

## TOPOGRAPHICAL HISTORY.

Boundaries. — Roads. — Bridges. — Stages. — Post-Office. — Public Buildings. — Printing-Office. — Burying-Grounds.

THE Court-House in Concord lies, north  $58\frac{1}{4}^{\circ}$  west, distant 15 miles 285 rods in a straight line from the City Hall in Boston, 16*m.* 40*r.* by the turnpike, 17*m.* 212*r.* through Lexington and 20*m.* 188*r.* through Waltham. Bedford bears from Concord north  $62^{\circ}$  east, distant 3*m.* 276*r.* in a straight line, and 5*m.* 32*r.* by the road; Lexington, south  $78^{\circ}$  east, 5*m.* 296*r.*, and by the road 6*m.* 163*r.*; Lincoln, 4*m.* 77*r.* by the road; East Sudbury, south  $12-1/2^{\circ}$  west, 6*m.* 201*r.*, and by the road 8*m.* 201*r.*; Harvard College, south  $56\frac{3}{4}^{\circ}$  east, 12*m.* 207*r.*, and East-Cambridge court-house, 14*m.* 250*r.* <sup>1</sup>Concord lies 13 miles from Lowell, 18 from Groton and 30 from Worcester.

Concord is bounded on the southwest by Sudbury, by a line running from "bound rock," near Concord River, north  $55^{\circ}$  west, 1178*r.* to Acton corner, near Joseph Hayward's; thence westerly on Acton by a straight line, running  $35^{\circ}$  east, 1656*r.* to Carlisle corner, near Paul Dudley's; thence northerly on Carlisle by a line having 28 angles. Southerly it is bounded on Lincoln, by a line beginning at bound rock before mentioned and running with the river to the mouth of Well Meadow Brook, and thence by a line having fourteen angles to Bedford line; thence on Bedford by a line having thirteen angles to Concord river and by Concord river to Carlisle bounds. These lines, giving to the town an exceedingly irregular shape, were surveyed in 1829, and stone bounds put up at all the angles.

The principal road to Boston, before the Charlestown bridge was built, went south through Lincoln, Waltham, and Watertown. That now most travelled is the great county road from Boston, through Lexington and Concord, to Groton and to New Hampshire. The Concord and Union Turnpike from Bolton to Boston, laid out in 1802, passes through this town, but, being hilly, is not much travelled. It was made a free road in 1829. From \$1000 to \$1,500 is annually expended in repairing the highways.

The first *bridge* was built across the Concord river from the point of land below Joseph Barrett's, Esq., to Lee's hill. In 1665 it was washed away, and another built the next year, where the present [1835] south bridge stands. Six or seven new bridges have since been built on the same spot. In 1660 there were three new bridges in the town, the north bridge (which the events of the 19th of April, 1775, have made memorable), the great south bridge, and one where Darby's bridge now [1835] stands. A few years previous to that time, the town had been allowed £20 by the county towards maintaining these bridges. An effort was then made to have the whole expense borne by the county, but the town could obtain but £30 annually for that purpose. When they were first supported entirely by the town, is uncertain. They have been often swept away by the floods; and large sums of money are annually raised to keep them in repair, which has very much increased the expenses of the town. The bridge by Captain Hunt's was first built about 1792, that by the Rev. Dr. Ripley's in 1793, those on the turnpike in 1802,<sup>2</sup> and that beyond Deacon Hubbard's in 1802. There are now [1835] eight bridges entirely supported by the town.

*Public Stages* were first run out of Boston into the country through Concord in 1791, by Messrs. John Vose & Co. There are now (1833), on an average, 40 stages which arrive and depart weekly, employing 60 horses between Boston and Groton, and carrying about 350 passengers; 150 have passed in one day.

The *Post-Office* was first established in this town, February 20, 1795. Six mails then arrived and departed weekly. Sixteen now [1835] arrive and depart. Since 1813, the net proceeds of the post office to government have been about \$3,000, varying from \$30 to \$70 per quarter. The following account of the post-masters was furnished me by the Post-Master General.

1. William Parkman, Esq., P.M., from February 20, 1795, to December 31, 1810, resigned.
2. Hon. John L. Tuttle, P.M., from January 1, 1811, to February 14, 1813, resigned.
3. Hon. John Keyes, P.M., from February 15, 1813, at present [1835] in office.

1. Hale's Survey of Boston and its Vicinity. pp. 69-71.

2. Henry David Thoreau would disagree with this 1802 date, and on the basis of his own readings of town records suggest instead 1807 or 1808, instancing that E. Wood (Ebenezer Wood or Elijah Wood, Jr.) informed him that although the Turnpike Company had proposed to build it, they did not fulfill their contract.



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*Public Buildings — Meeting-houses.* — To provide suitable accommodations for public religious worship, was one of the first acts of the town after its incorporation. And hence we find it recorded in a fragment of the proceedings of the town in 1635 — “Ordered that the meeting-house stande on the hill near the brook on the easte of Goodman Judgson’s lott.” Tradition informs us, that this was on the hill some distance easterly from the common. This house served as a place of worship about 30 years.

In 1667, a new meeting-house was ordered to be built, to stand between the present house and Deacon Jarvis’s. It was nearly square and had a gallery. The lower floor had a few pews on the out side; and the remainder was filled with seats. The roof was square and ornamented with four projections on the sides, resembling luthern windows or gable ends, having a window in each. In the centre was a “turret,” or cupola, in which the bell was hung.<sup>3</sup> On the spire was a vane in which was cut “1673,” the date of the completion of the house.

Arrangements were made in 1710, after several meeting and considerable discussion, for building another house. It was 60 feet long, 50 wide, and 28 “stud”; had no pews till some time after it was built, and then only by special vote of the town, as a favor to distinguished individuals; two galleries; no porches nor turret; and was completed in 1712 at an expense of £608. This house was several times repaired. In 1749 pews were built around the lower floor, and some in the lower gallery.

January 31, 1791, the town voted to enlarge and repair the house in its present [1835] form. It is 72 feet long, 50 wide, and 28 high; and has three porches, a spire 90 feet high, and square pews on the lower floor, and by the walls in the gallery. Builders, Abner Wheeler and Reuben Bryant; expense, £924. It was dedicated January 24, 1792, when the Rev. Dr. Ripley preached a sermon, which was printed.

The Trinitarian meeting-house, built in 1826, is 60 feet long, 58 wide, and 22 high, with a spire of 68 feet. The entrance is at one end, and it has narrow pews facing and descending towards the pulpit, and a gallery at one end. Building committee, Moses Davis, John Vose, and Ebenezer Hubbard; builder, Thomas Benjamin; expense (including a bell weighing 1125 lbs.), between \$5,000 and \$6,000. It was dedicated December 6, 1826, when the Rev. Mr. Green of Boston preached a sermon, afterwards printed.

A town bell was procured very early, but at what time does not appear. At first it was hung on a tree, and its tones are said to have been terrible to the neighboring Indians. About 1696 it was broken, and sent to England to be recast. In 1700 it was “hanged on the meeting-house in the turret,” where it remained till the court-house was built, on which it was placed til 1791, when it was removed to the meeting-house. A new bell was procured, in 1784, from Hanover, weighing 500 lbs., but being broken, another was ordered from England in 1789, which continued till 1826, when the present one, weighing 1572 lbs., was obtained. The clock in the front gallery of the meeting-house was given to the town in 1793, by Mr. John Minott; and that in the belfry was procured by subscription, in 1827, for \$450.

No subject seems to have excited greater interest, or required the exercise of greater talents, than “seating the meeting-house.” Large committees were accordingly chosen almost every year prior to the erection of pews, and as late as 1784, to tell the people where to sit when attending public worship. Few were able to perform such duties and escape censure. Singers were first seated in 1774.

*Court-Houses.* — The first house for the accommodation of the courts, and town-meetings, was built in 1719, principally of materials in the old meeting-house, and stood near the present site of the county-house occupied by the jailer. It was 34 feet long, 26 wide, and 14 high, with a cupola in the centre, on which was placed the vane of the meeting-house, dated “1673.” The expense, excepting £30 was paid by the town. The new court-house is a commodious wooden building, 70 feet long, 50 wide, and 28 high. In the centre of the roof an octagon cupola rises 60 feet from the ground. It was built in 1794, by Daniel Davis of Acton. The whole expense was \$4,583, of which the town paid £100 and gave the land on which it stands, and has the right to use it for public meetings.

The first *Jail* was built in 1754 in the rear of Dr. Heywood’s old house. Prior to that time, prisoners were confined in Cambridge and Charlestown. In 1770 it was removed to the west

3. Dr. Lee’s MSS.



end of the burying-ground, near Mr. Bigelow's tavern. The present [1835] jail was built of stone in 1788, and received its first tenants in the April following. It is 65 feet long, 32 wide, 3 stories high, and has 18 apartments, 7 of which are for criminals. It cost £3,084.

The *Academy*, built in 1822, is 40 feet long, 30 wide, and 2 stories high. The grammar schoolhouse is of the same size, the lower story being occupied as a school-room, and the upper one as a masonic hall. It was built in place of one burnt December 31, 1819, and dedicated, with two other new ones, for primary schools, September 7, 1820. In 1799, seven new school-houses, one in each district, including the centre, were built at an expense to the town of about \$4,000.

A *Printing-Office* was opened in this town by Nathaniel Coverly in 1794, but it was continued but a short time. April 20, 1816, Messrs. Bettes and Peters issued the first newspaper, entitled the *Middlesex Gazette*, and it has since been continued, under various names and proprietors, till the present time [1835].

*Burying-Grounds* were laid out at an early period, but the date is unknown. The monument on the Hill Burying-Ground, containing the inscription, "JOSEPH MERRIAM, AGED 47 YEARS, DIED THE 20 OF APRIL, 1677," is the oldest in town. The oldest in the West Burying-Ground is that of Thomas Hartshorn, who died November 17, 1697. No other one appears there till 1713. The first person buried in the New Burying-Ground was Mrs. Anna Robbins, who died July 13, 1823, and the fact is properly noted on her monument. Beside these, tradition reports that the ground first used for interring the dead was on the hill easterly of the present one; but no traces of it can be discovered, if indeed one was ever there. Some of the epitaphs which have marks of originality, are annexed. Others appear elsewhere in this work.

"In Memory of  
Capt. JOHN STONE,  
the Architect of that Modern  
and justly Celebrated Piece of  
Architecture, Charles River Bridge.  
He was a man of good Natural abilities,  
which seemed to be adorned with Moral  
Virtues and Christian Graces.  
He departed this life in the year of  
our Lord, 1791, in the 63 year of his age."

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There is much beauty in the following concise epitaph:

"Vivens,  
Dilectissima  
ORPAH BRYANT.

born December 24, 1797.  
died October 1, 1798.

She was the joy of her father,  
And the delight of her mother

Mortua, Lachrymabilissima."

On the only upright *white* stone, then in the Hill Burying-Ground, the subjoined appears, relating to the donor of the singing fund.

"This stone is designed  
by its durability  
to perpetuate the memory,  
and by its colour  
to signify the moral character  
of



## LEMUEL SHATTUCK'S

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Miss ABIGAIL DUDLEY,  
who died Jan. 4, 1812  
aged 73."

Few grave-yards within my knowledge have so many monuments, on which character is drawn, as ours. These inscriptions have considerable similarity, but discover the peculiar taste of the age in which they were written. The character in the subjoined is drawn with peculiar force.

"In Memory of  
Mrs. REBECCA HUNT, consort of  
Lieut. Reuben Hunt, who died  
June 28, 1790, aged 47.  
Her virtues,  
social, conjugal, parental, and Christian,  
commanded respect and rejoiced acquaintance,  
sweetened life, consoled in sickness,  
made a friend of death, and confirmed  
the hope of celestial glory.  
This stone  
perpetuates her memory  
and invites  
imitation.  
'Frail man give ear;  
The dearest joys of earth resign  
Secure those joys that are divine.'"

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The following, generally attributed to the pen of Daniel Bliss, Esq., has often been published and admired:

"God wills us free; – man wills us slaves.  
I will as God wills; God's will be done.  
Here lies the body of  
JOHN JACK,  
A native of Africa, who died  
March, 1773, aged about sixty years.  
Though born in a land of slavery,  
He was born free.  
Though he lived in a land of liberty,  
He lived a slave;  
Till by his honest though stolen labours,  
He acquired the source of slavery,  
Which gave him his freedom:  
Though not long before  
Death, the grand tyrant,  
Gave him his final emancipation,  
And put him on a footing with kings.  
Though a slave to vice,  
He practiced those virtues,  
Without which kings are but slaves."



## LEMUEL SHATTUCK'S

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