

WHERE IS BUCKLAND, MASSACHUSETTS?

This town occupies an interior position west of the centre of Franklin County, and lies south and west of Deerfield River, which separates it from Charlemont and Shelburne. On the southeast is the town of Conway, south is Ashfield, and west are the towns of Hawley and that part of Charlemont lying south of the Deerfield River.

As incorporated April 14, 1779, it embraced a part of Charlemont and the unsurveyed territory lying between the that town and Ashfield, known as "No Town". The area is small and broken by many hills, rising to a height which renders them untillable. The most prominent are Moonshine, in the southeast, Putnam, near the centre and Johnson's Hill, in the northeastern part, all terminating in well-defined peaks. West of the centre of town is a range of hills of great elevation extending nearly across the town. These modify the course of the principal stream, Clesson's Brook, which, flowing from Hawley eastward, is bent to the southern line of the town, and then flows northward to the Deerfield River, through a small but fertile valley. In this valley, and along the Deerfield, are the principal settlements. Agriculture is at present the chief pursuit of the people.

Source: History of The Connecticut Valley in Massachusetts, 1879

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.



Buckland, Massachusetts - 1800's

Early Years

In 1662, just forty-two years after the landing of the Pilgrims, the territory of this town, together with that of others in the present Franklin, Hampshire, Berkshire and Hampden Counties, was incorporated as one county by the name of Hampshire. At that time the section was inhabited only by wild beasts and Indians. Then followed King Philip's War and at its close the Pocumtuck Indians, who inhabited this local area, fled to the Hudson River and became absorbed by the Scaughtecook tribe living some twenty miles north of Albany, New York.

When approached by a committee from the General Court of Massachusetts, the descendants of these Pocumtucks gave a deed which conveyed to the English that territory now included in the towns of Charlemont, Buckland, Hawley, Heath, Rowe, Monroe, and parts of if Colrain and Shelburne.

The tract sold is as follows:

A certain tract of land lying within the Province, west of Deerfield, & is upon the main branch of Deerfield River, and is bounded as follows, viz: East of the mouth of North River, so called, where it empties into Deerfield River; extending up said river, or west to the great Mountain, and is bounded west at the foot of the Great Mountain that separates, and divides the Waters that flow from thence East into Connecticut River and West into Hudson River, and it is about ten miles from the mouth of North River to the mountain. Extending north five miles fr sd river; south also five miles from sd river, which tract of land descended to us from our grandmother, Ohweemin, and Indian of the Scaughtecook tribe.

*Sold by Mawhammetpeet, wife of Tiahpukeaumin,
Megunnisqua, her (x) mark,
Tiahpukeaumin, his (o) mark,
Weesawneah, his (bow) mark,
Paughtanwaypeet, his (c) mark.*

This deed is on file in the Registry of Deeds office in the Franklin County Court House, Greenfield, among the Hampshire County Abstracts.

The same year that this deed was passed, the General Court of Massachusetts granted three townships in western Massachusetts to the town of Boston in consideration of the pay-ment by the latter town of about one-fifth of the colony tax, and large sums of money for the support of the schools and the poor. The vote concerning this was taken in the House of Representatives on June 27, 1735.

Boston Township No. 1

A tract of land was laid out containing twenty-three thousand and forty acres, surveyed by Nathaniel Kellogg and two chairmen under oath, and was called Boston Township No. 1. This embraced the town of Buckland, the greater part of Heath and the town of Charlemont. By vote of the free holders and other inhabitants of Boston, the selectmen sold Township No. 1, in May 1737, to John Read, Esq., for one thousand and twenty pounds, Read promising to comply with the conditions of the original grant. On the fourteenth of December next, Read sold to John Checkley and Gershom Keyes, reserving seventeen hundred and sixty acres in the northwest part of the tract and imposing upon them the original conditions of the grant.

On the twenty-third of April 1741, Keyes sold to Moses Rice of Rutland, Mass., twenty-two hundred acres, and during the same year, other portions of the township to Nathaniel Cunningham and Benjamin Clark. To Ebenezer Storer he conveyed fifteen hundred and eighty-four acres lying in the northeast corner of the place; November first to Phineas Stevens of Deerfield one thousand acres, five hundred of which lay south of the Deerfield River - now Buckland - and five hundred on the northside, on the east line of the town. This thousand-acre purchase Stevens sold to Othniel Taylor of Deerfield for one thousand pounds. These with other transactions were made largely for speculation. Boston appears to have taken the money and freed herself from the obligations imposed. Buckland seemed to come under a general classification, and remained so until 1779. Her original territory was a part of the towns of Charlemont and Ashfield, and of grants known as Benjamin and Jonas Clark's, Cobbitt's, Dana, White and Wilder's, Field, the School grant, Green and Pierce's, Smith, Sprague, Uxbridge, Ward, Jasher Wyman and the Ross and Hezekiah Wyman Grants. The fact that the men who settled on these grants had no established name for their residence other than on such and such a grant led to the name of "No Town" being used and this appellation appears on the old Provincial records and is found frequently in the older deeds.

More to come...

Source: History of Buckland Massachusetts, Bicentennial Edition, Vol II, 1979