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THE BEGINNINGS
OF LEBANON, MAINE

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The Beginnings of Lebanon, Maine

By

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For the

YORK COUNTY TERCENTENARY

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INDIAN BATTLE AXE AND GOUGE PLOWED OUT
IN WEST LEBANON VILLAGE ABOUT 1885

THE BEGINNINGS OF LEBANON, MAINE

"The New Township at the Head of Berwick" on the east side of the Salmon Falls or Newichawannock River in the County of York was granted by the Great and General Court of the Province of Massachusetts Bay, 20 April, 1733. It began at the lowest Stair in the river and extended eight poles above the Isinglass Falls in said river, then northeast by east five miles and one hundred twenty poles, then southeast by south six miles and forty poles to the headline of Berwick, then southwest by west on the headline to the Salmon Falls River. It contained six miles square and an allowance of 1,500 acres which had formerly been granted to Hon. Elisha Cook of Boston.

This was the original size of the township which in later years was increased by the addition of ten grants of adjoining lands on the east, northeast and north sides of the township.

On 8 December, 1719, James Warren of Berwick, surveyor, with Nicholas Merrick and John Shapleigh, chainmen, both of Kittery, made a survey and drew a plan of 1,500 acres at the head of Berwick and on 12 December, 1720, Elisha Cook in his petition to the Great and General Court set forth that it had failed to grant to Rev. John Cotton of Boston lands which were promised to him to encourage his settlement in the work of the ministry in Boston in 1641. Mr. Cook also represented that he had purchased this land of the heirs of Mr. Cotton and that it had been surveyed on the headline of the Township of Berwick. This grant was confirmed as extending northly into the unappropriated lands, a distance of one mile. Thirteen years later it was included in the New Township.

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The settlement of the Township was vested in sixty Proprietors whose progress was greatly retarded by the fact that it was on the frontier.

From ancient times over these hills and valleys had roamed the Indians. They called the territory Towwoh. They have left traces of themselves here. About fifty years ago the late Henry E. Lord plowed out of his garden in West Lebanon Village an Indian battle-axe. It is one of the finest specimens of Indian relics that has been found in York County. Mr. Lord also found, a mile west of the Village near Barley Street, an Indian gouge which was used in removing the skins of deer and beaver. In the field opposite to the Gully Oven which was owned by Stephen Jones (1781-1843), father of Hon. Samuel Wingate Jones, was plowed out an Indian axe which was in possession of his widow, Mrs. Eunice Jones, 1865 to 1875. What became of it the writer does not know.

The last Indian attack nearest this township occurred at Rochester, New Hampshire, 26 June, 1746. Stealthily the savages approached the settlers while they were at work in the field on Meeting House Hill. When the Indians were discovered the settlers gave the alarm and ran towards the garrison some distance away. The Indians concealed themselves along the path and sprang from ambush as the men came towards the garrison. Several settlers were slain. The Indians then ran across the road into a pasture where they killed a herd of cattle. They captured one John Richards and crossed "White Hall Swamp" to the Salmon Falls Road. They found a boy named Jonathan Dore whom they also captured. They then forded the Salmon Falls River near East Rochester and crossed the New Township, then a wilderness. There is a tradition that the Indians, with their captives, slept the first night

under the great arch of the Gully Oven in the westerly part of the town.

John Richards returned in 1747 but Jonathan Dore remained in captivity from 1746 to 1759. A Boston newspaper gives an account of his return in the latter year. On 23 February, 1761, the Proprietors of the New Township gave him a grant of twenty acres at the southwest corner of the Township, near Stair Falls, and here he dwelt until his death in 1799.

Indian Dore, as he was called, left three depositions of his experience with the Indians. These depositions are on file in the Registry of Deeds in Alfred. In his declaration made on 1 July, 1791, he calls himself fifty-three years of age and declared that he was often with the Indians in hunting and fishing between the Great Ossipee and the Little Ossipee Rivers. He was often with them in hunting deer and beaver on the west side of the Saco River, and he declared that the Indians showed him a place where an Englishman had had a trading post. He also stated that since he came from the Indians, about 1765, he went with Ephraim Berry of Rochester to a place about three-fourths of a mile from Great Ossipee Pond where the Smalls traded with the Indians and about four miles above the mouth of Great Ossipee River he saw Sunday's Hills.

The first settler in the New Township is said to have been Samuel Kenney who came from Dover, N. H. His deed is dated 28 March, 1738, and he agreed to dwell *in person* on his lot for the full term of five years. As a matter of fact he dwelt in the town for fifty-two years.

The Proprietors were very slow in bringing forward the settlement of the township. At the end of seventeen years they were called upon by the Great and General Court to report upon the progress of the settlement. They sent a report on 13 December, 1750. They stated therein that

there were living in the Township fourteen families. They gave the name of the head of each family, as, Nathan Lord, Josiah Chandler, Ebenezer Moulton, Tobias Leighton, Ichabod Goodwin, Caleb Blodgett, John Lord, Christopher Bradbury, Richard Cutts, Jr., James Frost, Joseph Sayward, Barsham Allen, Elisha Hill, and Samuel Came, Esq.

These settlers cleared up their land and built their houses in the southwestern part of the township in the First Division of Home Lots. The Proprietors had cut a road from Berwick town line straight through the First Division, a distance of three miles, to Merrow's Corner. On the east side of this road there were twenty-seven lots in the First Range and on the west side twenty-nine lots in the Second Range and west of the Second Range were seven Letter lots.

Some time before 13 December, 1750, the Proprietors commenced to get out lumber for a Meeting House. This lumber was burned before the last named date. The Proprietors prayed for more time to bring forward the settlement, asserting that "the wars and rumors of wars" had held back their progress these seventeen years.

The old French and Indian War did not end until 1760. On 10 June, 1755, the Great and General Court ordered Capt. William Gerrish of Berwick to march against the Arasaguntacook Indians and other tribes east of the Piscataqua River (excepting the Penobscot Tribe) with fifty men and to scout from Lebanon to the Saco River. Capt. Gerrish was in the service daily from 28 June to 21 November, 1755. He kept a daily Journal which is preserved in the Massachusetts Archives. He first came to Lebanon and encamped at Little River Falls, 30 June, 1755. Again he marched to Lebanon and encamped at Capt. Benjamin Tibbetts' Garrison which stood a little southeast of the house, which stood until 1918 and was owned by the late

David Wesley Varney. Capt. Gerrish wrote that "an Hundred and Seventy Souls Dwelt under that Roof on 9 July, 1755." Allowing for his fifty-two men, who formed the company, there were living in the New Township one hundred eighteen persons. The Lower Garrison having just been completed and the troops having just been ordered to the frontier, we may assume that every inhabitant of the settlement went to the garrison at night for safety. On 23 September, 1755, Capt. Gerrish again marched to Lebanon and encamped at the New Fort (The Upper Garrison). This garrison was located on the east side of the old road in what is now the woods, about half way between the home last occupied by the late George F. Furbush, which was burned about 1892, and Merrow's Corner. There is no house within half a mile of this Garrison site.

Capt. Gerrish visited the township with his scouting party eleven times in the year 1755.

Capt. Benjamin Tibbetts, of the New Township, with a company of Lebanon men, was in the service from 30 of August to 31 October, 1757. His muster roll contains the names of Henry Bickford, John Cloutman, Solomon Tibbetts, Reuben Hussey, John Grindall, Ebenezer Tibbetts, Jacob Hersom, Beniah Dore, Joseph Rankins, John Dore and Edward Burrows.

Gov. Thomas Pownall gave directions for eighteen men to be placed in the Upper Garrison in Lebanon and to scout between that Garrison and the Phillipstown (Sanford) Garrison in January, 1758.

Capt. William Gerrish was again in command of a company from 21 March to 12 September, 1759. In this company were the following Lebanon men: Benjamin Tibbetts, Solomon Tibbetts, William Tibbetts, Reuben Hussey, Benjamin Furbush, Hezekiah Cloutman, Edward Burrows, and John Grindall, Jr.

There were enlisted under Col. Nathaniel Meserve in his New Hampshire Regiment for the Crown Point Expedition, the following Lebanon men who served from March to November, 1757: Jacob Hersom, Samuel Kenney, Philip Fall and Matthew Farnham. The latter died in the service 11 November, 1757.

Capt. Samuel Gerrish commanded the last of the colonial troops of Lebanon men who served from March to November, 1760, as follows: Samuel Kenney, John Cloutman, Samuel Copp, William Stevens, Jonathan Young, John Young, Benjamin Ash, Jacob Hersom, Daniel McCrillis, and Benjamin Hartford. So ends the colonial war in Lebanon.

The inhabitants of Lebanon addressed a letter to Thomas Pownall, "Captain-General and Governor-in-Chief over His Majesty's Province of the Massachusetts Bay in New England and the Honorable His Majesty's Council and House of Representatives in General Court assembled at Boston, 18 August, 1757." This formidable document was signed by Benjamin Tibbetts, Henry Bickford, Ephraim Blaisdell, [] Dodge, Joseph Farnham, John Grindall, Edward Burrows, Solomon Tibbetts, John Dore, Benjamin Ash, Jacob Hersom, Samuel Fall, John Cloutman, John Whitehouse, Samuel Kenney, Paul Farnham, Philip Dore, Richard Dore, Reuben Hussey, Benjamin Furbush, Joseph Rankins, William Tibbetts, and Ebenezer Tibbetts. The foregoing list of names is believed to be a complete list of the heads of all families settled in the Township in the year 1757.

There were ten grants of lands outside of the original grant of the Township lying along the east, northeast and north which were annexed to the town. Wainwright's Grant of five hundred acres made to the children of Capt. John Wainwright, late of Haverhill, deceased, was made

9 December, 1736. It was annexed to the town, 27 February, 1787. Baker's Grant of five hundred acres made to Mrs. Christine (Otis) Baker, wife of Capt. Thomas Baker of Dover, N. H., for having been redeemed from captivity in Canada after remaining there twenty-five years, was made 26 June, 1734. It was annexed 23 February, 1825. Bagley's Grant of five hundred acres, made to Col. Jonathan Bagley for his services at Louisburg, was granted 24 February, 1764. This was the Thomas Millet Wentworth farm in the north part of the town and was annexed 5 March, 1785. A grant of three hundred acres to Middlecook, son of Hon. Elisha Cook of Boston, north of Bagley's Grant, was made 17 February, 1768, and annexed to the town 5 March, 1785. Woodman's Grant of five hundred acres was made to Edward Woodman of Durham, N. H., 9 June, 1766. It was annexed to Lebanon, 5 March, 1785, and was set off to Shapleigh (now Acton) 14 February, 1793. It is called Fox's Ridge. Gores of 540 acres to Samuel Andrews and Jonathan Hamilton between Shapleigh and Lebanon were granted 21 February, 1787. A grant of two hundred acres to Col. John Waldron, Eleazer Knox's lot and Hersom's Gore were all set off from Shapleigh and annexed to Lebanon, 23 February, 1825. These grants increased the size of Lebanon by nearly 2,500 acres, making the town to contain about 33,000 acres of land.

The first Meeting House in Lebanon was built in 1753. It was located on the west side of the old road at South Lebanon, nearly opposite the farm house owned by Charles Lowd, 1936. This Meeting House stood there from 1753 to 1801 when it was sold, taken down and removed to West Lebanon Village by the First Free Baptist Society.

Rev. Amos Main, minister and physician in the adjoining parish of Rochester, N. H., appears to have been the first to conduct services in this Meeting House. He

baptized children here 11 October, 1753, 20 June, 1756, 5 September, 1756, and again 24 April, 1757. In the latter year he attended "a minister's fast at Towow."

His account book shows that as a physician he visited eleven families in Towwoh, 1754 to 1759.

An unsuccessful attempt was made to gather a church here in 1758 and 1759. Mr. Ezra Thompson, a native of Wilmington, Mass., and a graduate of Harvard College in 1756, was invited to come to the New Township to preach and keep school for six months. All we know is that he did not settle in the community but went to Arundel (now Kennebunkport) where he served as a school master for about twenty years.

The Colony of Massachusetts Bay early enacted a law that every township must organize a parish church and settle an Orthodox minister for life before the township could become an *incorporated town*.

The Proprietors of the New Township at the Head of Berwick were unable to meet these conditions for thirty-two years. On 22 July, 1764, they persuaded a young school master from the Town of York to come to Lebanon and preach the Gospel. After preaching here for some weeks they gave him a call. His name was Isaac Hasey. He was born in Cambridge, Mass., 23 July, 1742, the son of Abraham Hasey, the carpenter of Harvard College. He graduated at Harvard in 1762. Among his classmates were Rev. Jeremy Belknap, minister of the First Parish of Dover, N. H., and later of the Federal Street Church of Boston, and author of the *History of New Hampshire*, and of Hon. Elbridge Gerry, signer of the Declaration of Independence and Vice President of the United States.

Mr. Hasey accepted the invitation of the Proprietors to settle in Lebanon, 26 January, 1765. He then agreed "to preach the everlasting Gospel of Jesus Christ to the people therein dwelling."

The first church, composed of six members, was gathered 26 June, 1765. The members were Isaac Hasey, Joseph Farnham, Sr., Joseph Farnham, Jr., Edward Burrows, Ephraim Blaisdell and Richard Dore. Edward Burrows and Ephraim Blaisdell were chosen deacons.

On 28 June, 1765, Mr. Hasey was ordained to the pastoral care of the church lately gathered in Lebanon. The Boston Evening Post, issued 15 July, 1765, refers to the event and adds that it occurred "in the presence of near Three Thousand People." Rev. Benjamin Stevens of the First Parish of Kittery began with prayer, Rev. Isaac Lyman of York preached a sermon very suitable to the occasion, Rev. James Pike of Somersworth, N. H., gave the charge and Rev. Josiah Chase of the Spruce Creek Parish of Kittery gave the Right Hand of Fellowship. The whole was concluded with great order and solemnity.

Mr. Hasey ministered to the Parish and to the Town for forty-seven years, 1765 to 1812. During the first quarter of a century he was the only educated person living in the town. He was withal the Founder of the Parish and of the Town.

The Great and General Court granted letters of incorporation, 17 June, 1767. The boundary was more clearly defined than in 1733. They said, beginning at the Salmon Falls River in the north bounds of Berwick and running northeast by east with that line six miles two hundred rods, then northwest by north six miles eighty rods with the province land, then southwest by west with the unappropriated lands and a grant made to Jonathan Bagley, Esq., to the river aforesaid, then with the said river to the bounds first mentioned * * * * "the inhabitants are hereby invested with all the powers, privileges and immunities which the inhabitants of the towns within this province do enjoy."

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Benjamin Chadburne of Berwick, a leading Proprietor, was empowered to issue to some principal inhabitant to warn the inhabitants who have a free hold estate to meet and choose such officers as are required by law to manage the affairs of said town. The act of incorporation and the town records are all in the handwriting of Isaac Hasey for the first nineteen years, 1767 to 1786. Mr. Hasey kept diaries from 1764 to 1809. Thirty-seven of these diaries are preserved in the archives of the Maine Historical Society in Portland. He also kept the Church Records for the full forty-seven years. They were burned 31 July, 1920, with the house of the Clerk of the Church. The writer has the only copy that is known to be in existence. Mr. Hasey baptized 367 persons, married 246 couples and churched, that is, offered prayers in the Meeting House for the safe deliverance in child birth of the mothers of Lebanon more than 170 times. At the first Town Meeting, 14 September, 1767, Isaac Hasey was chosen town clerk and Tristram Copp, Joseph Farnham, Sr., and Joseph Farnham, Jr., were chosen selectmen.

Mr. Hasey was married in York, 22 August, 1765, to Rebecca Owen, daughter of William and Mary (Brown) Owen, of Boston. She was a school teacher in York. The Proprietors gave him a farm and built for him a parsonage. These were located in South Lebanon near the Meeting House. His family consisted of three sons and four daughters. His daughter, Rebecca, became the wife of Thomas Millet Wentworth. Hannah Owen became the wife of Dr. Nathaniel Adams, a celebrated physician of Lebanon, 1800 to 1830. Mary became the wife of Ezra Kimball, of Dover, N. H. Sally, the youngest daughter, became the second wife of Rev. Joseph Hilliard of the Second Parish of Berwick. His son, Benjamin, prepared for college at Dummer Academy in Byfield and graduated at Harvard Col-

lege in 1790. He was the first native-born son of Lebanon to receive a liberal education. He was a lawyer for sixty years in Topsham, Me. These sons, Benjamin, Isaac and William, never married.

Mr. Hasey was a most diligent worker in the town and in the parish. His daily record for thirty-seven years is found in his diaries. On 20 April, 1775, he entered the following brief statement: "Squally, good news this morning 4 o'clock A. M.—News of ye Regulars fighting. Striking Contrast!" The next day he wrote: "Muster day to send off ye minute men—rode to Berwick and returned."

At the birth of a child he offered prayers for the family on the following Sabbath in the Meeting House; a little later he baptized the child. As the years rolled on he united many of these children in holy wedlock. When sickness came he visited the fathers and mothers to offer prayers at their bedsides. In the hours of death he conducted the last sad service and entered a record in his diary.

Late in life Mr. Hasey appeared in the pulpit on the Sabbath with a wig and a gown. On 22 September, 1805, instrumental music was first used in Lebanon, being a bass viol played by Dr. Nathaniel Adams, who led the singing.

Eight of Mr. Hasey's sermons are preserved in the Congregational Library in Boston. One was a discourse from the text: "Mark the Perfect man and behold the Upright for the End of that Man is Peace." Another delivered on several occasions was from the text: "Remember now thy Creator in the Days of thy Youth."

Finally on 17 October, 1812, full of years and rich in a well spent life, he too passed on and was buried in the soil that he first won to civilization. By actual count seven hundred people passed through the gate to the First Parish Cemetery in token of esteem for the patriarch and founder of Lebanon.



