

- A – 956 Highland Rd.
- B – Gail
- C – Gail
- D – 171 Asbury St., 1753
- E – 230 Asbury St.
- F – 1028 Bay Rd., 1725
- G – 918 Bay Rd., 1725
- H – 648 Bay Rd., 1729
- I – 638 Bay Rd., 1780
- J – 613 Bay Rd., 1780
- K – 601 Bay Rd., 1750
- L – 588 Bay Rd., 1770
- M – 563 Bay Rd., 1775
- N – 560 Bay Rd., 1790
- O – Bay Rd.
- P – Bay Rd.
- Q – 76 Bridge St., 1662
- R – 180 Bridge St., 1690
- S – Bridge St.
- T – Essex St.
- U – Essex St.
- V – Essex St.
- W – Woodbury St.
- X – Essex St.
- Y – Meeting House, 1643
- Z – Cemetery, 1707

History of

The Hamlet, 1638-1793

Early settlers in the bay area called their town Agawam, a name used by the local Indians. On Aug. 4, 1634, the Massachusetts Bay Colony Court of Assistants decreed that Agawam be called Ipswich, after the town of Ipswich, a major English port of embarkation to the colonies ,⁶

In 1638, in a section of Ipswich, south of the Great River, now known as the Ipswich River, Matthew Whipple received the first land grant from the Massachusetts General Court.⁵ Matthew, along with his brother John, in 1639, owned 685 ac. (*John 460 and Matthew 225*). This included land in both Ipswich and what is now Hamilton.⁵

The area stretched south, between what is now Cutler Rd. (*then Elm St.*), and the Myles River, to the border of what was then Salem (*now Wenham*). To the west was a parish called New Meadows (*now Topsfield*) and to the east was the Chebacco parish (*now Essex*).

The Hamlet covered about 8,100 ac. Nearly half was suitable for pasture; 20% meadowland; 10% woodland; 5% farmland; and the remainder covered with water and rock.¹

The useful land was divided into four types of use:

Commons: Unfenced land used by the village inhabitants, called commoners, for grazing livestock,

cutting wood, and digging sand, clay and gravel.

Tillage: Large lots owned by a few people, called freemen, and often enclosed by a fence

Meadows: Large farm lots owned by freemen, whose homesteads often were on separate lots.

House lots: Less than 10 ac. lots close to the meetinghouse, on which were a house, barn, outbuildings, cow yard and garden.

Many of the early houses were "wattle and daub" structures. Wood beam frames were filled in with sticks (*wattle*). A sticky mixture of clay, mud, and grass (*daub*) filled the gaps. The roof usually was a thatch of dried local grass.

Various deeds and documents mention four hills in the Hamlet: Lummus (*now Cilley*), Brown's, Poland (*now Willow*), Whipple (*now Sagamore*) and Vineyard.

The main north/south travel route was a former Indian path stretching south from Ipswich through the Whipple properties. In 1641, it was officially laid out by the Bay Colony and became the Bay Path.¹⁰

Several other roads likely existed. These included wagon roads to surrounding towns: Way to New Meadows parish (*now Asbury St.*), Candlewood Road (*now Essex St.*), and Way to Chebacco parish (*now Chebacco Rd.*). Other likely roads were: Way to Quarles' (*now Miles River Rd.*), Way to Knowlton's (*now School St.*), Way to Rubbly Hill (*now Woodbury St.*), Way to Brown's (*now Bridge St.*), and Way to Saltonstall's Farm (*now Highland St.*).

Church attendance was compulsory for everyone living in Ipswich. The Ipswich meetinghouse was on a hill, the highest point in town. First built in 1634, and rebuilt in 1647, it was on what became known as the Meeting House Green.

For the families living in the area south of the town, above Wenham, getting to Sabbath services was a long and difficult trip, especially in the winter and spring. The only road was the Bay Path. Several rivers had to be crossed and the bridges often were damaged by spring floods.

In 1661, an Ipswich family stopped attending Sabbath worship because they lived a long distance from the meetinghouse. The General Court sold the family's farm so they could move nearer the sanctuary.¹

Church in Wenham

In January 1679/80, Hamlet neighbors asked the Wenham church to make more room for them in the meetinghouse. The church granted them "the west gallery and two seats next to the stairs, on the right hand of the coming in of the south door, for their wives."¹⁹

For pews and seats, the neighbors paid a third of the annual expenses of the Wenham meetinghouse, and also their share in its repair, and the pastor's salary.¹⁸

The "neighbors" were of the gentry. Joseph Felt in his 1834 history of Ipswich, Essex and Hamilton, referred to a 1679 characterization of the southern parish as, "One of the principal of these hamlets lies on the road to Boston, extending almost to Wenham, wherein are several of the better rank; members of the church, persons of public place and service, as well or better landed than any other ..."

The Whipples were among a few families that owned most of the land in this part of Ipswich. Many of their properties were more than 300 ac. Settlers were said to be attracted to the area because of its good agricultural lands and both water and wood resources.²

In addition to the Whipples, other early residents in this part of Ipswich, were:

Annable, John (1623-1664) - A tailor, bought land from Matthew Whipple estate, in 1647.⁴ He became a Freeman in 1648 and married, 1648, Anna Whipple, sister of Matthew and John Whipple. They had 7 children.

Browne, Joseph (1639-1694) - Bought 18 ac. from William Hubbard, before 1700.¹ A turner (*wood worker*), he married Hannah Aslebee, in 1671, and they had 8 children.

Browne, Nathaniel (1676-1759) - A weaver, he owned 16 ac. that he inherited from father.³²

Dane (Deane), John (1643-1707) - A commoner, he married Abigail Warner 1671. They had 7 children. Their house, built on land originally part of John Whipple property, was on Bay Rd. near Gardner St. In 1706, he sold to the Hamlet a piece of land for the town burial ground on Bay Rd.¹

Dodge, Samuel (1645-1705), married (1665) Mary Parker. They lived on the west side of the Hamlet near New Meadows parish (*Topsfield*).³³

Maj. Symonds Epes (1662-1741) was prominent in Hamlet's government. For several years, he was moderator of parish meetings, an assessor, and as a member of several committees. He was also colonel of a militia regiment, justice of the General Sessions court, and a member of the Governor's Council from 1724 to 1734. At 52, he married 16-yr. old Mary Whipple. Major Epes was buried in the tomb now marked by the stone monument erected by heirs of Dea. Nathaniel Whipple.¹¹



Oldest remaining house, at 76 Bridge St. was built by Joseph Browne, Sr., c1662. Photo, Q00

Fellows (Ffellowes), William. (1609-1676), commoner, a shoemaker and farmer, married Mary Ayres (1635). They lived on the northeast side of the Hamlet, close to the Ipswich town line.³³

Gilbert, John (1658-1723), son of Humphrey Gilbert was the first deacon of the church. He married Elizabeth Kilham in 1677. They lived near the Wenham line, above the Sarah Dodge property and southwest of the John Patch property.¹³ A low rise on the property was called the Gilbert Hill. He and his son signed the 1712 separation petition.¹

Knowlton, Samuel (1647-1696), a commoner, he was a shoemaker and farmer. He married Elizabeth Witt (1669). They lived on the east side of the Hamlet, near what is no Essex St.⁸

Lamson, William (1675-1749) married (1706) Lydia Porter. Their house was in the west side of the Hamlet, near the Way to Topsfield (now Asbury St.).³³

Lovering, John (1637-1668), married Esther Norton, 1713. Son John signed separation petition. They lived near the Wenham town line.³³

Moulton, William (1672-1748) married 2nd Jane Conant, 1695. Their house was north of what is now Moulton St.³³

Perkins, John (1590-1654) married Elizabeth Eveleth (1635). Their house was near the Wenham town line.³¹

Poland, Samuel (1668-1746) married Sarah Knowlton, in 1715. They lived in the eastside of the Hamlet, near Poland Hill.²²

Potter, Anthony (1627-1696) married (third time) Elizabeth Stone. Their house was near the Miles River and close to the Ipswich town line.¹⁷

Quarles, Robert (1675-1730) fought in French and Indian War. He married, in 1709, Mary Perkins. Their house was built in 1710, on what is now Miles River Rd.¹

Tilton, Abraham, Sr. (1638-1728); 2nd wife was Mary Cram. His son, Abraham, Jr., in 1696, along with Edmund and Anthony Potter built a gristmill on the Miles River. Their house was near what is now 641 Bay Rd.

Tuttle, Charles, Sr. (1679-1752), a blacksmith, married (1703) Mary Burnham. They had 5 children and lived near the north end of the Bay Path in the Hamlet.^{29, 25}

Walker, Richard (1637-1721) married (1645) Sarah Story. Their farm was off of Bridge Street.²³

Woodbury, Isaac (1659-1733) married Elizabeth Herrick (1687). They lived near to what is now Bridge St. They had 10 children, one of whom, Nicholas, was captured by a band of Indians in 1711. He was held for 9 years in Canada, until a ransom was paid.¹

Most families were large. For example, the Dodges had 11 children, as did the Gilberts; the Woodburys had 10; the Moultons had 9; and both the Fellowes and Lamsons had 8.²⁹

Children were put to work as soon as they were able. Boys helped their father with his work and the girls helped their mother. This allowed them to learn the skills needed when they had a family.

In the late 1600s, many of the landowners in the southern parish began discussions about separating from Ipswich. Topsfield did this in 1650. The high tax Ipswich imposed on landowners and how the money was spent may have been a major cause for the desire to separate from Ipswich.

Cemetery on Bay Path

Not only was the Ipswich meetinghouse a long way from the Hamlet, getting to the churchyard also was lengthy and time-consuming. Thus, Ipswich, in 1705, gave the Hamlet parish 1 acre of common land for a burial place.¹

A year later, John Dane exchanged a half-acre of his land on the Bay Path for the as-yet unused acre that was not by the road.^{1, 11} The Dane lot, 165 ft. deep, had 135 ft. frontage on the Bay Path. It was between land he owned on the north and on the south by John Hubbard land.²⁰ Dane, in 1707, was buried in the cemetery.⁵

The first enlargement of the burial ground occurred in 1763. John Hubbard gave the Hamlet a quarter of an acre¹ on the south-east side of the Dane lot.

Hamlet Parted from Ipswich

In 1712, many men (✓ 65) living south of the Great River, representing 40 families that worshiped at the Wenham meetinghouse, petitioned Ipswich to become a separate hamlet. They said the Wenham meetinghouse was not large enough to accommodate them. Also cited was the distance to the Ipswich meetinghouse was long, and getting there, in the winter and spring, was difficult.¹

Among the petitioners for the separation were: 8 Whipples, 6 Brownes, 4 Annables; 3 Deanes, 3 Knowltons, 2 Polands, 2 Dodges, 2 Thornes and 2 Walkers.

Ipswich agreed to the separation providing the Hamlet paid an indemnity £908 8s 3d for support of paupers, preacher's salary and other things. Further, the Hamlet had to build a meetinghouse and appoint an orthodox minister. The parish voted, on Oct. 2, 1712, to build a meetinghouse by the end of the following year.¹

Many Ipswich residents were very angry with the Hamlet leaving. They would be paying much more taxes to support the poor. They unsuccessfully tried to have the separation cancelled.⁷

The Hamlet also had to negotiate with the Wenham church for leaving. In March 1713, several Ipswich members (*Samuel Poland, William Davidson, and Mathew Whipple*) of the Wenham Congregational Church met with the Wenham church elders, to discuss the disposal of their rights in the meetinghouse.² The following day, Wenham church voted to allow their "Ipswich neighbors" to surrender their rights to pews in the meetinghouse. On Jun. 15, 1713, 15 Ipswich families gave up their rights in the Wenham meetinghouse. The Wenham church paid them and exact amount of £39, 11s, 9d.^{2, 6}

Oct. 3, 1713, 52 Ipswich neighbors formed a church 3 miles north on the Bay Path.²⁴

1712 Petitioners in Third Parish

<i>Annable, Matthew</i>	<i>Knowlton, Thomas</i>
<i>Bedlock, Christopher</i>	<i>Loverill, John</i>
<i>Browne, Jacob</i>	<i>Manuel, William</i>
<i>Browne, James</i>	<i>Perkins, John</i>
<i>Browne, Joseph</i>	<i>Piper, Jonathan</i>
<i>Browne, Nathaniel</i>	<i>Poland, James</i>
<i>Browne, Samuel</i>	<i>Poland, Samuel</i>
<i>Browne, Thomas</i>	<i>Pottar, Edmund</i>
<i>Davis, John, Jr.</i>	<i>Potter, Nathaniel</i>
<i>Davison, William</i>	<i>Quarles, William</i>
<i>Deane, Daniel</i>	<i>Roberts, Richard</i>
<i>Deane, John</i>	<i>Stevens, Moses</i>
<i>Deane, Nathaniel</i>	<i>Thome, Bernard</i>
<i>Dike, Nathaniel</i>	<i>Thome, John</i>
<i>Dike, Anthony</i>	<i>Tilton, Abraham</i>
<i>Durrig, Thomas</i>	<i>Tilton, Samuel</i>
<i>Dodge, Parker</i>	<i>Tuttle, Charles</i>
<i>Dodge, Richard</i>	<i>Walker, John</i>
<i>Giddings, Isaac</i>	<i>Walker, Richard</i>
<i>Gilbert, Daniel</i>	<i>Welch, Moses</i>
<i>Gilbert, John</i>	<i>Whipple, James</i>
<i>Hooker, John</i>	<i>Whipple, Jonathon</i>
<i>Hubbard, John</i>	<i>Whipple, John</i>
<i>ffellowes, James</i>	<i>Whipple, Matt, 3d</i>
<i>Killam, Daniel, Sr.</i>	<i>Whipple, Matt, 4th</i>
<i>Knowlton, Benjamin</i>	<i>Williams, Nicholas</i>
<i>Knowlton, John</i>	

Shortly after, on Oct. 14, the Hamlet was incorporated.¹ It included the inhabitants and lands of the farms owned by Jonathan Annable. Joseph Jacobs, John Abbott, Capt. John Whipple, Joseph Whipple, Jonathan Lovering and all the farms lying upon Wenham bounds, and the land in Chebacco, that were not part of the Chebacco parish.^{10, 11}

A week later, on Oct. 21, Hamlet inhabitants met at the house of Matthew Whipple: he was chosen as the moderator.⁴ One of the issues discussed was the building of a meetinghouse.

It was built, in October 1714, on the corner of Elms Rd. and the Bay Path. It was 50-ft. long, 38-ft. wide, and 20 ft. stud. There was a small tower on the roadside end.¹ (*It was not called a steeple, for it served as a watch tower.*)

Matthew Whipple was the largest contributor to the building of the first meetinghouse. He was a maltster and had a malt and oat mill. Further, he was a town officer, a justice of the Court of Sessions, representative in 1718, 1719, and 1729. He died Jan. 28, 1739.²⁹

On Oct. 27, 1714, Rev. Samuel Wigglesworth became the Hamlet's first pastor. He was the son of the Rev. Michael Wigglesworth of Malden.²⁶

Born. Feb. 4, 1688/89, Samuel Wigglesworth studied physic and graduated at Harvard College, in 1707. He moved, in 1710, to the Hamlet and began a medical practice, but stayed only a year. He went back to Malden, where he studied divinity. In 1713, he began to preach in Groton. In January 1714, he returned to the Hamlet, as a "spiritual physician." The townspeople invited him to be their pastor.²

The dual role of minister and doctor was quite common in the 17th and early 18th centuries. There was a strong belief that health and sickness were tied to sin and to the will of God.

The Hamlet gave Wigglesworth money to have a parsonage house built on land, 1.5 acres, adjoining the meetinghouse.²

The Hamlet became larger at the end of 1715. The General Court allowed the Richard Saltonstall farm and other neighboring inhabitants to separate from Ipswich and join the Hamlet.¹⁰

Another expansion came in 1718, when the General Court granted Alexander Knight's farm to be part of the Hamlet.¹⁰ It was on the northeast side of Chebacco Lake.²¹

In 1719, the Chebacco Parish objected to the farms of Thomas Knowlton and Jeremiah Buckman, on the northeast side of Chebacco Lake²⁷ becoming part of the Hamlet. However, a court ruled that they could leave Chebacco.¹⁰ In 1740, Buckman sold his property to Ebenezer Knowlton.²¹

The church was very pleased with their pastor as they showed in 1720, when they purchased, for Rev. Wigglesworth's use, 7 acres of land along the Bay Path, adjoining his 1.5 ac. lot. It extended south to Maj. Symonds Epes' property.^{2, 10}

During Rev. Wigglesworth's ministry, the congregation expanded significantly. The Wednesday after a great earthquake in 1727, which occurred on a Sunday evening, the town observed a day of humiliation and prayer, and a sermon was preached by Wigglesworth. From the day of the earthquake. Oct. 27, to Sep. 8, 1728, 99 people were admitted to the church.¹

Not just earthquakes disturbed the Hamlet residents. They knew about the smallpox epidemic in Boston and were concerned about travellers bringing it to their town. Between April and December 1721, 844 people in Boston died from smallpox.

In March 1727, Ipswich gave the Hamlet their old school bell to replace a previous bell. It hung from the branch of a tree near the meetinghouse.¹

Alarms and reminders were sent to residents by the ringing of a bell hung in the village center, near the meetinghouse. There were different bell tollings for safety, funerals, Sabbath services, school and town meetings.

The Hamlet acquired a larger bell in 1733. Made in England, it cost £60. Up to 1762, it, too, was hung on a pine tree northwest of the meetinghouse. In 1785, the church sold the bell for £40 and bought a new one, which was hung in the tower.¹

Sometime after the building of the meetinghouse in 1712, John Thomson built a saltbox inn and tavern on the corner of Elm Street and the Bay Path. Later, Capt. Daniel Brown, son of Jacob Brown, owned it.¹⁰

Schools Built

In 1730, the Hamlet had its first public school. Previously, the only school was in Ipswich. The Hamlet built a one-room schoolhouse,^{5, 113} called the Center School, on Farms Road (*now Cutler Road*), near the meetinghouse.²

The selectmen appointed a 4-member school committee. The Committee hired Joseph Secomb of Danvers to keep school for 4 months (*Nov. to Mar.*).¹⁰ The public school was only for boys from 9 to 17. They were taught reading, writing and basic arithmetic.

All the Hamlet's residents contributed money for the school's operation. The committee collected £100 for the school's construction and initial operation.^{3, 2}

Starting in 1738, Ipswich annually provided money for the Hamlet's school expenses.⁷ The amount distributed varied from year to year. Further, Ipswich required each scholar to pay 3 pence a week.¹

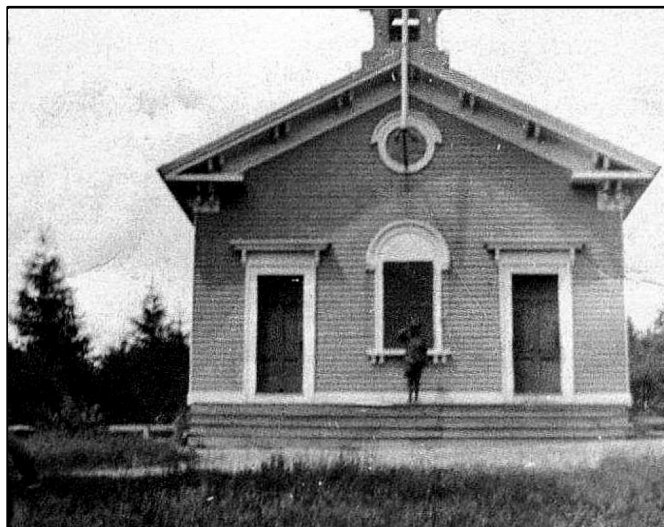
Also in 1738, a second school opened further north on the Bay Path,² at between what now are 874 and 894 Bay Rd. With the school's opening, the first school, near the meetinghouse, became the South School and the new school, the North School.

In 1744, on a Sabbath afternoon, another earthquake rattled the Hamlet. The congregation was alarmed. Pastor Wigglesworth, seeking to calm them, said, "There can be no better place for us to die in, than the house of God."¹⁰ The earthquake brought many more people to join the church.

Another earthquake struck in 1755. It, too, brought many new members to the congregation.¹

Hamlet residents, around the 1750s, were also concerned about bear attacks. In 1747, a resident of western part of the Hamlet shot a bear near his house. Apparently, there were many sightings. In 1757, another one was killed. Soon after, there were no further reports of bears menacing the Hamlet.¹

In 1758, a third school opened in the west part of the Hamlet. Built on the north corner of High-



First public school was built in 1730 near the meeting house. Photo, Hamilton Historical Society

land Street and Willowdale Road (*now Winthrop Street*), the school was in a sparsely populated section and had few students.^{3, 1}

A fourth school opened in 1768. Called the East School, it too was in a sparsely populated section of the Hamlet.¹

The 4 schools were assigned district numbers: District #1, the North School; District #2, the West School; District #3, the South School; and District #4, the East School. The schoolhouses, though having slightly different facades, were similar one-room buildings, with windows on three sides.

In each district, the taxpayers paid for the building of a schoolhouse, appointed the teachers, and received, from the town treasury, support for their school.⁷

Only boys, except those whose age and attainments permitted them to attend the grammar school, went to a district school: they ranged from 4 and 5 years old, to young men in their teens.⁷

It was not until 1769, that girls were eligible for the district schools. Previously, For girls, there were "dame schools," taught in private houses. School dames taught them to read and sew.⁷

The Hamlet, in 1762, replaced the original meetinghouse with a new building, on the same site. The oblong, barn-like meetinghouse was 60 ft. long, 44 ft. wide, with a 26 ft. stud. The main entrance was on Bay Road. It had entry porches on the north and south ends, and a tower with bell and clock on the south end.¹⁵

Inside, it had a high pulpit, with a sounding board above and behind it. Men's and women's galleries lined each end and the front side of the meetinghouse. There were long seats in the body of the house and square pews on the sides, in which there were seats on hinges to be turned up during prayer and at the close of service. Candles, set in tin wall sconces, provided light.¹⁵

Although his health was not robust, Rev. Wigglesworth was the Hamlet pastor for 54 years. He died in 1768.¹

In 1771, Manasseh Cutler came to the Hamlet. He was 29. He was "rather small in stature, but well-proportioned and sprightly."¹

At the time, the church had 27 male and 41 female members.¹ Rev. Cutler served for 52 years.²

Also new to the Hamlet was Dr. Elisha Whitney, a native of Watertown. He arrived in 1772 and remained for 21 years, before moving to Beverly. He was a surgeon in the Revolutionary War. During his absence, Dr. Cutler served as the town's doctor.²

Dr. Whitney also was the moderator at meetings, the treasurer, and a member of the school committee. His house stood on Bay Path near the intersection with Farms Rd.²

A 1773 census shows the Hamlet's population was 870; there were 116 houses with 172 families; 419 males, 451 females.^{1,2}

The large farms in the Hamlet employed many workers (*yeomen*). They also employed craftsmen: blacksmiths (*smithies*), brick-makers, carpenters (*joiners*), saw-mills (*millers*), wheelwrights, masons, candle makers (*chandlers*), thatchers, shoemakers (*cobblers*), (*sope boilers*), potters, horse shoers (*farriers*) and tailors (*milliners*).

During the mid 1700s, some Hamlet landowners along the Miles River bought the privilege of fishing for alewife. There was a large demand for this "trash fish;" they were shipped to West India, where they were used to feed slaves.

Wars Throughout 1754-1793

Wars were an on-going factor for the settlers. There were" King Philip's War of 1675 to 76, Queen Anne's War of 1702 to 13, King William's War of 1689 to 97, While not fought near the Hamlet, they did affect the residents. Many fought in the battles in Canada, northern and western Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

During the last half of the 18th century, men from the Hamlet were still fighting in wars. Complete listings of those involved do not exist. However, it is likely that more than 200 were in the military, army and navy.

In the French and Indian War (1754-1763), it is likely that more than 50 Hamlet men served. 3 died in battles at Fort Edwards on Lake George, NY, in 1754: privates Antipas Dodge, John Jones, Joseph Symonds died. Amos Howard and Elijah Maxey were wounded in battles at Ticonderoga, NY, in 1758.²

Pvt. Maxey saw action in 1756, 1758, 1759 (*Quebec Expedition*) and 1760 (*Montreal Expedition*). He served in Capt. Moses Hart's company, in Canada Expedition, in 1762.²

Privates Antipas Dodge, John Jones and Joseph Symonds all served under Capt. John Whipple in Col. Bagley's Regt., at Greenbush, NY battle.²

Soldiers from the Hamlet, who served in the militia at Crown Point, NY, under Capt. Stephen Whipple, in 1756, included privates: Nathaniel Adams, Thomas Adams, John Baker, John Boynton, Benjamin Glazier, Stephen Lowater, John Marshall, Benjamin Pinder, William Poland, Ebenezer Porter and Joseph Whipple.²

Dr. John Calef of the Hamlet was the surgeon in Col. Plaisted's regiment when it fought at Crown Point.¹ Dr. Calef, in 1754, was a surgeon for 4 months, in the militia commanded by Gen. John Winslow, during the Arcadia campaign. In 1755, he was ordered to Fort Halifax. He stayed there for two months, for he garrison was in great need of medical aid.¹

In addition to fighting at Crown Point, Pvt. Pinder was with Ebenezer Porter on the Louisbourg expedition.²

Stephen Whipple served in his brother's company, Capt. John Whipple Jr., as a lieutenant, in the 1755 battle at Fort Edward, NY.²

Cpl. Stephen Whipple marched from the Hamlet to Albany and then to Fort Edward, also in 1755. A year later, he returned home and became the captain of 41 Hamlet soldiers. On May 7, 1758, he marched with his troops to Crown Point. In a later battle, while serving with Col. Plaisted's Regt., at the Louisbourg Fort, Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia, he was shot in the thigh.²

Abraham Hobbs served in the 1780 Quebec Expedition, commanded by Gen. James Wolfe, who, during the capture of the French stronghold, was killed.¹

Many Served in Revolution

During the early 1770s, there were many rumors of a possible war with England. But there was greater alarm about small pox coming to the Hamlet.

The first cases of smallpox developed in 1774 in Boston and nearby towns. In February, Ipswich proclaimed a fast against small pox. Towns became very protective against people from other towns coming to their area.

Rumors, in 1774, were that the British had invaded Ipswich from the sea and had set fire to the town in retaliation for taking prisoners at Lexington and placing them in jail. Families fled to the countryside, people buried their silver, and frightened messengers rode through the countryside announcing that the British were on their way. However, when it was discovered that these reports were only rumors, other riders were sent as far as Newburyport to dispel them.²

Rumors became fact in 1775, when the Revolutionary War began. British attempts to disarm the Massachusetts militia at Lexington and Concord, in April 1775, led to open combat.

The Hamlet received word of the battle with the British. Two Hamlet minuteman companies mustered. Capt. Elisha Whitney, town doctor, led a company had 37 men and Capt. James Patch with 35 men. They marched to Mystic (*Medford*) and returned 4 days later, a round trip of about 110 miles.²

Commissioned a captain in June 1775, Robert Dodge was a colonel at the war's end. He served in 23 engagements during the war. He was at Bunker Hill, Dorchester Heights, in the Rhode Island and New York campaigns, and at Trenton. Both Robert

Dodge and Rev. Manasseh Cutler served in the Third Essex County Regiments of Colonels Ebenezer Francis and Jonathon Titcomb. Dr. Cutler was the chaplain in September 1776, at Dorchester Heights and in August 1778, at Newport, RI.³⁰

At least 150 Hamlet men served as soldiers and sailors in the War for Independence.² Many served intermittently throughout the war, with many different companies and regiments, primarily in the New England area, but also in New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. For the most part, they served for from 3 or 4 days to 3 or 4 months.

Men from the Hamlet served in most of the major Revolutionary battles, including:

- Apr. 19, 1775, Lexington, the start of the Revolutionary War;
- May 1, 1775, Cambridge (*At least 33 Hamlet militiamen*)
- May 10, 1775, capture of Fort Ticonderoga, NY;
- Jun, 17, 1775, Bunker Hill;
- Mar. 4-17, 1776, Capture of Dorchester Heights;
- Oct. 28, 1776, White Plains (*37 men engaged in various aspects of the New York campaign*);
- Fall of 1776, Crown Point (*21 from Hamlet*);
- Dec. 26, 1776, Trenton, NJ;
- Jan. 3, 1777, Princeton, NJ;
- Aug.-Nov. 1777, Saratoga, Cambridge and Prospect Hill.
- Aug. 29, 1778, Providence, RI (*16 from the Hamlet*);
- Following the British surrender, Hamlet soldiers were ordered tip be guards, at Cambridge, of prisoners before they were shipped back to England.

The Hamlet, although small in territory and in population, offered valuable service during the Revolution. Life became very difficult for the Hamlet and surrounding towns. Not only did they provide men to fight, they also provided supplies, including clothing, blankets, food, and money.²

Saltpeter (*potassium nitrate*), for ammunition, was a constant need during the war years. Manasseh Cutler and John Whipple made natural saltpeter at a mill they owned.² Key ingredients were animal urine and organic matter such cut grass. The process has many steps of filtration, distillation and drying to yield saltpeter crystals.

A major problem facing the Hamlet's residents, as well as everyone in the colonies during and following the revolution was a drastic currency depreciation. The colonies and the Continental Congress, no longer under British monetary regulations, printed money. Congress' bills were known as continentals.

Rev. Cutler wrote, "In 1777, money had depreciated as much, at least, as five to one, but in 1779, it was twenty to one. I have spent considerable of an estate in the support of my family and now am driven to the practice of physic."²⁸

These were dark times.



Continental Congress printed money, known as continentals



Trek to Ohio began in December 1787, when 22 people left from the Hamlet for the 650-mile, 51-day journey to the new western territory. Drawing: Colorized adaptation of Ipswich Historical Society drawing.

On May 19, 1780, there was physically a dark day. At noon, there was “midnight darkness.” People lit candles, cattle lowed, and fowls went to roost. Smoke from a major Canadian fire obscured the sun.

The poor value of Continental currency became a positive for veterans of the revolution.

Trek to Ohio

1786 several former army officers organized a company in Boston, the Ohio Company, to purchase territory northwest of the Ohio River, for locating a permanent settlement. The land was to be purchased with the Continental currency, with which the military was paid after the war. The government accepted the money at face value for purchasing of the land in the new territory.¹⁰

For veterans, Rev Cutler obtained a million acres, at \$1/ac., with 500,000 acres more thrown in as an allowance for badlands and incidental charges. Of special interest is that he secured the land with an ordinance prohibiting slavery in that territory.¹⁰

In December 1787, 22 people were in the first company to leave

from the Hamlet for the 650-mile, 51-day wagon trek to the new western territory. Men from the Hamlet were: Jarvis Cutler, son of Manasseh Cutler; Isaac Dodge; Oliver Dodge; William Moulton and his son Edmond; Amos Porter, Jr.; David Wallace; Peletiah White; and Josiah Whitridge.¹³

Rev. Cutler's antislavery belief was not shared by all in the Hamlet. In 1755, there were 62 slaves above the age of 16 in Ipswich, including the Hamlet.²⁷

In the Hamlet, in support of the antislavery movement, was Dea. Matthew Whipple (1685-1766). He stipulated, in his will of 1760, “in consideration that my servant Plato has been a faithful servant that, after my death and my wife’s death, he shall be free.” His wife, Martha, died in 1774.

Plato was allowed to live in the Whipple house with his wife, Phebe; it also was stipulated that should Plato be unable to care for himself, provisions were to be provided for his care. Plato died in 1799: he was 109.¹

In 1788, Massachusetts became the sixth U S. state. The population, in 1790, was about 380,000. Ipswich’s population, in-

cluding the Hamlet, was about 3,300.⁹

Hamlet Becomes Hamilton

In the late 1700s, several prominent residents of the Hamlet began calling for a complete separation from Ipswich. Probable factors in their unrest were the amount of taxes being paid and how the money was spent.

In March 1792, the Hamlet appointed four residents, Rev. Dr. Manasseh Cutler, Col. Robert Dodge, Joshua Giddings and Jonathan Lamson, as a committee to negotiate with the General Court in Boston for the incorporation of the Hamlet, as a separate town.²⁸

The land consisted of about 480 ac. of tillage, 720 ac. of English and upland mowing, 780 ac. of fresh meadow, 4,100 ac. of pasture, 1,000 ac. of woodland, exclusive of enclosed pasture lots, 450 ac. of unimproved, and 37 ac. of parsonage. Besides these, there were 120 ac. for roads, and 350 ac. covered with water.¹

There are no data about the number of houses or the number of families in 1793. However, in 1773, there were 116 houses, 172 families in the Hamlet. in 1831, there still were just 116 houses.¹

On Jun. 21, 1793, after obtaining the act of incorporation, the town of Hamilton held its first town meeting on Aug. 1, 1793, in the meetinghouse on the Bay Path. Dea. Nathaniel Whipple was the moderator and treasurer; Lemuel Brown, the clerk; and the selectmen were Jonathan Lamson, Capt. Daniel Brown and Joseph Poland, Jr.¹⁰ All the officers were descendants of men that petitioned Ipswich, in 1712, for the creation of the Hamlet.

They raised £910 to pay Ipswich for various expenses. At an October meeting, held in the meetinghouse, the selectmen adopted rules and regulations for the management of town affairs and the salaries of officers.¹⁰

In 1793, the new town of Hamilton had:

- *One Church* - Until 1829, when the First Congregational Church was incorporated, Hamilton's town and church affairs were acted together.⁴
- *No fire department.*
- *Law enforcement* - Constables, tythingmen and watchmen; the watch house was a room in meetinghouse basement.¹
- (PIC) *A few recognized roads* - Rubby, Bay, Topsfield, Way to Smith's. There were numerous ways built from farmhouses.
- *A cemetery* - Across from the meetinghouse
- *One doctor* - Nathan Lakeman came to Hamilton in 1793.¹
- *Several tradesmen* - Blacksmith, undertaker, tavern, mills,
- *A militia* - Detachment of men paid 4 shillings/day, for each day on duty. The same Minutemen are voted to have £S a month, with what they shall receive from the State and the United States, from the time they may march, till they return.
- *3 selectmen* - Met in the meetinghouse basement.¹
- *No parks*

- *4 district schools* - Partly kept by men, in winter, and partly by women, in summer.¹
- *Suffrage* - Practically every man in the could vote, providing the poll tax was paid. The property holding requirement was interpreted that a man's income met the requirement.
- *About 50 slaves*²⁷
- *Indentured workers*
- *Indians, less than 10.*
- *The title Mr.* was only given to the wealthier and the more educated. Goodman or Goodwife was used when addressing commoners.⁶
- *No commonage*
- *Large landowners, farmers.*

There were two major crops: corn and oats. Rye, barley and English and upland hay were moderate crops. Vegetables included pumpkins, melons, peas, beans and turnips.⁶ Near the mid 1700s, potato was grown. Hay and oats were winter feed for the cattle. Flax was for weaving linen for garments and table covers. Barley was key to brewing beer.⁶

By 1800, many of the 1712-petition families were gone from Hamilton, including the Davis', Fellows, Gilberts, Hubbards, Kilhams, Moultons, Perkins, Thornes, and Walkers.¹⁴

The 1800 population was: 749; 352 men; 384 women. There were 149 families; 44 family names.¹⁴

Jack Hauck, Revised November, 2018

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Hamlet Veterans Revolutionary War

Name	Rank
Annable, Jacob	Capt.
Annable, James H.	Pvt.
Annable, Robert	
Annable, Robert, Jr.	Pvt.
Appleton, Benjamin	Cpl.
Knowlton, Timothy	
Appleton, Thomas	Pvt.
Boardman, John	
Brown, William	
Cole, Henry	
Cressy, Alber	Pvt.
Cutler, Manasseh	Chap.
Dane, John	2 nd Lt.
Dane, John, Jr.	Pvt.
Dean, Israel	Sea.
Dean, Nathan	Sea.
Dean, Nehemiah	Sea.
Dodge, Ammi	Pvt.
Dodge, Barnabas	Capt.
Dodge, George, Jr.	Pvt.
Dodge, Israel	Sea.
Dodge, Jonathan	Pvt.
Dodge, Joseph	Pvt.
Dodge, Mial	Pvt.

Dodge, Paul	Sgt.
Dodge, Paul	1 st Lt.
Dodge, Richard	Capt.
Dodge, Robert	1 st Lt.
Giddings, Joshua	
Henderson, Frederick	Pvt.
Kinsman, Austin S.	Pvt.
Kinsman, Thomas, Jr.	Pvt.
Knowlton, Antipar	Pvt.
Knowlton, Edmund	Pvt.
Knowlton, Ezra	
Knowlton, George K.	Fifer
Knowlton, John	Pvt.
Lamson, Benjamin	Sea.
Lamson, Jonathan	Ens.
Lamson, Jonathan, Jr.	Pvt.
Lamson, Joseph	Sea.
Lamson, Samuel	Sea.
Lofking, Joseph	Boy, Pvt.
Lofking, Moses	Sea.
Lofking, Moses, Jr.	Pvt.
Lovering, John, Jr.	Pvt.
Marshall, Francis	Pvt.
Mordough, John C.	Pvt.
Norris, George E.	Capt.
Norris, Jeremiah,	Drummer
Patch, Edmund	Pvt.
Patch, James	Capt.

Perkins, Philemon	Pvt.
Pitman, Howard	
Poland, Nathaniel, Jr.	Pvt.
Porter, Dudley H.	Pvt.
Porter, Ebenezer	
Porter, Samuel	Lt.
Potter, William	Pvt.
Roberts, Joseph	
Roberts, Thomas	
Saunders, Nathaniel W.	Pvt.
Saunders, Oliver	Pvt.
Smith, Solomon	1 st Lt.
Thompson, John	2 nd Lt.
Webber, John S.	Lt.
Whipple, John, III	Pvt.
Whipple, John, Jr.	Capt.
Whipple, Matthew	Master
Whipple, Samuel	Pvt.
Whipple, William III	Pvt.
Whitney, Elisha	Capt.
Whitredge, John	Pvt.
Wigglesworth, William	Pvt.
Woodberry, Jacob	Pvt.
Woodbury, Benjamin	Pvt.
Woodbury, John L.	Pvt.

2018 Hamilton Houses Built Before 1795

Asbury St.	171	Ebenezer Lowering	1753c	Federal
Bay Rd.	1028	Austin Brown	1725c	American Colonial
Bay Rd.	918	Emeline & George Patch	1725	American Colonial
Bay Rd.	648	Joseph H. Dane	1720	Federal
Bay Rd.	638	John Whipple	1660	American Colonial
Bay Rd.	630	Congregational Church	1762	Greek Revival
Bay Rd.	624	Rev. Samuel Wigglesworth	1714	American Colonial
Bay Rd.	563	William Foster	1797	American Colonial, ½ house
Bay Rd.	560	Stephen Brown	1755	American Colonial
Bridge St.	180	Peter Woodbury National Register	1690	American Colonial
Bridge St.	76	Joseph Brown, Sr. National Register	1662c	American Colonial