

Gad Hitchcock's sermon

On May 25, 1774, Gad Hitchcock, the first minister of the First Congregational Church in Hanson, preached the Election-day sermon ~~at~~ Boston church. General Thomas Gage and other British were present; the content of the sermon was such that the British were offended and left the church.

A photostat of this sermon is owned by the First Congregational Church.

Green Hill Cemetery (High Street)

Historical - Hitchcock family plot. Hearse house and receiving tomb. Earliest stone 1745.

Woodard Cemetery (Main Street)

1790's and 1800's restoration markers

Howland Cemetery (Camp Kewanee Road)

Hanson family and Civil War Veterans. Restoration markers

Steele Cemetery (Hanson Airport)

Hanson family - 1700's, 1800's

Thomas Tombs (Main Street)

Gould House (High St.)

built in 1748 by John Gould
wide pine floorboards
beautiful panelling
five fireplaces; Dutch oven.
ships staircase, view of Blue Hills

The Hermitage (Main St.)

built by Lot Phillips (Revolutionary
soldier)
known as Luther Keene house

Hamlin House (Holmes St.)

built in 1752, by Cleazer Hamlin,
great-grandfather of Hannibal
Hamlin, vice-president under Lincoln.

First Congregational Church (High Street) - founded 1748
Rev. Robert A. Hingham

Written church records dating back to 1748.
Protocol of Gad Hitchcock's Election Day sermon
given on May 26, 1774. Gad Hitchcock was the first minister
of the church and held this position for 54 years.
The present building was built in 1836 and has
been modified since then. Old beams and carpentry
work visible in cellar.

First Baptist Church (Main St.) - founded 1820.

Rahm Skatoon House (King St.)

Built in 1700

Once owned by Jemimah Skatoon, grandmother of
George F. Skatoon

Not definitely known who built it and when.

3 tall sycamore or buttonwood trees - originally 3 -
set out by Jemimah Skatoon on the day of the battle
of Bunker Hill, June 17, 1775.

Gad Soper Place (Spring St.)

large, former tavern on Plymouth-to-
Boston route.

large, high rooms
iron-framed fireplaces

Cobb House (West Washington St.)

built about 1803, by Cornelius Cobb,
one of the first storekeepers in this
section.

In very good condition.

Major's Purchase (or, Purchase Purchase)

Land, including most of Hanson and
parts of other towns, was bought by
Major Josiah Winslow in 1662, from the
Indian sachem Josias Wampatuck. It was
then considered part of Dunbury.

There is a stone marker, the "Major's
Purchase Stone", west of Liberty Street,
north of County Road. It marks the
northernmost boundary of the purchase.

Iron Industry

The local iron industry began in the early 1700's. The "bog iron ore" used was found in many ponds and streams; Hanson's main sources were Maquan, Indian Head, and Monponsett Ponds. Monponsett yielded about 100 tons per year.

Shallow water held pea-sized nodules, 20-30% iron. In water from 2-6 feet deep, the pieces were as large as figs. From the depths came large cakes of brittle,

black ore. These ores sold for about \$6 per ton at any of the 3 or 4 local forges in 1804.

From the smelted iron were made many products, such as nails and tacks, chains and anchors for shipbuilders, cannon balls for the Revolutionary War, tools, etc.

Shoemaking

At first, there were only individual family shoe shops. Boys would help their fathers until they learned to make a whole shoe. Women did the stitching until the sewing machine was invented. Boots, brogans, and oxford types were all made.

The two major shoe manufacturers in town were Isaac Foster and Benjamin Thomas, whose shops were located on Maquan and High streets, respectively. However, larger companies appeared in the late 1800's, and the little independent shoe shop disappeared.

Charcoal making

Charcoal was in great demand locally, especially for the iron industry. Hardwoods—maple, ash, and birch—were used for smelting iron, while softer woods became charcoal for home use.

The burning was often done in pits, about 20 feet across, and 2 feet deep. Short pieces of wood were stacked in layers and covered with earth; a "chimney" in the center was left to start the fire in the center, closed when the burning was started. Draft vents and holes for esca-

ping gases were also made. Several days were required to complete the burning.

Lumbering

Lumbering, especially in the Great Cedar swamp, was the first industry in Hanson. The cedar was cut in the winter on the ice. Most other wood cut was oak and pine.

Some of the lumber used in building the U. S. Constitution, including the masts, was from Hanson. Local shipbuilders were also supplied.

Waterfowling

Hanson possesses many varying bodies of water: ponds, streams, potholes, and swamps. Also, there used to be more millponds. Many native and migratory waterfowl were hunted, including herons and egrets. Camouflaged gunning stands were set up on the shores of the ponds. On the larger ponds, camouflaged board fences 5 to 6 feet high and up to 100 feet long were built, and the shorelines built up with stones and sand.

Live ducks and geese, and wooden decoys ("blocks") were used. Eventually, legislation put an end

to commercial waterfowling, which then became strictly sport.

Mill sites

Oldest one on Wampatuck Pond, foimed by dam built in 1694-5, by Nathaniel Thomas; also, nearby is the site of the first house in Hanson, built on the slope above the brook. Mill used as gristmill, then tack works. (Liberty St.)

1725 - mill built by Rocky Run, by Joseph Barstow, Benjamin Stetson, Thomas Bardin, & Nehemiah Cushing. Mill used for ironworks, nail & tack works.

1812 - mill built by Col. Jesse Reed at junction of Indian Head River & Rocky Run; used for a short time as grist mill, then abandoned; Reed moved a few rods upstream on the river, made tacks & nails.

1814 - mill on Indian Head brook, owned by Colonel Luther Howland; tack works; old gambrel roof house for workers still occupied. (Brook St.)

Moore's sawmill - on Poor Meadow Brook; (West Washington St.)

Other smaller mills were located at various places along the streams; some sites uncertain.

Wampatuck Pond - central part of town;
site of first dam in Plymouth
County, 1694; fed by Indian Head
Brook; 72 acres.

Indian Head Brook - source: Maguan Pond,
flows south to Indian Head Pond,
northwest to Wampatuck Pond, north
to Indian Head River (which even-
tually becomes the North River); about
4 1/2 miles total in Hanson.

Poor Meadow River - flows about 3 miles in

western part of town; early power
source.

Hanson also contains 39 acres of Oldham
Pond on the eastern boundary, and 22 acres
of Monponsett Pond on the southern
boundary.

Canals, reservoirs, and bogs - these are found
mostly in the central, eastern, and
southern parts of town. Most are com-
paratively recent, built for the cran-
berry industry and using water from

Indian Head Brook and the Great
Cedar Swamp.

Geographical Features

Bonney Hill - central part of town. 165 feet above sea level; highest point in Hanson.

Barker Hill (Perry Hill) - north central part of town.

Beals Hill - southwest part of town; near Great Cedar Swamp.

Great Cedar Swamp - covers a large area in

southern part of town; lumber source; important wildlife area; great natural water-holding area for Monponsett pond; site of "Lunk" Indian crossway.

Maquan Pond - east central part of town; spring-fed, source of Indian Head Brook; early iron ore source; 43 acres.

Indian Head Pond - east central part of town; fed by Indian Head Brook; early iron ore source; 137 1/2 acres.

HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF HANCOCK
HANCOCK Public Library

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Smith House (Maguan St.)

Original doors, latches, floorboards
1 original window
7 fireplaces, 6 with original bricks
old sofas, chairs
old silver; pewter lamps, cups, plate.
desk of Edward Everett, minister to
France under Abraham Lincoln.

House purchased with prize money from
Revolutionary War; account in Pembroke's
250th anniversary history.

300 NICKERCOCK HOUSE (High St.)

Built about 1722
12 rooms - little changed except porch.
6 fireplaces; "skeleton closet"

This house was the first parsonage of
the Congregational Church in Hancock.

Bryant House (High Street)

Built 1747 by John Thomas
rambled roof, old barn torn down
old furniture and fireplace (some original bricks)
garage - carriage shed - gone
miscellaneous antiques: footwarmer, candlemaker,
candlesticks

The Bryants live in the house now. Mrs. Bryant
has a very interesting scrapbook about the Thomas
family and the history of the house. -- also account
of earthquake in 1755.

Oliver B. Keene House (O High St.)

Built 1821 - many materials from older houses
an older house stood on site - Alexander Soper "Soper Place"

1874 - black congrus wood found in secret closet,
clinched the murder case against William
Sturtevant in the "Halifax Murder Case."
Story can be found in detective magazine - Okmors

Original fireplaces around central chimney,
3 downstairs, 1 upstairs.

Original beams, doors, latches, floorboards,
windows in front also original.

Oliver B. Keene House (continued)

Living room: former kitchen, largest fireplace;
large dutch oven.

Addition on back: fireplace recently built, of old
bricks from 1812 Bridgewater home.

Original wainscoting.