

## PREFACE.<sup>1</sup>

THE author of the following History, having had occasion several years since to consult some of the earlier town records in Concord, discovered many important facts and documents which were wholly unknown to the public, and very imperfectly to the inhabitants of the town itself; and it occurred to him that a series of communications in a periodical work, embracing them, would be interesting and valuable, and he immediately began to collect materials for this purpose. But, in the progress of his investigation, the quantity of interesting matter increased so much, that it was thought best it should be published in some other form than that originally intended. The result of his inquiries appears in the following volume. It has been compiled at such intervals of time as could be conveniently abstracted from the almost constant engagements of business.

Those only, who have been engaged in similar works, can be aware of the great labor required to collect the materials for a volume like this, and arrange them for the press. And the difficulty and labor have been much increased in this instance by the imperfections of the town and church records. The first volume of the records of the town, containing its proceedings prior to 1696, about sixty years after its first settlement, is lost; and likewise the proceedings of the church prior to 1738, more than one hundred years after its organization. There is however in the clerk's office an old volume, containing an imperfect record of several grants of land, and a few unconnected proceedings of the town; with an incomplete list of marriages, births, and deaths, prior to 1696. This renders the early history of the town, less perfect than it would have been, had the records been preserved, though from other sources much important information has been obtained. The early records and documents in the offices of the Secretary of the Commonwealth and of the county of Middlesex, and the private papers of individuals, and various other scattered fragments of traditionary, manuscript, and printed history have, with great labor and no little expense, been consulted, which, though they do not furnish a complete history, have been found interesting and important, and in some respects supply the place of town records. Traditions, however, are often contradictory, tending to embarrass rather than to elucidate. They should be depended upon only as leading the investigator *towards* the truth, which, on further inquiry and comparison of different traditions with records, may be discovered. I have seldom been willing to state a fact positively, unless verified in this way. A tradition has prevailed in Concord, that the early records of the town were burnt; and this is said to have taken place when part of the first settlers removed to Connecticut. If this were true, it could not apply to the town records from 1650 to 1696, nor to any part of the church records prior to 1738. This tradition is undoubtedly incorrect. The town records were destroyed in some other way, and, if burnt, it must have occurred subsequent to 1696. The loss of the church records was probably occasioned by the difficulty in the church detailed in the following History.

Few place have so many interesting incidents associated with their history as Concord. From its local situation, it has been the centre of many of the important operations in the county of Middlesex, and of some of the most interesting in the Commonwealth. Being the first inland town settled above tide waters, it endured great hardships in the commencement of its history. The progress of the settlement, the exertions to civilize the Indians, the warlike operations in the town as a military post during Philip's war, the distinguished part it took in the Revolution and in other peculiar eras in the history of Massachusetts, are but imperfectly, if at all, known; but fortunately many important facts have been preserved in manuscript. — The ecclesiastical history also has been considered of unusual importance, and especially during Whitfield's time. This work, besides the minute details of civil and ecclesiastical history, interesting to readers generally, as well as to the citizens of this town in particular, contains the Natural History, Topography, Statistics, Notices of Early Families and Distinguished Men, and other subjects of general or local interest, which may be appropriately embraced in such a history. — The towns of Bedford, Acton, Lincoln, and Carlisle were incorporated principally within the original limits of Concord; and, as their history is intimately blended with that of Concord, it was thought expedient to embrace within the work the history of each of those towns since its separate incorporation.

In arranging facts on such a great variety of subjects as are embraced in a town history, it is

difficult to present them in such a manner as will be entirely satisfactory. I have adopted that mode which appeared most intelligible and interesting to my own mind. To present a work like this free from errors cannot be expected. Some may appear in this History; yet the author is conscious of having taken unusual care to avoid them. Those who are competent to detect them will, it is hoped, make all due allowance, should they be found.

The volume is submitted to the public with diffidence. The author lays no claim to the qualifications, which such an undertaking would seem to require. His object has not been to make an attempt at fine writing, (had it been possible for him to have succeeded, or had he deemed it proper in a town history,) but to relate, in as plain, simple, and intelligible a manner as was within his power, such facts as he deemed most worthy of preservation. The object of local history is to furnish the first elements of general history, to record facts rather than deductions from facts. In these municipalities, — these separate incorporations, — are to be found many of the first moving causes which operate on, and revolutionize public opinion. Many facts, minute in themselves, are in this view important. The details, which it is the appropriate province of the local historian to spread before the public, are not so much history itself as materials for history. It is the work of the general historian, who has before him all the particulars of each portion of the great natural and political landscape, to exhibit the connexion of the several parts, and to show how they depend, one upon another, in bringing about the great changes, which have been taking place and affecting the condition of society. Strong inducements to take such an enlarged and philosophical view of the facts which have been detailed, and to submit the ideas that arose in my own mind from such a view, have been often presented. But it would increase the size of a volume already enlarged far, very far, beyond its original design.

To trace the history of our ancestors, and transmit a record of their deeds to posterity, is a duty we owe to the past and the future. Such a record must be preserved as invaluable by the immediate descendants and kindred of those, who once lived and acted where they now do, and whose ashes repose beneath their soil. And it cannot be without interest to those who have gone out from their kindred to dwell in other parts of the country, nor to those who have come to dwell in the habitations made vacant by the removal or death of the original occupants. What this town once was, who originally occupied it, and by what means and by whom it has become what it now is, are questions which can be answered only by minute topographical history. If the work shall satisfy the public, and contribute to the gratification of those for whom it is more particularly designed, the author will feel himself compensated for the labor and expense, in preparing and publishing it.

To the Hon. Abiel Heywood, town clerk of Concord, to the town clerks of the several surrounding towns, to the Secretary of the Commonwealth, to John Farmer, Esq. of Concord, N.H., and to various others, who have aided by the use of manuscripts, by the communication of facts, and by various services rendered him, the author feels under special obligations.

L.S.

*Boston, August, 1835.*

### TO CONTINUE READING:

CHAPTER I. — 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.

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