

---EARLY HISTORY OF TOWN OF SOMERSWORTH, STRAFFORD COUNTY, NEW HAMPSHIRE---

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The New England gazetteer containing descriptions of all the states, counties and towns in New England; 14th ed.; published 1841 by I. S. Boyd and W. White, J. Hayward in Concord, N.H, Boston. [Excerpts]

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Somersworth NH is in Strafford County, and was formerly a part of Dover. It was incorporated in 1754. It is bounded N.W. by Rochester, N.E. by Salmon fall river, which divides it from Berwick, Maine., and S.W. by Dover. It is 11 miles N. by W. from Portsmouth and 45 E. from Concord.

The White Mountains may be seen from the summit of Otis' hill; also the steeples of the meeting houses in Portsmouth, and the masts of the shipping in the harbor.

The soil of the town is well adapted to Indian corn, and almost all kinds of grain and greass. the tide flows on the east side of this town, four miles to Quamphegan falls. The river is of sufficient depth, till within a mile of said falls, for vessels of 250 tons. The S. part of the town is bounded on Cocheco river, from its confluence with the Piscataqua to the mouth of Fresh creek, near a mile; and thence by said creek to its head, nearly a mile and a half.

There are but two ponds of note in the town: Humphrey's pond on the line of Dover, 200 rods long and 120 rods wide; and Cole's pond, 150 rods long and 75 wide.

Red and yellow ochre, also iron ore, have been found in this town. The ochre has been used in painting houses, and has been found to make a durable paoint.

At Great Falls, are extensive manufacatories and a large and beautiful village.

This town was settled between 1650 and 1700 by William Wentworth and others. Many of the first settlers were killed or taken captive and carried to Canada. Ebenezer Downs, who was a quaker, was taken by the Indians at Indigo Hill in 1724 and carried to Canada. He was grossly insulted and abused by them, because he refused to dance as the other prisoners did for the diversion of their savage captors.

NICHOLAS PIKE, author of a popular system of arithmetic, was born in this town, October 6, 1743.

JOHN WENTWORTH, son of the Hon. John Wentworth, was born in this town, July 14, 1745, and was graduated at Harvard College 1768. He entered on the study of the law, and settled at Dover. When application was made to him to put an action in suit, it was his practice to see the parties or to write to them, stating the consequences of a legal process, and advising them to settled their differences between themselves. By this mode of procedure he was instrumental in preventing many vexatious lawsuits; and was entitled to the appellation of peacemaker. He was a member of the continental congress in the revolution, and died January 10, 1787.

HON. THOMAS WALLINFORD, was born at Bradford, Mass in 1697. He came to this town in the early part of his life; and by a diligent application to business, from a small beginning became one of the richest men in the province.

ICHABOD ROLLINS was born in Somersworth in 1721. He was a judge of probate for the county of Strafford, and died January 31, 1800.

Population in 1830, 3,090

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From: The Statistics & Gazetteer of New Hampshire, compiled by Alonzo J. Fogg, Concord NH,
D.L. Guernsey, 1875

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Somersworth is a small township, and the people are almost exclusively devoted to manufacturing, mercantile trade and professional business. Next to Dover, it is the most important town, in the value of its manufactured, productions and trade, in the county, and ranks as the fifth town, or city, in the State, in manufacture.

RIVER AND VILLAGE

Salmon Falls River passes along its northeastern border, which separates it from Maine, and is the only stream of note in the town.

The village of Great Falls is situated on this river, where centres all the manufacturing and trade in town.

The Great Falls Manufacturing Company controls all the water power at this point, which is rated at 3,900 horse power. This company has a capital of \$1,500,000 and employes 775 men, 775 women and 250 children, who annually receive for their labor, \$553,000 and manufacture 19,728,000 yards of sheetings, etc., valued at \$2,446,000. ...

The Somersworth Machine Company, iron founders and machinists, manufacture cooking, office and parlor stoves, hollow ware, also, all kinds of castings for mills, gas work, cast iron, steam, gas and water pipes, retorts, hydrants, &c. Capital invested \$100,000; employ 100 hands; annual pay roll \$60,000 and producing good of various kinds to the value of \$200,000.

Great Falls Woolen Company manufacture many cassimeres, 6-4 goods. Capital \$100,000, employ 60 males 20 females; pay roll \$36,000; annual productions \$300,000

Wright & Company; flour and meal; capital \$30,000; annually produce 1,000 barrels of flour and 168,000 bushels meal, valued at \$181,000. There are also manufactured, bobbins and spools, harnesses, sale boots and shoes. There are no shoe manufactories in town but the stock, ready cut and put up in cases is brought from out of the State to be made into boots and shoes.... There are bakers, confectioners, custom boot and shoe workmen, carpenters, blacksmiths, painters, marble workers, masons, photographers, printers, tailors, and various other trades; there are six church edifices, two large school houses, two banks, between sixty and seventy stores, of all kinds, two hotels, seven lawyers, nine physicians and various other professions. This village is located in a remarkably romantic part of the country. Nearly opposite the office of the Great Falls Manufacturing Company, and in the centre of the village, is a handsome public grove, on ground sloping towards the mills. This grove is a great resort for the inhabitants in the warm season of the year. Nearly all varieties of trees are to be found here, such as the maple, oak, elm, chestnut, pine etc. Many of the streets are beautifully shaded, and lined on either side with fine residences and adorned with spacious yards.

The cemetery is about one mile from the village, and has many expensive monuments and headstones. It is a beautiful and attractive spot for mourners to spend a silent hour near those they once held dear, but who now lie slumbering in the dust.

[addition info, Employments and Resources can be found in the original document]
<http://archive.org/stream/statisticgazett00fogg#page/332/mode/2up>

CHURCHES AND SCHOOLS

Congregational, Rev. S.W. Webb pastor; Methodist, High Street, Rev. J. W. Adams, pastor; Main Street, Rev. F. Ryder, pastor; Baptist, no pastor; Freewill Baptist, no pastor; Roman Catholic, Rev. Patrick Canovan, priest.

There are fourteen schools, eleven of which are graded; average length of schools for the year,

thirty-four weeks [additional info in original document]. The High School is under the instruction of James W. Dixon, as Principal.

LIBRARIES

Great Falls Manufacturers, and Village Library, 6,000 volumes; Agricultural Library, 1,000 volumes; A. Twing's private library, 1,000 volumes.

BANKS

Great Falls National Bank, Somersworth Savings Bank, and Somersworth National Bank (see tables).

NEWSPAPER

Great Falls Journal

HOTELS

Great Falls Hotel, and Granite State House

FIRST SETTLEMENT

William Wentworth, John Hall and William Styles commenced a settlement within the limits of the town, between 1650 and 1675, but the exact date is not known. Since 1823 the village of Great Falls has been nearly all built. At that date the Great Falls Manufacturing Company was chartered with a capital of \$500,000; prior to that time there was only a saw and grist-mill and two dwelling houses. Somersworth was taken from Dover, and incorporated April 23, 1754.

Many of the first settlers were killed or taken captive by the Indians. George and Matthew Ricker were ambused and killed near Varney's Hill October 7, 1675. A Quaker by the name of Ebenezer Downs was taken captive and carried to Canada in 1724. He was insulted and abused because he refused to dance with the other captives for the amusement of the savages. The following year he was redeemed. In the summer of 1710 Jabez Garland was killed and the next year Gershom Downs fell a victim to their savage cruelties between Varney's and Otis Hill.

[more info in original document]

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From: History of Rockingham and Strafford counties, New Hampshire : with biographical sketches of many of its pioneers and prominent men - Hurd, D. Hamilton, Philadelphia 1882

SOMERSWORTH : (page 680)

<http://archive.org/stream/historyofrocking00hurd#page/680/mode/2up>

The town of Somersworth lies in the southeastern part of Strafford County, and is bounded as follows: on the north by Rochester, on the east by Salmon Falls River, which separates it from Maine, on the south by Rollinsford and Dover, and on the west by Dover. The surface is rolling and the soil generally fertile.

The territory embraced within the present town of Somersworth was settled some time after Waldron began the settlement of Cochecho Lower Falls (1640) probably about the year 1670, at or near Humphrey's (now Hussey's) Pond. The people gradually pushed farther and farther into the wilderness. The Heard family had commenced a clearing and built a garrison northwest of Varney's (now Garrison) Hill. Others found their way still farther into the north of Dover, seldom going beyond two or three miles from a garrison-house, to which they would fly in time of peril. About 1675 a family settled two miles north of Salmon Falls, on the Indigo Hill road, and tradition says they built a garrison.

[more info about the Indian captives in the original document, i.e. Ebenezer Downs].

It was about 1750 that Andrew Horn came from Dover and purchased the land where Great Falls is now located, erected a house near the present site of the Boston and Maine railroad depot, and shortly afterwards a saw and grist-mill at the falls.... [additional early history in original document]

In 1729 a petition was presented by the inhabitants in the north-eastern part of Dover for a new parish, and it was signed by the following inhabitants: Samuel Roberts, Paul Wentworth, Thomas Alden, Elazer Wyer?, Lowe Roberts, Jeremiah Rawlings, Silvanus Nock, James Hales, Thomas Hobbs, William Streley?, George Ricker, Thomas Downs, Philip Yetten, Thomas Nock, Zachariah Nock, Philip Stacpole, Thomas Miller, Nathaniel Perkins Jr., Samuel Roberts, John Conyer?, Wilam Chesle?, John Roberts, Samuel Randall, Samuel Cosen, ---? Ricker, Ephraim Ricker, Joseph Ricker, Joshua Roberts, John Hall, Moses Tebbets, William Downs, John Tebbets, Benjamin Peirce, Mahonan Recker, Thomas Tebbets, Benjamin Stanton, Ebenezer Wentworth, Samuel Jones, Joseph Peney, Philip Gupey, Josiah Clark, John Mason, Joseph Husey, Ichabod Tebbets, James Stacpole [Stackpole] Benjamin Varney, Ebenezer Garland, Samuel Downs, Richard Wintworth [Wentworth], Joseph Wintworth, Thomas Wallingford, Moris [Morris] Hobbs, Benjamin Twomble [Twombly], William Jones, Daniel Plumer, Jabez Garland, Hugh Connor, Job Clements, John Roberts, Edward Ellis, Samuel Ally, William Thompson.

May 19, 1743 a petition was presented that the parish be made a town, but it was not until April 29, 1754 that the act was passed [list of persons on the petition are found in the original document]

<http://archive.org/stream/historyofrocking00hurd#page/682/mode/2up>

Somersworth Army, July 21, 1746 [true list of train soldiers can be found in the original document]

---Other items found in the original document---

- History of the Great Falls Manufacturing Company
- History of the Great Falls Woolen Company
- The Great Falls Gas Company History
- History of the Churches in Great Falls (Somersworth) and pastors
- History of Banks: The Great Falls Bank, The Somersworth Savings-Bank
- List of Somersworth Town Moderators, Town Clerks and Representatives
- Military History of Somersworth during the Civil War

LIBRARY: The Manufacturers and Village Library was organized Dec 23, 1841 with Moses Bates, president; J.H. Lamos, secretary and George W. Wendell, treasurer and J.H. Lamos, librarian. The library is in successful operation and has about seven thousand volumes.

FOREST GLADE CEMETERY--ground was purchased in 1851 and was consecrated Oct 3, 1852, the sermon delivered by the Rev. James T. McCollum.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES WITH LIKENESSES:

Hon. Daniel G. Rollins, son of John & Betsey (Shapleigh) Rollins, b. 3 Oct 1796. He m. 3 Feb 1825 to Susan Binney Jackson. His children include Franklin J. Rollins of Portland, US collector of internal revenue in the District of Maine; Edward A. Rollins Speaker of the New Hampshire House of Representatives in 1861 and 1862 after that long time US Commissioner of Internal Reveue and later president of the Centennial National Bank of Philadelphia; Daniel G. Rollins who was District Attorney for the city and county of NY and Surrogate; George F. Rollins of the Treasury Dept in Washington DC; daughters: Mrs. Thomas C. Parks of Newton MA; Mrs. Oliver W. Shaw of Austin, Minn; Mrs. John P. Pope; Miss Carrie E. and Miss Mary P. who lived with their mother.

MICAJAH CURRIER BURLEIGH, b. 15 Jan 1818 in South Berwick Maine; son of William Burleigh one of the leading lawyers of York County, Maine. On 9 Dec 1847 he married Mary Frances Russell of Somersworth and had 10 children, four surviving him: William Russell Burleigh b 13 Feb 1851, grad Dartmouth college, practicing lawyer in Great Falls NH; Mary Elizabeth Burleigh, wife of Charles W. Wright of Great Falls, manager of Somersworth Machine Co.; Edward Stark Burleigh graduated Dartmouth College in 1878 and later a resident of Florida; Charlotte Russell Burleigh was residing with her mother at the time of this biography.

OLIVER HUBBARD LORD, son of Ephraim and Sally (Goodwin) Lord, b. 19 Nov 1811 in Berwick Maine; In 1832 he moved to Great Falls NH. He married August 1838 to Mary W.G. Stevens, dau of Dr. Whiting Stevens, and had seven children, four of whom survived: two sons and two daughters, viz. George Boardman Lord who married Lizzie C. Mott and resided in Somersworth; Mary A. Lord, wife of James P. Dixon president of Colby Academy, New Ldondon NH; Annie A. Lord, wife of Charles E. Marston, prorieter of the Dover Iron Foundry and Machine Works; and Edward Oliver Lord, who married Mary B. Horne and resides at Great Falls.

DAVID H. BUFFUM, son of Timothy and Anna Austin Buffum was born 10 Nov 1820 in North Berwick, Maine. He came to Great Falls in 1839. He married 26 Jan 1853 to Charlotte E. Stickney dau of Alexander H. Stickney of Great Falls. Their children included three sons and a daughter: Charlotte A. Buffum (died May 23, 1877); Edgar S. Buffum, Harry A. Buffum and David H. Buffum. Harry A. is a manager of a felt-mills at Milton NH, and David H is an undergraduate of Yale.

CAPT. ISAAC CHANDLER, b. 22 Sep 1811 in Windsor CT. In 1830 he removed to Great Falls NH.

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