

# DOWNLOAD PDF TOWN PAPERS. DOCUMENTS RELATING TO TOWNS IN NEW HAMPSHIRE.

## Chapter 1 : Full text of "Town papers. Documents relating to towns in New Hampshire"

*Pub. in continuation of the Town papers comp. and ed. by Nathaniel Bouton and issued in as v. 9 of the Provincial and state papers. Title Documents relating to towns in New Hampshire.*

A typical New England town green Douglas, Massachusetts Towns date back to the time of the earliest English colonial settlement, which predominated in New England, and they pre-date the development of counties in the region. Areas were organized as towns as they were settled, throughout the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. Town boundaries were not usually laid out on any kind of regular grid, but were drawn to reflect local settlement and transportation patterns, often affected by natural features. In early colonial times, recognition of towns was very informal, generally connected to local church divisions. By , colonial governments had become more involved in the official establishment of new towns. Towns were typically governed by a town meeting form of government, as many still are today. Towns originally were the only form of incorporated municipality in New England. The city form of government was not introduced until much later. Boston , for instance, was a town for the first two centuries of its existence. The entire land areas of Connecticut and Rhode Island had been divided into towns by the late 18th century, and Massachusetts was almost completely covered early in the 19th century. By , the only New England state that still had large unincorporated areas was Maine ; by the end of the 19th century, most areas in Maine that could realistically be settled had been organized into towns. Early town organization in Vermont and much of New Hampshire proceeded in a somewhat different manner from that of the other New England states. In these areas, towns were often "chartered" long before any settlers moved into a particular area. This was very common in the mid to late 18th century—although there were towns which predated that period and were not part of this process in southeastern New Hampshire, such as Exeter. Once there were enough residents in a town to formally organize a town government, no further action was necessary to incorporate. This practice can lead to inconsistencies in the dates of incorporation for towns in this region. Dates given in reference sources sometimes reflect the date when the town was chartered, which may have been long before it was settled, and not the date when its town government became active. In other parts of New England, some "future towns" were laid out along these lines, but such areas would not be formally incorporated as towns until they were sufficiently settled to organize a town government. A typical town in the northern three states was laid out in a 6-by-mile 9. Each contained 36 sections, 1 mile 1. One section was reserved for the support of public schools. This was copied when the Continental Congress laid out Ohio in — Once areas had become settled, new towns were sometimes formed by breaking areas away from the original existing towns. This was an especially common practice during the 18th and early 19th centuries. More heavily populated areas were often subdivided on multiple occasions. As a result, towns and cities in urbanized areas are often smaller in terms of land area than an average town in a rural area. Formation of new towns in this manner slowed in the later part of the 19th century and early part of the 20th century, however. It has not taken place anywhere in New England in the last fifty years; boundary changes of any type are fairly rare. Other types of municipalities in New England[ edit ] Towns are the basic building block of the New England municipality system, although several other types of municipalities also exist. Every New England state has cities. In addition, Maine also has a unique type of entity called a plantation. Beneath the town level, Connecticut has incorporated boroughs , and Vermont has incorporated villages. Cities[ edit ] In addition to towns, every New England state has incorporated cities. However, cities are treated in the same manner as towns under state law, differing from towns only in their form of government. In common speech, people often generically refer to communities of either type as "towns", drawing no distinction between the two. The presence of incorporated boroughs in Connecticut and incorporated villages in Vermont has influenced the evolution of cities in those states. In Connecticut in particular, the historical development of cities was quite different from in the other New England states, and at least technically, the relationship between towns and cities is today different from

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elsewhere in New England. Just as boroughs in Connecticut overlay towns, so do cities; for example, while Hartford is commonly thought of as a city, it is coextensive and consolidated with the Town of Hartford; governed by a single governmental entity with the powers and responsibilities of the Town being carried out by the entity referred to as the City of Hartford. In legal theory though not in current practice Connecticut cities and boroughs could be coextensive covering the same geography as the town without being consolidated a single government ; also a borough or city can span more than one town. In practice, though, most cities in Connecticut today do not function any differently from their counterparts elsewhere in New England. See the section below on boroughs and villages for more background on this topic. There are far fewer cities in New England than there are towns, although cities are more common in heavily built-up areas, and most of the largest municipalities in the region are titled as cities. Cities are more common in the three southern New England states, which are much more densely populated, than they are in the three northern New England states. In early colonial times, all incorporated municipalities in New England were towns; there were no cities. Springfield, Massachusetts , for instance, was settled as a "plantation" in colonial Massachusetts, the term was synonymous with town as early as , but the city of Springfield was not established until . The oldest cities in New England date to the last few decades of the 18th century, e. New Haven, Connecticut was chartered as a city in . In New England, cities were not widespread until well into the 19th century. New Hampshire did not have any cities until the s, and for many years prior to the s Vermont had just one city. In most of New England, population is not a determining factor for what makes a city or town, and there are many examples of towns with larger populations than nearby cities. Massachusetts is one of the few states in the region that is an exception to this rule; the Massachusetts Constitution requires a town to have a population of at least 10, people before it can switch its government from a town meeting form to a city form. Nevertheless, even without a hard and fast population limit for city status, the practical threshold to become a city seems to be higher in the three southern New England states than in the three northern New England states. In Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island, almost every city has at least 10, people, and all but a few have at least 20, In Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont, however, there are a number of cities with fewer than 10, people, and there are five three in Maine and two in Vermont with fewer than 5, Over time, some of the distinctions between a town and a city have become blurred. Since the early 20th century, towns have been allowed to modify the town meeting form of government in various ways e. In recent decades, some towns have adopted what effectively amount to city forms of government, although they still refer to themselves as towns. As a practical matter, one municipality that calls itself a town and another that calls itself a city may have exactly the same governmental structure. With these changes in town government, a reluctance to adopt the title of city seems to have developed, and few towns have officially done so since the early 20th century. In Massachusetts, 13 municipalities Agawam , Amesbury , Barnstable , Braintree , Easthampton , Franklin , Greenfield , Palmer , Randolph , Southbridge , Watertown , West Springfield and Weymouth have adopted Mayor-Council or Council-Manager forms of government in their home rule charters, and are therefore considered to be legally cities, but nevertheless continue to call themselves "towns". They are sometimes referred to in legislation and other legal documents as "the city known as the Town of Plantation Maine In addition to towns and cities, Maine has a third type of town-like municipality not found in any other New England state, the plantation. A plantation is, in essence, a town-like community that does not have enough population to require full town government or services. Plantations are organized at the county level, and are typically found in sparsely populated areas. There is no bright-line population divider between a town and a plantation, but no plantation currently has any more than about residents. Plantations are considered to be "organized" but not "incorporated. In colonial times, Massachusetts also used the term "plantation" for a community in a pre-town stage of development Maine originally got the term from Massachusetts, as Maine was part of Massachusetts until , when it became a state via the Missouri Compromise. The term plantation had not been much used in Massachusetts since the 18th century. Massachusetts also once had "districts," which served much the same purpose. They were considered to be

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incorporated, but lacked the full privileges of a town. On August 23, in order for more representation for the Revolutionary War, 36 towns in Massachusetts and 6 in Maine were incorporated, effectively eliminating the district meaning. Maine and Rhode Island are also known to have made limited use of the district concept. Districts have not been at all common since the first half of the 19th century, and there have not been any districts anywhere in New England in over a century. Maine is the only New England state that currently has a significant amount of territory that is not sufficiently populated to support town governments, thus the only New England state that still has a need for the plantation type of municipality. For a historical example in New Hampshire, see Plantation number four. Boroughs and villages[ edit ] Perhaps because the towns themselves are such strong entities, most areas of New England never developed municipal forms based on the compact populated place concept. This contrasts with states with civil townships, which typically have extensive networks of villages or boroughs that carve out or overlay the townships. Two of the New England states do have general-purpose municipalities of this type, however, to at least a limited extent. Connecticut has incorporated boroughs , and Vermont has incorporated villages. Such areas remain a part of their parent town, but assume some responsibilities for municipal services within their boundaries. In both states, they are typically regarded as less important than towns, and both seem to be in decline as institutions. In recent decades, many boroughs and villages have disincorporated, reverting to full town control. The term "village" is sometimes used in New England to describe a distinct, built-up place within a town or city. This may be a town center, which bears the same name as the town or city almost every town has such a place , or a name related to that of the town, or a completely unrelated name. Except for the incorporated villages in Vermont, these "villages" are not incorporated municipalities and should not be understood as such. Towns do sometimes grant a certain measure of recognition to such areas, using highway signs that identify them as "villages", for example. These informal "villages" also sometimes correspond to underlying special-purpose districts such as fire or water districts, which are separately incorporated quasi-municipal entities that provide specific services within a part of a town. In Maine and New Hampshire, the term "village corporation" is used for a type of special-purpose district. Many villages also are recognized as places by the United States Postal Service some villages have their own post offices , with their names used in mailing addresses or the United States Census Bureau which recognizes some villages as census-designated places and tabulates census data for them. Towns with an example of the former, such as Richmond, Rhode Island , do not have a post office themselves, but instead use villages in town or villages in nearby towns as a mailing address. This leads to a weaker town identification in such towns, with residents more strongly identifying with the village they live in. However, villages or CDPs have no existence as general-purpose municipalities separate from the town if they even have any legal existence at all , and are usually regarded by local residents as a part of the town in which they are located, less important than the whole. It is possible for a Connecticut borough or Vermont village to become a city. In Connecticut, cities overlay towns just as boroughs do, and, just like a borough, a city can cover only a portion of a town rather than being coextensive with the town. This is rare today—only one or two examples remain—but it was more common in the past. At least one borough historically spanned more than one town: There are no legal restrictions in Connecticut that would prevent a city or borough today from similarly overlaying the territory of more than one town, provided it is not consolidated with one of the underlying towns. Cities actually developed earlier in Connecticut than in the other New England states, and were originally based on the borough concept. At one time, all cities were non-coextensive; the practice of making cities coextensive with their towns was a later adaptation intended to mimic the city concept that had emerged in the other New England states.

### Chapter 2 : Social Genealogy

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