

2019

# History of Bucksport Maine

Town of Bucksport

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# BUCKSPORT

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## The History of Bucksport

Bucksport has a long and eventful history to account for and there have been several documents written through the years that do just that, including the following history that was published by the Bucksport Bicentennial Committee to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the town of Bucksport in 1992. It was written by the History Sub-Committee of the Bicentennial Committee: Leland Lowell, Chairman, Arthur M. Joost, Jr., Frances (Delano) Bemis, Mary (Grindle) Redman, Ben W.D. Craig, Donna (Dunbar) Hoffman.

Links to other history documents are provided at the bottom of the page.

## The Origins of Bucksport

In 1762, a group of 352 citizens of Massachusetts and New Hampshire petitioned the English General Court of Massachusetts for a land grant of 12 townships between the Penobscot and St. Croix Rivers. Deacon David Marsh of Haverhill, Massachusetts, was issued the grant in the name of all the petitioners. Marsh chartered the sloop Sally to survey and explore the new lands, and the petitioners each posted a bond of fifty pounds and signed an agreement that each township, within 6 years, must:

## Historic One-Room School House



Duck Cove Community Club  
Flyer

**Join the members of the  
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on the third Thursday of  
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The Great Outdoors  
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- Be settled with 60 Protestant families;
- Build 60 houses at least 18 feet square;
- Be only 6 miles on the river of seacoast;
- Have 300 acres of land fit for tillage;
- Have a church with a minister settled; and
- Reserve 1 lot for parsonage purposes, 1 for the minister, and 1 lot for Harvard College and for the use of schools.

Jonathan Buck of Haverhill was third on the list of signers and captain and owner of the sloop Sally.

The Sally left Newbury, Massachusetts, on June 18, 1762, and sailed to Fort Pownell (Stockton Springs) 8 days later. The Haverhill group, and one other, cast lots for the townships. The Haverhill group drew the 6 townships west of the Mt. Desert River, renamed the Union River because it united the two groups of townships.

The 6 townships drawn by Buck and his party were:

- Plantation No. 1... Bucksport
- Plantation No. 2...Orland
- Plantation No. 3...Penobscot (Castine)
- Plantation No. 4...Sedgwick
- Plantation No. 5... Blue Hill
- Plantation No. 6 ...Surry

This group was back in Haverhill by August of that year, but Buck, along with a group of settlers, returned again on the Sally in June, 1763, to begin building the town. In 1857, Rufus Buck wrote a history of Bucksport. In fancy prose, he tried to paint for his readers a picture of what Buck and his companions might have seen from the shores of their new village-to-be:

*...Not a mark of civilization greets the eye. Before us the great Penobscot is silently rolling to the ocean, its mirrored surface giving aback a true picture of every variety of foliage upon its banks. The island, with its varied hues of green, is now dressed in its richest attire, and the rays of the rising sun are just breaking upon the tops of the tall pines like streaks of gold. As we look in the west, there seems to arise a vast pyramid of wood, whose branches are reaching down to the water's edge. On yonder point a little opening is seen, and two Indian wigwams of conical form, from which the smoke is slowly ascending till it vanishes in the thick forest behind. There for a time dwelt the natives of the woods. Behind us, all around is one vast primeval forest, which has cast a gloom over the earth for centuries.*

The settlers fell to the tremendous task of carving their homes out of the wilderness, and what a formidable undertaking it must have been. Virgin pines towered over 100 feet into the sky, 3 to 4 feet or more in diameter. Felling one of these giants with hand tools was difficult enough, but the difficulties were compounded when the massive trees finally rested on the

a business meeting to keep the door open to this one-room school house built in 1895. See original black slate blackboards - original copies of pictures of George Washington. After the business meeting, stay for a fun pot-luck lunch and hear the fun ideas of old neighbors and new friends from away.  
**For more information, contact (207) 469-7734.**

### Address:

429 State Route 46  
Bucksport, ME 04416  
(next to the Bucksport Golf Course)

ground. Having no draft animals to move them, the trees were chopped up with axes and fed into roaring bonfires built around their stumps, turning both the tree and stump into ashes.

Fishing, hunting and agriculture, in a primitive form, were an endless chore in putting food by for the long winters. To add to their travails, the Revolutionary war moved to the Penobscot. A British naval blockade effectively shut off any communications or supplies, and the settlers of Plantation No. 1, short of food and powder, faced almost certain extinction. Several children died from lack of food and the town fathers sent off a message to the General Court of Massachusetts seeking aid. A portion of that message read:

*... Sensible that winter is approaching and that we have been deprived of any succor from the eastern towns for near three months past occasioned by the present distressed situation the whole colony is in and we your petitioners more especially from a number of vessels lying in the bay at Long Island (Ilesboro) the mouth of said river who had made prizes of numbers of vessels bound in here for our relief and if said vessels continue there our distress will be increased and that your petitioners are in a very defenseless state respecting ammunition- your petitioners humbly pray that your honors would take our case into your considerations and in your great wisdom would point out and direct us in a method that we may be supplied ammunition and provisions of bread kind.*

The message was delivered and 200 bushels of corn, along with powder and shot, were smuggled into the town, to be paid for with lumber.

Massachusetts sent a fleet of 19 armed ships, twenty transports, and a force of over 1000 men to dislodge the British from Fort George in Castine. The 21-day battle that followed resulted in one of the greatest fiascoes in US military history. Until Pearl Harbor it remained the largest naval defeat. Because of the incompetent leadership, a small British force was able to defeat an opponent who vastly outnumbered it. Writing of this, an historian of the day said that the leaders managed to "snatch defeat from the jaws of victory." Every one of the colonists' ships was destroyed, their corpses littering the shores of the Penobscot from Sandy Point to Bangor. The survivors took to the woods, walking their way to safety. The day was August 14, 1779. One of the American commanders later wrote:

*To attempt to give a description of this terrible day is out of my power. It would be a fit subject for some masterly hand to describe it in its true colors, to see four ships pursuing seventeen sail of armed vessels, nine of them were stout ships, transports on fire, men of war blowing up every kind of stores on shore, throwing about, and as much confusion as can possibly be imagined.*

Buck and his family, along with the other princes of Plantation No. 1, left their homes with what possessions they could carry and rowed or walked north to Bangor, thence overland 200 miles to Haverhill. Land travel, away from navigable waters, was relatively safe then.

The day after the naval disaster ended, the British sloop NAUTILUS dropped anchor in the harbor of Plantation No. 1. The NAUTILUS crew went ashore to pillage and burn the

properties of the departed patriots. The few settlers who remained, by pledging allegiance to the crown, were spared. Colonel Buck and his family, now in Haverhill, were not to see the town again for five more years.

After a treaty was signed with British in 1783, most of the former townspeople, along with some new adventurers, returned from Haverhill, some again aboard the sloop Sally. The town was rebuilt rapidly after the sawmill was put in operation. Saw logs of the highest quality were readily available and houses and barns sprang up, but the people were poor by the end of the war, so no fine buildings were built.

In 1784, the people began governing themselves by meeting each March to choose a committee that acted much as the Selectman form of government does today. No records have surfaced regarding the activities of this committee. With this government already in place, the Plantation was prepared when the General Court of the Province of Massachusetts passed an act in 1789 establishing the County of Hancock. They immediately petitioned the Court for permission to incorporate Plantation No. 1 as the town of Buckstown, honoring by its name, Colonel Jonathan Buck.

On August 18, 1792, the first warrant calling for a town meeting was issued. The first town meeting, held on September 6, 1792, elected the first officer of the town. The first officers and their order of election were:

- **1st** Phineas Ames: Moderator
- **2nd** Abner Curtis: Town Clerk
- **3rd** James Clements, Daniel Buck, Theophilus Brown: Assessors and Selectman
- **4th 5th** Eben Colson, Benjamin Farnham: Collectors and Constables
- **6th** Abner Curtis: Treasurer
- **7th** James Clements, Phineas Ames: Surveyors and Highways
- **8th** Benjamin Farnham, Ephraim Stubbs, Nathan Atwood: Fish Committee
- **9th** Jonathan Putney, Abner Clements, Nathaniel Lowell: Hogleaves
- **10th** Voted that all swine should run at large yoked as the law directs
- **11th** Voted that Hogleaves shall take hogs in their custody, and proceed in the same manners Pound Keepers are by law directed.
- **12th** Voted that Taxes assessed for clearing roads shall be collected.
- **13th** Voted that the Selectman shall be a committee to take care of the town's public lots and prevent any tip or waste of the same.
- **14th** Voted that the Town Clerk shall take money out of the town treasury, and purchase a book for town records.

A true record of said meeting-- Abner Curtis, Town Clerk

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## **Related Documents:**

-  [History of Bucksport-Source: Wikipedia](#)
-  [Bucksport 150 Year Celebration.pdf](#)
-  [Bucksport Bicentennial Celebration.pdf](#)
-  [Legends of Jonathan Buck](#)
-  [Eastern Maine Conference Seminary 1932 Catalogue.pdf](#)
-  [Eastern Maine Conference Seminary 1933 Catalogue.pdf](#)
-  [History of Bucksport.pdf](#)

**Town of Bucksport, Maine, P.O. Box X, 50 Main Street, Bucksport, ME 04416 Phone: (207) 469-7368 Fax: (207) 469-7369**

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