

## WHERE IS SOUTHAMPTON, MASSACHUSETTS?

Southampton is a town of approximately 5500 people located in Hampshire County of Western Massachusetts. It lies in the valley between Mount Tom and Mount Pomeroy. It is bordered by Westhampton, Easthampton, Holyoke, Westfield, Montgomery and Huntington. Southampton is 17 miles northwest of Springfield and 100 miles west of Boston. Other towns in the area include Northampton (home to Smith College), Westfield, Chesterfield, Chester, Chicopee, West Springfield, Agawam, Hadley, Amherst, Hatfield and Whately. The total area of Southampton is 29.6 square miles. The Town of Southampton started out as a farming community although there are few farms left. Although travel to Springfield, Hartford and Boston is relatively easy because of easy access to the Massachusetts Turnpike and I-91, the town is essentially rural. The center of town is small and inconspicuous. A quick ride takes you into the more remote and very rural hilltowns of Western Massachusetts.

## HISTORIES OF THE TOWNS OF WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS

Heritage Surveys, Inc. is building a compilation of historical pictures and sketches of the towns of Western Massachusetts from its archives of ephemera and books. This is a work in progress.



**The house of Dr. Sylvester Woodbridge on East Street. originally built in 1776. Photo c. 1890**



**Ox-drawn haywagon lumbering down College Highway, 1898**



**Clark-Lyman Farmhouse on College Highway, 1900**

Southampton, once a forest tract, lies in the valley of the Manhan between Mount Pomeroy and Mount Tom. Wooded slopes, sparkling brooks and fertile farm lands comprise the 29.6 square miles of this attractive New England township.

The land was originally a part of Northampton and owned by the proprietors of that town. The old Northampton Proprietors' book records that a meeting of legal proprietors was held on March 10, 1730. A group of people requested that they be allowed to move to the southern extremity of that town and form a separate precinct. The request was granted, and at a later meeting on May 25, 1730, a committee reported that there should be laid out to each of 30 proprietors 90 acres of land. Each settler must move to his section of land with his family and live there at least two years before it would legally become his property.

One can only guess why these original settlers were willing to move so far from a house of worship, from schools and from close neighbors. It may be that the good land, many small streams and beautiful Mount Pomeroy were sufficient allure. One reference mentions that the open pasture land furnished excellent grazing for cows, horses and sheep, and that there were many oak trees which would furnish acorns for fattening pigs.

"Draughts" were prepared and lots drawn for home lots on June 8, 1730 by the thirty original proprietors. The new settlement became the Second Precinct of Northampton on July 23, 1741, a District on Jan. 3, 1753, named "Southampton," and a town by act of the General Court on August 23, 1775.

-Source: The Hampshire History 1662-1962, copyright Hampshire County Commissioners, Northampton, MA 1964