelled from Duxbury to Plymouth was considerably increased and therefore many continued to use the old bridge even after it had become dangerous for travel. Complications began to arise but were soon settled after someone had applied the torch and the whole structure was destroyed by fire. While the officers of the law were endeavoring to detect the incendiary, a wag reported to them that he saw a man going to the bridge in the morning with a live coal in his hand, but on being pressed for further information, at last told them it was only a certain gentleman walking hand in hand with a young lady whose name was Cole.

The other old bridge near by the new road was ordered by the Court to be taken down, as it was dangerous for travel.

In the early days, there was a road from Stony Brook running towards Bridgewater across the corner of Evergreen Cemetery following nearly the

street lately laid out (Evergreen Street) as far as the corner of the cemetery. There was also a highway across the old burying ground from the front of this (Town) hall to a point near the house of the late Lewis Ripley (now Dr. John Shattuck,--E.F.D. 1919), thus separating the old church from the graveyard. It will be noticed now that the older gravestones, say previous to 1760 are to be found at the northwest part of the old grounds, The road from the church to the hotel was not laid out until 1759.

At the beginning of the last century or soon after 1700, there were ~~more~~ more than forty families in the region of Jones River and they began to desire a separation from the old town, but a request to that effect was refused by the town in the early part of the year 1717. A petition was then sent, signed by forty-one persons, to the "Council and Representatives in General Court assembled" in which they set forth the difficulties they labored under by living so far from the meetinghouse, many residing at a distance of six or seven miles, and the most of them "above four miles".

The result of this was that the General Court set off the North part of Plymouth, with a portion of Plympton and Pembroke as a precinct or parish and the Act, passed in November 1717, provided that they should suitably maintain a minister; so the people of this new Jones River Parish soon began to make preparations to build the meetinghouse and a call was given to Mr. Thomas Paine to be their minister, but he was not settled and nothing more is recorded until we find that "Mr. Joseph Stacie began to preach July 26, 1720".

In 1721, Major John Bradford deeded a lot of land to the minister on which was erected the parsonage house which is still standing (This is the house at the corner of the roads to Bridgewater and Boston, at the old point well, long since out of use. The house is still occupied and in apparently good condition,--E.F.D. 1919). Mr. Stacy sold this house to Thomas Croade in 1724, and afterwards lived in the house that formerly stood near the large elm tree on the grounds of Joseph A. Holmes (now the terrace south of Jones River at the Great Bridge, land owned by Alexander Holmes,--E.F.D. 1919), and which was not demolished until about 1843.

A little more than seven years passed after the parish was formed when a serious trouble arose concerning the schools. As early as 1696, the town of Plymouth voted that the school-master for the fourth quarter should "remove no farther southward in said towne for settlement to keep scool than John Gray's". In 1714, 20 pounds was allowed to the north end of the town "to build a scool house somwhare neare Jacob Cook's" and the same year Major John Bradford gave a lot of land for it to be built upon, which was near the corner just westerly from the house of the late Miss Jane R. Sever (Miss Sever lived at the corner of Main and Linden Streets, or as it used to be, the Boston Road and the way to the Landing. Here was the house where the telephone exchange has been for some years, just toward Plymouth from Geo. E. Cushman's store,--E.F.D. 1919). A school-house which stood on the same land is remembered by a few persons now living, although it was removed nearly seventy-one years ago.

But to return to the school trouble. At a very excited meeting of the town February 15, 1725, it was voted to have but one school in town which greatly exasperated the inhabitants of the North Parish and the next town meeting allowed them what they were annually rated or taxed for schools, and no more towards maintaining one among themselves. The result of these meetings seemed to determine the future action of the people of Jones River Parish, for the same month they voted at a precinct meeting "to petition the Great and General Court to become a township".

During that year the matter was urged and opposed by the different parties as a majority of the people of the town were strongly against the separation; but on the third day of June 1726, the bounds of the intended new town were decided upon and on the 16th day O. S. corresponding to the 27th of June N. S., the Act of incorporation passed. It is said that Lieut. Gov. Dummer suggested the name of Kingston on the 28th of May preceding, that being the birthday of His Majesty King George the First, then the reigning sovereign of England.

Major Bradford issued the warrant for the first town meeting on the 15th of August, sixteen days before the meeting was held.

Having passed the period of the incorporation of Kingston, we can only note some of the important facts or events during the hundred years following. In 1730, the name of Giles Rickard, the schoolmaster, first appears upon the records, though he had probably been employed previously. No representation was sent to the General Court until 1740 when Capt. Gershom Bradford represented the town. Rev. Joseph Stacey died Aug. 25, 1741, after a ministry of twenty-one years. The records of the Church during this ministry are very meagre only a little appears besides a few acts of discipline. It seems to have been the custom to settle certain differences in public before the church and I will quote two instances to illustrate; Mar. 21, 1721, "The difference between Jonathan Bryant and William Cooke was made up in the audience of the church". Again, at another time; "An agreement between Elisha Stetson and Rebeckah Mitchell. Rebeckah: I do freely forgive him as I hope to be forgiven. Elisha: I desire to forgive her, and do freely forgive her as I know My own heart."

Rev. Thaddeus Maccarty was the next settled minister, being ordained in Nov. 1742. In 1743, a reward was offered to any one who should kill a wolf within the limits of the town and the following year it is recorded that one was killed. In 1745, during Rev. George Whitefield's career in this vicinity, a serious trouble arose with the minister, Mr. Maccarty. The town voted "not to allow itinerant preachers to preach in the meeting-house" and "that hooks and staples be put to the casements that nobody may get in at unseasonable hours to do damage in ye meeting-house etc. etc.". Mr. Maccarty was displeased and asked for his dismissal, which was readily granted in November 1745. It is said that both minister and people regretted the action taken at that time.

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The third minister was Rev. William Rand who settled in 1746. He had previously been settled at Sunderland, where it is said the people favored the ways and methods of Mr. Whitefield while he as paster opposed them, so he must have found a more congenial field of labor at Kingston. Very little is known in regard to the part which Kingston may have taken in the Colonial wars previous to the Revolution. It is on record that Kimball Prince was a member of Capt. Ed. Cole's company in the expedition against Louisburg in 1745. This was a company in the Seventh Mass. Regiment, Col. Shubel Gorham. One or two other names appear which I suppose were Kingston men. Then during the French War, we find recorded under date of May 17, 1756, the following vote by the town: "That the town stores of powder, balls, etc., be lodged in the garret of the meeting house" but that shows nothing in particular of any action the town might have taken at that period.

Notes added at this point: Dr. John Thomas was commissioned in March 1746 as second surgeon in a body of troops raised by the Province to be stationed at Annapolis Royal. Might have taken (action?) at that period.

Note 2: Dr. Thomas had been appointed surgeon's mate in Shirley's regiment 1755. He was appointed a Colonel in the same regiment in 1759 and reappointed by Gov. Pownall in 1760, and commanded his regiment part of both these years in Nova Scotia.

Until 1764, the meeting-house had no steeple but that year one was erected and the first bell of the town was placed in it. The same year, Nicholas Sever Esq. died aged 84 years. He was the first of the once prominent family of that name in town and now not one of his descendants reside here. (This was written before the family moved back. E.F.D.) Deacon Wrestling Brewster, the first treasurer of the town and who continued in that office until 1751, died Jan. 1, 1767. Oct. 14, 1771, it was voted "to allow Benj. Cook eight shillings for a coffin and liquor at the funeral of James Howland". Although this person was one of the town's poor, yet according to the custom of those days, all proper respect was shown him.

We are now approaching the War of the Revolution. As early as 1773 a town meeting was called to consider a pamphlet published by order of the town of Boston in which many infringements of the rights of the inhabitants of the colony were pointed out. The town soon addressed the Committee of Correspondence of Boston in a carefully worded letter, the language of which was prophetic, ending with the following passage: "Slavery is ever preceded by sleep: May the colonists be ever watchful over their just rights and may their liberties be fixed on such a basis as that they may be transmitted inviolate to the latest posterity." A meeting of the towns of Plymouth County was held at Plympton, Sept. 26, 1774, and John Thomas Esq., Capt. John Gray and William Drew were the Kingston delegates. Subsequently these same gentlemen with Hon. William Sever, Deacon Ebenezer Washburn, Mr. Benj. Cook, Mr. Peleg Wadsworth, Jedediah Holmes and Capt. Joseph Bartlett were chosen the Committee of Correspondence. The minute company was formed probably in 1774 as in the early part of 1775 the town voted "to purchase thirty-three stand of good fire-arms with all accoutrements suitable to equip thirty-three soldiers". This company was commanded by Capt. Peleg Wadsworth; Seth Drew was lieutenant and Joseph Sampson ensign. As soon as the news of the Bexington battle reached Kingston this company marched with Col. Cotton's regiment to attack Balfour's regiment of British troops which was stationed at Marshfield. After arriving there, a conference of officers was held, and Capt. Wadsworth, being dissatisfied with the day, marched his company to within a short distance of the enemy; but his numbers were too small to venture an attack and before any action took place Balfour conveyed his troops through the Cut River, and when he heard the ships which were anchored off Brant Rock, sailed for Boston. Thus the Kingston Minute company has its place in history. Of the officers in the Revolutionary army the more prominent ones who went from Kingston were Gen. Peleg Wadsworth (a native of Duxbury, but for several years a resident of Kingston), Gen. John Thomas, and Major Seth Drew. Gen. Wadsworth distinguished himself by many acts during the war and finally lived and died in Maine in 1829. Of the eminent services of Gen. Thomas, which are well known to all who are acquainted with the early history of the army at Roxbury and Dorchester Heights, we have not time to speak. Major Drew was in the army throughout the whole war being at Saratoga, Trenton, Monmouth, and in the vicinity of West Point during that memorable campaign. He was one of the Court-martial appointed to try Joshua Hett Smith, accused of being an accomplice of Major André. Capt. Mezekiah Ripley, Lieut. Crocker Sampson and Ensign James Sever were the other officers who went

from Kingston. Simeon Sampson the distinguished naval commander was a native of the town. He was appointed by the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts the first naval captain in the service and he commanded the brig "Independence" and afterwards the "Mars", both vessels being built at the Kingston Landing. In 1776 he captured five prizes but was himself soon after taken by Capt. Dawson after a bloody conflict. He died in 1789 aged fifty-three years.

Before leaving these revolutionary heroes, will mention an incident connected with Gen. Thomas's camp at Dorchester Heights. At one time he had a son John, a boy of eight or nine years of age, with him, the same whom some of us remember as the venerable Col. John Thomas who died forty-four years ago aged 87 years. It seems that James Sever, another Kingston boy a few years older, had ~~xxxxxx~~ been to visit Gen. Thomas in camp and that fact, together with the General's son being there, caused a grandson of Rev. William Rand, a boy of eleven years, to send the following letter to Gen. Thomas requesting to go too:

Kingston Oct. 15, 1775

Honored Sir:

I want to come to se you And stay a litel wile along with you. I want to se John. My grandfarther sed that I mite go, he ast Mis Thomas whether she thought there wass Any danger. She sed that I would git in danger I dont think there is any danger. I wed kip along john, my grandfarther lives I should as not if you thought there was ne danger. I wod not go whar there is danger. Gim Sever is been and staid a good while. Sir I wod be very glad if you send word to grandfarther fer me to com. I'd be a good boy. Send word to grandfarther pretty soon wether I maint com or no. Mis Thomas was dredful fraid when she was thar ef a cannon beel. I want to com very much I want you should send word before Mis Thomas goes. So I remain your friend

William Rand.

As we have introduced thasperson, one or twe things connected with his life after reaching manhood will be related. It is daid he was a little extravagant in his manner of living and on being reminded of it by one of his friends, and warning him what the result might be, replied, "that he did n't think it possible he should ever come to actual want, but he might be a little reduced." The rest of the story is told in one line by Rev. Mr. Willis in his list of deaths: "Jan. 4, 1828, died William Rand, pauper, aged 64 yrs."

In all our towns during the revlutionary conflict, there were many persons, some being the best of citizens, who adhered to the royal cause, but if their opinions were too pronounced they were often treated with the greatest indignities so that many left their homes and went to the loyal British provinces, New Brunswick or Nova Scotia, where some of them made their permanent homes while others returned to their old homes after the troubles were over, seeming repentant and humbled. In 1777 Samuel Foster and Charles Foster his son with Wrestling Brewster were considered by the people of Kingston internal enemies of the government and the Messrs. Foster were arrested while at work in their field where the house of Horatio Adams now stands and were tried in the meeting house. The elder Foster tried to

be heard in his own defence but every time he arose to speak, the presiding officer with sword in hand would say, "You Samuel Foster sit down." They were both pronounced guilty and sent to Boston where they were confined on a prison ship for ten months. They were finally released through the intercession of Job Prince a native of Kingston and the wife of Charles Foster who had gone to Boston on horseback accompanied them home, they taking their turns riding. These facts were related to me by the late Dea. James Foster, the trial of his grandparents in the meetinghouse being remembered by the late Seth Washburn who was about eight years of age at the time.

Another incident of those times will be mentioned in this connection. A certain sea captain whose sympathies were decidedly with the Royalists, had absented himself from public worship for a long time on account of the revolutionary proclivities of Parson Rand. But it came to his ears that on a stated time the minister would read a proclamation from the king. This so delighted him that he resolved to attend divine service on that Sunday and Mr. Rand did read the King's Proclamation; but to the great consternation of the Tory, the minister turned over the document, on the back of which he had written his sermon containing many severe allusions to King George and his advisers in Parliament and it proved to be a sermon more decided in its political nature than Mr. Rand had ever before preached. He listened to it until he became very angry, then left the house in an excited manner, slamming the pew-door after him and shuffling his feet on the floor as he passed down the aisle. To irritate him a little more, just as he was passing out of the house, one of the congregation cried out to him, "Shut the door arter ye, Captain", much to the amusement of the audience.

I cannot state the exact number of men from Kingston who were engaged in the revolutionary service, but a list numbering ninety-two was found among the papers of Gen. Goodwin of Plymouth of men credited to the town.

On the 14th of March 1779 the Rev. William Rand died after a faithful ministry of thirty-three years, aged 79. On the 22d of May, 1780, the town voted to concur with the Church in giving Rev. Zephaniah Willis "a call to the work of the Gospel ministry" his salary to be £80 to be paid partly in Indian corn, rye, pork, beef, etc, at specified prices. He was ordained Oct. 18th of the same year and continued in the ministry forty-eight years, until he resigned in 1828. Although but few persons are now living in town who remember him as a minister, yet numbers of us present here tonight recollect him while living, although the sixth day of next month will complete the half-century since he passed away in the ninety-first year of his age. Often have we heard the old people tell of his methodical, punctual ways and quaint sayings. His favorite hymn for commencing morning service was "Lord in the morning thou shalt hear, My voice ascending high". So invariably did he use it when exchanging with the ministers of the neighboring towns, that he came to be known by the appellation "Lord in the morning". This with his extreme punctuality, being in the pulpit and commencing the service rather earlier than the regular minister was in the habit of doing, gave rise to the following incident in Plymouth. One Sunday morning a family of Dr. Kendall's parishioners living near the meetinghouse were preparing to attend service, thinking they had ample time, when suddenly the bell stopped ringing. One looked at another, wondering what was the matter or what had happened when a young member of the family spoke and said, "You may depend upon it, it is either "Lord in the Morning" or the bell rope 's broke." I referred a moment ago to his quaint sayings. We

will notice one or two. On the street the old stone wall which enclosed his garden still stands and there was a time when a row of cherry trees stood just inside of the wall so that the fruit in its season was often a temptation to the passer-by. On one occasion a traveler on horseback, stopped and reached what he could from his saddle and then became a little bolder, by dismounting and standing on the top of the wall where he could pick them in greater quantities. Mr. Willis, who had noticed the liberties taken by the stranger, came to his front door and said, "Won't you have your horse put up, Sir?"

A woman in his neighborhood who imagined she had been wronged in some way and who thought Mr. Willis was partly to blame for it, would occasionally make her grievance known to him, usually taking a time when a third party was present. On one of these occasions when he was conversing with a friend in his garden she came from her house within hearing distance and made her complaint, but no response came, when she in a more forcible manner repeated her remarks, but they still apparently fell upon deaf ears; then raising her voice to a higher pitch emphasized somewhat by a gesture of her hand, said, "Mr. Willis, do you hear me?" "You speak very distinctly, Madam," was his only reply.

The first meeting-house that had stood for eighty years was demolished in 1798, and a new one was built that year. The raising of the meeting-house, which occupied three days, was made a very jovial occasion. I will give an account of it as taken from the papers of the late Cornelius A. Bartlett. "Booths were erected in the field opposite and all kinds of liquor and refreshments were sold freely. Mr. Bildad Washburn kept a tavern in the house now known as the Russell house (Dr. O. C. Swops, ---E.F.D. 1819) and Mrs. Dorothy Bates who was then ten years of age recollected the crowds of people who were there each day. Peleg Holmes said he listened one day to a Mr. Jackson who was playing on a fiddle while some were dancing. After the frame was up, a procession formed of those who were employed in raising the building, consisting of carpenters, sailors, blacksmiths, each taking some implement of his trade, such as axes, rules, squares, tackles, ropes, etc. They marched to the Great Bridge and back to the temporary building on the Green that was used for public worship while the house was being built. There they had punch and other refreshments and after an hour or so had passed in their having a jolly time, the crowd dispersed to their homes, and so ended an old-fashioned meeting-house raising.*

This meeting-house is well remembered by many of us as it was not taken down until May 1851. The present church edifice of the First Congregational Society occupies the same site as the two which preceded it and some of the timber from the first building was used in the construction of the last. The ancient ground that was given by Major John Bradford for a burying place in 1721, remained without an enclosure for sixty-six years, when in 1787 a wall was built to protect it. There the remains of most of the founders of the town, with their descendants, repose, in some families to the number of six or seven generations, and there also rest three of the four earlier ministers, Messrs. Stacey, Rand, and Willis, whose pastorates, with the exception of Mr. Maccarty's three years, extended over a space of about one hundred and eight years. The earliest inscription in the churchyard is of the date Feb. 14, 1718, and down to the year 1860, nine hundred and thirty-five names were inscribed on the gravestones in that old burial place. In 1840 or thereabouts the old ground was enlarged on the northerly side and since 1854, the beautiful Evergreen Cemetery has been connected with the

* The temporary structure was formed from the roof of the old building, and it was called the Snail Trap.

latter portion so that the ancient resting places of our fathers with that of the present generation are still in one enclosure.

The most remarkable case of longevity in this vicinity was that of Ebenezer Cobb of this town. On the first day of April 1794, he completed his hundredth year and continued to live until December 1801, when in his one hundred and eighth year. Being born in 1694, he lived in three centuries, the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth. He was five years old before Mary Allerton Cushman, the last of the Mayflower pilgrims died, and until ten years ago, it could be said that three generations of men embraced the whole history of New England, for aged persons were then living who remembered Grandfather Cobb, as he was familiarly called. (It was generally shortened to Gran'ther Cobb,--E.F.D. 1919). Perhaps the old, old story which had been told times without number at various historical gatherings the last hundred years may be new to the younger people here, so will venture to repeat it.

When Mr. Cobb had completed his hundredth year in 1794, Rev. Dr. Chandler Robbins of Plymouth went to the house of the venerable man and preached a suitable sermon. The reason of Dr. Robbins officiating at that time, was that some feeling had arisen between a son of the centenarian (Mr. John Cobb, then 62 years of age) and Rev. Mr. Willis, and so the preference was given to Dr. Robbins. Shortly after, Mr. Willis called on his aged parishioner as they were on friendly terms, when the latter said to his minister, "Do not feel offended because you was not called to preach the sermon; it was none of my doing, it was the boy's work; but I promise you, Mr. Willis, when I have another century sermon to be preached, you shall do it."

When Mr. Cobb was seventy years old, a neighbor, passing his garden saw him planting some fruit trees and said to him, "Mr. Cobb, you seem to be laboring for the benefit of future generations." "Oh no," said he, "I expect to live to drink good cider made from the apples which they will bear." These words though spoken in jest, were prophetic, for at the time of his death, the orchard had been thirty years growing.

In the year 1800, a committee was chosen by the town to settle accounts with the building committee for the new meeting-house and soon after a sum of money arising from the sale of pews was funded for the support of a Congregational minister. In 1802, the General Court incorporated a board of trustees of the fund and soon a majority of the people were making strenuous efforts for the repeal of the act of incorporation. This produced the most distracting divisions and a bitter quarrel known since as the "Great Fund Controversy" so that during the first four years of this century the town was in a great turmoil, nothing like it having been known in its previous history. A disruption of the old parish soon took place and some of the members who withdrew soon became the founders of the Baptist Church in the town, although at the time of their withdrawal they had no particular sympathy with that denomination.

We must pass over a few years to the time of the last war with England. July 28, 1812, a town meeting was held to express disapprobation of the war. A vote was taken and a wish for restoration of peace and an abhorrence to an alliance with France was expressed. June 24, 1814, it was voted to choose four men to join with the selectmen to contract with as many men as are required to be drafted on as good terms as possible by the month". Eli Cook, Benj. Delano and Ellis Bradford were chosen a Committee of Safety. Six Hundred dollars were raised for war expenses. "Three anchors were made

at the forge in the Northwest part of the town by Hyde & Holmes for the government ship "Independence". This ship was originally a seventy-four-gun ship but razed to a fifty-seven this year. The largest of the anchors weighed nine thousand three hundred pounds; the others 8500 each.

I have previously mentioned that this ship "Independence" was built in Revolutionary days and we must not forget to state that shipbuilding was the most important business carried on in the town in the ancient times. Vessels were built on Stony Brook and Jones River at a very early date, certainly by the year 1714. The Stetsons and Drews were builders from the earliest times and the latter family can count back at least six generations who were engaged in the same business. Knowing that my own ancestor John Drew, the first of the family to settle in Plymouth, was a shipbuilder and a man of considerable consequence by reason of his business in those early days, I asked an aged man who had followed the same vocation throughout his life, if the Drews had not always been classed as superior builders. He answered, "Yes, but there was a time when there was quite a rivalry with the Stetsons," and as he was a descendant from both families, he said he thought he could tell me a story without the appearance of boasting. It was this:

Once a fine large vessel was built at the Landing by both of these families in company, so that when it was finished it could be easily determined which of the parties had shown the greatest skill in its construction; but when she made her trial trip to Boston a certain person remarked that "when the Drew half was coming up to the wharf, the Stetson half was way down to Cohasset Rocks".

During the first sixty years of the present century, Joseph Holmes built seventy-five or more vessels, while during the same period many others were launched from the yards of the Drews, Bartletts, Delanos, Alexander Holmes and the Severs. In a diary of the late Francis Drew, it is recorded that during the year 1806, a ship, brig, schooner, and sloop were launched by the different builders, and in 1807, three brigs and a schooner were in process of construction.

We must not close without a reference to the schools of the past. As before stated, Giles Rickard's name appears as the first schoolmaster as early as 1750 and the same name as late as 1759. In that Plymouth family several generations bore the same Christian name, and we cannot state for a certainty whether one person continued as the schoolmaster through that space of thirty years or whether it may not have been father and son. About 1770, Peleg Wadsworth (afterwards the General) taught the school for a while in town. Mr. Esterbrook, afterwards a minister in Athol, Mass., was employed for a time. In May 1794, Mr. Martin Parris was engaged at a salary of seventy pounds a year. He continued for eight years, when he went to Plymouth, but afterwards resumed teaching again in Kingston. I suppose a few persons are still living in town who received instruction from him before he relinquished his profession as teacher to become the minister of the ~~church~~ church at Marshfield. Of the schoolmasters who followed Mr. Parris previous to 1850, the names of John Thomas, Hersey B. Goodwin, Freeman B. Howland, Morton Eddy, Samuel Ring, and Jason Winnett are remembered. Of the teachers employed in the town between the years 1850 and 1850, the following are brought to mind: E. Gifford, David Thayer, William M. Whitman, Joseph S. Beal, Jonathan Arnold, S. H. Stone, Jesse E. Keith, Benj. W. Harris, Lewis E. Noyes, G. S. Newcomb, Henry M. Miller, Miss Melina Darling, Miss Abby J. Bosworth,

Miss Lucy F. Bartlett, Miss L. T. Bradford, Miss Eveline Holmes, Miss Catherine Russell, Miss S. C. Simonds, Miss Jane Foster, Miss H. C. Drew, Miss B. P. Burgess.*

Note.---That part of the address, marked by *'s, is crossed out in the manuscript, probably as not to be read that night, since it brought the story down later than 1830.---(E.F.D. 1919).

Of the private schools in the town, none is better remembered by persons now living than that for young ladies of which Miss Deborah Sampson was the teacher. Many considered their education incomplete until they had attended this popular school. Miss Sampson was teaching here in 1825 and for about twenty years afterwards.

In the great reformatory movements, which agitated the Nation during the third, fourth and fifth decades of the present century, Kingston acted well her part. We have not yet forgotten the Simultaneous temperance meetings which were held all over the country at this season of each year and how in our little town the best speakers which could be obtained were engaged and often the old meetinghouse with its galleries on three sides would be filled to overflowing on these occasions. During the same years ~~in~~ the noted orators of the Anti-Slavery movement would be often heard in the town and many of the members of the first Anti-Slavery Society which was formed in 1834, lived to see the triumph of their cause when the abominable system of American slavery went down with such a frightful sacrifice of blood and treasure in the great rebellion of 1861. But I am getting beyond my limits as it was not my intention to mention any event which occurred this side of the year 1830, although there are many things which would be interesting to touch upon if there was time, and some of you here might wonder why I have omitted so much that would perhaps be more interesting than what I have dwelt upon. I can only say that it has been difficult to know just how much of the history of one's town it will do to crowd into an evening's talk, but I have endeavored to state what I have thought would be the most interesting to my listeners, and with the hope that my effort has not been too tedious, and thanking you for your kind attention, I will close.