

The Town We live In

At the present time when the popular fad is searching old records and interviewing old inhabitants and when a well established pedigree traced back to a soldier of the Revolution is a source of greater pride than even the possession of wealth or brains and when our homes are filled with ancient furniture some heirlooms and some not, I have caught the infection and have spent a little time gathering a few facts in regard to our own town dear old "Shelburne".

On the old gravestones scattered through the town we find names and dates that indicate that the forefathers of many of us cleared the land and settled here many years ago. In 1768 two Germans settled on two points extending into the lake which were named from them Logan and Potters points. In 1775 they went to Canada with lumber and were killed on the lake for their money. It is not known whether they left any families. Some ten families settled near the lake in Shelburne before the Revolution but it can not be found who they were except these two Germans and Moses Piersons, who located on what is know as the Maeck place now owned by Mr. Botts of Albany. He left the town during the war and in 1783 he came back and Wm. and Caleb Smith, ~~James~~ Thomas Hall, Hubble and Bush, Richard..... and Cershom Lyon settled in town..... and in '85 Daniel Barber, Daniel....., Aaron Rowley, Samuel....., Benjamin Harrington, Capt. Furritt, Joshua Reed, Timothy Hollabard, Sturgess Morehouse, Remington Bitgood and Josiah Isham, located and became residents and the next three years '86, '87, '88, Maeck, Hill, Trowbridge, Mills Chittenden, Minor, Gage, Barstow, Lyon, Sutton, Hawley, Saxton, Nash, Tracy, Labor, Averill, Hamilton and others settled here, about thirty families all told. Shelburne was organized as a town in 1787. The name was given in honor of a noted nobleman in England, The Earl of Shelburne. There is evidence that the land at the head of the bay and the mouth of the river was used by indians as a location for an indian village and hunting ground. In 1788 Benjamin Harrington purchased a lot in the center of town and built a log house. It was then an unbroken wilderness and hemlock swamp where the brick store in the village now stands.

In 1789 he built a frame house just back of the house now owned by David Irish. In 1796 after the main road was lain out from Middlebury to Burlington he built the hotel which has ever since been used for a public house. A son of Moses Pierson Ziba located on the main road where a Mr. Ray now lives. Usal Pierson owned the farm that Mr. Fletcher now owns. Wm. Smith on Smith's point, Daniel Comstock on the lake shore, also Frederick Saxton. Levi Comstock lived on what used to be the lake road from Charlotte to Burlington. He built the great red brick house last occupied by Norris Miller. Lieutenant McDonough made this house his headquarters while he was fitting some sloops of war in Quaker Smith Bay during the war of 1812, with which he won the glorious victory of Plattsburg.

In 1785 Ira Allen built a log bridge over the river at Shelburne Falls, a sawmill, a gristmill, and a forge. Until 1796 there was no bridge across the river excepting this one at the falls and all travel to the north necessarily went that way. People living in the west part of town passed the mouth of the river on a sandbar and traveled a rough road near the shore of the bay nearly where the car tracks now run in going to Burlington. At this time 1796 the main road was laid out and the bridge across the LaPlatte river at the village was built. The first frame house was erected at the village in 1784 on the land now owned by Mr. Thorpe

owned by Mr. Throne and in 1790 a frame house was built by Moses Pierson on the ~~Maeck~~ place and now forms part of the house still occupied as a dwelling.

The first built was the old White or Union church which stood near where the school house now stands.

Benjamin Harrington contracted for and built this church in 1808. The First Methodist Church was built in 1831 and stood near where the Catholic church now stands. The present Methodist church was erected in 1872. In 1840 a small number of Methodists left the church and organized a new church led by Nathaniel Gage. They built a church that stood at the junction of roads near the Miner place in East Shelburne. In 1845 a part of the members of the Methodist church seceded and organized a new church, The Wesleyan Methodist, and built and used for a church the house now occupied by Mrs. James Wells. The Episcopalians for a number of years held service in the White church. After it was burned in 1868 they used the Town Hall until the present church was built.

Shelburne settled so rapidly that in 1791 its population exceeded that of Burlington. It was the day of large families numbering from eight to fifteen children and there are records of one family of twentyfour, one of twentyfive, and a number of ten to fifteen.

Often we see a quite company bearing beneath the shade of the arbor Vlaes in the graveyard the body of someone who wished to lie at last in Shelburne. We feel honored to have been born among the hills of Vermont in Shelburne, to have been taught in her schools. May we be further taught by her beautiful scenery, the grandeur of her surrounding mountains and the lovely expanse of water at her feet, verdure in summer, her magnificent snowy whiteness in winter. How successful and sublime our lives may be if we but allow the good fortune of our birthright to influence our characters.

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