



History of the Town of Hampton, New Hampshire, Vol. 1: From Its Settlement in 1638, to the Autumn of 1892 (Classic Reprint)

Joseph Dow

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Excerpt from History of the Town of Hampton, New Hampshire, Vol. 1: From Its Settlement in 1638, to the Autumn of 1892

It is many years since my interest was first awakened to collect material for a history of the town of Hampton. In the intervals of an otherwise busy life, I have brought together, from all available sources, such information as seemed to me important to preserve and disseminate, in compact form, for future generations. I was the more inclined to do this, since the history of Hampton, in its earlier years, was in some measure, the history of the Province of New Hampshire. Being one of the four original towns and united with the other three in many public acts; being a half-shire town of Norfolk County when under Massachusetts jurisdiction; being a border town between the two provinces, and so participating in the boundary disputes; being a sea-board town, whose defenses were of vital importance to all the rest, - the record of its progress, for at least one hundred years, must be of more than local interest.

Moreover, from many of the early families have gone out branches, to people the newer towns, as they were settled, one after another; and even in remote portions of our country, are found many persons, who trace their ancestry back to this settlement by the sea.

Every person, who has attempted to trace his own descent from the several families from which he has sprung, in following out any one of them for two centuries, through all the branches into which it has ramified, has found the task to be very difficult. No one can appreciate the difficulty, except from his own experience. Written memorials he finds to be exceedingly rare; and living members of the family, often, on this subject, very ignorant or very indifferent. In many cases, there are traditions and little besides traditions, relative to some branches. But not unfrequently, these vary one from another, so that they are of but little value. Indeed, tradition, at best, is not a very reliable source of information. Fortunate, then, must he be considered, who, after long, patient research, has been able to approximate his beau ideal of a complete genealogy.

If such obstacles are to be encountered in tracing a single family, how much greater must be met when fifty or a hundred families are to be traced through a period of two hundred years and more.

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