

HISTORY AND HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

History

The Town of Raymond, as we know it here and now, had its start with the arrival of its first two settlers in 1770. But its story would start a century earlier when William Raymond, or Rayment as it was then sometimes spelled, of Beverly, Massachusetts, earned public recognition by leadership participation in the 1675 militia attack on the Rhode Island Indian stronghold of Narragansett in the Great Swamp Fight in King Philips War. Then when the resentful Indians allied themselves with the French adventurers in Quebec to harass the English settlements along the Atlantic coast, Captain William Raymond raised a company of 60 men of Beverly to participate with some other Massachusetts colonists under Sir William Phips in an attempt to destroy the French fortress, the center of French activity in the new world. They did attack and enter the city but the arrival of winter and epidemic in the fleet resulted in disaster and great loss of life.

Massachusetts had no money for payment of their services and the promise of gain through captured loot was not realized, leaving the survivors and dependents without compensation until 1735 when a move was made to reward them with grants of land. Townships of land were taken by these companies of soldiers for settlement. Town facilities and roads were laid out and individual land parcels drawn by lot. Called "Canada Towns" due to their origin to differentiate them from other types of land grants, the Beverly Company Township was called "Canada #1" or "Beverly-Canada". Some three dozen other similar companies from seacoast towns north and south of Boston formed a semi-circle of settlements 50 to 100 miles further inland, intended to act as a defensive barrier to discourage further French and Indian depredations.

In 1741 another continuing problem, that between Captain John Mason who, together with Sir Ferdinando Gorges had been granted the "Province of Main" in 1622 and claimed the land north of the Merrimac River, was terminated. With now an acknowledged boundary between Massachusetts and Mason's province of New Hampshire, Beverly-Canada was found to be in the new Province along with many other invalidated Massachusetts grants. Attempts to come to terms with the New Hampshire Proprietors were unsuccessful and the illegal squatters could only go back to Beverly and other towns and forfeit their rights and hard work. Eventually what had been Beverly-Canada became the present town of Weare, west of Concord and Manchester.

By 1760 another attempt was initiated to compensate the deprived "Canada Soldiers," by now all heirs or assigns of the original veterans, with grants of land in the Province of Maine which belonged to Massachusetts by acquisition from the Gorges heirs. Permitted in 1765 to select from unappropriated land adjacent to a settled town, the Beverly Proprietors, still led by descendants of William Raymond, considered sites and visited one up the Royal River above North Yarmouth but finally selected our present location next to the settled town of Windham in 1767. Many of the other Canada Towns similarly evicted from New Hampshire were doing the same, such as Rowley-Canada (Bridgton), Newbury-Canada (Poland), Gorham-Canada of Barnstable (Otisfield), Whitman-Canada (Waterford), Newton-Canada (Paris), and Sudbury-Canada (Bethel).

Cumberland County had been formed in 1760 from a part of York County and the land, except for the townships established in 1735 at the time and manner of the Canada Towns, was virginal wilderness. A surveyor, George Peirce of Otisfield, was engaged to survey and lot out the Town of Raymond for settlement. The Beverly Proprietors drew for their lots again, in four divisions of 64 shares (60 for the company, one for the first settled minister, one for the support of the ministry, one for the support of schools, and one for Harvard College) in accordance with the terms of the grant. Taxes or assessments were paid to Massachusetts through the tax collector of Windham and prospective settlers acquired their 100 acre parcels directly from the individual proprietors.

The first arrival of settlers was in 1770 when Joseph Dingley and Dominicus Jordan of Cape Elizabeth came up the Presumpscot River to Sebago Pond, attracted by the proprietors' offer of a free 100 acre lot to the first claimants on the spot. Resting overnight at the foot of the lake, Dingley stole away early with their canoe to be the first (at the head of Kettle Cove) leaving Jordan to walk the shore to the mouth of the Jordan River where he set his stake in second place. Arrivals continued with early names of Cash, Davis, Brown, Gay, Staples, Leach, Tinney, Crisp, Smith, Simonds, and other. Log cabins were erected, land was cleared by massive cutting and burning of forests and means of subsistence and livelihood were established.

In the first rush of settlers to provide shelter on a productive site, assigned lots according to the Peirce survey map were difficult to discover and more ignored than observed. By 1790 tenancy and lines were in a mess, unsolvable by Peirce or the proprietors. Jordan and Dingley were directed by the proprietors to get a new survey, discovering the Peirce lines if possible, and present the plan by 17 March 1791 or forfeit their pay. This they did on that date, with Nathan Winslow of Portland as surveyor, though they failed to note on each lot the nature of the land as directed due to the work being done with snow on the ground. Lines were not cleared for sightings or elevations and generous allowances were made for "swag of the chain" so that most 100 acre lots were and still are, in excess of that size. Many adjustments and changes in both map and sites were necessary before the first deeds could be written and recorded on 29 March 1794, but at last there was some order and legitimacy to the township of Raymondtown, Massachusetts.

With inadequacies in a proprietary form of government in a growing settlement, Raymond became the 146th incorporated town in the District of Maine, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, on 21 June 1803. Town offices were established to afford self-government, but Boston was a long way off and indifferent to the needs of the people. Given this situation, together with the interposition of the State of New Hampshire between the Commonwealth and District, it was not long before there was agitation for Maine statehood, which came in 1820. Growth had been rapid and continuous as settlers arrived and families grew, prospering through agriculture and timber for Portland and other seacoast towns running short of nature's bounty.

Raymond was difficult to administer, since it was one of the largest townships in Maine by virtue of the original land request in 1765 being enlarged to offset the large area taken by lakes and ponds that were then of little agricultural use. But in 1829 the town was reduced in area by the taking of that part of Raymond to the west and north of Crooked River which, together with portions of Otisfield, Harrison, Bridgton, and Sebago formed the new Town of Naples. Then, with the wilderness of Rattlesnake Mountain in the center of the town, there was dissatisfaction by those living in the western part due to their insulation from and the greater attention given the eastern part where Town Meetings were held in Raymond Village. In 1838, by petition to the legislature, the western part tried to become a separate town but did not succeed. In 1841 a second try was successful and on March 18, 1841 a new town was named Casco, reducing Raymond to about half in area and population. There were, however,

gains when, in 1859, a gore of land between Raymond and Gray and another between Raymond and Standish cape were annexed to Raymond followed by, in 1869, the annexation of Standish Cape itself.

Steady growth and activity in the area continued to peak in 1860, terminated by a combination of effects of the Civil War followed by the post-war movement of people and business to the newly opened west. Maine, noted for its large families engaged in agriculture, had a greater percentage of its population in the military service than any other state during the war and after that conflict, the western style of farming and fee land, together with movements of the labor force to the industrial cities for mill occupations, created a precipitous decline in population equal to the climb before the Civil War. This reached its nadir in 1930, since which time it has resumed its earlier rapid increase and had passed its 1860 peak by 1970 with no indication yet of any tapering off.

Prepared by Ernest Knight

Historic and Archaeological Resources

There are at least 25 significant historical properties and archaeological sites in Raymond, the importance of which are unrecognized by many local residents.

Historic Structures and Sites. The Maine Historic Preservation Commission's records indicate that there is only one structure in Raymond (the Hawthorne House) included on the National Register of Historic Properties. This does not mean, however, that there are no other significant historic properties within the Town's boundaries. Inclusion in the National Register is voluntary on the part of a property owner, and results from the preparation of a nomination application by a property owner, the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, or any other interested group. The preparation of nomination papers for many of the Town's other historic properties has not yet occurred in Raymond.

There are a number of buildings in Raymond built in the nineteenth century or earlier that might qualify for inclusion on the National Register. The ell of the Crockett house (#1) was reportedly the home of Dominicus Jordan, Raymond's first settler. This section would have been built before 1800. Sometime before 1870, it was expanded and was known as Sawyer's Tavern. Since then, it has been converted to apartments. Ye Olde House (#2) was one of the early homes on Route 85 and was also built before 1800. It has been an inn and a private home at various times and at present is a restaurant. The Hawthorne House (#3), built in 1812, was the boyhood home of Nathaniel Hawthorne and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Following the Hawthorne (original spelling) family ownership, it became a tavern, then a church, and is now a community building owned by the Hawthorne Association. The building on the corner of Routes 85 and 302 (#4) has been used as a stage stop, a tavern, as Fulton's Store, and the Pleasant View House (a summer boarding house).

Two of the churches in Raymond are also nineteenth century buildings. The Raymond Hill Church (#5) was built in 1834 on land donated by Richard Manning, the agent for the Proprietors of Raymond. It has an unusual curved ceiling and is included in the Greater Portland Landmarks' historic properties list. This church's cemetery has a number of graves of the early settlers. The Raymond Village Church (#6), built in 1879, has original trompe l'oeil artwork on the walls and ceiling painted by the first minister, Reverend William Twort. The Raymond Village Church's weathervane is a restoration of the original weathervane made by Sumner Plummer soon after the church was built. The church bell was made and installed in 1884.

In several of the cemeteries, there are some unusual pressed bronze monuments that date from the late 1800's. Two of these monuments are in the Village Cemetery (#7), two in Riverside (#8), and one in Raymond Hill Cemetery (#9). Behind the Village Cemetery, there is a stand of pine trees where a celebration of the Town's centennial took place in 1903. Since then, this area has been called "Centennial Grove."

Several of the present homes in the Town, particularly along Main Street in the Village, were at one time stores or small manufacturing shops. Clough's Store (#10) in East Raymond is probably the only building in this area that is still used commercially. It was built prior to 1900 and was formerly called Lane's and then Cole Brothers. At one time, it had a public dance hall on the second floor. Marsh's Store (#11) in the Village operated until the mid-1980's. It was built before 1876 and was formerly called Harmon's. Additions behind the store and eventually the store itself were converted to apartments, but at present the building is vacant. Both of these stores also served as relay stations for the first telephones, which came to Raymond in 1914.

Until the first consolidated school was built in East Raymond around 1950, there had been as many as fourteen small school houses in the Town. Some of these remain as private homes. They are as follows: School #1 on Mill Street near Gay Street (#12), the Over the River School (#13) next to St. Raymond's Church, School #8 on the North Raymond Road (#14) across from Ganderbrook, and the house across from the Village Church parking lot (#15). The present Town Hall (#16) was originally the East Raymond School. The last school used in the Village was added onto and converted to the Bayview Apartments (#17).

Archaeological Sites There is one historic archaeological site and sixteen prehistoric archaeological sites in Raymond, according to the Maine Historic Preservation Commission. These sites are located along the shoreline of Sebago Lake and related drainage areas, as shown on the Historic and Archaeological Resources map, page 1-5.

There are a few archaeological sites that have been identified by local sources. They are as follows:

1. First Dam Site – located above the present dam on Mill Street and allegedly the first mill site in present day Raymond: the rights to this dam site were reserved in 1765;
2. Frye's Leap;
3. Images at Frye's Leap – Original pictures purportedly painted by Indians;
4. Hawthorne's Cave, located next to Frye's Leap;
5. Hawthorne' Rock, located at the outlet of Thomas Pond into Dingley Brook;
6. Swan's Island – Site of canal and steam boat landing, at the end of Wharf Road;
7. Old Gold mine, located on land at the junction of Valley and Raymond Hill Roads;
8. Pulpit Rock, located off Route 302 in the vicinity of Thomas Pond; and
9. Dingley Dam – the first dam built in Raymond.

Analysis. The many historical and archaeological sites stand as evidence to Raymond's rich history. Unfortunately, the importance and location of these sites are unknown by many Raymond residents. One negative consequence of this situation might be the accidental demolition or irreversible alteration of one of the Town's historic and archaeological resources.

Insert Historic and Archaeological Resources map