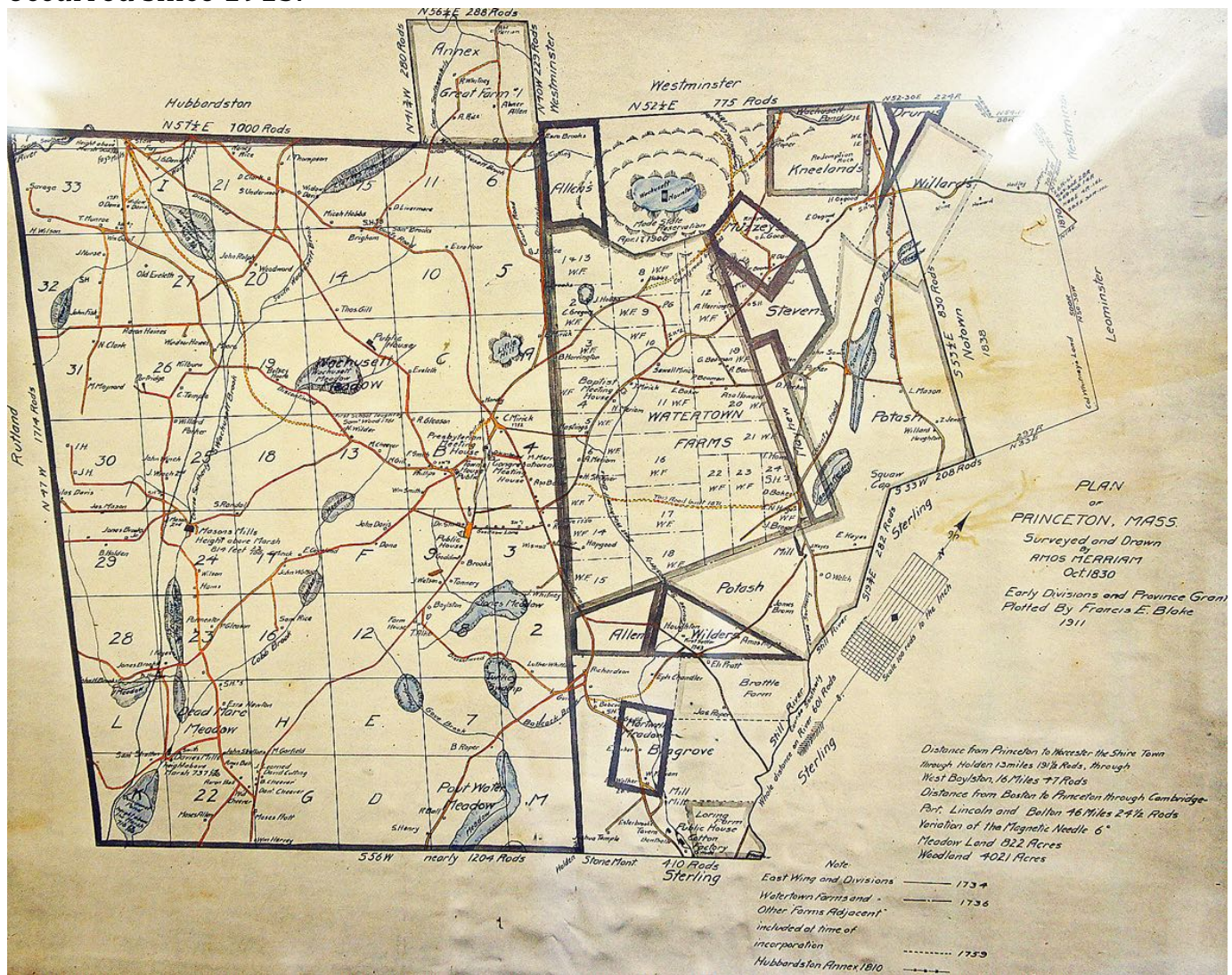


Then & Now - "Princeton's First 200 Years"

By Eleanor S. Llewellyn October 6, 1960

For the Bay State Historical League

There are three histories of Princeton. Perhaps I should say four and include the chapter in Whitney's History of the County of Worcester, published in 1793. That chapter is largely descriptive, and presents an interesting picture of the town thirty years after its incorporation. Of the other three, the first was written by Mr. Charles Russell in 1838, "for the use of the inhabitants" he says; the second, by the Reverend Jeremiah Hanaford, a Methodist minister, in 1852; and the third by Mr. Francis Blake in 1915. The first two deal only with the early settlement, and the religious controversies which went on during the early days of the town. Mr. Blake's history gives a more complete picture of the town up to 1915, and includes a volume of genealogies of the early families. However, this was written (45) years ago, and many changes have occurred since 1915.



1830 Surveyed and Drawn Map of Princeton by Amos Merriam

I shall not go into a detailed account of the organization and naming of the town, but will mention a few of the basic facts. Part of the area was made up of land from the Rutland East Wing, and the rest from a number of large tracts or farms, which had been sold or granted to individuals by the Provincial Government. Because of the difficulty of getting to meetings, especially religious meetings, residents of the area petitioned the Provincial Government to set apart this section as a separate town.



Reverend Thomas Prince
5/15/1687 – 8/22/1758

The name Prince Town was selected to honor the Reverend Thomas Prince, a noted minister in Boston, who held a large tract of land in the area.

The original petition, presented December 29, 1758, and signed by the Governor on October 20, 1759, incorporated the area into a District with little or no representation in the State government. Another petition was presented requesting that the District be made a town, and after some controversy over boundaries, was granted, and the name changed to Princeton. This was signed by the Governor on March 6, 1773 granting Princeton representation.

It has been said that the development of a New England town rests on four institutions; the Church, the School, the Town Meeting, and the Library. With this I agree, but I believe it is the people themselves who really shape the town, and for this reason I would like to take a brief look at a few of the early settlers.

Hanaford said "these early settlers were persons of decision, boldness, enterprise, and independence, with clear heads and warm hearts". They left their native homes to cultivate a dreary waste, and this too, under a thousand difficulties". In 1793, Whitney wrote "From the appearance of their buildings and farms we must judge the people are very industrious". One has only to look at the houses, stone walls, and acre lots today to realize that this was true. At the Centennial Celebration in 1859, one of the speakers gave the full following toast, "Princeton, the Prince of towns for raising oxen, men, and stone walls".⁶

Settlers:

The first settler in this area was one Joshua Wilder, a saddler by trade, from Lancaster. In 1742, he petitioned the Governor of the Province for a grant of land on the twenty-five mile stretch from Lancaster to Nicheawaug (Petersham) along the path known as the Mid-State Trail (Houghton Rd.). His request was granted on condition that Wilder maintain a "good and convenient house for the reception of travelers", and that in four years' time he have some of the land under good cultivation. Mr. Wilder settled on a fairly level spot, beside a brook, in what is now the east part of Princeton. He must have been an adventurous sort of man, certainly he was not afraid of hard work, nor of

loneliness. During the French and Indian Wars, he conceived the idea of driving a herd of cattle to Canada to sell to the English army for meat, and thus make a fortune for himself. Go to Canada, he did, but with disastrous results. He arrived too late; there was no market for his cattle, and he returned to Princeton, a broken man. Later he sold his farm to Benjamin Houghton, whose property adjoined his, and moved his family to what is now Belchertown. This was about 1755.

Our next settler, Abijah Moore, seems to have been a different type of man. He came here from Sudbury sometime between 1747 and 1750, and set up a public house on the site of Mrs. Densmore's house at Russell's Corner (19 Merriam Rd.). He must have enjoyed people, been capable, and well liked, for his tavern was the center of community affairs for many years.

In May 1751, Robert Keyes of Shrewsbury settled his family on Pine Hill, at the foot of the mountain, and started a farm there. Several years later, his little five-year old daughter, Lucy, disappeared after she apparently tried to follow her older sisters to the Wachusett Lake, about a mile away. Extensive search failed to bring any clue to her disappearance. The most plausible explanation seems to be that she was taken by Indians: some years later two men from Groton found living with Indians in Canada, a white woman who said she once lived near "Chussett Hill".

Oliver Davis went over the hills to settle beside West Wachusett brook, where he erected a grist mill, and a saw mill. This was the beginning of the settlement called Valley Village in those days, later Slab City (Rt. 62 near the Hubbardston Town Line).

Dr. Zachariah Harvey was a practicing physician, first in Worcester, then in Shrewsbury, and came to Princeton about 1758; at least before the incorporation of the town. You will hear more of him later. According to reports he was a man of "superior natural endowments", executive ability, and moral worth and versatile in resources fitting him to a wide sphere of usefulness and gaining for him the high regard and confidence of every community in which he lived. Among his accomplishments was the development of a variety 'of apple which bears his name.

You can see that our first settlers did not come in an organized group to settle a new community, but came as individuals. One man and his family settled in an isolated spot and started the little groups which became the hamlets of the nineteenth century. There were a number of these by that time; Russell's Corner, Everetville, East Princeton, Buck's Mills, Princeton Center, Pratt's Corner, sometimes called the West Village or the Other Village, Brooks Station, and Slab City.

Becoming a Town:

When the District was made a town in 1773, about five thousand acres of land lying between Westminster, Fitchburg, Leominster, and Princeton, and belonging to none of them, was added to Princeton. Protests from the inhabitants of the town, on the grounds that the land was poor, hilly, and unsuitable for cultivation, and that it would be a burden for the town to maintain, resulted in it being set off again. However, in 1837, the Massachusetts Senate appointed a commission to view all unincorporated

lands in the Commonwealth, and make arrangements to have them annexed to adjoining towns. At this time, the section which had eight dwellings and 64 inhabitants, was known as No Town. About a third of the land was under cultivation, and the rest in wood land. There were four families living near the Princeton line who sent their children to school here.

The Commission recommended that the land be divided between Westminster, Princeton, and Leominster, Princeton's part being 1475 acres. This recommendation was adopted, and passed by the Legislature on April 4, 1838.

Wood has been cut from the land, but the houses are gone today, and much of the land is part of the Leominster forest. During the last war, a CCC camp was established in Leominster area, and work done building roads, water holes for fire protection, and a pond and bathing beach. Names given to some of the roads suggest the character of the terrain; Wolf Rock, Hells Highway and Rocky Pond Road. After 200 years the land is still much as it was in 1773, and confirms the judgement of those early settlers, as to the difficulty of cultivating it.

The Prince Town District was legally incorporated on October 20, 1759. At that time one William Richardson of Lancaster "was empowered to issue a warrant to some principal inhabitant of said District, requiring him to notify and warn the inhabitants of said District qualified by law to vote in Town affairs, to meet and choose such officers as shall be necessary to manage the affairs of the District". This notice was sent to Dr.

Harvey, who called the first meeting to be held on December 24, 1759, at the house of Abijah Moore. There were about thirty families in the District at the time. Voting was limited to "freeholders and other inhabitants 'holding an estate assessed at twenty pounds or more'."

It is interesting to note that on the proceeding day, December 23rd, a religious meeting was held at Moore's tavern, at which the preacher used the following text; "If it be possible, live in peace with all men". We wonder if this was just a Christmas message, or if someone had an idea that all might not go peaceably the next day. The officers elected at this meeting served until March 16, 1760, when the first Annual Town Meeting was held. The records of this meeting have been lost, so the records of the town start with those of 1761.

The Town Meeting is the most unique of our institutions. This is the place where men are free to express their opinions, and to choose those persons whom they wish to have manage the town business. The Annual Meeting consisted in election of officers, accepting reports of officers, raising and appropriating money for regular expenses, and



Russell's Corner (19 Merriam Rd)

consideration of special business. It is surprising to find that we have the same procedure and officers in our town government today. Some, like the pound keeper and the fence viewers, do not have very arduous duties, but they are appointed every year, none the less. The meetings were warned then as now, and were carried on much as ours today, with the exception of the use of the Australian ballot.

Dr. Harvey emerged from this meeting as Moderator, District Clerk, Chairman of the Selectmen, Chairman of the Assessors, and Agent to the General Court. He apparently wanted to manage affairs to the point that some people claimed that he used illegal methods to get himself elected. They registered a protest with the Governor of the Province and requested permission to call a new meeting to elect new officers. The request was not granted, however, and Dr. Harvey continued to run the town as long as he was here. According to the History of Westminster, he moved to that town about 1767 or 1768, and got into politics there. Did he become too unpopular to stay in Princeton, or was he just a rolling stone?

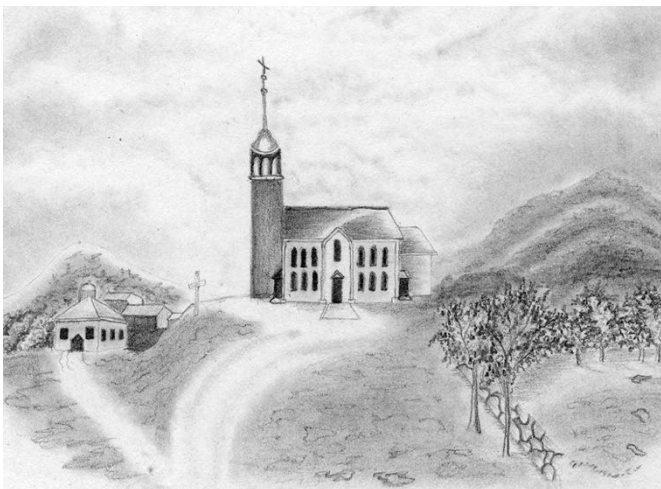
After the election of officers at this meeting, the following business was taken up.

- To see if the Town would build a pound (this location is part of the PHS Can you Find It? Scavenger Hunt Activity).
- To see if the Town would raise money by taxation
- To see if the Town would build a meeting house
- To see if the Town would fix wages of assessors
- To see if the Town would do anything about roads
- To see if the Town would vote to let swine run at large

They voted to use Caleb Mirick's barn yard for a pound, to have a committee select a site for a meeting house, and a committee to look into the coat of one. What they did about the swine I do not know.

Meeting Houses:

The first meeting house was raised in 1762, on Meeting House hill (Mountain Rd).



Sketch of First Meeting House Across Town Pound & Meeting House Cemetery

About thirty years later, this house was declared unsafe for public meetings, and in 1796 a new one was built to replace it. Money to pay for the building was raised by sale of pews and a general tax. The funds were not sufficient to include a bell at that time. Purchase of a bell was postponed until 1815, when one was purchased from Paul Revere and Sons of Boston, for \$470. The raising was a big affair; the men doing the work, while the women served enormous quantities of food. Records show that on this occasion five hundred and sixty pounds of meat were consumed, to say nothing of the

other food and the rum.¹ The old meeting house was sold to Jonas Beaman for eighty dollars.

By 1830 this second meeting house was so run down that the town voted to spend no more money on it, and to build a new church at the head of our present common. At this time the parish relinquished all right to the old building on Meeting House hill, and the town assumed all responsibility for it. In spite of the condition of the building it was used as a Town House until Boylston Hall was built on the east side of the Common in 1842.

In 1818, Mr. Ward Boylston gave the town \$500, which was to accumulate interest until the sum had grown enough to build a Town House. Twenty-four years later, in 1842, the people voted to build the town house, and call it Boylston Hall, in memory of Mr. Boylston, who had died in 1828. This was erected on the east side of the Common about where the church stands today. It was a one story building with one large room, 40 by 60 feet, which was used for all town affairs until it was destroyed by fire in 1883.



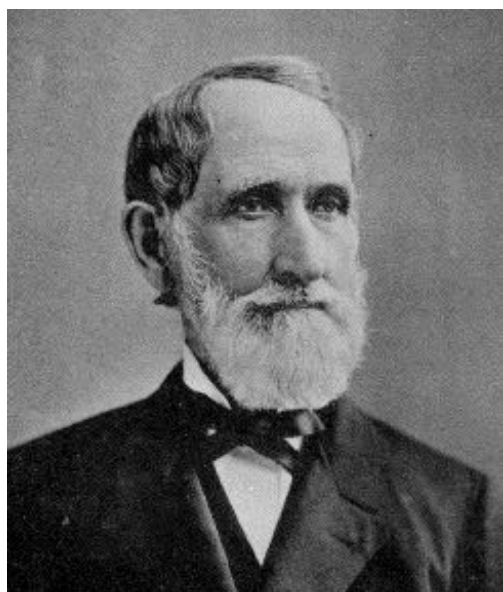
Boylston Hall on The Current Site of the First Congregational Church

After the fire, Mr. Edward Goodnow, who had just given the town a library building, at the head of the Common, behind and to the right of the church, offered to give \$5000 toward the erection of a new town hall, provided that the town buy the lot adjacent to the library lot, and move the church and horse sheds over to the site of the old Boylston Hall. He also specified that the new building should be called Bagg Hall, in

memory of his two wives and son. His first wife was Harriet Bagg, and his second was Mary Augusta, a sister of Harriet. They were the daughters of Dr. Henry Bagg, a physician in town.

That he was very diplomatic in presenting his proposition is evident, for his suggestion was unanimously accepted by the church members. I might add that he contributed \$5000 toward moving the church building, and setting it up on the new foundation.

Then followed the work of raising the rest of the money, planning and building the present Town Hall. Though quite different in style, it was designed by the same architect who planned the Library building, and was considered very fine. Both buildings were dedicated with fitting exercises on September 6, 1887.



*Edward Augustus Goodnow
7/16/1810 – 2/2/1906*

Churches:

"Twenty-five years from the first settlement and five years from the act of incorporation, on August 12, 1764, a church, called the Church of Christ, was organized in Princeton". There were eighteen members, all male. The Reverend Timothy Fuller was the first settled minister. Before that time religious meetings were held at Moore's tavern, and in private homes with ministers coming from neighboring towns. Many ministers were called to Princeton, only to be dismissed after a few years. There were twelve or thirteen during the first hundred years of the town's existence. It has been said that the people were so religious and so exacting in their demands that no one could satisfy them. Perhaps we can get an idea of what happened by looking at one case. A minister was invited to come and preach, which he did, apparently to the liking of the people, for they called him to be their settled minister. Then he declined the call, and when questioned had this to say. "I felt as if I were preaching to an assembly of Puritan Divines, and that I was not competent to become the minister of such people. They could not only tell what they believed, but give reason upon reason from morning till night."

Later there were Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists, and Universalists.



Methodist Church 1892 at 47 Hubbardston Rd.



Late 1850's Baptist Church, Becomes Prospect House Hotel in 1860

Dissent in the Baptist group resulted in the meetings being given up about 1851, and the church sold in 1860. The Methodist church was struck by lightning in 1892 and burned. The story goes that Mr. Grimes, who lived across the road from the church, watched it burn, but refused to help save it, saying that it was an act of God, and that he would not go against God's will. This left only the Congregational church which is standing today. This has the round window from the first meeting house, the Paul Revere bell from the second, and the beautiful chandelier given by John Lane Boylston soon after the

third building was erected.

There have been a few Roman Catholics in town for many years, but so few that

no church was organized until recently. In February 1914, the town leased the upper room in the Library Building to be used for Catholic services during the summer months. A priest came from Worcester or Jefferson to celebrate this mass. Later, services were held in the Library Building throughout the year. In 1955 Bishop Wright purchased the Williams house at 3 Worcester Road, and in 1957 established the Prince of Peace Mission. Since that time the Catholic group has grown until it has been estimated that today twenty-five percent of the town's population has Catholic affiliations.



3 Worcester Rd. – Original Alexander Bullock Home

Schools:

Now, let us take a brief look at the schools. The first school was established in



First School House 136 Hubbardston Rd.

1794. Before that time the children were taught at home. Mr. Samuel Woods was the first teacher of record. He probably taught the children in his own home, along with his own children. He had five when he came to Princeton in 1761 or 1762, and eight more born after that date.

As soon as possible after the incorporation, the town was organized into squadrons according to the location of the houses, and each district ordered by the

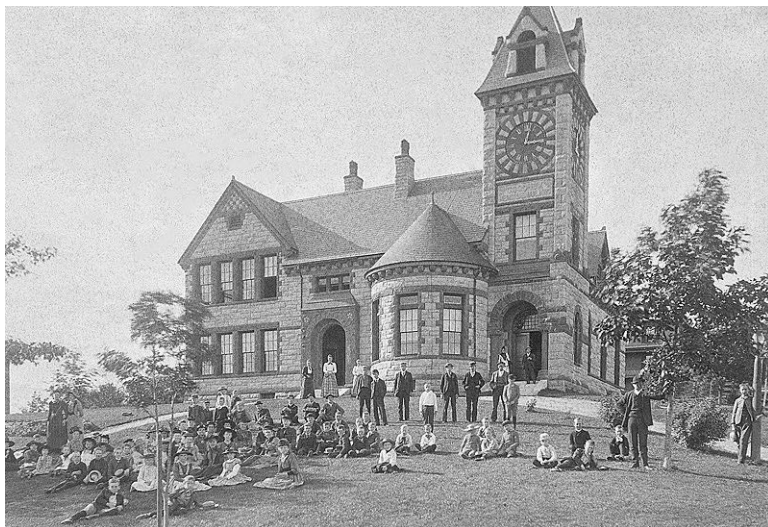
Selectmen to procure a school master.

This was the beginning of the district schools. At first there were five, later the number increased to ten. The first school houses were small one room buildings of wood or brick, and originally with no heat. later wood burning stoves were put in. Among the early teachers were some from local families, while others came from out of town. The best known of these were Robert Thomas, later the author of the Old Farmer's Almanac. He married Hannah Beaman, a Princeton girl in 1803. Leonard Woods, a son of Samuel the first teacher, was one of the natives who taught here, and later became Doctor of Divinity of Andover Theological Seminary.

As roads were built, communication became easier, and the curriculum expanded, the district schools were closed, and the pupils taken, at the town's expense, to center schools in East Princeton (Mechanics Hall) and Princeton Center. Today, we have even more centralization, with one grade school in the Center, and the Wachusett Regional High School in Holden taking care of grades nine through twelve.

If our schools stand for formal education, our library must stand for informal and adult education. As I mentioned a few minutes ago, Mr. Goodnow gave the town a library building in 1882. As early as 1793 Princeton had "a handsome social library established, of the value of seventy pounds, ten pounds thereof were given by the Honorable Judge Gill". This first library was owned by shareholders who paid an annual tax of seventeen cents and had free use of the books. To people who were not shareholders, the books were rented. It seems that after a while the people lost interest in the library and it was sold to Mr. John Brooks (# Worcester Rd.) for one hundred dollars. He installed it in his own house where it remained until it was burned with the house in 1873. The hundred dollar sale netted the shareholders \$12.88 apiece.

At the time of the building of the Goodnow Memorial Building, Princeton had a ladies Reading Society, which had been in existence for some years, and owned over a thousand books. At one time this was housed at Russell's Corner, later at the Folger house at 15 Gregory Hill, and the Princeton Agricultural Society owned a small library of about seventy volumes, probably on agriculture and animal husbandry. The Town owned a law library. The books of these three libraries were incorporated in the Goodnow library so that when it opened its doors, there were about 2000 books on the shelves. Mr. Goodnow gave money for the purchase of additional books, and made



Goodnow Library as a School

Passage and her Friends of the Library group.



Mechanics Hall as a School

provision, by establishing a trust fund, to have money available every year for the purchase of more books. To meet the requirements of Mr. Goodnow's deed of gift, each year the warrant for our Annual Meeting includes an article to raise and appropriate \$50 for the purchase of books.

The library has continued to grow and exert a definite cultural influence on the town. Today, it is one of the most active spots in town, under the able leadership of Mrs.

How People Lived:

Now, let us consider how the people lived. To anyone settling in a new location, a roof over his head and food to eat are the first considerations. So, it was with the Princeton settlers. Land was cleared, houses built, fruit trees and vegetables planted, and pastureland opened up for cattle. In 1791 there were 144 dwellings and 1016 inhabitants in Princeton. "Their farms are mostly large and good, exceedingly well adapted to pasturage. Hence the finest of beef is fatted here, and vast quantities of butter and cheese are produced in town". The farmers raised food for themselves and took the surplus to market to trade for such goods as tea, sugar, and spices which they could not raise.

In 1793, there were four grist mills, and five saw mills in town. There were also coal kilns for making charcoal, several on one road, which is known as the old Coal Kiln road today.

In 1831 there were 2963 cattle. By 1840 the population had increased to 1347, agricultural products increased in value to \$9,000, and lumber to \$8,000. Two tanneries were estimated to be doing \$25,000 worth of business. Shoes to the value of \$33,900 were made here, and "immense quantities of palm leaf hats were manufactured by the female part of the inhabitants." There were two chair factories in East Princeton, as well as one known as Buck's Mills near the Sterling line. This last one was in operation until a few years ago (1954), when the Metropolitan Water District took over the site.

Traveling by coach and horseback brought outsiders to town, and hotels sprang up to accommodate them. By the last half of the nineteenth century, Princeton was a flourishing summer resort. In 1822 a Mr. Page opened the Wachusett House in the center of town.



Wachusett House Hotel Before 1865



Mountain House Hotel Early 1880

Thirty years later, he sold it to John Brooks, Jr.. Hanaford described it thus "It was an elegant building furnished in a style not surpassed probably in New England. Best accommodations are furnished by the landlord, Mr. John Brooks, Jr.. Every convenience and luxury to be obtained in the metropolis, especially in the sunnier months, is furnished the weary traveler". In 1859, Mr. P.A. Beaman purchased the house from Mr. Brooks, and raised the Building to put in another story. Mrs. Houghton, a member of the Beaman family,

tells how, when the building was raised, her grandmother stayed upstairs and never left the house all winter.

The Baptist church, which stood between the two Gregory houses (2 and 10 Mountain Rd.), was sold in 1860, and converted into a hotel called the Prospect House. There was the Mountain House (261 Mountain Rd) at the foot of the mountain, the Mount Pleasant House (34 Goodnow Rd.), which later became the homes of Mr. Harry Whitney and Mr. Edward Whitney; the Howard House at 16 Worcester Road, Pratt's Cottage (2 Radford Rd.) in the "Other" village, the Grand View House (254 Mountain Rd), near the Mountain House, and Harrington Farm (173 Westminster Rd) which is still operating. There were also a number of



Mount Pleasant House

boarding houses, and large homes which took roomers who got their meals at the hotels.

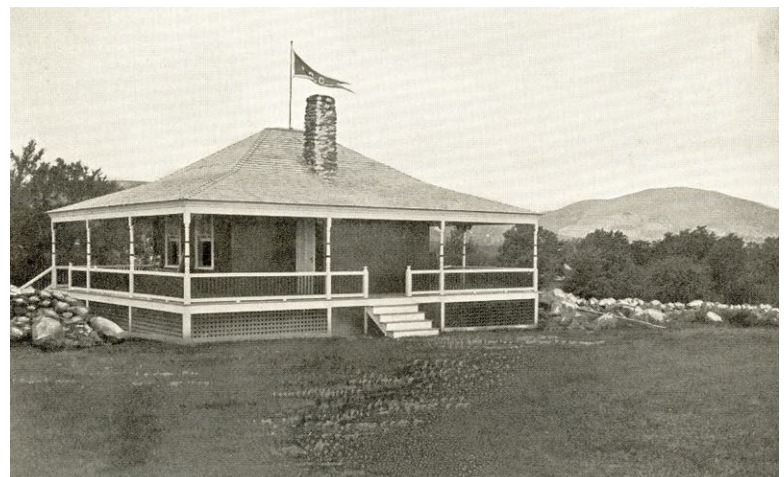
Guests came by stage coach from Oakdale, Wachusett Station in Fitchburg, Pratt's Junction in Sterling, and later, when the Boston, Barre, and Gardner railroad was in operation, they came to Brooks Station and the Princeton Depot, leaving the train about two and a half miles from the center of town. Coaches, carriages, and barges met the trains, and there was great rivalry in securing

passengers. Mr. Bullard of the Mountain House was instrumental in getting the road extended from Pratt's Corner to the top of Meeting House Hill (this road is called Allen Hill Rd today), claiming that some of his passengers left the coach in the center of town instead of going on to his Hotel. Some of the wealthy guests came with their horses and carriages, and a retinue of servants to stay all summer.

The guests took drives and walks, played croquet on the lawn during the day, and cards in the house during the evening. Tennis was popular, and in the late 1890s a small golf course was laid out at Russell's Corner. The Princeton Country Club was incorporated under state laws. This provided many hours of healthful exercise and

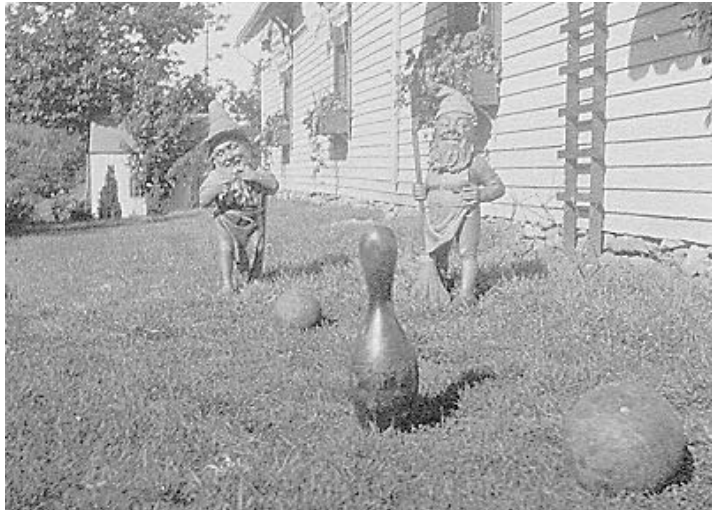


Princeton Depot 1875



Club House Princeton Country Club 1914 Sterling Rd.

recreation, The season ended with a tournament played on the Labor Day weekend. The winner received a silver trophy, called the President's Cup, generously donated by Mr. Thomas Allen. As Mr. Harry Beaman once said, the club was conquered by the automobile. When people acquired cars, they sought better courses than Princeton's nine hole "cow Pasture course", and the Princeton Country Club went out of existence. Every hotel had its bowling alley, one of which remains today in the Bowling Alley Tearoom (private home today). One of the big events of the summer was coaching parade day in Rutland, when gaily decorated stage



Lawn Outside Bowling Alley Tea House With Knomes Bowling

coaches filled with pretty girls, paraded through the Main Street of Rutland. Princeton always sent an entry and frequently brought home a prize.

Everyone profited by this summer business, and I remember well two little ladies who came to the hotel every Saturday night with baskets filled with nosegays of flowers to sell the guests. Nasturtiums, pansies, sweet peas, mignonette, bachelor buttons and all the other old fashioned flowers were made up in attractive bouquets to brighten the guests' rooms.

Unfortunately, there has been one force with which Princeton has had to contend, which has had a great influence upon her. By this, I mean fire. One by one the hotels have burned. The Grand View House in 1899, the Wachusett House in 1910, the Mountain House in 1914, and the Princeton Inn, formerly the Prospect House, in 1923. In 1908 the Heywood and Davis houses (5 & 7 Hubbardston Rd.) burned to the ground. Fire destroyed the Brown and Stewart chair factories in East Princeton, as it did in Boylston Hall, and the Methodist Church.

Since the early 1900's and the advent of the automobile, Princeton has entered another phase of her life. The automobile has meant two things to modern man; first the ability to go where and when he wishes, and second, the ability to cover many miles in a short time. Instead of going to one resort for an extended vacation, people take long trips covering hundreds of miles, with short stops at a number of places. Consequently, after the hotels burned, there was little incentive to rebuild them, and as a result, Princeton settled down to a quiet year round type of living. During the summer months of the Hotel Era, the population was estimated to have increased by as many as seven hundred persons. Today, the population is fairly stable. There are no Hotels, and although a few houses are closed during the winter months, the town is equally active summer and winter.

Princeton as a typical New England Village:

A brief look at the town in relation to the so-called outside world shows Princeton as a typical new England village.

During the early years, communication was slow and difficult, but the people kept in touch with their neighbors, and Princeton was as interested and positive about relations with the Mother Country as the rest of the Province. They sent representatives with written instructions to meetings, and eagerly awaited news of events. They even went so far as to write their own declaration of independence, sometime in 1774. A fairly long and complete document was found in the town records signed by ten men of Princeton. It read in part as follows:

"I do truly and sincerely acknowledge, profess, testify, and declare, that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is and of right, ought to be a free and sovereign and independent State. And I do swear that I will bear true faith and allegiance to said Commonwealth, and that I will defend the same against all traitorous conspiracies and hostile attempts what so ever and that I do renounce and abjure all allegiance, subjection, and obedience to the King or government of Great Britain, and every other power what so ever".

When news came that the British were marching toward Lexington and Concord the "Minute Men" were called and started for Concord. Some were with Asa Whitcomb at Bunker Hill, and others were with Washington throughout the war. Princetonites questioned the patriotism of the fellowmen, and there began the controversy with Timothy Fuller, their first minister. He was accused of being sympathetic toward the Crown because he refused to call a fast appointment by the General Court.

We can well imagine the condition of the people at the end of the war. A farmer may be prosperous and making a good living, but his wealth is in goods rather than cash, so in the best of times the people did not have much money. With only the older men, and the women and children at home to run the farms, times were hard. Add to this the fact that the people were heavily taxed for support of the army, some of the soldiers were not paid, and many people were in debt. With this in mind, I believe we should take a sympathetic attitude toward the folks who took part in Shay's Rebellion. Princeton was, I am sorry to say, well represented. It has been said that at times the town looked like a garrison, there were so many wearers of the Sprig of Hemlock here. Abraham and Henry Gales, brothers, seem to have been the leaders from Princeton.

A pleasanter note appears when we recall that on the inauguration of John Quincy Adams, as President of the United States in 1825, Mr. Ward Boylston suggested that the name of the mountain be changed to Mount Adams. Some seven hundred people are said to have taken part in a great celebration on March 4th, Inauguration Day. The Wachusett House was

renamed the Mount Adams Hotel, and Wachusett Mountain named Mount Adams, not with one hundred per cent approval of the Princetonites. Four years later, on March 11, 1829, there appeared in the Massachusetts Spy, a letter to the editor which read in part *"During the past four years, I have been in rather a disagreeable dilemma. Some of my friends and visitors have greeted me by my new name, while others have been determined to know me by no other than my ancient and well established, title, Wachusett. As Mr. Adams retires from office at this time, with due deference to him, I beg leave, through the medium of your paper, to inform the public that I have resumed my former name, by which alone, I wish hereafter to be known and distinguished"*.

Signed Wachusett Mountain

SOCIAL ASSEMBLY.

Begone! Dull Care!

Your Company, with Ladies, is solicited at the
MOUNT ADAMS HOTEL, PRINCETON,
 On Thursday Evening, February 16th, 1843, at 4 o'clock.

M. PAGE.

MUSIC:--R. R. Lawrence, and the Misses Macomber, (twin sisters.)
 PRINCETON, FEB. 13, 1843.

Anti-Slavery:

During the 1830s and 1840s when the antislavery movement was getting under



19 Merriam Rd.

way, Princeton men took that cause to heart and worked earnestly for the liberation of the slaves. On January 15, 1837, sixty five men met at the hall of Charles Russell (19 Merriam Rd.), for the purpose of forming an Anti-Slavery Society; the object of which was to be the "entire extinction of slavery in our nation". The report of this meeting states that "in whatever views we contemplate Slavery, we believe that it is wholly inconsistent with the Bible and the genius of our government, and that the sooner it is abolished the happier it will

be for the slave, the master and the nation". It continues "The principals by which we would accomplish our object are those of light, love, and moral persuasion. We totally deplore the use of physical force, either by the slave, or by anyone who seeks his emancipation".

The leaders in this group seem to have been the Everett's, especially Joshua T.

(290 Redemption Rd Trail -Rt. 140). The Everett family operated a tannery near the Westminster line, and it was said "their ideas on politics were more odorous than the hides and hemlocks that in that time spiced the region, for they were abolitionists holding doctrines on the question of African slavery, which, though now thought to be not only allowable but highly commendable, were then regarded by politicians as dangerous, and by the church people as heretical". Joshua Everett was a deacon in the Baptist church. He withdrew from the church that he might have greater liberty and freedom to speak and act in the cause. Leaders of the movement, Garrison, Phillips, May and others were personal friends of his, and were entertained at his home when they came to here to speak. His home was always open to the negro slaves, and is said to have been one of the stops in the underground railroad.

By 1843, they agreed that an abolitionist should withdraw from any organization political or religious, which refused to make the abolition of slavery one of the chief objects of its existence. Meetings seem to have been heated, and apparently were given up, as the last one reported in the Secretary's book is dated December 9, 1844.

When the war came, Princeton did her share, and has at the entrance to Bagg Hall, two tablets bearing the names of soldiers who went to the war.

We have on the Common a memorial to the townspeople who took active part in the two World Wars. This is a stone seat which may serve as a resting place for the weary, and a constant reminder to everyone entering the center of town, of the Wars for Democracy.

Captain Boaz Moore's Company in Colonel Ephraim Doolittle's Regiment from 19th of April, 1775.

	Days		
Capt. Boaz Moore	13	" Elisha Gale	9
Lt. John Jones	9	" Jacob Morse	16
Lt. Adonijah How	18	" David Haws	8
Sergt. Thomas Mason	18	" Samuel Robbins, Jr.	6
" Abraham Gale	9	" Eleser Packard	8
" John Barke	11	" Andrew Barber	8
Corp. Chamberlin Eustis	9	" Levey Wyman	8
" Humphrey Moore	10	" Uriah Newton	11
" Isaac Thompson	18	" David Rugge	8
" Curtis Fowl	8	" Joel Sawin	8
Fife Samuel Ferrington	8	" Ichabod Fisher	8
Drum William Whitaker	9	" Isaac Kendal	8
" James Curtis	8	" Thos. Nappar(?)	16
" Isaac Parker	9	" Norman Clark	11
" David Everitte	8	" Jabez Mynan(?)	8
" Joseph Eveleth	9	" Jona. Geary	11
" George Parkhurst	8	" Jesse Fisher	8
" Ephraim Hartwell	9	" Phineas Gregory	10
" Josiah Mirick	9	" Abijah Herrington	6
" Ephraim Roper	8		

Partial List of Volunteers - Blake Lists 196 Names of Men Who Volunteered to Fight For Princeton, Even Though Many Did Not Live in Princeton.



William Morse First Summit House 1870 -1874

No talk on Princeton would be complete without mention of the Mountain. As we know, it was first mentioned by Governor Winthrop, in his journal under the date of January 27, 1631. He described a trip into the interior on which he went up the Charles River to Watertown, and up a hill from which "they saw a very high hill, due west, about forty miles", which hill was Wachusett Mountain.

It was included in a tract of land given the Reverend Timothy Fuller in 1768. Later it passed through the hands of several people until in 1874 the Wachusett Mountain Company was incorporated for the purpose of purchasing and improving the land upon and near the mountain. A small stone house had been built on the top of the mountain in 1870 by William Morse. The Wachusett Mountain Company was authorized to build a hotel and a toll road for transporting visitors to the top of the mountain. The first summit house was built in 1870, and enlarged four years later. However, the company was apparently too ambitious, for it failed in 1877.



*Wachusett Mountain Company's Second Summit House
1884-1907*

The next owners were P.A. Beaman and Son, who built the Second Summit House in 1884-5 and finally sold the mountain to the Commonwealth in 1900. Since that time,



*Third & Final Summit House Owned by the State
1907-1970*

it has been a State reservation. For many years it was under the able management of Mr. Everett Needham. He did much to develop and beautify it. He built roads, opened up interesting vistas, and always notified the public when the azaleas and laurel were in their prime. There have been several attempts made to establish commercial concessions on the mountain which have been fought vigorously by the towns people in their desire to retain its natural beauty. This past summer, August 17, 1960, the State legislature authorized the Wachusett Mountain State Reservation Commission "to construct, maintain,

and operate or lease a ski area and the necessary facilities, allowing up to \$250,000 for its construction". Signed by Governor Oct 1960

Our Annual Report for 1959 reveals some interesting facts. Today the population is 1355, practically the same as it was in 1840. At that time there were 1347 persons in Princeton. From 1840 to 1920 there was a steady drop in population, until it read 682 in 1920. During that period the summer population was considerably higher. After the hotel era and the advent of the automobile, new families moved into town, and there was a slight rise until 1945, when there were 866 persons here. The last ten years have seen an increase of 323, to the present 1355.

By the Numbers:

In 1791 there were 144 dwellings, today there are 365. This is an increase of 221 in the last 169 years.

The only new public buildings of recent years are the Fire Barn, the Electric Light Building, and the Town Barn. Mechanics Hall and the Chapel in East Princeton, Bagg Hall, The Library, the Church and the School building in the Center are all old buildings. We have three houses of worship, the Congregational Church, the East Princeton Chapel, and the Prince of Peace Mission.

There has been a marked change in our school housing. Today, there is one grade school building, staffed by 10 teachers and 6 supervisors. The curriculum has expanded from the three Rs to include emphasis on the physical growth and health of the child. This takes the form of physical examinations, eye and ear tests, polio and dental clinics, and a school lunch program which provides a warm, nourishing mid-day meal.

Our health program does not stop with the children. Some years ago, a Public Health Nursing program was started in conjunction with Sterling. It has expanded until today the towns have separated, and each has a full time nurse on duty. We also have a Board of Health for the town which takes care of general health problems such as sanitation, inspection of restaurants etc.

Our town provides many services which we take for granted. We have an efficient highway department, electric light department, police department, and a fire department, which provides protection which is much needed, and is highly efficient especially for a volunteer service.

The appearance of the town is good. There is a typical New England Common, with plantings around the public buildings. Our roads are shaded by beautiful trees, many of which were probably planted about 1840, when there was a movement to have people plant shade trees along the roadside near their houses. We notice these especially on the Worcester, Whitney Hill, and on the Brooks Station Roads near the cemetery.

Since 1955 there has been a Planning Board for the town. We were very fortunate to have had on the original committee a man who has had considerable experience in urban geography and town planning. The Board has set up zoning regulations and a building code, the purpose of which is to direct the development of the town along lines to keep it both beautiful and efficient.

One of the most outstanding features of the town is the activity of the library. In 1959 there was a circulation of practically 15,000 books, an increase of nearly 1400 over the record for 1958. The library has sponsored art exhibits, book talks for adults, and story hours for the children. Not only has there been service at the library building, but a book mobile service, and recently a service at the school was begun. The library has many friends who have contributed much, and this past year has seen the organization of the Friends of the Library Group which plans more worthwhile contributions to the community.

Princeton has always had friends who have done much to benefit and shape the town. The first was the Honorable Moses Gill, who married the daughter of Thomas Prince. He built a mansion and spent much time here, taking great interest in the development of the town. His gifts were many, varied, and valuable. Ward Boylston did much for the town. The Boylston name appears frequently in our history. Of Mr. Goodnow, we might say, that he was responsible for the appearance of the center of the town today, for he gave the Library Building, was responsible for the church being in its present location, and was the guiding influence in the location and style of the Town Hall.



*1764 Portrait of Lt. Governor Moses Gill
by John S. Copley*

The Future:

Now, I would like to say what I think the future holds for Princeton. Today, much of the acreage of the town is in the restricted form of reservations. We have Wachusett Mountain - State reservation, Little Wachusett - wild life sanctuary belonging to the State, Wachusett Meadows - another wild life sanctuary belonging, to the Massachusetts Audubon Society. Much of the No Town section is included in the Leominster State Forest. Our two largest bodies of water are controlled for water supplies; Wachusett Lake for Fitchburg, and Quinapoxit Pond for Worcester, and more land is under the control of the Metropolitan Water District.

Princeton is very rocky and full of ledge which has made it impractical to set up a town water supply. Many owners of homes have had to provide their own water supply by artesian wells. The earlier settlers had dug wells, some of which are in use today. I see no possibility of any large housing developments, or industrial developments. The industries of the nineteenth century are gone. We have a few farms, but the town is largely residential.

The automobile makes it an ideal living area, with easy access to the larger communities of Fitchburg, Gardner, Leominster, Clinton, and Worcester. We have three groups which are interested in maintaining the town as a beautiful New England town. These are our Town Planning Board, our Garden Club, which has done, planting around

the Library, Town Hall, and the War Memorial, and our Historical Society.

When we consider our assets, we find that the town has much to offer in the way of services, especially in the development of youth. We have enough social organizations to provide stimulus, recreation, and good fellowship among neighbors, and at the same time are near enough to larger communities to be able to enjoy their cultural advantages. The majority of the people in town are young and give the town real vitality, They come here because they want the country way of life for themselves and their children.

So, I see the town growing slowly with no marked changes in pattern, and providing the comfortable, abundant life of the typical New England village.

During the summer of 2023 William "Bud" Brooks, OCR scanned this document added images from the PHS collection, and slightly updated it using parenthesis to clarify specific locations. The original typed versions can be found in a Gray File Box entitled "PHS Previous Research and Talks."

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