

CHAPTER IV.<sup>1</sup>

Recovering from the Effects of the War — Work-House — Local Matters — Small-Pox — Norfolk County — Attempt to divide the Town — Business Enterprises — Post-Office — War with England — Alarm at Cohasset — Town Lines — Manufacturing Companies discouraged — Surplus Revenue — Anti-Slavery Resolutions — Town Records — Town Hall — War of the Rebellion — Opening Scenes — Twelfth Regiment — Raising Troops — Military Records — Bounties — Thirty-fifth Regiment — Town Bonds and Seal — Forty-second Regiment — Contributions — Difficulties — Fourth Heavy Artillery — Final Attempt to divide the Town — Soldiers' Monument — Two Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary — Water Question — Fire Department — Growth of the Town.

RECOVERING FROM THE EFFECTS OF THE WAR. — The process of recovery from the desolations occasioned by the war was slow. The losses had been too great, the wounds too deep, and the exhaustion too complete to be made good at once; hence, there was great depression in trade, for there was no money upon which to transact business. The drain of men had been so severe that it was many years before the gap thus occasioned was so far filled that the ordinary duties could be done with comparative ease. The evils resulting from a currency depreciated until its value became but nominal, continued the burdens of taxation far beyond their natural limits, and thus there was stagnation and depression. Nor were these physical evils the only sources of difficulty; those of a moral nature, resulting directly from habits contracted in the army, were a calamity of far more terrible character; and not one was

<sup>1</sup> The material for this chapter is gathered mainly from the town records, and may be found under the appropriate dates.



so fearful and far-reaching in its effects as that of the excessive use of intoxicating liquors, which had become well-nigh universal; and in consequence, large numbers of well-to-do families, who, before the war, were in comparative wealth and ease, became reduced, and were obliged to sell the estates that the war had left to them, to supply the demands of an exhaustless appetite. Hence, in the course of the following generation, a vast number of the estates in town changed hands. Nor has the effect of this wholly ceased even at the end of a full century from the close of the war, but is still felt in its hereditary power, by multitudes of the present generation, who have inherited this unnatural appetite from their ancestors.

**WORK-HOUSE.**— For years, therefore, the inhabitants were obliged to struggle for a bare maintenance, and were in no condition to prosecute business enterprises or carry on the pursuits of learning; and it was a score of years before the natural resources of the town began to be developed by the enterprises of the citizens. During the later years of the war the town, after various attempts, succeeded in building, in 1779, a work-house near the centre of its territory, not far from Tirrell's mill, for the accommodation of the poor, who had increased to such a degree as to require special attention; and this house was used for that purpose until the erection of another building for the same purpose, at Weymouth Landing, in 1809.

**LOCAL MATTERS.**— A few items of interest occur upon the records from time to time before the close of the century, among which are the following: March 12, 1787, the town officers took the oath of allegiance agreeable to a resolve of the General Court; May 7, 1787, Dr. Cotton Tufts was chosen a delegate to the Conven-



tion in Boston, second Wednesday in January, to consider the constitution or form of government of the United States of America; April 5, 1790, the town voted to allow their representatives five shillings per day agreeable to the practice of other towns; and March 14, 1791, the town clerk was directed to read the laws of the Commonwealth at the next meeting after he receives them.

**SMALL-POX.** — At a meeting held Sept. 11, 1792, the town refused to permit inoculation for the small-pox, and March 11, following, permission was granted for the erection of a hospital for that purpose agreeable to law, under direction of the selectmen.

**NORFOLK COUNTY.** — After the war, the question of a new county was frequently raised and various action taken, sometimes favorable and sometimes opposed, but the matter was finally determined by the General Court, and the towns of Suffolk County southerly from Boston were set off and formed into Norfolk County in 1763. This, however, does not seem to have suited the good people of Weymouth, for, Aug. 26, of that year, a committee was appointed to draw up a petition to the General Court, praying to be set off from Norfolk County and to be reannexed to Suffolk, but the movement was unsuccessful, and Weymouth has remained to the present time a part of Norfolk County, although the attempt was afterwards renewed, the reason alleged being that the shire town was too far away.

**ATTEMPT TO DIVIDE THE TOWN.** — In 1796 the division of the town was again proposed, this time by the North Precinct, and a petition presented to the General Court for that purpose. The feeling ran very



high, the North Precinct being almost unanimously in favor, and the South as decidedly opposed. For the next half a dozen years the matter was in constant agitation in public and in private, in parish meeting and in town meeting, and the town was so nearly divided upon the subject that the votes were sometimes in favor and sometimes against. At that time, about the year 1802, according to a canvass made for the purpose, the population was found to have increased to 1803, 965 of whom lived in the North Parish and 838 in the South; the ratable polls in the North were 211, and in the South 201; two fifths of the land was in the North, and three fifths in the South; of the money at interest, the South had \$22,950, and the North had \$20,133.<sup>1</sup> The Senate voted in favor of a division, but the House refused, and the matter was referred to the next session, March 3, 1803, which was equivalent to an indefinite postponement of the whole subject. Thus the question has remained to the present, with spasmodic attempts from time to time to revive it, but never with much prospect of success.

<sup>1</sup> Private papers of Dr. James Lovell, who was an active participant in the movement. The petition and remonstrance are preserved among his papers, also an act of incorporation for the new town as proposed. The following statistics were also prepared to accompany these: —

29 MARCH, 1802.

Inhabitants of the Town of Weymouth . . . . .	1,803
Ratable Polls . . . . .	412
Length of the Town 9 to 10 Miles, breadth 2½ Miles.	
Inhabitants of the North Parish . . . . .	965
Ratable Polls . . . . .	211
Money at Interest by last Valuation . . . . .	\$20,133
Including ⅔ of the number of acres of Land.	
Inhabitants of the South Parish . . . . .	838
Ratable Polls . . . . .	201
Money at Interest by last Valuation . . . . .	\$22,950
Including ⅔ of the number of acres of Land.	



**BUSINESS ENTERPRISES.** — With the increase of population and wealth there came also a revival of business enterprises, and soon after the beginning of the nineteenth century a new era of prosperity dawned upon the town, commencing at Weymouth Landing, at the head of tide-water on Fore River, and gradually extending over other parts of the town. In 1805 a turnpike was built through Weymouth, opening a more direct communication between Boston and Plymouth, by which the village at the Landing was largely the gainer. Under the lead of Capt. Samuel Arnold, Levi Bates and others, various branches of mechanical industry were started, and a new life infused into the community. Within a few years a large number of buildings were erected within a radius of half a mile. Many of them, in magnitude and value, have hardly been surpassed to the present day. Navigation was resumed, and quite a brisk trade carried on between the town and Boston by means of sailing packets, which ran regularly; and it was in these days that shoe manufacturing commenced, which has since grown into such vast proportions.

In 1800, March 10, there is found for the first time upon the records the warrant for the town meeting entered in full, a custom that has been continued ever since; and under date of May 11, 1801, are found the qualifications of voters at that time, who were to be twenty-one years of age, and to possess a freehold valued at sixty pounds, or one yielding an income of three pounds (free suffrage had not yet become the law of the land).

The town, which was always conservative, did not look altogether with favor upon the new enterprises, but viewed with jealous eyes the proposition to open new roads through its borders and construct bridges across the rivers, and went so far (Feb. 3, 1803) as



to choose a committee to oppose them before the committee of the General Court, which had the matter under consideration,—such men as Cotton Tufts, Eliphalet Loud and Major John White being foremost in the opposition,—but the roads and the bridges were built, and the town was the better for them.

**POST-OFFICE.**—In 1804, Feb. 6, the town instructed the selectmen to petition the Postmaster-General to establish a post-office at or near the head of navigation at Fore River. This village, although the youngest in town, was already the most important. The answer to this petition was the establishment of the first post-office in Weymouth. In 1809 the new work-house at the Landing was completed, costing about sixteen hundred dollars, and was used for the accommodation of the town's poor until the purchase of the present town farm, in 1839. March 12, 1810, the selectmen and the physicians of the town were appointed a committee to superintend the inoculation with cow-pox.

**WAR WITH ENGLAND.**—During the war with Great Britain, in 1812–15, many of the young men of the town engaged in the service by land and sea, but the action of the town shows very little movement in connection with the subject, there being but four votes standing upon its records relating to the matter. May 21, 1812, the town voted to each enlisted soldier a bounty of five dollars, and ten dollars per month pay while in actual service; and June 30, 1814, it was voted to make the pay of non-commissioned officers and privates, now or hereafter in the service, equal to fifteen dollars per month, and the same to those called out upon the alarm at Cohasset, and who remained there



until legally dismissed. A committee of safety was also chosen, to consist of the selectmen (three) and six others. On the 7th of November the town voted twelve hundred dollars to pay the soldiers and build a magazine.

**ALARM AT COHASSET.** — The nearest approach to actual hostilities that the town experienced during that war was upon the occasion of this "alarm at Cohasset," which occurred on a Sunday, Adj. Cushing notifying the militia in the meeting-houses while the people were attending divine service. It was reported that a landing had been effected from an English ship-of-war that was cruising along the coast, committing many petty depredations, and that there was necessity for immediate assistance. The infantry and artillery companies from Weymouth responded at once, but the alarm was a false one and there was no need of troops.

Mechanical industry being then in its infancy, and needing the services of only a part of the men, numbers of these had entered the mercantile marine, and at the opening of the war, this branch of service being paralyzed, many of them found employment in the navy and upon privateers.

A change appears upon the records in May, 1818, with respect to the qualification of voters, — an income from freehold estate of ten dollars, or such an estate valued at two hundred dollars, being required, and an age of twenty-one years.

**TOWN LINES.** — In the beginning of the third volume of the town general records there is a full description of the town lines, as measured by James Humphrey, Esq.,<sup>1</sup> in 1794, probably the most correct

<sup>1</sup> Appendix D.



and reliable of any to be found upon any record.<sup>1</sup> Aug. 21, 1820, a committee was appointed to oppose the petition of the Hingham and Quincy turnpike to the General Court to have the allowance paid to vessels passing through their draw-bridges removed.

**MANUFACTURING COMPANIES DISCOURAGED.** — In the years 1822 and 1824 committees of manufacturing companies were looking over the State in search of the most desirable water privileges, with a view of selecting a location, and Weymouth Back River appears to have been preferred. In the former year, Aug. 12, Samuel Hubbard and others had so far decided in favor of this locality, that they requested of the town the

<sup>1</sup> The following is a copy of the township lines taken from the record of James Humphrey, Esq., from measurements made by him in 1794: —

Line between Hingham & Weymouth, Beginning on the line at the south corner of Weymouth.

1. N. 13, E. 188 Rods. Spruce Tree W. H.
2. N. 14, E. 132 Rods. Road by Smith's.

**NOTE.** — After running 82 Rods North, 14 East, marked a spruce W. H.; also marked another spruce.

3. North  $11\frac{1}{2}$ , E. 80 Rods.
4. " 14, E. 26 Rods. Meeting house N. 81 W.
5. North  $14\frac{1}{2}$ , E. 100 Rods.
6. "  $13\frac{1}{2}$ , E. 988 " Road beyond Binney's.
7. "  $13\frac{1}{2}$ , E. 17 " then turning and following a river called Fresh River to the sea. Distance 4 miles 251 rods from Abington (on the line) to Fresh River.

Line between Weymouth & Abington, Beginning at the south corner of Weymouth.

- S. 74, W. 46 rods to the road.  
 S. 72, W. 110 " S. 75, W. 20 rods, S.  $69\frac{1}{4}$  W. 49 rods.  
 S. 68, W. 70 " S. 66, W. 20 " S. 70, W. 45 "  
 S. 70, W. 72 " S.  $77\frac{1}{2}$ , W. 14 " S. 69, W. 320 "  
 S. 77, W. 36 " S. 72, W. 18 " S. 69, W. 180 "

Abington Line 1000 rods (3 miles & 40 rods).

Line between Weymouth & Braintree & Randolph, Beginning at the Smelt Brook near the Bridge.

Course S. 14, W. to the southwest corner of Weymouth.

Line against Braintree 3 miles 182 rods.

"	"	Randolph 2 "	118 "
		—	—
		5	300



privilege of purchasing the alewife fishery, the only serious difficulty; but the town, valuing a small present income more highly than a large one in prospect, refused. Again, April 5, 1824, Gen. W. H. Sumner and others, impressed with the value of the water privilege, offered the town two hundred dollars per year for ten years, agreeing to make a sufficient fishway by which the fish could ascend into the pond above, to employ a capital of one hundred thousand dollars, and pay a parish tax to be divided between the three parishes. But the town, with strange short-sightedness, again refused. Had better counsels prevailed, Weymouth might now be what Lowell is. On May 2, 1825, Gen. Sumner again renewed his request, with a still more favorable proposition, but the town would not consent.<sup>1</sup>

In 1831 the report of the expenses of the town was printed for the first time.

**SURPLUS REVENUE.** — In 1836 the general government found itself in the anomalous condition of an overflowing treasury, and a large sum amounting to many millions was distributed among the States for their use as a loan. Massachusetts distributed its share among the several towns, and Weymouth, in 1837, after one of the most hotly contested struggles in its history, having called no fewer than eight meetings upon the matter, divided its share among the

<sup>1</sup> This proposition was: —

1. To pay the town \$1,000 for the fish right.
2. To leave to a mutual reference to say what the fish right is worth, and to abide its decision.
3. To erect a proper fishway, satisfactory to a commissioner appointed by the governor and council, or the Court of Common Pleas, who shall have authority to settle all difficulties that may arise between the town and the proprietors of the water privilege.

The town voted to accept the third proposition, but difficulties were thrown in the way and it was never carried out.



inhabitants, *pro rata*, taking notes therefor, which was in reality a perpetual loan without interest, for on March 16, 1808, the town voted to destroy the notes, amounting to \$6,146.40, they being outlawed and worthless:

ANTI-SLAVERY RESOLUTIONS. — Soon after this time the anti-slavery agitation commenced, and an earnest, determined body of its friends were found among the citizens, and so vigorous and successful were their efforts, that a strong sentiment was created in the town in favor of the movement, so strong that when, in 1842, George Latimer, a fugitive slave, lay in Boston jail, at the instance of his alleged master, James B. Gray, of Virginia, a series of indignant resolutions were passed at the meeting held Nov. 14, protesting against the act.

In 1837 another movement was made by Jacob Perkins and others toward the improvement of the water privilege at East Weymouth, in the interest of iron manufacturers, which, after long and tedious negotiations and litigations, resulted in the establishment of the Weymouth Iron Company, which has proved one of the most important business enterprises of the town.

PAY OF TOWN OFFICERS. — At the March meeting, in 1843, it was voted to pay town officers one dollar per day for their services, the clerk to have no pay for town-meeting days. This seems to have been the beginning of regular payments for this purpose, but an advance from time to time has increased the sum to three times its original amount.

In 1847 a strong effort was again made for a division of the town, but like that of fifty years previous, it proved unsuccessful, the vote on the question being taken by a committee going from house to house, with the following



result: 460 in favor and 465 against, 72 not voting and 56 not found; of the nays, 359 were in the South Parish. This agitation was renewed again in 1850 with a similar result.

On Nov. 12, 1850, strong, denunciatory resolutions against the fugitive-slave law were passed, and on March 10, succeeding, the town voted that they be expunged from the record, which was accordingly done by writing across their face. Thus the record stood until March, 1880, when the latter vote was rescinded, and the record stands as originally made in favor of the resolutions and as the voice of the town.

**TOWN RECORDS.** — The original town records being badly worn and in a very dilapidated condition, the selectmen were instructed to have them transcribed, also to look up the books belonging to the town, have them catalogued, and to procure a safe in which to keep them. The first and last clauses of the vote were carried into effect, but that relating to the catalogue remained unattended to.<sup>1</sup>

And again on March 13, 1854, a series of strong anti-slavery resolutions stand upon the records as the expression of the town.

**TOWN HALL.** — In 1852, in view of the want of a proper place for holding town meetings, and for quarters for town offices, the town hall was built on the westerly side of Washington Street, at the corner of Middle Street, and very near the geographical centre of the

<sup>1</sup> The date of the earliest book of records now in possession of the town is not known with certainty, but is probably that ordered to be purchased March 7, 1669-70. Its records, however, date back to 1642, and perhaps earlier, as some of the entries are not dated. The town records are probably as full as those of other towns, and in a fair state of preservation.



town; a plain, inexpensive structure, but which has answered the actual necessities of the town in that respect for over thirty years.

**WAR OF THE REBELLION.**—As will be seen, the records are very bare of interest, other than that which attaches to the ordinary but necessary business of the town, until the stirring days of 1861. The long-continued quarrels in Congress upon the slavery question, each year growing more intense and bitter, had culminated in a marshalling of the contending parties and the election of a Republican President. The crisis was brought about by accident, each party believing, until the actual collision, that the other would give way and not force matters to an extremity. But the attack upon Sumter, and the call of President Lincoln for volunteers, decided the question in favor of war. The spirit of the people was aroused to the highest pitch and the greatest enthusiasm prevailed.

A public meeting of the citizens was called at once, and the organization of a military company for actual service commenced. Volunteers for what was afterwards Company H, Twelfth Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteers, were enlisted; the company was soon filled, and made choice of James L. Bates for captain, whose after-record was the brightest in the town's military history.<sup>1</sup> He passed through the various grades of service, and at the close of the war wore worthily the honorable title of brevet brigadier-general. His regiment saw the hardest service, and fought in twenty-eight battles.

On the 29th of April a special town meeting was called, at which five thousand dollars was voted to equip this company and for other necessary expenses connected

<sup>1</sup> Appendix D.



therewith. Each married man was to receive fifteen dollars per month and each single man ten dollars, while in actual service under command of its officers; the same to be paid to others who should hereafter enlist. June 11, 1861, the selectmen were directed to furnish necessary aid, not exceeding fifteen dollars per month, to the wife, and children under sixteen years of age, of men enlisted by the town in the service; also to other near relatives who might be dependent upon them at the time of enlistment.

On the 10th March, 1862, ten thousand dollars was appropriated for aid to the families of volunteers in the field, and the poll-tax of last year's volunteers was also remitted.

**MILITARY RECORDS.** — The selectmen were instructed “to cause a record to be prepared and kept of all the Weymouth soldiers engaged in the service of the government, with such details as may be obtained with respect to them and their service, names, ages, residence, and such particulars as may be necessary to a full knowledge of them and their service in the war.”

Within the first year of the Rebellion, Weymouth had put out for aid to families of soldiers over fifteen thousand dollars, something over one third of which was to be reimbursed by the State; and in order to guard against unforeseen and sudden emergency “Union Guards” were formed, for whose supplies and necessary expense the town also paid in the same time nearly a thousand dollars more.

**BOUNTIES.** — During the summer of 1862, the urgency for soldiers became so great and the call so persistent that the town, upon the report of a committee appointed for the purpose, voted to pay a bounty of one hundred and fifty dollars to each inhabitant who should enlist



within ten days (July 25) as a volunteer in the United States service for three years, unless sooner discharged, under the call of the governor, as per general order No. 26, to be paid on being mustered in, volunteers for one year to be paid one hundred dollars; and nineteen thousand dollars was appropriated for the purpose.

Upon the spur of this incentive, a second company was speedily raised, which was mustered into the service Aug. 12, 1862, as Company H, Thirty-fifth Regiment Massachusetts Volunteers. Benjamin F. Pratt was chosen captain, who was promoted through the several grades of the service, and at the close of the war was brevetted as brigadier-general. This regiment and the Twelfth saw very hard service in the Army of the Potomac, and their losses were very severe. On the 19th of August the town extended this offer to all who should enlist in the town's quota, whether inhabitants or not.

**TOWN BONDS AND SEAL.**— On the 4th of November fifteen thousand dollars was appropriated for aid to the families of soldiers who were inhabitants of the town when enlisted. At the same time it was voted to issue town bonds not exceeding thirty thousand dollars, at five per cent, and March 24, 1863, the selectmen were instructed to procure a corporate seal, with the legend, "Town of Weymouth, Mass., Incorporated 1635," for the use of the town upon its bonds and other documents, which was accordingly done.

In the fall of that year a company of nine-months' men were enlisted, and mustered into the service Sept. 13, as Company A, Forty-second Regiment Massachusetts Volunteers, under the command of Col. Burrill. Hiram S. Coburn was chosen its captain.

On the 21st of July, 1863, the town voted three dollars per week for aid to the families of volunteers for one year, to fill up the town's quota, in addition to



the sum paid by the State, and the same amount for a second year, provided they continue in the service so long; and on Nov. 23, one thousand dollars was placed at the disposal of the recruiting committee, who were to receive no pay for their services.

**CONTRIBUTIONS.**— At the annual meeting, March 21, 1864, the town voted to raise twenty-five thousand dollars for State aid, and subsequently, April 9, it was voted to refund the contributions made by citizens for filling the town's quota of men under the calls of the President, Oct. 14 and Feb. 1, provided the contributors agree in writing to apply the same towards furnishing the men called for March 14, 1864; and six thousand five hundred dollars was appropriated for the purpose. The recruiting committee was also instructed to solicit subscriptions of money, to be used in raising men to fill the present quota. On the 20th of May ten thousand dollars was voted for recruiting under the last call.

**DIFFICULTIES.**— On the 8th of June the town voted to pay one hundred and twenty-five dollars to each volunteer recruited under any call of the President this year, or in anticipation of any future call, this enlistment to be made under the direction of the chairman of the board of selectmen. There seemed at this time to be great difficulty in answering the calls of the President, and so serious was the emergency that the selectmen resigned in a body, but were afterwards persuaded to withdraw their resignations. It appeared, also, that the town was justified in making serious complaint of the manner in which the enrolment of those liable to military duty was made, as appears by the following resolves: "That the enrolment of this town is fully twenty per cent larger than the average



towns in the district, large numbers of whom are unfit to be enrolled, and that the town request an equitable enrolment. That the town believes their selectmen and assessors to compare favorably with those of neighboring towns, and feels aggrieved that they should have been entirely ignored in the matter of enrolment, while those of other towns have been appointed to that duty."

As the time approached for the expiration of the term of service of the Twelfth Regiment, the selectmen were directed to proceed to Boston and receive Company H of that regiment, and to invite those members of the Eleventh Regiment who enlisted from this town to assist in this duty. In the summer and autumn of this year, a fourth company was enlisted for one year, and mustered in as Company G, Fourth Heavy Artillery; Andrew J. Garey, captain. Many of these were re-enlistments of members of the Twelfth, Thirty-fifth and other regiments whose terms of service had expired. This company was stationed upon the fortifications near Washington, and saw but little active service.

On the 8th of November the town appropriated twelve thousand dollars for bounties, not to exceed one hundred and twenty-five dollars to each man counted in Weymouth's quota under the next call. March 20, 1865, the town voted to borrow thirty thousand dollars on its bonds at six per cent, to be sold as required; and on the 22d of May the town voted to refund the money contributed by individuals to aid in filling the quota of the town in accordance with the law of April 25 of this year; a list to be prepared and payment to be made in town notes, due Sept. 1, 1866. On the 21st of December a committee was chosen to consider the subject of a soldiers' monument and report. A vote was also passed to pay two years' aid to all who had not received it; also, to pay each man drafted July, 1863, who fur-



nished a substitute, whether the latter remained in the service or not, payable in town notes in three years with interest.

This completes the record in brief of Weymouth during the war, as far as it appears upon its books; but before a correct judgment can be formed as to what the town actually did in the great struggle for existence that the country carried on during the four years from 1861 to 1865, it will be necessary to go somewhat more into detail, and to ascertain more nearly the number of men sent into the field and what became of them. It is well known that the town answered all of the calls made upon it, but what was their measure? As before noticed, there were enlisted four full companies; these were sent into the service and performed all the duties required of them, which in many instances were neither few nor light; besides these, enlistments were made for all the various branches of the service, infantry, artillery and cavalry, in more than fifty different organizations, as well as many in the navy. The whole number actually contributed by the town probably will never be accurately known, but upon its records are the names of nearly eight hundred; without question enough have been omitted to carry the total above that number, or nearly one in ten of its population.

Of these, ninety-eight have their names upon the soldiers' monument as having been killed in battle or died in the service. Beside these, and this list is by no means complete, more than a hundred are reported as wounded, and nearly forty taken prisoners, many of whom died in rebel prisons. And of the whole number, only eight, less than one in a hundred, are reported as deserters, and some of these returned to their regiments. This certainly is an honorable record and one of which the town may well be proud; and when the history of Weymouth in the Rebellion is written,



which will some day be a fact, it will be made sure that this town is entitled to a high place among the thousands that contributed cheerfully and liberally towards the accomplishment of the same noble purpose.

**FINAL ATTEMPT TO DIVIDE THE TOWN.** — Several attempts were made to revive the question of a division of the town, and March 19, 1866, a vote was actually passed to do this (two hundred and sixty-nine to two hundred and thirty-nine) upon the northerly line of the fifth and sixth school districts, and a committee of one appointed from each district to carry the vote into effect; but the matter appears to have been dropped, to be again called up March 4, 1878, when the selectmen and three from each ward, twenty in all, were constituted a committee to take the whole matter into consideration and report. This report was made at the next annual meeting, held March 3, 1879, and was unanimous that it was inexpedient to divide the town at that time, and the report was accepted.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The town of Weymouth is divided into four principal villages: Weymouth, or the "Landing," as it is called, at the head of tide-water on Fore River, South Weymouth, East Weymouth, and North Weymouth, or "Old Spain," a name by which it has gone from time immemorial, and whose origin cannot now be traced, besides several smaller villages, as Lovell's Corner, between East and South Weymouth, and the Old North, central between the Landing, East Weymouth and Old Spain. The larger villages are upon most points separated from each other by wide tracts of unsettled territory, and are governed largely by local interests and influences. Hence there has been from the first a great deal of friction in the management of the town's business, amounting often to almost open quarrel. This has been conspicuously the case in the parish and school matters, and the result has been the various attempts to divide the town. This want of harmony, growing out of its local divisions, has also impaired largely the influence of the town, which, from its population, wealth and business, should be one of the most important in the State. These remarks are intended to explain much of the action that appears upon the records which would otherwise be difficult to understand.



**SOLDIERS' MONUMENT.** — After various votes and appropriations, a soldiers' monument was erected upon Burying Hill, in the old North Cemetery, upon the easterly side of the highway, consisting of a plain granite obelisk, suitably commemorating the names and services of those who perished in the Rebellion in defence of their country, and was dedicated in 1868.<sup>1</sup>

On the 21st of March, 1870, it was voted to divide the town into five wards, for convenience in carrying on the necessary public business. This was accordingly done, and it remains thus to the present day. In 1871, March 6, the first appropriation was made for the celebration of Memorial Day, and the vote has been annually repeated ever since.

**THE TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY.** — At the annual meeting held March 2, 1874, a committee was chosen to make arrangements to celebrate the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the settlement of the town, and the same committee was also authorized to engage some one to prepare and publish a history of the town. The first vote was carried into effect on the 4th of July of that year, by a public meeting upon King Oak Hill, with appropriate services, among which was an historical address by Charles Francis Adams, Jr., Esq., whose great-grandmother, Abigail Smith, wife of John Adams, second President of the United States, inferior to none of the honorable women mentioned in the national history, was born and reared within a short distance of the spot where the address was delivered. The occasion was one of great interest, being the second of the kind held in Massachusetts, and was celebrated with

<sup>1</sup> For a full description of this monument and of the services at its dedication, see the *Weymouth Gazette* and *New England Genealogical Register* of corresponding dates.



much enthusiasm by a large number of the citizens of this and other towns, who were cordially invited to the entertainment.<sup>1</sup>

**WATER QUESTION.** — The last important business found upon the town records is upon the question of supplying the town with water from Great Pond. Many and urgent had been the calls demanding this or some other means by which the inhabitants and the rapidly growing necessities of the town should be furnished with an ample supply of water. Efforts were put forward to that end, and a charter was obtained from the Legislature of 1882-3, of sufficient powers to cover the undertaking. On the 18th of September, 1883, a town meeting was called, at which it was voted, by a large majority, to accept the Water Act, and on the 25th of the same month a board of water commissioners was chosen, and instructed to cause to be made thorough surveys and estimates of all work and costs proposed by the Act, and to make a report of the same at a special meeting to be called for the purpose. This, one of the most important enterprises ever undertaken by the town, has not reached its present stage without violent opposition. The unfortunate situation of the town in respect to its various villages, with their often conflicting interests, and the jealousies occasioned thereby, has shown itself in this matter, as in nearly every important movement that has ever been proposed, and its success, however much it may be desired, is not yet assured. (The final action assuring it has since been taken, and the work is in progress.)

<sup>1</sup> This was probably the most interesting gathering ever held in the town, and was participated in by the citizens generally, resident and non-resident, and was also attended by many invited guests from other places. The proceedings were published in full, by the town, with the address of Mr. Adams, and is one of the most important additions to its historical material yet presented to the public.



**FIRE DEPARTMENT.** — Until quite recently the town, officially, had made no attempt to afford its citizens protection against fire. What had been done was the work of volunteer companies, or of fire districts in which the town government had no part. A half-century or more ago a small hand-engine, called the "Aquarius," manned by a company of volunteers, was located at Weymouth Landing, which was for many years the only protection against fire, other than the primitive hand and bucket arrangement. Some twenty years later several fire districts were erected in town, and hand-engines provided for them. At that time the town attempted some action in the same direction, and went so far as to choose a committee to purchase four engines and the necessary apparatus to go with them, for the four principal villages. This was April 29, 1844; but on the following May 7 this vote was rescinded, and the matter remained in its previous condition until March 5, 1877, when a committee of three from each ward was chosen to organize a "fire department." In accordance with the report of this committee, the town, on the 15th of May, voted to purchase three fire-engines, hose-carriages, etc., two hook-and-ladder trucks and fifteen hundred feet of hose; also to build three engine-houses and construct five reservoirs, appropriating \$18,000 therefor. On the 30th of January, 1878, a vote was passed making a further appropriation of \$1,100 for another hand-engine. On May 2, \$2,000 was voted for an engine and hose-carriage. In March, 1880, a steam fire-engine was purchased for Ward III., at a cost of \$3,200, and in 1883, \$4,200 was appropriated for a steamer for Ward II. Thus it will be seen that the town has made a beginning in this important matter, which only needs to be supplemented by the introduction of water from Great Pond, as proposed by recent votes, or from some other source, to afford really effective protection.



GROWTH OF THE TOWN.—It may be of interest to note the gradual growth of the town expenses from the beginning, when almost every separate item was voted upon in open town meeting and there were almost no general appropriations, until the present time, when the annual expenditure of the town is not far from \$100,000. On May 23, 1751, is noted the first general appropriation for the poor, amounting to £20. The highways were provided for by personal labor, and it was not until after the year 1800 that anything like regular, stated appropriations were made. Beginning with the year 1820, the average sums appropriated for expenses, other than schools and highways, were for the ten years from 1820 to 1830, about \$1,400; for the succeeding decade, from 1830 to 1840, about \$2,000; from 1840 to 1850, about \$4,000, an increase of one hundred per cent; from 1850 to 1860, about \$7,000; from 1860 to 1870, about \$15,000; and from 1870 to 1880, about \$25,000, an increase in half a century of nearly eighteen hundred per cent, while the increase of population was but little more than four hundred per cent.

The expenditure for schools, aside from the buildings, beginning at about \$100, had risen in the year 1800 to about \$500. From 1800 to 1810, the yearly average was about \$700; from 1810 to 1820, about \$1,000; from 1820 to 1830, about \$1,000 to \$1,200 (in 1821 there were 895 children of school age); from 1830 to 1840, from \$1,200 to \$2,000; from 1840 to 1850, from \$2,500 to \$3,500 (in 1842 there were 1,099 children of school age); from 1850 to 1860, from \$3,500 to \$7,000; from 1860 to 1870, from \$8,500 to \$15,000; from 1870 to 1880, from \$20,000 to \$26,000, an increase since 1821 of 2,500 per cent, while the number of school children had increased but about 125 per cent (the census of 1880 showing 2,023 children of school age).



The increase of population for the first century and a half was very small indeed, the estimate for 1643 being about 1,000. The next estimate is from the Egerton manuscript in the British Museum, and dates about 1675, in which the number of houses set down for Weymouth, in round numbers, is 250; allowing five to a house, this would give a population of 1,250. In 1750 the estimate was 1,200. A census in 1765 showed 1,258, while that of 1776 indicated 1,471, and in 1790 this had declined to 1,469. In 1800 quite a gain was shown in a total of 1,803. The following ten years there was an increase of but 86, while in 1820 the number had increased to 2,407. From this time the gain was rapid, the census of 1830 giving a population of 2,837, while that of 1840 was 3,738, and that of 1850 stood at 5,369. The succeeding ten years showed an increase of over forty per cent, giving a total of 7,742. In 1870 the population was 9,010, and in 1880, 10,570, a gain in the present century of almost five hundred per cent.

The appraised value of the real property was in 1853, \$1,138,999; and of the personal, \$619,483: a total of \$1,758,482. In 1875 the real estate was valued at \$3,863,523; and the personal, \$2,107,711: a total of \$5,971,234. This was the last State valuation.

These statistics show, in a comparative degree, the wonderful development of the town in material resources, and also its rapid progress in mechanical pursuits, while the indications are not wanting that promise a long continuance of its prosperity.