

## CHAPTER II.

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### NOTICES OF PENACOOK PREVIOUS TO ITS SETTLEMENT BY THE WHITES.

By virtue of her original charter, obtained in 1628, Massachusetts claimed all that part of New-England lying between three miles to the northward of Merrimack river, to the source of the same, and three miles to the southward of Charles river; and in length, within the described breadth from the Atlantic ocean to the South sea. Accordingly, in 1638, men were sent to discover the sources of the Merrimack, and found some part of it above Penacook to lie more northerly than forty-three and a half degrees.

In 1652 the General Court of Massachusetts ordered a survey, to ascertain the northern bound of the colony; and for this purpose appointed Captains EDWARD JOHNSON and SIMON WILLARD commissioners. Capt. Johnson, accompanied by *John Sherman*, of Watertown, and *Jonathan Ince*, of Cambridge, surveyors, together with several Indian guides, went up the river Merrimack, to find the most northerly part thereof, which the Indians told them was Aquedocktan, the outlet of lake Winnepissiogee. Capt. Johnson was the author of "The Wonder-Working Providence of Zion's Saviour." John Sherman was the ancestor of the distinguished Roger Sherman, of Connecticut; and Jonathan Ince was a graduate of Harvard college. The surveyors, on the 1st of August, 1652, decided the head source of the Merrimack "where it issues out of the lake called Winnapusseakit," to be in "latitude forty-three degrees, forty minutes and twelve seconds, besides those minutes which are to be allowed for the three miles north which run into the lake." At this point, which is

now called the *Weares*, a rock was discovered, a few years since, with its surface but little above the water, and about twenty feet in circumference, on which the following letters were found sculptured:

|               |  |      |
|---------------|--|------|
| E I           |  | S W  |
| W P           |  | IOHN |
| E N D I C V T |  |      |
| G O V         |  |      |

Col. Philip Carrigain, of Concord, who carefully examined these letters in 1834, gives the following explanation: "The E I, are the initials of Edward Johnson; S W, of Simon Willard — the two commissioners. W P are on the same line, and immediately precede IOHN ENDICVT, and it is not improbable they stand for worshipful — a title often given, in those Puritanical times, to the governor and magistrates." The surveyors on this expedition passed through Penacook "in a Bote," and occupied nineteen days; and the whole expense attending it was about £84.\*

\*"Account of Disbursements about Journey to the head of the Merrimeck:

|                                                                                            |                                                                                          |    |    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|
| Ipr. for makeing the Bote & Ores, with all the Boards & Stuff,                             | £                                                                                        | s. | d. |
|                                                                                            | 03                                                                                       | 01 | 00 |
| for one man for the Journey & his worke in preparing levall,                               | 03                                                                                       | 03 | 00 |
| for 5 pound of powder 4 pond of shott match and Indian flowes, [2]                         | 00                                                                                       | 12 | 00 |
| for 3 yooke of oxen and a horse,                                                           | 00                                                                                       | 11 | 00 |
| It. to James Prentise for the jorney,                                                      | 03                                                                                       | 00 | 00 |
|                                                                                            | 10                                                                                       | 07 | 00 |
| Reseaved in parte of this Accountt,                                                        |                                                                                          |    |    |
| Ipr. for the Sayles, pieces of Rope & two Blockes the Bote & some                          |                                                                                          |    |    |
| Ruff &c, that were left,                                                                   | 02                                                                                       | 17 | 00 |
| Remaynes to me still on this Accountt,                                                     | 07                                                                                       | 10 | 00 |
| Due to Good. Bull for carting                                                              | 00                                                                                       | 16 | 00 |
|                                                                                            | 08                                                                                       | 06 | 00 |
| Sum total due to Capt. Johnson,                                                            |                                                                                          |    |    |
| "The Deputies consent this bill should be satisfyed to Capt. Johnson.                      |                                                                                          |    |    |
|                                                                                            | "DANIEL DENISON.                                                                         |    |    |
| "The Deputies consent that Capt. Johnson be paid for his Journey,                          | 13                                                                                       | 6  | 8  |
|                                                                                            | "DANIEL DENISON.                                                                         |    |    |
| "The Magists. consent hereto.                                                              | EDWARD RAWSON, <i>Secret'y.</i>                                                          |    |    |
| "Consented to by the deputies.                                                             | WM. TORREY, <i>Cleric.</i>                                                               |    |    |
| "The Magists. desire these accompts may by the Auditor and the psons concern'd drawne      | EDW. RAWSON, <i>Secr'y.</i> "                                                            |    |    |
| & put into such a way as may stand on record.                                              |                                                                                          |    |    |
| In the other account are charged, among other things, "6 gal. & 3 quarts of liquers; 38¼   | lbs. of Bacon; paid one of our pilatts; paid two other Indians, and payd for ells in our |    |    |
| jorney," &c., &c. The whole expense of the expedition could not be less than £84 10s. 10d. |                                                                                          |    |    |

While Massachusetts was thus fixing the bounds of her colony at the head waters of the Merrimack, the General Court of New-Hampshire also had an eye on the same, and claimed that the said territory was within their patent and jurisdiction. This claim of New-Hampshire was founded on a patent obtained by Capt. John Mason, in 1629, "under the common seal of the Council of Plymouth," which conveyed the land "from the *middle part* of Merrimack river; and from thence, northward, along the sea coast, to Piscataqua river, and up the same to the farthest head thereof; and from thence, north-westward, until sixty miles from the first entrance of Piscataqua river; and also through Merrimack river to the farthest head thereof; and so forward up into the land westward, until sixty miles were finished; and from thence, to cross over land to the end of the sixty miles accounted from Piscataqua river, together with all islands and islets within five leagues distance of the premises." This territory was called NEW-HAMPSHIRE. But, owing to the unsettled state of affairs, the towns settled at this period in New-Hampshire agreed, for their better defence and security, to place themselves under the jurisdiction of Massachusetts,\* which continued from 1641 till 1680. Hence, being under one government, in 1659 a petition was presented to the General Court of Massachusetts, by inhabitants of *Dover* and *Newbury*, in the words following :

*To the Honerd Generall Courte, now assembled at Boston :*

The humble petecyon of us whose names are underwritten, beinge inhabytants of this jurisdiction, and beinge senseable of the need of multiplyinge of towneshippes for the inlargement of the contrey, and accomodateinge of such as want opportunity to improve themselves, have taken into consideration a place which is called Pennecooke, which by reporte is a place fit for such an one. Now the humble request of your petitioners to this honred Courte is, that we may have the grant of a tracke of land their to the quantity of twelve miles square, which, being granted, we shall give up ourselves to be at the cost and charge of vewing it, and consider fully about it, wheather to proceed on for the settlinge of a towne or noe, and for that end shall crave the liberty of three yeares to give in our resolution; and, in case that wee doe proceed, then our humble request is, that we may have the grant of our freedome from publique charge

\* See Belknap's Hist., vol. i., p. 30, Farmer's edition.

for the space of seaven yeares after the time of our resolution given in to this Honerd Courte for our encoragement to settle a plantation soe furre remote, as knowinge that many will be our inconvenyences (for a long time,) which we must expectt to meet with, all which desires of ours beinge ansered, your petetioners shall ever pray for the happyness of this Honred Courte, and rest your humble petetioners.

|                                  |                    |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Richard Walderne,                | John Bayley,       |
| Vall: Hill,                      | John Cheiney,      |
| Peter Coffin,                    | Nathaniel Weare,   |
| John <sup>His</sup> X Hird,      | Robard Coker,      |
| William <sup>mark</sup> Ffurbur, | John Poore,        |
| Roger Plaisteed,                 | Robert Rogers,     |
| Edward Woodman,                  | Edward Richardson, |
| John Pike,                       | William Cotton,    |
| Abraham Toppan,                  | John Wolcott,      |
| Benia: Swett,                    | John Bond,         |
| George Little,                   | William Titcomb.   |

18 (3) 59: [that is — 18<sup>th</sup> May, 1659.] The Committee do judge meet that the petitioners be granted a plantation of eight miles square, upon condition that at the sessions of the General Court, to be held in Octo., 1660, they make report to that Court of their resolution to p'secute the same with a competent no. of meet persons that will ingage to carry on the work of the said place in all civill and ecclesiasticall respects, and that within two years then next ensuing there be 20 families there settled. Also, that they may have imunity from all publique charges (excepting in cases extraordinary) for seven yeares next ensuing the date hereof.

THO: DANFORTH,  
EDWARD JOHNSON,  
ELEAZAR LUSHER.

The Deputies approve of the retorne of the Committee in answer to this petition, with reference to the consent of the honored magistrates thereto.

WILLIAM TORREY, *Cleric*.

6, 3: 1662 — [that is — May 6, 1662.] Upon informacon that Penicooke is An Apt place for A Township, and in consideration of the lord's great blessing upon the countrie in multiplying the inhabitants and plantations here; and that Allmost All such places are Allreadie taken up: 'Tis ordered by this Court, that the lands at Peniecook be *reserved* for a plantation till so many of such as have petecioned for lands there or of others shall present to settle A plantation there.

The Deputies have past the same: desiring the consent of the Honob<sup>le</sup> magistrates thereto.

WILLIAM TORREY, *Cleric*.\*

\* Mass. Col. Records.

It appears, also, from the records of the Massachusetts colony, that a petition was presented, in 1663, by inhabitants of Chelmsford, for the grant of a township at Penacook. In October, 1663, the court "granted the inhabitants of Salem a plantation of six miles square at Pennicook, if getting twenty families on it within three years."

The conditions not being fulfilled, the foregoing grants, it would seem, were forfeited. In June, 1714—fifty-one years after their first petition—the people of Salem again petitioned that the grant of a plantation of six miles square to them at Pennecook, in October, 1663, may be confirmed to them. They stated that since the *first* was made, they had been embarrassed by Indian wars, and that "some of the inhabitants of the town had erected a trading house at Pennicook forty years since." Whether this trading house was the same as that of Waldron and Coffin, in 1668, is not clear; but, from the concurrence in the dates, most likely it was. One trading house, it is believed, stood on the east side, on or near the farm of Judge Sewall.

PETITION FOR PENNYCOOK—1721.

*To his Excellency, SAMUEL SHUTE, Esq<sup>r</sup>, Capt. Gen<sup>l</sup> and Govern<sup>r</sup> in Chief in and over His Majesty's Province of the Massachusetts Bay; and to the Hon<sup>ble</sup> the Council and House of Representatives in Gen<sup>l</sup> Court assembled, this 31<sup>st</sup> day of May, Anno Domini 1721. The Petition of the subscribers, Inhabitants of the County of Essex—*

HUMBLY SHEWETH, That y<sup>e</sup> Petitr<sup>s</sup> being straitned for Accommodations for themselves and their posterity, have Espied a tract of Land, scituate on the River of Merrymake, (the Great River of the said Country,) whereon they are desirous to make a Settlement and form a Town, if they may obtain the favour and countenance of this Great and Hon<sup>ble</sup> Court therein: Y<sup>r</sup> pet<sup>rs</sup> therefore humbly pray this Great and Gen<sup>l</sup> Court to grant them, under such Restrictions, and on such Conditions as y<sup>r</sup> Excellency and Honours shall think fit, a Tract of Land for a Township, which lies at the lower end of Pennicook: to beginn three miles to the Eastward of Merrimake River, at the place nearest to the mouth of Conduncook [Contoocook] River—to extend to Merrimake River, and over it, to and up Conduncook River, eight miles; from thence, to run Southerly seven miles, parallel with Merrimake River; and at the End of the s<sup>d</sup> seven miles, to run directly to the mouth of Suncoot River; and then up Suncoot River till it comes to the distance of three miles from Merrimake River; and then to, on a Strait Line, to the first mentioned

bound and Station: Which Tract of Land is Computed to Contain about the quantity of Eight miles Square, wh<sup>ch</sup> Request your petitioners are the more Imboldened and necessitated to make, inasmuch as They are informed the Three Townships last Granted are all laid out and Taken up, and They cannot be accomodated in either of them.

And y<sup>r</sup> pet<sup>rs</sup> shall, as in Duty Bound, ever pray.

|                                             |                             |                               |
|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Stephen Barker,                             | Matthias Cowdry,            | Nath <sup>l</sup> Page,       |
| John <sup>His</sup> X Granger,              | Tho's Scihegsar,            | John <sup>His</sup> X Mattis, |
| Sam <sup>l</sup> <sup>mark.</sup> Phillips, | Joseph Work,                | David <sup>mark.</sup> Cragg, |
| John Osgood,                                | Nicholas White,             | Sam <sup>l</sup> Aires,       |
| Timothy Johnson,                            | Sam <sup>el</sup> White,    | James Barker,                 |
| Ebenezer Eastman,                           | Eben Thornton,              | Eben <sup>r</sup> Barker,     |
| Joshua Bayley,                              | John Saunders,              | Ed. Clark,                    |
| James Fales,                                | Elezar Crocker,             | Sam <sup>el</sup> Clark,      |
| William White,                              | Nath <sup>el</sup> Lovejoy, | Sam <sup>l</sup> Granger,     |
| David <sup>His</sup> X Kimbel,              | John Merrill,               | John Pecker,                  |
| Moses <sup>mark.</sup> Day,                 | Sam <sup>el</sup> Chandler, | John Loel, [?]                |
| John Hall,                                  | Robert Kimbell,             | Wm. Davis,                    |
| Sam <sup>el</sup> <sup>His</sup> X Runills, | Job Hinkley,                | Joseph Davis,                 |
| Jerath <sup>el</sup> <sup>mark.</sup> Hug,  | Jonathan Clark,             | Nehemiah Heath,               |
| Nathaniel Abbot,                            | John Sandars,               | Sam <sup>el</sup> Kimbal,     |
| John Chandler,                              | Henry Wook, [?]             | Abraham Cooley,               |
| Stephen Abbot,                              | Benjamin Gage,              | John Goterson,                |
| James Black,                                | Tim <sup>His</sup> X Hogg,  | Sam <sup>el</sup> Borbank,    |
| Benjamin Stephens,                          | Andrew Allin,               | Andrew Mitchell,              |
| William Marten,                             | David Stephens,             | Jon <sup>a</sup> Page,        |
| Stephen Osgood,                             | William Barker,             | Ephraim Farnon,               |
| Thomas Blanchard,                           | Eben Stephens,              | John Hastings,                |
| Eben Lovejoy,                               | Annaniah Barker,            | Sam <sup>el</sup> Davis,      |
| Thomas Abbot,                               | John Barker,                | Ephraim Davis,                |
| John Wright,                                | Sam <sup>el</sup> Barker,   | Nathaniel Morrill,            |
| Joseph Parker,                              | Nathan Barker,              | Stephen Morill,               |
| James Stephens,                             | James Parker,               | Tho <sup>s</sup> Kingsbery,   |
| James Bayley,                               | John Foster,                | John Bayley,                  |
| John Astin,                                 | Aaron Foster,               | Sam <sup>el</sup> Granger,    |
| Sam <sup>el</sup> Kimbel,                   | Christopher Colton,         | Nath <sup>el</sup> Sanders,   |
| Jona. Chadwick,                             | Robard Pesley,              | Sam <sup>l</sup> Ela,         |
| Benj <sup>a</sup> . Calton,                 | Daniel Astin,               | Eben <sup>r</sup> Gill,       |
| Nehemiah Calton,                            | John Ingals,                | Benj <sup>a</sup> Smeth,      |
| Nathaniel Clemons,                          | Jon <sup>a</sup> Gage,      | Joseph Page,                  |
| John Muleekin,                              | Dan <sup>el</sup> Jaques,   | Stephen Emerson,              |
| Sam <sup>el</sup> Hazeltine,                | Richard Jaques,             | John Morden,                  |
| Rich Hall,                                  | William Gutterson,          | Jon <sup>a</sup> Corlis,      |
| James Smith,                                | Jonathan Rolande            | Moses Abott,                  |
| William Wickar,                             | Zebediah Barker,            | John Osgood,                  |
|                                             | Tho <sup>s</sup> Page,      | Nath <sup>el</sup> Peasley.   |

*In the House of Representatives, June 9<sup>th</sup>, 1724.*

Read and Ordered, that Captain Shipley, Col<sup>l</sup> Buckminster and M<sup>r</sup> Winslow, be a Committee to view the said Land, and to make their Report y<sup>e</sup> next Session.

Copy Examined per

J. WILLARD, *Sec'y*.

In May, 1722, however, a survey was made of Penacook by William Ward and John Jones, "according to the direction of the committee appointed by the Honorable House of Representatives in y<sup>e</sup> former sessions"—comprising in the whole 69,500 acres of land. The interval land was 2,000 acres.

This survey—a copy of which I have from the original plan in the Secretary's office, Massachusetts—was as follows:

The *south* line, crossing the Merrimack river at its junction with Shoo-Brook [Soucook,] was eleven miles, viz.: 1530 perches east, and 1990 west side.

The *north* line, crossing the Merrimack at "the river called Contucuk or Conduncook"—1450 perches east, and following the course of the Contucuk west.

The *east* line, drawn from the eastern terminus of the south line to the eastern of the north line, was ten miles.

The *west* line, drawn from the western terminus of the south line, northerly, till it struck the Contucuk, was 2930 perches, or nine miles and fifty rods.

Another petition was presented June 17, 1725:

*To the Hon<sup>ble</sup> WM. DUMMER, Esq<sup>r</sup>, Lieut. Governor, and Commander in Chief in and over His Majesties province of y<sup>e</sup> Massachusetts Bay, in New England, to the Hon<sup>ble</sup> His Majesties Council and House of Representatives in Gen. Court or Assembly convened at Boston, June 17<sup>th</sup>, 1725.*

The petition of Benj<sup>a</sup> Stephens, Andrew Mitchel, David Kimball, Ebenezer Eastman, John Osgood and Moses Day, a Committee appointed by and in behalf of the petitioners formerly for a Tract of Land at a place called Pennycook—

HUMBLY SHEWETH, That whereas y<sup>r</sup> petitioners have at two sever<sup>al</sup> times petitioned the Great and Gen<sup>l</sup> Court for a grant of the afore-said tract of Land at Pennycook, with resolutions fully inclined to make a speedy settlement there, w<sup>ch</sup> they conceive, under the divine protection, they are able to go on and through with; and the Hon<sup>ble</sup> House of Representatives having been pleased twice so far to take their petition under consideration as to grant the prayer under such

conditions as by y<sup>e</sup> vote of the s<sup>d</sup> Hon<sup>ble</sup> House may more fully appear, which conditions, though they be expensive, yet y<sup>r</sup> petitioners have well weighed the same, and would willingly have undertaken the settlement, if it had been the pleasure of the Hon<sup>ble</sup> Board to have concurred in the aforesaid vote. But as y<sup>r</sup> petitioners are informed it did not meet with a concurrence: Wherefore, y<sup>r</sup> petitioners are emboldened, with great submission, to renew their pet<sup>n</sup> to y<sup>r</sup> Honour, and this Great and Gen<sup>l</sup> Court, that you would please to take the premises again into y<sup>r</sup> wise and serious consideration; and as the building a Fort there will undoubtedly be a great security within and on Merrimack River, and y<sup>t</sup> your petitioners are still willing to build and maintain it as afore propos'd, at their own cost, y<sup>t</sup> they may have the countenance and authority of this Court therefor, and that they woud pledge to make them a grant of it accordingly.

Y<sup>r</sup> petit<sup>rs</sup> wou'd also suggest to y<sup>r</sup> Honnours, that many applications have been made to the Government of New Hampshire for a grant of the s<sup>d</sup> Land, which, though it be the undoubted right and property of this Province, yet it is highly probable that a parcel of Irish people\* will obtain a grant from New Hampshire for it, unless some speedy care be taken by this great and Hon<sup>ble</sup> Court to prevent it. If that Government should once make y<sup>m</sup> a grant, tho' the pet<sup>rs</sup> conceive it wou'd be without right, as in the case of Nutfield, yett it wou'd be a thing attended with too much difficulty to pretend to root y<sup>m</sup> out, if they shou'd once gett foot hold there. Your petitioners therefore pray that the vote passed by the Hon<sup>ble</sup> House may be revived, or that they may have a grant of the Land on such other terms and conditions as to the wisdom of this Court shall seem best. And for y<sup>r</sup> Hon<sup>rs</sup>, as in duty bound, y<sup>r</sup> petitioners shall ever pray, &c.

BENJ<sup>A</sup>. STEPHENS,  
ANDREW MITCHELL,  
DAVID KIMBEL,  
EBEN<sup>R</sup> EASTMAN,  
JOHN OSGOOD,  
MOSES DAY.

*In the House of Representatives, June 17<sup>th</sup>, 1725.*

Read, and the question was put whether the House wou'd revive their vote above refer'd to—

Resolved in the affirmative.

Copy examined per J. WILLARD, *Sec'y*.

\* "Irish people," as they were called, from Nutfield, had already built a fort on the east side of the river, as will fully appear in the sequel.