

Oxford – Historic Timelines 3/7/16

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.

1633 – John Oldham was the first white man to tread on Oxford soil.

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

1726 – Abijah Moore graduated Yale, the first college graduate from Oxford and the only known resident of Central Massachusetts to receive a degree from Yale under the first charter.

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
1774 – Oxford Militia march, with other towns, on the Worcester County Courthouse
1778 – Ward set off
1785 – Universalist Church established – The oldest Universalist Church in the world
1789 – Moffit Farm annexed
1789 – Colonel Alexander DeWitt born
1791 – Hudson house built. Now it is the oldest house in Oxford
1793 – Kidder land annexed
1797 – First Masonic Lodge was formed
1801 – The first post office was established
1807 – South Gore land annexed
1809 – Part of Charlton annexed
1816 – Andrew Sigourney house built
1817 – Mary DeWitt Freeland born
1818 – Colonel Alexander DeWitt house built
1821 – Clara Barton, founder of the Red Cross, born
1820 – George F Daniels born.
1824 – Independent Oxford Militia formed to be called the “Oxford Invincibles”
1828 – First documented Catholic service in Oxford
1829 - George Washington Sears “ Nessmuk” born
1829 – Dinah, a faithful slave, died
1829 – First meeting of the Methodist Society
1832 – Webster set off
1835 – Methodist Society established
1836 – First documented service of the First Baptist Church
1838 – North Gore annexed
1840 – Norwich and Worcester Railroad began operations with a station at Texas Depot
1850 – Clara Barton’s summer home was built
1857 – St. Roch’s Catholic Church established
1863 – First documented service of Grace Episcopal church
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 – St. Roch’s Parish established
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
1892 – History of Oxford published by George F Daniels
1894 – History of Oxford published by Mary DeWitt Freeland
1896 - First documented service of St. Ann’s roman Catholic Church
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 in North Oxford
1906 – Ballard Block built
1906 – Dedication of St. Ann’s Catholic Church
1907 – Oxford D.A.R Chapter established

1907 – Bounds between Oxford and Charlton established.
1907 – Bounds between Oxford and Millbury established.
1908 – Bounds between Oxford and Auburn 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 – St Mary's Assumption Albanian Orthodox Church establishes a monastery at Hodges Village.
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
1953 – Oxford Little League established
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 – Town charter adopted.
1972 – Carl's Diner opened (Formerly Henry's)
1960 – Dedication of the Hodges Village Dam
1977 – Route 395 through Oxford is opened
1978 – First documented service of Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church
1978 – Blizzard of '78
1980 – Town Hall rededicated
1980 – Oak Hill Bible Church moved to Oxford and the first documented service
1991 – Laurel Thatcher Ulrich received the Pulitzer Prize for "A Midwife's Tale – The Life of Martha Ballard" based on her diary 1785 – 1812
1994 – First documented service Tabernacle of Praise Assembly of God
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
2011 – Oxford Main Street Historic District approved by the Massachusetts Historical Commission
2011 – Dorothy Barrie appointed Knight of National Order of the Legion of Honor by the French World Government for her service as an army nurse at the 16th General Hospital during the Battle of the Bulge in War II.
2012 – A portion of Buffalo Hill, Dr. Joslin's summer home, preserved for agricultural purposed by the Trust for Public Land.
2012 – Oxford's Junior League Baseball team won the state championship.
2012 – 1976 time capsule opened.
2012 – 300th Anniversary Huguenot pageant held at the Huguenot Fort
2013 – Oxford's 300th anniversary celebration
2013 – Great and General Court of Massachusetts established 1713 as the date of incorporation for Oxford.
2014 – Oxford designated a Purple Heart Community
2014 – Historic 1796 home at 253 Main Street burned down.
2014 – Oxford received flags from the U.S. Capital flown on July 8 and July 15, 2013

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

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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

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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. Daniels History of Oxford
5. May White