

Indian Tribes. — Musketaquid Indians. — Local Situation. — Settlement projected. — Act of Incorporation. — Purchase from the Indians. — Depositions. — First Settlers. — Johnson's Account. — Additional Grants. — Sufferings of the Inhabitants. — Wet Meadows. — Petition to the General Court. — Condition of the Town. — Chronological Items.

WHEN the English settlements first commenced in New England, that part of its territory, which lies south of New Hampshire, was inhabited by five principal nations of Indians:— the Pequots, who lived in Connecticut; the Narragansets, in Rhode Island; the Pawkunnawkuts, or Womponoags, east of the Narragansets and to the north as far as Charles river;¹ the Massachusetts, north of Charles River and west of Massachusetts Bay; and the Pawtuckets, north of the Massachusetts. The boundaries and rights of these nations appear not to have been sufficiently definite to be now clearly known. They had within their jurisdiction many subordinate tribes, governed by sachems, or sagamores, subject, in some respects, to the principal sachem. At the commencement of the seventeenth century, they were able to bring into the field more than 18,000 warriors; but about the year 1612, they were visited with a pestilential disease, whose horrible ravages reduced their number to about 1800.² Some of their villages were entirely depopulated. This great mortality was viewed by the first Pilgrims, as the accomplishment of one of the purposes of Divine Providence, by making room for the settlement of civilized man, and by preparing a peaceful asylum for the persecuted Christians of the old world. In what light soever the event may be viewed, it no doubt greatly facilitated the settlements, and rendered them less hazardous.

Musketaquid, the original Indian name of Concord and Concord River, for a long time before it was settled by our fathers, had been one of the principal villages of the Massachusetts tribe. Nanepashemet was the great king or sachem of these Indians. His principal place of residence was in Medford near Mystic pond. "His house was built on a large scaffold six feet high, and on the top of a hill. Not far off, he built a fort with palisades 30 or 40 feet high, having but one entrance, over a bridge. This also served as the place of his burial, he having been killed about the year 1619, by the Tarrantines, a warlike tribe of eastern Indians, at another fort which he had built about a mile off." He left a widow — Squaw Sachem, and five children. Squaw Sachem succeeded to all the power and influence of her husband, as the great queen of the tribe. Her power was so much dreaded, when she was first visited by the Plymouth people in 1621, that her enemies, the sachems of Boston and Neponset, desired protection against her, as one condition of submission to the English. She married Wibbacowitts, "the powwow, priest, witch, sorcerer, or chirurgeon" of the tribe. This officer was highest in esteem next to the sachem; and he claimed as a right the hand of a widowed sachem in marriage; and by this connexion became a king in the right of his wife, clothed with such authority as was possessed by her squawship.³ Both assented to the sale of Musketaquid, though Tahattawan, hereafter to be noticed, was the principal sachem of the place. This tribe was once powerful. Before the great sickness already mentioned, it could number 3,000 warriors. That calamity, and the small-pox, which prevailed among them with great mortality in 1633, reduced it to nearly one tenth of that number. The Musketaquid Indians suffered in common with the brethren of their tribe elsewhere. When first visited by the English, their number was comparatively very small. Their manners, customs, and character form a subject for general rather than town history. Such notices, as are particularly applicable to this place or vicinity, will be given in a separate chapter. The place where the principal sachem lived was near Nahshawtuck (Lee's) hill. Other lodges were south of the Great Meadows, above the South Bridge, and in various places along the borders of the rivers, where planting, hunting, or fishing ground was most easily obtained.

1. I have supposed that the Indians living south of Charles River did not belong to the Massachusetts tribe. Chickatabot, sachem of Neponset, and Obatinuat acknowledged submission to Massasoit in 1621, and were at enmity with Squaw Sachem. No instance within my knowledge is recorded of a petty sachem going to war with his own tribe. It is also worthy of remark, that these sachems and their descendants executed deeds of lands within Massasoit's territories, but never in the Massachusetts territories. As the country became settled by the English, and the jealousies between different tribes were forgotten, all the Indians living within the Massachusetts patent were rather erroneously classed among the Massachusetts Indians. Hence the statements of Winthrop, [Gookin](#), and other historians. See Prince, ANNALS, 1621.

2. MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COLLECTION, volume I.

3. Letchford.



From these sources the Indians derived their subsistence; and few places produced a supply more easily than Musketaquid. South of Mr. Samuel Dennis's are now seen large quantities of clamshells, which are supposed to have been collected by the Indians, as they feasted on that then much frequented spot. Across the vale, south of Capt. Anthony Wright's, a long mound, or breast-work, is now visible, which might have been built to aid the hunter, though its object is unknown. Many hatchets, pipes, chisels, arrow-heads, and other rude specimens of their art, curiously wrought from stone, are still frequently discovered near these spots, an evidence of the existence and skill of the original inhabitants.

The situation of the place, though then considered far in the interior and accessible only with great difficulty, held out strong inducements to form an English settlement, and early attracted the attention of the adventurous Pilgrims. Extensive meadows, bordering on rivers and lying adjacent to upland plains, have ever been favorite spots to new settlers; and this was peculiarly the character of Musketaquid. The Great Fields, extending from the Great Meadows on the north to the Boston road south, and down the river considerably into the present limits of Bedford, and up the river beyond Deacon Hubbard's, and the extensive tract between the two rivers, contained large quantities of open land, which bore some resemblance to the prairies of the western country. These plains were annually burned or dug over, for the purposes of hunting or the rude culture of corn. Forest trees or small shrubbery rarely opposed the immediate and easy culture of the soil. And the open meadows, scattered along the borders of the small streams, as well as the great rivers, and in the solitary glens, then producing, it is said, even larger crops and of better quality, than they now do, promised abundant support for all the necessary stock of the farm-yard. These advantages were early made known to the English emigrants.

Traditionary authority asserts that the settlement was first projected in England. It is not improbable that this may have been partially true, and that William Wood, the author of "New England's Prospect," and the first who mentions the original name of the river or place, might have come here in 1633, and promoted its settlement by his representations after his return to England. It must have been effected, however, in conjunction with others who were residents in the colony. The plan of the settlement was formed on a large scale, and under the most sanguine anticipations of success. Nearly all the first settlers were emigrants directly from England; and a greater number of original inhabitants removed, during the first fifteen years after the settlement, to other towns in the colony, than permanently remained here. This sufficiently characterizes it as one of the "mother towns." It was the first town settled in New England above tide waters; and was in fact, as it was then represented to be, "away up in the woods," being bounded on all sides by Indian lands, and having the then remote towns of Cambridge and Watertown for its nearest neighbours.

The uniform custom of the early settlers of the Massachusetts colony was first to obtain liberty of the government to commence a new settlement, and afterwards to acquire a full title to the soil by purchase of the Indians. This title was never obtained by conquest. The first undertakers, as a preliminary step towards the settlement, had this town granted to them by the General Court, at its session at New-Town [Cambridge] Sept. 2, 1635, under the following Act of Incorporation:⁴

It is ordered that there shall be a plantation att Musketaquid, and that there shall be 6 myles of land square to belonge to it; and that the inhabitants thereof shall have three yeares imunities from all public charges except trainings. Further that, when any that shall plant there, shall have occasion of carrying of goods thither, they shall repair to two of the nexte majistrates, where the teams are, whoe shall have power for a yeare to press draughts att reasonable rates, to be paid by the owners of the goods, to transport their goods thither at seasonable tymes; and the name of the place is changed and here after to be called CONCORD.

4. The late Samuel Davis, Esq., of Plymouth, supposed (MS. letter), that the original name was "formed of two Indian words, *moskeht*, signifying 'grass,' and *ohkeit*, signifying 'ground'; and unitedly 'grass-ground.' Musketaquid, as nearly resembling this word as the Indian dialect would permit, was probably applied to the land near the river, as indicating its character, or to the river itself, in which case it would mean 'grassy brook' or 'meadow brook.'" *Concord*, the present name, is said by tradition to have been given on account of the peaceable manner in which it was obtained from the Indians. This opinion, however, is not supported. Johnson, (2. HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS volume iii. p. 155.) says, it was named Concord "from the occasion of the present time, as you shall after hear," but does not tell us any thing further about it. It probably received its name from the Christian union and *concord*, subsisting among the first company, at the commencement of the settlement.



Governor Winthrop⁵ says this grant was made
to Mr. Buckley and _____ merchant, and about twelve more families, to begin a town.

This was undoubtedly the Rev. Peter Bulkeley; and the merchant intended, Maj. Simon Willard, two distinguished individuals, who will be more particularly noticed in the sequel. The loss of early records renders it impossible to ascertain who the twelve other families were. Their names may, however, be inferred from an account of early families, to be given in this history. Others were soon after added; and on the 6th of October, the Rev. John Jones, and a large number of settlers, destined for the plantation, arrived in Boston.

The time from which the town should be free from immunities or public charges, mentioned in the act of incorporation, was calculated from the October following. In 1636 the order to press carts was renewed for three years more. These peculiar privileges were probably granted to the first settlers, as an encouragement in their hazardous enterprise. That legal authority should be given to compel any person, at any time, to carry goods through a wilderness untrodden by civilized man, appears singular to us, but was probably necessary then, as it would have been difficult, if not impossible, to *hire* them "at reasonable rates." Though some privileges were granted to Concord, from its peculiarly remote situation, which were withheld from other towns, it did not entirely escape censure. Being required to perform military duty, it was, in 1638, fined 5s. for want of a pair of stocks, and a watch-house. In June, 1639, it had a similar fine imposed, and another for "not giving in a transcrip of their lands." In 1641 it was again fined" 10s. for neglecting a watch and for non-appearance."⁶ Such fines were imposed on several towns by the General Court, pursuant to an act, passed June 7, 1636, providing that every town should keep a military watch and be well supplied with ammunition, as a guard against the incursions of unfriendly Indians.

It does not appear from any sources of information extant, that all the land, included in the incorporated limits, was purchased of the Indians till some time after the settlement had begun, though a part of it might have been. Till May, 1637, no order on the subject appears. The court at that time gave "Concord liberty to purchase lande within their Limits of the Indians; to wit: Attawan and Squaw Sachem." The land was accordingly fairly purchased, and satisfactory compensation made; and Aug. 5, 1637, the Indian deed was deposited in the Secretary's office in Boston. The Colony Records give the following account of this transaction.⁷

5th. 6mo. 1637.

Wibbacowett; Squaw Sachem; Tahattawants; Natanquatick, alias Old man; Carte, alias Goodmand; did express their consent to the sale of the Weire at Concord over against the town: and all the planting-ground which hath been formerly planted by the Indians, to the inhabitants of Concord; of which there was a writing, with their marks subscribed given into court, expressing the price.

Whether this transaction related to the whole town is uncertain.

A tradition has been handed down that the purchase took place under a large oak, which was standing in front of the Middlesex Hotel within the memory of our oldest inhabitants, and called, after one of the original settlers, "Jethro's tree"; and which is said to have been used in early times as a belfry on which the town bell was hung.

I have sought in vain for the Indian deed. It was probably lost very early, since measures were taken in 1684, when the colony charter was declared to be void, and the claims of Robert Mason to large portions of the country were asserted, to establish the lawful title, which the inhabitants of Concord had in their soil. The original petition was also lost. The following depositions, relating to the subject, were taken, and are inserted in the Middlesex Records, and

5. JOURNAL, volume i. 2

6. Colony Records.

7. Ibid.



in the Town Records, to answer the purpose of the original deed.

The Testimony of William Buttrick, aged sixty-eight years, or thereabouts, sheweth; — That about the year one thousand six hundred and thirty-six, there was an agreement made by some undertakers for the town since called Concord, with some Indians, that had right unto the land then purchased of them for the township. The Indians' names were Squaw Sachem, Tahattawan, sagamore, Nuttunkurta, and some other Indians that lived and were then present at that place, and at that time; the tract of land being six miles square, the centre being about the place where the meeting-house now standeth. The bargain was made and confirmed between the English undertakers and the Indians then present and concerned, to their good satisfaction on all hands.

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7: 8: 84 [7th. Oct. 1684]. Sworn in court,
Thomas Danforth. Entered in Register at Cambridge,
Liber 9. page 105, by Thomas Danforth.

“The testimony of Richard Rice, aged 74 years,” like William Buttrick's, is recorded in full immediately after it, and attested in the same manner.

The Deposition of Jehojakin, alias Mantatukwet, a Christian Indian of Natick, aged 70 years or thereabouts.

This Deponent testifieth and saith, that about 50 years since he lived within the bounds of that placed which is now called Concord, at the foot of an hill, named Nahshawtuck [Lee's], now in the possession of Mr. Henry Woodis, and that he was present at a bargain made at the house of Mr. Peter Bulkeley (now Capt. Timothy Wheeler's)⁸ between Mr. Simon Willard, Mr. John Jones, Mr. Spencer, and several others, in behalfe of the Englishmen who were settling upon the said town of Concord, and Squaw Sachem, Tahattawan, and Nimrod, Indians, which said Indians (according to their particular rights and interest) then sold a tract of land containing six miles square (the said house being accounted about the centre) to the said English for a place to settle a town in; and he the said deponent saw said Willard and Spencer pay a parcell of Wampumpeage,⁹ hatchets, hoes, knives, cotton cloth, and shirts, to the said Indians for the said tract of land. And in particular perfectly remembers that Wibbacowet, husband to Squaw Sachem, received a suit of cotton cloth, an hat, a white linen band, shoes, stockings, and a great coat, upon account of said bargain. And in the conclusion, the said Indians declared themselves satisfied, and told the Englishmen, they were welcome. There were present also at the said bargain Waban, merchant; Thomas, his brother-in-law;

Notawatuchquaw; Tantumous, now called Jethro.

— Taken upon oath the 20th of October 1684, before [Daniel Gookin](#), sen. Assistant, Thomas Danforth, Dep. Gov. Entered in the Register at Cambridge, Lib. 9. page 100, 101; 20: 8: 84 [20th Oct. 1684] by Thomas Danforth, Rec'r.

The Deposition of Jethro, a Christian Indian of Natick, aged 70 years or thereabouts:

This Deponent testifieth and saith, that about 50 years since, he dwelt at Nashobah, near unto the place now called by the English Concord; and that coming to said Concord was present at the making a bargain (which was done at the house of Mr. Peter Bulkeley, which now Capt. Timothy Wheeler liveth in) between several Englishmen (in behalfe of such as were settling said place) viz. Mr. Simon Willard, Mr. John Jones, Mr. Spencer, and others, on the one party; and Squaw Sachem, Tahattawan, and Nimrod, Indians, on the other party; and that the said Indians (according to their several rights) did then sell to the said English a certain tract of land containing six miles square (the said house being accounted

8. This was between the houses of Daniel Shattuck, Esq. and Capt. John Stacy.

9. Indian money curiously made of shells strung on strings and valued by the fathom at 5s.



about the centre) to plant a town in; and that the said deponent did see the said Willard and Spencer pay to the said Indians for the said tract of land a parcell of Wampumpeage, [like Jehojakin's testimony as far as "said bargain"]; and that after the bargain was concluded, Mr. Simon Willard, pointing to the four quarters of the world, declared that they had bought three miles from that place, east, west, north, and south; and the said Indians manifested their free consent thereunto. There were present at the making of the said bargain, amongst other Indians, Waban merchant; Thomas, his brother-in-law; Natawquatuckquaw; Jehojakin, who is yet living and deposeth in like manner as above.¹⁰

This was sworn to, attested, and recorded, like the preceding.

The first settlement commenced in the fall of 1635, fifteen years after the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth, and five after the settlement of Boston. The first houses were built on the south side of the hill from the public square to Merriam's corner; and the farm lots laid out, extending back from the road across the Great Fields and Great Meadows, and in front across the meadows on Mill Brook. This spot was probably selected because it contained land of easy tillage, and because it afforded the greatest facilities in constructing such temporary dwellings, as would shelter the inhabitants from the inclemency of storms and winter. These huts were built by digging into the bank, driving posts into the ground, and placing on them a covering of bark, brush-wood, or earth. The second year, houses were erected as far as where the south and north bridges now stand. This plantation, however, like others in the colony, was limited in its extent. In 1635, the General Court ordered that "no new building should be built more than half a mile from the meeting-house in any new plantation." This order was probably passed for greater safety against the Indians, and appears to have been enforced in Concord about eight years, after which the settlement began to be much more extended.

Many of the first settlers were men of acknowledged wealth, enterprise, talents, and education, in their native country. Several were of noble families. The Rev. Peter Bulkeley brought more than 6,000 pounds sterling, the Hon. Thomas Flint, 4,000, and others had very respectable estates. Many of them were men of literary attainments. Mr. Bulkeley became an author of distinguished celebrity. William Wood, if, as is probable, he was the author of "New England's Prospect," was a man of considerable intelligence and sagacity. But they were eminently a religious people partaking largely of the spirit which governed the companies that first landed at Plymouth, Salem, and Boston. Having been persecuted in their native country, and deprived of the liberty of worshipping God, and enjoying His ordinances, agreeably to their views of Scripture and duty, they accounted no temporary suffering or sacrifices too great to be endured, in order to be restored to their natural rights, and to freedom from religious oppression. Though some were men of fortune and eminence, and from their infancy had been unaccustomed to hardship, they cheerfully gave up all their personal comforts, crossed the ocean, and planted themselves in this lonely wilderness to endure suffering, for which no pecuniary compensation would have been adequate. No purpose of worldly gain could have prompted so hazardous and expensive an enterprise. It was emphatically a religious community seeking a quiet resting-place for their religious enjoyments and religious hopes. The remark, in reference to the whole colony, that "God sifted a whole nation that he might send choice grain over into this wilderness," (Lieut. Governor Stoughton's Election Sermon), might, with propriety, be applied to the resolute and pious fathers of this town. Though they came from various parts of England, they were united, and had high hopes of happiness and religious prosperity and emphatically lived in Concord.

Nothing but the unexpected hardships, peculiar to their situation could have produced contrary but almost necessary results.

The following extract is from Johnson's "Wonder-working Providence" [Massachusetts Historical Collection vol. iii. pp. 156-159 - Written about 1650].

Being an inhabitant of Woburn, and often associated with the citizens of Concord in public business, the author had good opportunity to become familiarly acquainted with its early history. This account may, therefore, be received with more implicit faith, than some of that

10. The town received its name in 1635, and not, as here stated, "since" 1636. If the purchase took place before the act of incorporation, Mr. Jones could not have been present; if in 1636, he was. These errors in the depositions, not materially affecting their importance, probably arose from their being given from memory.



author's statements of facts; and, for its curiosity and information, is worthy of insertion in this connexion.

“Upon some inquiry of the Indians, who lived to the North West of the Bay, one Captaine Simon Willard, being acquainted with them, by reason of his trade, became a chiefe instrument in erecting this town. The land they purchased of the Indians, and with much difficulties travelling through unknowne woods, and through watery swamps, they discover the fitnessse of the place; sometimes passing through the thickets, where their hands are forced to make way for their bodies passage and their feete clambering over the crossed trees, which when they missed they sunke into an uncertaine bottome in water, and wade up to their knees, tumbling sometimes higher and sometimes lower. Wearied with this toile, they at end of this meete with a scorching plaine, yet not so plaine, but that the ragged bushes scratch their legs fouly, even to wearing their stockings to their bare skin in two or three hours. If they be not otherwise well defended with bootes or buskings, their flesh will be torne. Some of them being forced to passe on without further provision, have had the blood trickle downe at every step. And in time of summer, the sun casts such a reflecting heate from the sweet ferne, whose scent is very strong, that some herewith have beene very nere fainting, although very able bodies to undergoe much travel. And this not to be indured for one day, but for many; and verily did not the Lord incourage their natural parts (with hopes of a new and strange discovery, expecting every houre to see some rare sight never seen before), they were never able to hold out and breake through.” * * *

“After some dayes spent in search, toying in the day time as formerly said, like true Jacob, they rest them on the rocks where the night takes them. Their short repast is some small pittance of bread, if it hold out; but as for drinke they have plenty, the countrey being well watered in all places that are yet found out. Their further hardship is to travell sometimes they know not whither, bewildred indeed without sight of sun, their compasse miscarrying in crouding through the bushes. They sadly search up and down for a known way, the Indian paths being not above one foot broad, so that a man may travell many dayes and never find one.” * * *

“This intricate worke no whit daunted these resolved servants of Christ to go on with the worke at hand; but lying in the open aire, while the watery clouds poure down all the night season and sometimes the driving snow dissolving on their backs, they keep their wet cloathes warme with a continued fire, till the renewed morning give fresh opportunity of further travell. After they have thus found out a place of aboad, they burrow themselves in the earth for their first shelter under some hillside, casting the earth aloft upon timber, they make a smoaky fire against the earth at the highest side. And thus these poore servants of Christ provide shelter for themselves, their wives and little ones, keeping off the short showers from their lodgings, but the long raines penetrate through to their great disturbance in the night season. Yet in these poor wigwams they sing psalmes, pray and praise their God, till they can provide them houses, which ordinarily was not wont to be with many till the earth, by the Lord's blessing, brought forth bread to feed them, their wives and little ones, which with sore labours they attain; every one that can lift a hoe to strike it into the earth, standing stoutly to their labours and tear up the rootes and bushes, which the first yeare bears them a very thin crop, till the soard of the earth be rotten, and therefore they have been forced to cut their bread very thin for a long season. But the Lord is pleased to provide for them great store of fish in the spring time, and especially Alewives about the bignesse of a Herring. Many thousands of these they used to put under their Indian corn, which they plant in hills five foote asunder, and assuredly when the Lord created this corn, he had a speciall eye to supply these, his people's wants with it, for ordinarily five or six grains doth produce six hundred. As for flesh they looked not for any in those times (although now they have plenty) unlesse they could barter with the Indians for venison or rockoons, whose flesh is not much inferiour unto lambe. The toil of a new plantation being like the labours of Hercules never at an end, yet are none



so barbarously bent (under the Mattacusets especially) but with a new plantation they ordinarily gather into church fellowship, so that pastors and people suffer the inconveniences together, which is a great means to season the sore labours they undergoe. And verily the edge of their appetite was greater to spirituall duties at their first coming in time of wants, than afterward. Many in new plantations have been forced to go barefoot, and bareleg, till these latter dayes, and some in time of frost and snow; yet were they then very healthy more than now they are. In this wilderness worke men of estates, speed no better than others, and some much worse for want of being inured to such hard labour, having laid out their estate upon cattell at five and twenty pounds a cow, when they came to winter them with inland hay, and feed upon such wild fother [fodder] as was never cut before, they could not hold out the winter, but ordinarily the first or second year after their coming up to a new plantation, many of their cattell died, especially if they wanted salt marshes. And also those, who supposed they should feed upon swines flesh were cut short, the wolves commonly feasting themselves before them, who never leave neither flesh nor bones, if they be not scared away before they have made an end of their meale. As for those who laid out their estate upon sheepe, they speed (fared) worst of any at the beginning (although some have sped the best of any now) for untill the land be often fed by other cattell, sheepe cannot live, and therefore they never thrived till these latter days. Horse had then no better successe, which made many an honest gentleman travell on foot for a long time, and some have even perished with extreme heate in their travells. As also the want of English graine, wheate, barley and rye, proved a sore affliction to some stomachs, who could not live upon Indian bread and water, yet were they compelled to it till cattle increased, and the plowes could but goe. Instead of apples and pears, they had pomkins and squashes of divers kinds. Their lonesome condition was very grievous to some, which was much aggravated by continual feare of the Indian's approach, whose cruelties were much spoken of, and more especially during the time of the Pequot wars. Thus this poore people populate this howling desert, marching manfully - the Lord assisting - through the greatest difficulties, and sorest labours that ever any with such weak means have done."

Additional grants of land were occasionally made, adjoining Concord, after the first purchase. On the 2nd of May, 1638, Governor Winthrop had 1,200, and Thomas Dudley 1,000 acres granted them below Concord. When they came to view it, "going down the river about about four miles, they made choice of a place for one thousand acres for each of them. They offered each other the first choice, but because the deputy's was first granted, and himself had store of land already, the governor yielded him the choice. So, at the place where the deputy's land was to begin, there were two great stones, which they called the Two Brothers, in remembrance that they were brothers by their children's marriage and did so brotherly agree, and for that a little creek near those stones was to part their lands. At the Court, in the 4th month after, two hundred acres were added to the governor's part [Winthrop's Journal, vol. I, page 264. The Colony Records give a more particular description of this and the subsequent grants.]

The governor's lot lay southerly, and the deputy governor's northerly of those rocks, and they were divided by a little brook, which may now be seen a short distance below Carlisle bridge. Governor Winthrop selected (judiciously, I think) a lot in Concord, which "he intended to build upon," near where Captain Humphrey Hunt now (1835) lives. The changes which took place in his property and family, probably prevented him from putting his plan into execution.

In November 1639, 500 acres of land were granted to Increase Nowell, Esq., "on the north side of the bounds of Concord beyond the river against the Governor's 1,200;" and 500 acres to the Rev. Thomas Allen of Charlestown, on the north side of Mr. Nowell's; and October 7, 1640, to the Rev. Thomas Weld of Roxbury, 533 acres, next to Mr. Allen's (Colony Records).

Another tract of 400 acres was also granted to Mr. Atherton Hough. All these lands were sold about 1650 to John and Robert Blood, and comprised what was afterwards known as "Bloods' Farms, which became a part of Concord, and which will be hereafter noticed.

About this time the Rev. Peter Bulkeley had 300 acres granted him towards Cambridge; and Mr. William Spencer 300 acres, "beyond Concord by the Alwife River."



It appears that the inhabitants were not well satisfied with their situation; and that other places, either adjoining the town or at a distance from it, were sought, to which they might remove. In a Petition on this subject to the General Court, it is said:

“Whereas your humble petitioners came into this country about 4 years agoe, and have since then lived at Concord, where we were forced to buy what now we have, or the most of it, the convenience of the town being before given out; your petitioners having been brought up in husbandry, of children, finding the lands about the town very barren, and the meadows very wet and unuseful, especially those we now have interest in; and knowing it is your desire the lands might be subdued, have taken pains to search out a place on the north-west of our town, where we do desire some reasonable quantitie of land may be granted unto us, which we hope may in time be joined to the farms already laid out there to make a village. And so desiring God to guide you in this and all other your weighty occasions, we rest your humble petitioners.”

This petition is signed by Thomas Wheeler, Timothy Wheeler, Ephraim Wheeler, Thomas Wheeler, Jr., Roger Draper, Richard Lettin, is dated September 7, 1643; and endorsed by the Court:

“We think some quantitie of land may be granted them provided that within two years they make some good improvement of it.”

The uplands, which the first planters selected for cultivation, proved to be of a poor quality; and the meadows were unexpectedly much overflowed with water. All the fish and other manure which were applied to enrich the sand hills east of the village were useless. These were causes of great disappointment and suffering. Among other projects to make the meadows dry, one was formed and then considered practicable, to deepen the channel of Concord river at the falls “to drain the water off.” A petition was presented to the Court, the first year after the incorporation of the town, which produced the following order, dated September 8, 1636.

“Whereas the inhabitants of Concord are purposed to abate the Falls in the river upon which their towne standeth, whereby such townes as shall hereafter be planted above them upon the said River shall receive benefit by reason of their charge and labour: It is therefore ordered that such towns or farms as shall be planted above them shall contribute to the inhabitants of Concord proportional both to their charge and advantage.”

The subject continued to be agitated for several years. November 13, 1644, Herbert Pelham, Esq., of Cambridge, Mr. Thomas Flint and Lieut. Simon Willard of Concord and Mr. Peter Noyes of Sudbury, were appointed commissioners “to set some order which may conduce to the better surveying, improving, and draining of the meadows, and saving and preserving of the hay there gotten, either by draining the same, or otherwise, and to proportion the charges layed out about it as equally and justly (only upon them that own land) as they in the wisdom shall see meete.”

All their efforts, however, were unavailing. Johnson says “the rocky falles causeth their meadows to be much covered with water, the which these people, together with their neighbour towne [Sudbury] here several times essayed to cut through but cannot, yet it may be turned another way with an hundred pound charge.” A canal across to Watertown or Cambridge was then considered practicable at a “hundred pound charge!”

In addition to these difficulties, it is intimated by Mather, author of the *Magnalia*, that others arose between the ministers and the people, which were settled by calling a council after the abdication of one of them. Some refused to bear their proportion of the public charges; and the town continued to decrease in population. Some families returned to England, others removed to older and others to newer settlements. In 1644, a large number went to Connecticut with the Rev. John Jones. The grievances of the people were set forth in a petition to the General Court.

“To the Wor:ll[Worshipful] Governor, Deputy Governor, with the rest of the Assistants and Deputies of the Court now assembled. The humble petition of the Inhabitants of Concord sheweth: “That whereas we have lived most of us at Concord since our coming over into these parts, and are not conscious unto



ourselves that we have been grosly negligent to imploy that talent God hath put into our hands to our best understanding; Neither have wee found any special hand of God gone out against us, only the povertie and meanesse of the place we live in not answering the labour bestowed on it, together with the badness and wetness of the meadows, hath consumed most of the estates of those who have hitherto borne the burden of charges amongst us, and therewith the bodily abilities of many. This being soe eminent above what hath befallen other plantations, hath occasioned many at severall times to depart from us, and this last summer, in the end of it, a 7th or 8th part of the Towne went to the southward with Mr. Jones [the Rev. John Jones] and many more resolved to goe after them, so that many houses in the Towne stand voyde of Inhabitants, and more are likely to be; and we are confident that if conscience had not restrained, fearing the dissolution of the Towne by their removeall, very many had departed to one place or another where Providence should have hopefully promised a livelihood.

“This our condition we thought it our duty to informe you of, fearing least if more go from us we shall neither remayne as a congregation nor a towne, and then such as are most unwilling to depart, whiles there remayne any hopes of ordinance amongst us, will be enforced to leave the place, which if it should come to pass, wee desire this may testify on the behalf of such, it was not a mynd unsatisfied with what was convenient, which occasioned them to depart but meerly to attaine a subsistence for themselves and such as depend on them, and to enjoy ordinances. If it be sayd, wee may go to other places and meete with as many difficulties as here, experience herein satisfies us against many reasons. Such as hardly subsisted with us, and were none of the ablest amongst us, either for labour or ordering their occasions, have much thriven in other places they have removed unto. Our humble request is you would be pleased to consider how unable we are to beare with our brethren the common charges, the premises considered. Signed:

- Richard Griffin
- Joseph Wheeler
- Timothy Wheeler
- George Wheeler
- John Smedley
- Thomas Bateman
- Robert Fletcher
- Walter Edmonds
- William Hunt
- William Wood
- James Blood
- Joseph Middlebrooke
- These in the name of the rest.”

This petition was presented May 14, 1645 and is attested by the proper authorities. It is endorsed; “We conceive the petitioners of Concord should (in consideration of the reasons alledged in this petition) be considered in their rates; but how much, wee leave to those that are appointed to assess the several towns when any levie is to be made.”

FOOTNOTE: A colony tax of £1,200 was assessed in 1640, £800 in 1642, £616 in 1645, and another tax in 1676. The following table shows the relative proportions which a few of the towns paid.

| Towns. | 1640, | '42, | '45, | '76. |
|---------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Boston, | £179 | 120 | 100 | 300 |
| Cambridge, | 100 | 67 | 45 | 42 |
| Charlestown, | 90 | 60 | 55 | 180 |



| Towns. | 1640, | '42, | '45, | '76. |
|------------|-------|------|------|------|
| Watertown, | 90 | 55 | 41 | 45 |
| Concord, | 50 | 25 | 15 | 34 |
| Sudbury, | — | 15 | 11 | 20 |

These difficulties hastened the settlement of other towns. About half of the original petitioners of Chelmsford were citizens of Concord. All of them, however, did not remove thither.

Groton, Lancaster and other towns, received some of the early inhabitants when they were settled. To restrain this spirit of emigration, the General Court passed the following order in 1645:

“In regard of the great danger that Concord, Sudbury and Dedham will be exposed unto, being inland Townes and but thinly peopled, it is ordered that no man now inhabiting & settled in any of the said Townes (whether married or single) shall remove to any other Towne without the allowance of the majistrates or the selectmen of the towns, untill they shall obtain leave to settle again, or such other way of safety to the said townes whereupon this Court or the Council of this Commonwealth shall sett the inhabitants of such said towns at their former liberty.”¹¹

Concord was probably less populous from 1645 to 1650 than at any other period. Johnson had that time in view, when speaking of the statistics of this town, “This Towne,” says he, “was more populated once than now it is. Some faint-hearted souldiers among them, fearing the Land would prove barren, sold their possessions for little, and removed to a new plantation, which have most commonly a great prize set on them. The number of families at present are about 50. Their buildings are conveniently placed, chiefly in one strait street under a sunny-banke in a low levell. Their herd of great cattell are about 300; the church of Christ here consists of about 70 soules; their teaching elders were Mr. Buckley and Mr. Jones who removed from them with that part of the people, who went away, so that onely the reverend grave and godly Mr. Buckley remains.” [Massachusetts Historical Collection vol. III. page 154.]

The following chronological items, collected from the colony records and other sources, are given as matters worthy of preservation here, and as showing the care exercised by the General Court over the towns.

November 2, 1637, Robert Fletcher was chosen constable of Concord. Thomas Brooks was in the same office the next year.

March 12, 1638, Lieut. [Simon] Willard was allowed “to sell wine and strong water”; and at the same Court an order passed that “the freemen of Concord, and those that were not free, which had hand in the undue election of Mr. Flint, should be fined 6s. 8d. apiece.”

In 1639, Mr. Flint, Lieut. Willard, and Richard Griffin, were appointed “to have the ending of small matters this year.” They were reappointed the two next years.

June 4, 1639, William Fuller, “who kept the mill built by Mr. Bulkeley by the Mill dam, was fined three pounds for gross abuse in over-tolling.”

In 1640, Lieut. Willard, Thomas Brooks, and William Wood, were appointed, under a law, “for valuing horses, mares, cows, oxen, goats, and hogs,” in Concord. The town paid its taxes this year in such property.

The same year, Thomas Flint was allowed to marry in Concord and Sudbury. In 1641, George Fowle was appointed “for the breeding of salt-petre in some out-houses used for poultry and the like,” under penalty of 12s. A company was incorporated this year “to carry on the beaver trade,” of which Simon Willard was

11.Colony Files.



appointed superintendent. Mr. John Bulkeley was paid 40s. for services as a soldier.¹²

“At Concord a bullock was killed, which had in his maw a ten shilling piece of English gold, and yet it could not be known that any had lost it.”¹³ In April, 1641, a house and child were burnt in Concord; fire having been put into a stack of hay standing near, by another child while the people were at meeting on the Sabbath.

Cattle then ran at large on “commons,” as they were called; and each town was required by an act of the General Court, to have a mark placed upon its respective cattle.

TO CONTINUE READING:

CHAPTER II. — Efforts to civilize the Indians. — Eliot begins the Work. — Effects at Nonantum and at Concord. — Laws for the Indians. — Opposition. — Eliot's Labors and Petition. — Nashobah. — Notices of several Indians. — Account of the Praying Indians. — Nashobah sold.

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12. Colony Records.

13. Winthrop, vol. II. p. 310.