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# History of Buckfield Maine

Town of Buckfield

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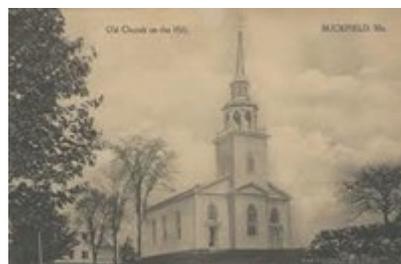
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## The History of Buckfield

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### ***Buckfield Beginnings***



In the autumn of 1776, according to tradition, a party of hunters from New Gloucester, Maine, consisting of Abijah and Nathaniel Buck, Thomas Allen and John Brown, with perhaps others, came into what is now the town of Buckfield, for the secondary purpose of procuring game, in which the region abounded, but primarily to select lots for a permanent settlement. They, or a part of them, had been here before on hunting expeditions, and had ascertained that it was a goodly land fit for habitation and had determined to settle here.

Long before this, Streaked Mountain, Twenty-Mile River and even Bog Brook had received the names, by which, they have ever since been known. Hunters had found the bears and catamounts were numerous around Streaked Mountain and Owl's Head, that Twenty-Mile river and South pond were full of fish, while Bog Brook was noted for its beaver.

The leader and moving spirit was Abijah Buck, then about thirty-four years old. He had served in the Colonial forces during the greater part of the year 1760 —the year after Quebec had fallen. He had previously been a "Scout to the Eastward." From North Yarmouth he entered the service, and it was stated in his enlistment papers that he was born at Dunstable, Mass., age 17 and that his father's name was John Buck. His early education could not have been of the

best, but he has acquired a large store of what may be termed practical knowledge. He wrote a fair hand for those times. His address was pleasing and his ways such as to win the confidence of those he approached. No man of the early period in the town's history was abler or of more integrity, and the most difficult undertakings requiring great tact and good judgment were given over to him to manage. He was the second person after the town was incorporated, to be commissioned as a Justice of the Peace, and was ever afterwards called "Squire Buck," even in depositions and other legal documents. He was not much in town office, for the reason probably, that for a considerable time, there was a strong feeling among the town's people against the proprietors, conceiving that their interests must be antagonistic to the town's interest. He was, however, several times elected one of the board of selectmen and assessors.

When Abijah Buck came into the township he was well-to-do. The price for which he sold his homestead in New Gloucester, shows him to be possessed of \$1,000.00 and upwards in cash or currency—a handsome property for persons in his station for those times, and demonstrates that poverty did not drive him into the wilderness to find a new home.

Nathaniel Buck, born about 1750, was a younger brother of Abijah Buck. He was a man of great physical strength and endurance, and noted for being an expert hunter and skilled in wood craft. In after years he was called a "housewright" which occupation claimed nearly all his attention. He was an industrious and thrifty man and withal a good citizen.

Thomas Allen was a deserter from the English Army on account of the Boston Massacre in 1770, in which he had participated, and his sympathy with Americans. He was born in Bolton, England, about 1732. Before attaining to his majority he had been apprenticed to a weaver. Allen appears to have been well educated and was a good penman, as his records as town clerk show. Being of an adventurous disposition, he had enlisted as a soldier to come to Massachusetts to keep the people of that colony in subjection. But he quickly caught the spirit of independence of the people, and when a favorable opportunity offered, he, with another British soldier, deserted. They were pursued, however, so hotly that they were forced to take refuge under a bridge, over which their pursuers galloped on horse back. No sooner had the sound of their horse's hoofs died away in the distance than Allen and his companion scrambled out and fled in the woods. It had been a most anxious period for them while under the bridge, for they realized, if captured, that they would be shot. Allen, in relating the story in after years to his Buckfield neighbors, said that his hair fairly stood on end when the horse's hoofs struck the bridge. He espoused the cause of the Americans and did good service at different periods during the conflict. Referring to this service, he once said: "I fought my own countrymen, and I fought like a lion, but it was for that freedom which I now enjoy." Allen never ceased, however, to love his native land, and often remarked: "There are no such sweet songbirds as in Old England." He was a man of fiery temper when aroused. In politics he became a staunch federalist and no amount of persuasion of his old associates, the Bucks, who had espoused the cause of the republicans, could induce him to change his views, no matter in how much of a minority he might find himself.

John Brown had seen service in the Old French and Indian War. He was the father-in-law of Thomas Allen and Nathaniel Buck. His wife died prior to his coming and it is probable that he was then past middle life. So far as known he was not related to the other browns who afterwards acquired settling lots in the township.

The party had come by way of the Nezinscot or Twenty-Mile river, through what is now the town of Turner. They found here in a hunter's cabin, in the limits of what is now the village, Benjamin Spaulding of Chelmsford, Mass., who had taken up his abode in the wilderness for a season, till two friends of his who had failed to meet the payments of

obligations, for which he was surety, could effect a satisfactory settlement with their creditors. This was done during the two following years. On Spaulding's camp were stretched to dry, the skins of many animals he had caught in traps, or shot in the chase. He informed the party that game of all kinds was there in great abundance, and that a few Indians had a wigwam near a pond about two miles northward, but were peaceably disposed and would make no trouble. Benjamin Spaulding had been born at Concord, Mass., Feb. 5, 1739, and was then in his prime. He married Patty Barrett of Chelmsford, Nov. 29, 1764. The descendents of this worth couple of every generation, have always been considered as of the very best of people of the town, and have ever been honored with offices and positions of trust within their gift. Spaulding became one of the three leading spirits in the management of the proprietary and the most prosperous and wealthy of them all.

Abijah Buck and his associates tarried for several days with Spaulding. It is quite certain from previous knowledge and information, that Abijah Buck had formed a definite purpose to purchase and colonize the town.

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