

Town of Oxford – The Beginnings ⁴



No formal act of incorporation of Oxford has been found. Its first mention was on May 31, 1693 when “Daniel Allen of Oxford” was chosen representative to the General Court. The site of the town is near the middle of the territory known as “Nipmuck”, “Nipmug” or Nepmug Country”. The first movements towards a settlement in this section was made in February 1680.

On May 11, 1681, the General Court empowered William Stoughton and Joseph Dudley to inspect “the matter of the land” and inquire into the validity of the Indian titles. Acting under the authority of the Court, these gentlemen later purchased certain Indian lands and the deeds of conveyance, dated February 19, 1681 – 1682, were presented to the Court on May 27, 1682, and by it confirmed. History states that this grant was ratified to Dudley & Company on January 11, 1688. The place was named Oxford after the city of that name in England. The plan comprehended about 65 square miles, including besides the present Oxford, the larger part of Charlton, about one-fourth of Auburn, one-fifth of Dudley and several square miles of the northeasterly portion of Southbridge. On December 8, 1731, the farms of Josiah and Theodore Kingsbury and adjoining land of Isaac Larned were annexed to Oxford. When Dudley was incorporated on February 2, 1732, a part of Oxford was included. On November 22, 1734, on petition of the town, Dudley’s farm was annexed to Oxford. On November 21, 1754, the district of Charlton was established, which took from Oxford all of the original grant lying west of a line one mile west of the “Village line”. On June 23, 1773, certain families were “erected into a precinct” called the South Parish of Worcester, and the district became the town of Ward on April 10, 1778 (now Auburn). On January 9, 1789, the estates of Isaac Moffit and two others were annexed to Oxford from Charlton. On February 18, 1793, a part of Sutton was annexed. On February 6, 1807, the Oxford South Gore was annexed, but was later included in the town of Webster, incorporated March 6, 1832. On February 13, 1809 twenty-six acres belonging to Amasa Kingsbury were annexed. On March 22, 1838, “the Oxford North Gore”, comprising 738 acres, was annexed; this lay between the north line of Oxford, as it then existed, and the Leicester south line.

- 1681- William Stoughton and Joseph Dudley empowered by the General Court to inspect the land
- 1682 – Deed of conveyance granted to William Stoughton and Joseph Dudley
- 1686 - 1687 – Settled by the French Huguenots
- 1693 – Daniel Allen chosen as representative to the General Court
- 1696 – Johnson massacre
- 1708 – Captain Rene Grignon moved to Norwich, Connecticut and presented the Huguenot Bell to the Town of Norwich on April 27.
- 1713 – Settled by the English and Incorporated
- 1714 – Eight-rod way established
- 1721 – First Congregational Church established
- 1728 – Ebenezer Learned born
- 1731 - The farms of Josiah and Theodore Kingsbury and adjoining land of Isaac Larned were annexed to Oxford.
- 1731 – 1732 - Dudley set off
- 1733 – The first mention in the records of a school.
- 1734 – Manchaug Farm annexed
- 1734 – Dudley Farm annexed

1738 - The Oxford North Gore, comprising 738 acres, was annexed; this lay between the north line of Oxford, as it then existed, and the Leicester south line.

1755 – Charlton set off

1771 – Josiah Wolcott erected a milepost on his property marking the spot as 53 ½ miles to Boston

1778 – Ward set off

1785 – Universalist Church established – The oldest Universalist Church in the world

1789 – Moffit Farm annexed

1789 – Colonel Alexander DeWitt born

1793 – Kidder land annexed

1797 – First Masonic Lodge was formed

1801 – The first post office was established

1807 – South Gore land annexed

1816 – Andrew Sigourney house built

1818 – Colonel Alexander DeWitt house built

1821 – Clara Barton, founder of the Red Cross, born

1829 - George Washington Sears “ Nessmuk” born

1829 – Dinah, a faithful slave, died

1832 – Webster set off

1838 – North Gore annexed

1840 – Methodist Church established

1840 – Norwich and Worcester Railroad began operations with a station at Texas Depot

1857 – St.Roch’s Catholic Church established

1866 – Allen Joslin house built

1869 - Elliot P. Joslin, M.D., pioneer in diabetes research, born

1873 – Town Hall relocated from the North Common to Oxford Center

1880 – Dr. Harry A. Allard, a scientist and plant expert, born

1884 – Silsby Horse Drawn Steam Engine “Huguenot 1” delivered to the Oxford Fire Department

1884 - Huguenot Memorial Society erects a cross and pedestal monument dedicated to the memory of the Huguenot settlers on 8.5 acres at the site of the original fort

1886 – The first cattle show in Oxford takes place

1887 – 50 post and lanterns were set for streetlights

1888 – The “Huguenot Steamer No.1 Company” was formed to operate the steamer

1890’s – Selectmen approved a Trolley line be built through town

1896 – Memorial tablet in memory of Colonel Alexander DeWitt placed on the walls of Memorial Hall

1900 – Turner Block built

1901 – Edwin A.” Michael” Bartlett, world famous dramatic tenor, born

1906 – Ballard Block built

1906 – Dedication of St. Ann’s Catholic Church

1907 – Oxford D.A.R Chapter established

1908 – Mr. George E. Kimball contacted Mrs. Clara A. Fuller, Regent, D.A.R. for the purpose of organizing a bicentennial planning committee

1911 – A monument was erected on Camp Hill by the General Ebenezer Learned Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution to recognize the encampment of three regiments of Federal troops under the command of Colonel Nathan Rice in 1799

1912 – The town voted to observe the Two Hundredth Anniversary in 1913

1913 – Bicentennial Celebration

1914 – The Oxford District Nursing Association was formed

1923 – The Huguenot steamer was replaced by a motorized fire engine

1928 – Webster – Oxford Airport in South Oxford was in operation

1929 – Charles Linberg landed in Oxford, Massachusetts to refuel

1926 – Clara Barton fresh air camp was started

1940 - Henry Donelin and James Mcyntire opened Henry’s Diner (Now Carl’s)

1940 – Al “Beartracks” Javery starts a seven season career as a pitcher for the Boston Braves

1955 – Greenbriar flooded from Hurricane Diane. 112 Families are relocated in 1958 - 1959

1959 – Dedication of the Buffumville Dam

1966 – Oxford Airport on Federal Hill opened

- 1967 – **Great Northeast Blackout - 11/9/67**
- 1972 – Carl's Diner opened (Formerly Henry's)
- 1960 – Dedication of the Hodges Village Dam
- 1977 – Route 395 through Oxford is opened
- 1978 – Blizzard of '78
- 1996 – The North Gore District 8 Schoolhouse, built in 1872 in Merriam District, was moved to Joslin Park
- 2001 – Neelu and Ishwar Sharma founded the Sarva Dev Mandir Hindu Temple
- 2002 – Huguenot Steamer returned to Oxford
- 2010 – Carl's Oxford Diner, Hodges Village Dam, The Clara Barton Birthplace, and the Huguenot Fort are listed on Massachusetts 1000 Great Places.
- 2010 – Oxford Senior League All Stars (15 and 16 year olds) win the state championship
- 2010 – Grenbriar Reunion and dedication of commemorative sign
- 2010 – Stone monument erected in North Oxford by Glen Krevosky
- 2013 – Oxford's 300th anniversary celebration (Planned)

Gabriel Bernon (1644 – 1736)



- 1644 – Born in La Rochelle, France of an ancient Huguenot family
- 1673 – Married Esther Le Roy (who died in 1710)
- 1686 – Fled France after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes led to his religious persecution

- 1688 – Arrived in Boston via Amsterdam and London with the intention of establishing a settlement at Oxford, Massachusetts; a plan that had evolved through his meetings with other refugees when in London. Bernon's financial support made the settlement a reality for other French Huguenot families who sailed to America with him, but he chose to settle in Boston. He was responsible for the settlement of thirty French Huguenot families and provided for a grist, saw and wash leather mill, and a church on Mayo's Hill. The Oxford settlement was abandoned in 1696 after an Indian attack in which four of its members were killed. Attempts were made to re-establish Oxford in 1699, but it was abandoned permanently due to Indian threat in 1704.
- 1697 – Relocated to New Port, Rhode Island
- 1706 – Moved to Providence, Rhode Island
- 1712 – Married to Mary Harris
- 1712 – Moved to Kingston
- 1721 – Sold the Oxford grant to Thomas Mayo
- 1736 – Died in Providence, Rhode Island

Huguenot Fort

- Late 1680's - Fort built
- 1704 - Fort abandoned
- 1819 – Fort owned by John Mayo
- 1881 - Huguenot Memorial Society established and the land and fort was deeded over to the Huguenot Memorial Society
- 1881 – The land and fort was deeded over to the Huguenot Memorial Society
- 1884 - Huguenot Memorial Society erects a cross and pedestal monument to the memory of the Huguenot settlers on the site of the original fort
- 1884 – 1979 – Under the care and management of the Huguenot Memorial Society of Oxford
- 1979 - Huguenot Memorial Society of Oxford conveys eight and one half acres of land, including the site of the Huguenot Memorial and the remains of the fort, situated on the northerly side of Fort Hill Road, to the Town of Oxford to hold said land in perpetuity upon the charitable trust:

The Town shall forever retain and use the premises as a memorial to, and to appropriately perpetuate the memory of, the early Huguenot settlers of the Town for the benefit, enjoyment and historical enrichment of the citizens of the Town and other members of the public; the land to be under the care, custody, management and control of the Town's Historical Commission established pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40, Section 8D: or act thereon.
- 1979 – Field stone altar erected in the north field of the Huguenot Fort and a Time Capsule is buried
- 1980 – Dedication of the altar
- 1984 – Evaluation by Boston University
- 1985 – Huguenot Fort accepted by the Massachusetts State Register of Historic Places.
- 1988 – Huguenot Fort accepted by the National Park Service, Department of the Interior, for listing in the National Register of Historic Places
- 1989 - Archeological evaluation project completion report published.
- 1989 – Preservation restriction granted
- 2000 – Tour of the fort in conjunction with Archaeological Week
- 2003 – Boy Scout earns Eagle Badge for clean up work at the fort
- 2004 – Work sessions conducted by Huguenot Memorial Society, the Oxford Historical Commission and near by residents to improve the entrance to the land
- 2005 – Boy Scout earns Eagle Badge for clean up work at the fort
- 2005 – Work sessions conducted by Huguenot Memorial Society, the Oxford Historical Commission and near by residents to improve the entrance to the land
- 2006 – Town picnic at the Huguenot Fort
- 2007 – Proposal submitted to the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority to restore the field stone wall fronting the site of the fort
- 2010 – Stone benches and interpretive sign Installed

Ebenezer Learned (1728 – 1801) ²

- 1728 - Born in Oxford, Massachusetts
- 1749 – Married Jerusha Baker
- 1750 – Inherited 200 acres known as *Prospect Hill* and built a home there
- 1756 – Lead his militia company to Fort Edward at lake George during the French and Indian War
- 1757 – Contracted smallpox
- 1758 – 1794 – Served as Selectman
- 1774 – Appointed Colonel of the militia
- 1775 – Led his Minutemen to Boston to join the Battle of Lexington
- 1775 – The Massachusetts Committee of Safety named him a Colonel and authorized him to organize the 4th Massachusetts Regiment. The regiment was subsequently adopted into the Continental Army.
- 1775 – Given command of Dorchester Heights by General Washington
- 1776 – First to enter Boston after evacuation by the British
- 1776 – Resigned his commission due to poor health
- 1777 – Returned to duty, named Brigadier General, and fought at Saratoga
- 1777 – 1778 – Commanded a brigade of Massachusetts's troops at Valley Forge
- 1778 – Resigned his commission due to poor health
- 1779 – Represented Oxford at the Massachusetts Convention
 - Served as a Judge of the Common Pleas for Worcester County, Massachusetts
- 1783 – Elected as a representative to the Massachusetts General Court
- 1801 - Died in Oxford, Massachusetts

Colonel Alexander De Witt (1789 – 1879) ²

- 1789 – Born in Oxford, Massachusetts
- 1804 - 1808 – Clerk at Merino Manufacturing Company in Dudley, Massachusetts
- 1818 – Moved to Franklin, Massachusetts
- 1818 – Manufactured cotton thread with partner Doctor Nathaniel Miller
- 1818 – Named Colonel of the 3rd Regiment of the 2nd Brigade
- 1820 – Married Mary Makepeace of Franklin, Massachusetts
- 1824 – With brothers Stearns, Hollis and Archibald opened a mill in Buffum Village, Oxford
- 1826 – Worthy Master of the Third Lodge of Masons
- 1828 – 1830 - Served as Selectman
- 1830 – 1833 – Served as Town Moderator
- 1830 – 1834 - Elected as State Representative
- 1832 - Served on the School Committee
- 1840 – 1844 - Served as Town Agent
- 1842 - Served as Town Moderator
- 1842 – 1851 -Elected as State Senator
- 1843 – 1848 - President of the Oxford Bank

- Director of the Worcester Merchants and Farmers Insurance Company,
- Director of the State Mutual Life Assurance Company
- President of the Mechanics Savings Bank
- President of the Mechanics National Bank
- President of the Worcester and Nashua Railroad
- Director of the Providence and Worcester Railroad
- Director of the Norwich and Worcester Railroad

- 1853 – Delegate from Oxford at the State Constitutional Convention
- 1853 - 1857 – Elected as a member of the Free Soil Party to the U.S. House of Representatives
- 1857 – Purchased the Old Huguenot Mill
- 1857 – American's Party candidate for Lieutenant Governor of Massachusetts

1858 – Founded the Oxford Fire Department
1865 – Purchased the Wallis Mill
1879 – Died

Clara Barton (1821 – 1912) ¹



1821 – Born in Oxford, Massachusetts
 Taught at District School No. 91839
1852 – Organized public schools in Bordertown, New Jersey
1854 – The first woman to work in Patent Office in Washington, D.C.
1861 – Cared for the wounded from the Sixth Massachusetts Regiment and assisted in the care of the wounded after the battle of Bull Run
1862 – 1865 – Served in the battlefields: Cedar Mountain, Chantilly, South Mountain, Spotsylvania, Wilderness, Belle Plain, Antietam, Fredericksburg, Petersburg
1864 – Assisted Dorence Atwater in marking 13,000 graves at Andersonville
1865 – Organized at her own expense the search for missing men
1868 – 1869 – Toured the U.S. and met Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucy Stone, Julia Ward Howe and other women interested in the suffrage movement
1870 – Served with the International Red Cross in the Franco-Prussian War
1873 – Awarded the Iron Cross by Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany
1876 – Started the First American Red Cross Chapter in Dansville, New York
1887 – Appointed to represent the U.S. at the International Conference, Karlsruhe, Germany
1881 – 1904 – Became the first president of the American Red Cross
1881 – Authored the “American Amendment” which distributed relief not only in wars, but also in famines, floods, earthquakes, and other disasters
1882 – 1883 – Provided relief from the Mississippi floods
1883 – Appointed Superintendent of the Women’s Reformatory in Sherborn Falls, Massachusetts
1884 – Distributed relief in the Ohio and Mississippi River floods
1885 – Provided relief in the Texas famine
1886 – Provided relief in the Charleston earthquake

1888 – Provided relief in the Florida Yellow Fever Epidemic
1889 – Assisted with relief in Johnston, Pennsylvania
1893 – Distribute relief in Sea Islands, South Carolina
1896 – Supervised the Red Cross mission to the Armenian Massacre, Turkey
1898 – 1990 – Provided relief in the Spanish-American War
1900 – Assisted relief in the Galveston, Texas disaster
1903 – Received the Russian Recognition of the Order of the Red Cross by Czar Alexander
1904 – Resigned as President of the American National Red Cross
1905 – Became the president of the National First Aid Society
1912 – Died at Glen Echo, Maryland

George Washington Sears “Nessmuk” (1821 – 1890) ¹

1821 – Born in South Oxford (now Webster)
1833 – Worked on a commercial fishing vessel
1840 – Signed on a three year voyage for the South Pacific
1857 – Married and had three children
1861 – Was a sharpshooter in the Civil War
1866 – Traveled up the Amazon River, following the route of Louis Agassiz
1870’s – Became a major proponent of light weight canoeing
1880’s – J. Henry Rushton built the *Sally Gamp* for Nessmuk. Developed the “Nessmuk Knife”
Popularized “Nessmuk Garlic Cheese Bread”
1880 – 1893 – Wrote articles for *Forest and Stream* called Nessmuk’s “Adirondack Letters”
1884 – Wrote *Woodcraft*
1887 – Wrote *Forest Runes*
1890 – Died. A mountain in northern Pennsylvania is named after him. A stone marker commemorating him is at the entrance to the 200 Sportsmen Club

Elliot P. Joslin, M.D. (1869 – 1962) ³



1869 – Born in Oxford, Massachusetts
Attended Leicester Academy, Yale College
1891 – 1895 – Attended Harvard University
Won the Boylston Society prize for work later published as the book *The Pathology of Diabetes Mellitus*.
Conducted Postgraduate work at Massachusetts General Hospital
First doctor in the United States to specialize in diabetes and was the founder of today’s Joslin diabetes Center. He was the first to advocate for teaching patients to care for their own diabetes, an approach now commonly referred to as “DSME” or Diabetes Self-Management Education. He is also a recognized pioneer in glucose management, identifying that tight glucose control leads to fewer and less extreme complications.

- 1898 – Started private medical practice in Boston’s Back Bay
- 1908 – In conjunction with physiologist Francis G. Benedict, carried out extensive metabolic balance studies examining fasting and feeding in patients with varying severities of diabetes
- 1910 – Built summer vacation home on Buffalo Hill
- 1916 – Published monograph *The Treatment of Diabetes Mellitus*.
- 1918 – Published *Diabetic Manual — for the Doctor and Patient*
- 1922 - Insulin became available as therapy, and Joslin’s corps of nurses became the forerunners of certified diabetes educators, providing instruction in diet, exercise, foot care and insulin dosing, and established camps for children with diabetes throughout New England.
- 1940 - The first hospital blood glucose monitoring system for pre-meal testing was developed under his direction ,and was the forerunner of modern home-monitoring systems.
- 1946 - 1966 - Challenged the government to do a study in the town of his birthplace, Oxford, later confirm Massachusetts. The study was started in 1946 and carried out over the next 20 years. The results would Joslin’s fear that the incidence of diabetes in the United States was approaching epidemic proportions
- 1952 - Joslin’s group practice became officially known as the Joslin Clinic.
- 1956 - The office was moved to its current location at One Joslin Place in Boston
- 1962 – Died in his sleep on 29 January 1962 in Brookline, Massachusetts.

Edited by Peter J. Smith for the Oxford Historical Commission. Please submit corrections or additions to pjsmithross@aol.com

1. Webster, Dudley, and Oxford During the Nineteenth Century by Paul J. Macek and James R. Morrison
2. History of the Town of Oxford Massachusetts by George F. Daniels
3. Wikipedia
4. May White & Daniels