

Gray Fund.

THE
ESSEX MEMORIAL,

FOR

1836:

EMBRACING

A REGISTER OF THE COUNTY.

BY JAMES R. NEWHALL.

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reference to slavery; but still it was a point on which all did not agree. In 1781, however, at the Court in Worcester an indictment was found against a white man for assaulting, beating and imprisoning a black. His trial took place at the Supreme Judicial Court in 1788; and the defence was that the black was a slave, and the beating, &c. was but the necessary correction of the master. This defence did not avail; the white was found guilty and fined; and this decision was the death warrant for slavery in Massachusetts.

Aged Persons.—By the census of 1830, it appears that the number of aged persons in this County is in greater proportion to the population of the State, than in any other section. The number of persons here, between 90 and 100 years, was thirtytwo males and fiftytwo females. There was no male of 100 years; but of the females there were two white, and one colored, of that age or upwards.

Deaf, Dumb and Blind.—By the same census it appeared that there were fifty-nine who were deaf and dumb, and fortytwo who were blind.

Highest Land.—The highest land in this County is "Bald Pate," so called, in the western part of Rowley; the hill is 329 feet above the sea.

AMESBURY.

AMESBURY, so called from a town in Wiltshire, England, is bounded southerly by the Merrimack, which divides it from Newbury and West Newbury, westerly by Haverhill, northerly by the New Hampshire boundary line, and easterly by Powow river, which separates it from the western border

of Salisbury. In the earlier records of the town, and in ancient books, the name is written Almsbury; and that orthography is occasionally adopted at the present day. Previous to 1668, when it was incorporated into an independent township, it constituted a parish of Salisbury under the name of Salisbury New Town. Its distance from Boston is forty miles, in a northeasterly direction; from Newburyport, four miles.

The town is six miles long, and three broad, and contains 9,170 acres; viz: 700 of tillage, 1,100 upland mowing, 300 fresh meadow, 5,000 pasturage, 270 woodland, 1,800 unimproved land, and land not particularly described. The Amesbury farmers have not given so much attention to modern experiments and improvements in husbandry, as some of their neighbors. They have seldom been competitors for prizes at the annual cattle shows, and very few have attended as spectators. The quality of their soil is about equal to the average of soil in the County. From legislative returns of 1831, it appears, the produce that year was 8,000 bushels indian corn, 2,500 bushels wheat, rye, oats and barley, and 900 tons upland hay.

This town is perhaps more broken into hills and dales than any other town in the County, and hence its natural scenery is of a more varied and picturesque character. Whittier Hill, Bear Hill, and the Pond hills, are the chief elevations, from some of which the prospect, both of land and ocean, is very extensive and magnificent. Kimball's Pond, near the centre of the town, is a very beautiful sheet of water, about a mile in length. The perch and pickerel in its waters, the woods and valleys upon its borders, render it a favorite resort for parties of pleasure in the summer season.

Amesbury is popularly divided into three sections, viz: West Parish, or Jamaica, the Ferry and Mills. *Jamaica* borders on Haverhill, and is the seat of the extensive chaise manufacturing.

The *Ferry* is at the southeast extremity of the town, at the junction of the Powow with the Merrimack and derives its name from the ancient ferry, which was established between this part of the town and Newbury. At this point the Merrimack alters its course, nearly at a right angle, from a northwest to a south west direction. Thirty years ago this was the seat of considerable commerce, several heavy ships being owned here. A great many vessels were also built on the banks of the river, and some are still every year launched. The salmon, shad and alewife fishery was also carried on here. Some fish are still caught, but they are becoming more scarce. The last season there were taken about 1,500 shad and 20 barrels of alewives. Not a single salmon was drawn up on the Amesbury fishing ground, during the season. Tradition says, it was formerly an article in the indentures of apprentices, that they should not be obliged to eat salmon, oftener than six times a week.

The settlement called *The Mills*, is at the northeastern border of the town, round the lower falls of the Powow. It forms a continuous settlement with the northwestern village of Salisbury on the other side of the Powow. The river is but about two rods in width and is crossed by several bridges. For many purposes the people on both sides of the Powow act as citizens of one town.

The Powow river rises in Kingston, N. H. There are on it twelve different dams with more

or less power. At the Mills there are five dams within the space of fifty rods, the falls over which are in the aggregate seventy feet high. The stream is rapid, and when swelled in volume by a recent freshet, its descent over the falls forms a curious and beautiful spectacle. The water in the stream seldom wholly fails, and to recruit its current, when exhausted, by long drought, Kimball's pond, before mentioned, has been dammed up and converted into a reservoir. The canal, which forms a communication between the pond and the river is about one eighth of a mile in length. It was made more than a century ago. A part of it passes under a high hill, tunnel-wise. This tunnel, in consideration of the very early period, when it was undertaken and completed, has always been regarded as an object of curiosity. The means exist in two large ponds, near the sources of the Powow, of greatly increasing the water in the stream and creating an inexhaustible supply for all the mills, that can be erected on its banks.

Water power was applied to propelling machinery in this village at a very early period. More than half a century ago, there was a smelting furnace here, and an extensive business carried on, in the fabrication of anchors, scythes, axes and other edge tools. About 1796, Jacob Perkins, having invented his machine for cutting and heading nails, set it in operation in this village.

Most of the people of Amesbury belong to the productive class; very few are raised above the necessity of personal exertion. All are active and industrious, readily find employment, and command good wages. They have been distinguished for their zeal in the cause of temperance. There has not been for several years, and is not now a single licensed grocer in town.

Josiah Bartlett, one of the signers of the declaration of Independence, was a native of Amesbury, and many of the same name and of his kindred, still remain in the place. He was educated at the public schools, and studied medicine in his native town.

Payne Wingate, who for many years has been the oldest person on the catalogue of Harvard College, was born at Amesbury in 1739. He graduated in 1759, and settled in the ministry at Hampton Falls, in 1763. He continued in this profession but a short time—was elected a member of the first colonial Congress, and is the only member of that body now among the living. His residence is at Stratham, N. H.

POPULATION.

In 1800, the population was 1,757; in 1810, 1,890; in 1820, 1,956; in 1830, 2,445. By the last census it appeared there were 115 aliens, 3 colored persons, 1 deaf and dumb.

Ratable polls, 672.

TOWN OFFICERS.

Town Clerk—Daniel Weed.

Treasurer and Collector—Daniel Weed.

Selectmen—Stephen Clements, John Wadleigh, Joshua Colby.

LAWYERS, PHYSICIANS, JUSTICES, ETC.

Lawyers—Robert Cross, F. Emerson.

Physicians—Moses Carter, Israel Balch, David Plumer, Benjamin Atkinson.

Justices of the Peace—Robert Patten, Eliphalet Graves, Robert Cross, Stephen Sargent, Jr. Lowell Bagley, William Nichols, Daniel Weed, Patten Sargent.

Postmasters—Eastern post office, Philip Osgood; western, Edmund Sargent.

RELIGIOUS SOCIETIES.

First Church—Orthodox Congregational; located at the Ferry. Organized, and the first pastor, Thomas Wells, settled, 1672. Mr Wells, died July 10, 1734, at the age of 87. Edmund March, the second pastor, was a native of Newbury, and graduated at Harvard College, in 1722; settled here 1728; died March 6, 1791, at the age of 88. The third pastor was Elisha Odlin; born at Exeter, N. H.; graduated at Harvard, 1731; settled here 1744; died January 21, 1752, at the age of 41. The fourth pastor was Thomas Hibbert; born at Rowley; graduated at Harvard, 1748; settled here November 6, 1754; died September, 1793, at the age of 66. The fifth pastor was Benjamin Bell; born in Dutchess County, N. Y. January 21, 1752; graduated at Yale, 1779; settled here October 18, 1784, and resigned March, 1790. The sixth pastor was Stephen Hull; settled here, 1799; resigned, 1811. The seventh pastor was Benjamin Sawyer; born at Boothbay, Maine, Sept. 22, 1782; graduated at Dartmouth, 1808; settled here June 19, 1816; resigned, 1835. They have at present no settled pastor. The records of this church are lost down to the time of Mr Sawyer's settlement.

Second Church—Orthodox Congregational; located at the West Parish. Organized 1726. Pastor, Peter S. Eaton. Mr Eaton was born at Boxford, October 7, 1798; graduated at Harvard College, 1818, and at Andover Theological Seminary, 1822; settled here September 20, 1826.

Baptist—This Society is located in the West parish. Pastor, William Norris.

Congregational Society of Amesbury and Salisbury—Organized December 6, 1831. Pastor, Joseph H. Towne. Mr Towne was born at Salem, May 27, 1805; graduated at Yale, 1827; studied with Mr Fairchild, of Boston; settled here March 5, 1834.

Friends.—The Friends have a meeting-house at the Mills; they regularly assemble on Sunday, and the society is highly respectable in numbers and character.

Universalists.—There is a society of Universalists here, but they have no settled pastor; they hold occasional meetings at the academy.

SCHOOLS.

Amesbury is divided into eleven school districts, in each of which a school is kept a part of the year; in the winter for larger, in the summer for smaller pupils. \$1,500 were raised for defraying the expenses of schools the present year. Total number of scholars, 1,222. Private schools are also kept a part, or the whole of the year, in different sections of the town. At the Ferry is a handsome building, in a beautiful location, built by an association, for an Academy. In former years, a flourishing seminary was kept here, and it is still occasionally occupied by an instructor in the higher branches of education.

MANUFACTURES.

The Amesbury Flannel Manufacturing Company—have all their buildings at the Mills, on the west, or Amesbury side of the Powow. This company was incorporated in 1822 with a capital of \$200,000. They have two extensive factories now in operation; in one of which flannels, in the other, satinets are fabricated. In the flannel mill are made annually 15,000 pieces of flannel, measuring 46 yards each; in the satinet mill, 5,000 pieces of satinet of 25 yards. In both mills the number of hands is 160. 80 males and 80 females. No females under fifteen years of age are employed. Both mills have been recently repaired and fitted with perfect machinery. Most of the proprietors belong to Boston.

President—Ebenezer Francis, Boston.

Treasurer—Benjamin F. Edmands, Boston.

Clerk—B. R. Nichols, Boston.

Manufacturing Agent—Joshua Aubin, Amesbury.

Selling Agents—A. & A. Lawrence & Co., Boston.

The Salisbury Manufacturing Company—have one factory in operation at the Mills, on the Amesbury side of the Powow and two on the other. This Company has a capital of \$500,000. They now make 650 pieces of flannel of 46 yards every week. When their machinery is all complete and in full operation they will turn out 1,000 pieces a week. They employ 200 males and 300 females. The stock is owned in Boston, Salem and Newburyport.

President—Edward S. Rand, Newburyport.

Treasurer—John H. Treadwell, Salem.

Clerk and Manufacturing Agent—James Scorton.

Selling Agents—Waterston, Pray, & Co., Boston.

There are also on the Powow, in this village, a grist mill, a saw mill, and a fulling mill.

About 550 chaises are annually manufactured at the West Parish, giving employment to 150 hands and a capital of \$80,000. These chaises are disposed of in almost every section of New England.

ALMS-HOUSE.

Keeper—Samuel Stuart. Number of subjects, 13. A farm is connected with the establishment.

STAGES.

A stage, meeting the Newburyport line, for Boston, leaves the Mills daily, except Sunday, at 7 A. M. : and returns in the evening; and another from Dover and Exeter passes through for Boston every day, except Sunday, at 11 A. M.

A stage passes through for Dover every day, Sunday excepted, at half past two P. M. ; and another from Newburyport for Dover, every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, at 8 A. M., returning Monday, Wednesday and Friday, at 4 P. M.

A stage from Newburyport to Haverhill passes through every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, at 10 A. M., and returns Monday, Wednesday and Friday, at 3 P. M.

All these stages, with the exception of the first, carry a mail.

PUBLIC HOUSES.

Manufacturers' Hotel, (Mills) Ichabod B. Morrill.
West Parish House—John I. Stickney.

INSTITUTION FOR SAVINGS.

The Salisbury and Amesbury Provident Institution—or savings was incorporated in 1828.

In May, 1835, the whole number of depositors was 256. Amount of deposits 32,906,58. Invested in mortgages of real estate 9,260, in personal securities 6,495,52. Bank stock 17,035,75. Cash on hand 150,88: Dividend declared and paid 5 per cent. Expenses of Institution \$75.

President—Joshua Aubin.

Treasurer—Robert Patten.

Clerk—Jonathan B. Webster.

MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS.

Militia.—Under the present organization there are but two companies of infantry. A volunteer company of artillery was disbanded a few years since. The militia system has been particularly unpopular in the west part of the town. In consequence, efficient men have been unwilling to hold commissions. For two years the Western Company has been destitute of officers and all measures taken to procure the election of suitable persons or to parade the company have proved inefficient. Of the East Company Jonathan Allen is Captain, James Rowell Lieutenant.

Fire Department.—There are three fire engines in Amesbury.

Stores.—Grocery, 7; dry goods and millinery, 5; others 16; total, 28.

Town Records.—The records are extant, in good preservation, from the date of the incorporation of the town.

Dwellings.—The number of dwellings is 406.