



GILSUM VILLAGE FROM THE SOUTHWEST.

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2 HISTORY

OF THE

TOWN OF GILSUM

NEW HAMPSHIRE,

FROM 1752 TO 1879,

WITH MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

BY SILVANUS HAYWARD, A. M.

"The kindly spot, the friendly town, where every one is known,
And not a face in all the place but partly seems my own."

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR,
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1881.

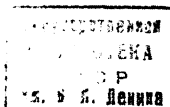
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N. B. Persons discovering mistakes, or able to supply omissions, are urgently requested to write the same to the author IMMEDIATELY.



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PREFACE.

This History has grown out of the Centennial Address of 1872, (Page 116.) Begun in 1875, it has occupied more than five busy years. At the annual meeting in 1876, the town voted \$500 towards an edition of 250 copies, each tax-payer having the privilege of buying a copy at a corresponding reduction in price. The town afterwards voted \$80 towards the expense of general views, and \$50 to secure the portraits of Capt. Hurd, Elder Kilburn, and Gen. Mack. The views were selected by a Committee, consisting of Daniel Smith, Silvanus Hayward, William A. Wilder, J. Quincy Pickering, Josiah Guillow, William L. Isham, and Solomon Mack. It was intended to secure a view of the East part of the town, but much to the regret of the Committee, no satisfactory result was obtained. Private views and other portraits have been inserted at the expense of parties interested.

National and State affairs are not legitimate to a *Town History*, except such occasional brief statements as may be necessary to explain some town action. Primitive habits and customs have been so fully and vividly portrayed in other histories, as well as in the newspapers of almost every season, that it has not seemed wise to enter that beaten path wherein one could scarcely hope to overtake, much less surpass his predecessors. Hence, this work claims to be nothing more than a local record of events pertaining to this little town, during the century and a quarter of its existence.

Accuracy, completeness, brevity, and impartiality have been my aim; how nearly reached, others must judge.

The inaccuracy of traditions is surprising. Traced back to their source, a nucleus of fact will usually be found, but almost unrecognizable under the accretions of two or three generations.

It is much to be regretted that the *town records* for the first twenty-five years are not to be found; how lost, is uncertain. These were the most important and valuable of all our records, and the loss is irreparable.

Repetition could not be *entirely* avoided. For the sake of brevity, however, vital statistics are mostly omitted from Biographical sketches, and historical facts from the Genealogies. Consequently, *to learn the history of any person, the name must be sought not only in the Genealogy, but also in every place referred to in the Index.*

While abhorring that namby-pamby, jelly-fish goodness that cannot be classed as belonging anywhere, or having any opinions of its own, I have, nevertheless, carefully endeavored to avoid all *such* partizanship in politics or religion, as can give reasonable offense to any.

The stand-point of time is the year 1879, unless otherwise indicated.

It has been found impossible to arrange the chapters in logical order of sequence. Those who are fastidious in this respect can easily satisfy their more logical minds by reading the chapters in the order of their own choice.

Part II is believed to be hitherto unique in its design;—at least, I have met nothing similar in any town history. It is an attempt to give a brief mention of the several families residing upon every spot where has stood a dwelling. Only a few wood-choppers' shanties have been purposely omitted. The record is necessarily incomplete, and at the close of each list of residents, it will generally be safe to add the words, *and others.*

The maps locate every road, and every residence from the first settlement to the present time, so far as can be ascertained. They represent not less than a year of solid work, being the result of a minute survey by the author, assisted by Edwin D. Hayward of Winchendon, Mass.

Public invitation was given to all to furnish sketches and portraits of themselves and friends, and whatever was received in season, has been *for substance* inserted, so that none can complain of being slighted. Obituary notices and letters of friends and acquaintance have been freely used. Except in a few cases where I have peculiar facilities of a personal knowledge, the responsibility of estimates of character has been thrown upon others. It should be remembered also, that the length of a notice is no criterion of a person's relative worth or prominence. It only indicates that more particulars were communicated to the author. It would have been easy to have added a piquant flavor gratifying to many, by collecting the gossip and scandal of a century past, or by sharply sketching the prominent traits of peculiar characters. Except, however, in a few notable instances that could not well be left out, criminal records, and gross defects of character have been carefully omitted. In all cases, I have intended

to make the record as I should wish it to be done, if each person were my own relative. *Humani nihil a me alienum puto.*

Part III from a small beginning, continually grew upon my hands to the last moment of going to press, and five years more of labor would hardly exhaust the field of research. It contains more than 10,000 names exclusive of ancestral records. As "king Ahasuerus laid a tribute upon the land, and the isles of the sea," so have I laid tribute upon all accessible resources, town records, family Bibles, family and town histories, gravestones, private diaries, the memory of the aged, &c. &c. Accuracy in dates is almost an impossibility. Records obtained from different branches of the same family, very rarely agree. Even dates sent by the same person at different times are frequently unlike. Add to these the cemetery and town records, and we sometimes have *three* different dates for the birth or death of the same person. To decide certainly between them is often impossible. I have generally taken what seemed to me to be the best authority, but in a few instances have given a double date. Honorary titles have been mostly omitted, except where needed for identification.

Out of more than a thousand letters, about fifty have failed to reach the persons addressed. A few have received no reply. Three or four persons have declined giving any information. *One only* sent an insulting answer. My first thought was to print it, for future generations to see and laugh at, but remembering *Uncle Toby and the fly*, I forbear.

My grateful acknowledgments are due for the courtesy and helpful kindness of both strangers and townsmen. Special mention should be made of John Ward Dean the accomplished Librarian of the Mass. Historical and Genealogical Society, George Hammond of Bennet's Corners, N. Y., and Isaac W. Hammond of Concord, N. H. My elder daughter has rendered invaluable service, especially in the preparation of the Genealogies.

My work is ended, but far from finished. None can be more sensible of its defects than the author. For those who may be surprised at its mistakes, which must be many, I can only wish a personal experience of the same kind of work.

S. H.

SOUTHBRIDGE, MASS., April 1881.