

NEW

HAMPSHIRE

TOWN

PLANS

1805

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New Hampshire State Library

Concord, 1978

INTRODUCTION

The maps on this microfilm are currently bound in three volumes as part of the collections of the New Hampshire State Library in Concord.

They were drawn apparently to meet the requirements of a state law passed by the legislature and approved on December 30, 1803, entitled "An Act to cause the several towns, parishes and places within this State to be Surveyed for the purpose of obtaining a Map of the State." Thus the General Assembly directed each town to make or have made an accurate survey and to transmit a map resulting from the survey to the Secretary of State on or before Wednesday, November 6, 1805. The act stipulated that the towns bear the expense of the survey, that a penalty of \$150 be assessed by the State Treasurer against any town neglecting to make the survey, that proprietors of uninhabited towns be required to submit a map, and that the selectmen of each town be furnished with a map of the State as soon as one could be compiled from the surveys.

The dates of various maps testify that many towns fulfilled the requirements of the act of 1803. But by June of 1805 it was apparent that several towns could not meet the deadline which the General Court, by an act of June 18, 1805, extended to June 10, 1806.

On June 20, 1806 the General Court resolved that the exclusive privilege of the copyright of the State map be given to Philip Carrigain, Jr., and Phineas Merrill. They were to compile the map from the surveys and 500 copies were to be provided to the State free of charge before or during June of 1807.

Philip Carrigain had become Secretary of State in 1805 under Governor John Taylor Gilman. Carrigain held the post until 1809. As a Concord citizen he was one of an association of men who carried on publication of the American Patriot, a newspaper of that city. It appears that Carrigain could not immediately compile his map, for according to Charles H. Bell's The Bench and Bar of New Hampshire "the surveys of some of the towns were made by incompetent persons, and it required ingenuity if not actual force to fit them perfectly together." (p. 239) Carrigain issued the map in 1816.

It is probable that the town maps have been in the office of the Secretary of State since they were received between 1803 and 1806. At some point in time they were processed for preservation and bound in their present volumes in alphabetical order by town name.

Early in 1978, a century and three-quarters after their origin, the maps were transferred to the State Library by Secretary of State William Gardner. The frequent call for the plans in their large, heavy volumes has prompted the Library to consider making them available in an alternative medium. Microfilm offers the most suitable answer.

The maps, being in the public domain, may be copied and used for research purposes. Requests to use them for publication should be directed to the State Librarian, 20 Park Street, Concord, NH 03301.

Avis M. Duckworth
State Librarian
New Hampshire State Library

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