

# HAWLEY

MASSACHUSETTS

THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS

1770 - 1820

by

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**TAYLOR, JOHN, JOHN, JR., and QUARTUS**

**PUDDING HOLLOW**

The Hawley town records, and both histories of Hawley, state that John Taylor, his wife Elizabeth, and their daughter Philanda were one of the first four families to arrive in Plantation No. 7 in 1771, and thus were among the first settlers in what is now Hawley. No mention is made of what town they came from. They settled in Pudding Hollow, and were present at the first Thanksgiving Dinner in the fall of 1772. In the fall of 1780 his wife Elizabeth became a member of the new Hawley Congregational Church. It is not until the fall of 1783, twelve years after his first reported arrival in town, that he made his first purchase of land (all of Lot 134) for 20 English pounds, from Samuel Belding and Silas Porter, who were among the original Proprietors of Plantation No. 7 (B. 2 p. 58). He was then 36 years old, and already had a family of six children. In the 1790 census, there were three males and six females in the family. And in the 1800 census, the household numbered seven, with two boys and three girls at home:

John Taylor	b. 9/22/1747	d. 6/13/1840
Elizabeth (first wife)	b. 1747	d. 3/22/1810
(she was buried in Pudding Hollow Cemetery)		
<i>children:</i>		
Philanda m. Jason Fuller,	b. 12/6/1769	d. before 1820
a daughter	b. 9/17/1771	d. in infancy
Betsy	b. 8/5/1773	d. 8/25/1775
Rachel	b. 7/27/1776	d. 7/12/1778

been a logical choice to be made by the Proprietors of No. 7 to come to build No. 7's first dam and mill. However, John is never mentioned in Hawley records as a miller, he was a construction expert only. Two other sons of Lt. Adonijah Taylor of Whately are also mentioned in Hawley deed records. They are his third son, Solomon Taylor, who was the first Taylor to own the first millsite in Lot 135. Solomon bought all of Lot 135 from original Proprietor John Worthington in 1778 (Hampshire Abstracts, B. 3 p. 107); and then sold it to Stephen Burt in 1782 (Hampshire Abstracts, B. 3 p. 274); by then, Solomon was living in Conway. It is probable that construction of the dam and mill began in 1778. The fourth son of Adonijah, Eliphalet Taylor of Whately, apparently grubstaked his older brother John's move to Hawley; it was Eliphalet who sold the northern third of Lot 134 to Jonathan Bangs in 1787 (B. 2 p. 57) after John had contracted to buy the whole lot in 1783 (B. 2 p. 58); the 20 British pounds paid by Bangs was then transferred, the same day, to Belding and Porter to pay off what John owed on the whole lot.

If this identification of John Taylor is correct, it offers an explanation for the hiatus in Hawley's town records, mentioned above. Twelve years had passed between the time that John Taylor first arrived in Hawley, and the time he paid for his first property. It is probable that John Taylor was hired as a skilled laborer by the Proprietors of Plantation No. 7 to build a dam and a mill on Mill Brook in Hawley, at the north end of Lot 135. His father, brothers, and other skilled laborers probably came to Hawley from the Whately mill for short periods of time, in order to help in the construction. In this way, John Taylor slowly earned enough money to pay for the nearby Lot 134 as his home lot, which he finally was able to do in 1783. But he did not work in Hawley continuously, he must have spent part of each year back at his old home in Whately. From Whately he then became a soldier in the Revolutionary War, and, probably burdened by old debts, he joined Daniel Shay's rebels till that effort collapsed. Then, he had to give up his arms and swear allegiance once again to the U.S.; he thus regained his civil rights in Whately. Like many others in the same position, he left his old home town for good and moved to a new home (in his case, Hawley) to start over. And, like most other old Shaysites, he tried to hide or bury all legal records of his old status as a Shay's rebel. That is why no mention is ever made in Hawley records about John Taylor's original home, or his status as an ex-rebel. But one tell-tale record remained, he had named his youngest son for Shays.

After 1783, the deeds record of John Taylor's ownership of land in Hawley is nearly complete, and illustrates a most interesting strategy for a poor man to deal with settlement in a new town, which may have been a familiar pattern in the late 1700s in western Massachusetts. John Taylor's is the only case which is documented in Hawley, and therefore deserves some detailed discussion here. For John came to Hawley quite poor. He was unable to purchase any land at all at the beginning. He spent his entire active life building the dams and mills on Mill Brook, and also clearing one plot of land after another, with the objective of selling that lot and moving on to clear and then sell yet another lot. He must have had some kind of a contract with Samuel Belding and Silas Porter, the owners of Lot 134, that he would not have to pay them for the first lot on which he settled, until he had cleared and sold the first parcel and thus acquired his first nestegg of money. He apparently borrowed enough money to get settled and finance his first few years in Hawley from his brother, Eliphalet Taylor of Whately.

As noted above, he purchased all of Lot 134 in 1783 for 20 English pounds (B. 2 p. 58) from Belding and Porter. Lot 134 is located on the east side of

Lot 140 show the location of part of that road.

In 1805, John Taylor purchased the northern half of Lot 139, which adjoined his Lot 135 property to the east. In March 1807, John Taylor sold his Lot 135 property, and then 10 adjoining acres in Lot 139 south of Potash Hill Road, to Moses Rogers (B. 29 p. 394) for \$1,000; he exchanged this property for Moses Rogers' 100 acres in Lot 140, just to the northeast from Lot 135, which was also valued at \$1,000 (B. 58 p. 379). It is very possible that this recognized the fact that Moses Rogers had already been busy helping to build the mill on Taylor's parcel on Lot 135 for one or two years, and had been commuting to that task down Potash Hill Road from his home on Lot 140. Later on in 1807, John Taylor sold his remaining 40 acres in Lot 139 for \$350, thus ending the series of transactions in that year with a profit of \$350.

Lot 140 was John Taylor's final home in Hawley. In 1810, John had 1 acre of tillage, 7 acres of mowing and 6 acres of pasture on 60 acres, and his son John, Jr. had 2 acres of tillage on another 26 acres of the same lot. John had a house worth \$75, a barn worth \$100, and a shop worth \$15 on his land; John, Jr. had no buildings at all and presumably lived with his parents. Their total valuation in 1810 was \$557. 1810 was a difficult year for John, Sr.; his wife Elizabeth died on March 22, and was buried in Pudding Hollow Cemetery. That fall, on November 22, 1810, he married Hannah Joy of Weymouth as his second wife. The 1810 census shows two households; both John, Sr. and John, Jr. had households of five. John, Sr.'s older children had already married and left home. Their households in 1810 were probably:

John Taylor, Sr.	b. 9/22/1747	d. 6/13/1840
Hannah Joy (2nd wife)	b. 5/18/1756	d. 3/31/1846

(Hannah buried in South Hawley cemetery; John probably also)  
*children of first marriage:*

Dolly	b. 9/20/1782
Rachel	b. 7/29/1784
Chaise (Shays)	b. 3/7/1787

**John Taylor, Jr.** married Lona Barnard of Hawley on November 1, 1802. She must have been the sister of Joseph Barnard. His family comprised:

John Taylor, Jr.	b. 9/9/1780
Lona Barnard (wife)	

*children:*

Henry	b. 9/9/1803	
resided Williamsburg		
Edmond	b. 9/4/1805	
Lona	b. 6/24/1807	
m. Reuben Crittenden		
Adonijah	b. 6/24/1809	d. 1/23/1810
Adonijah	b. 11/10/1810	
Daniel	b. 10/12/1812	
Chaise (Shays)	b. 1/5/1815	
m. Marie Ault		
Elizabeth	b. 5/17/1817	
m. ___ Leonard		
(John III	b. 10/18/1823)	

Middle Road; Mill Brook runs through the center of it from north to south. The lot is now completely within the boundaries of the Singing Brook Farm Trust (Harrison Parker's) property. Taylor then divided that lot into thirds. He himself probably settled at the top of the hill, where Singing Brook Farm's 'Red Top' house (once Ernest Sears) is now located. There he would have built a log cabin. He and his extended family then started to build the dam and mill on Mill Brook, near the north end of Lot 135. He also started clearing land, by cutting trees and then pulling stumps, on the northern third of Lot 134, with the objective of selling that northern third of Lot 134 and thus getting enough money to pay Belding and Porter. This he did in 1787, when Eliphalet Taylor (who had presumably grubstaked John) sold that northern third of Lot 134 to Jonathan Bangs for 20 pounds (exactly what John needed to pay Belding and Porter). And then, both deeds were registered together.

In 1787, John Taylor then started on the same process of land clearing in the middle third of Lot 134. He attracted a buyer to it in 1793. The buyer was Rufus Sears, whose unregistered deed to it is dated April 12, 1794. Rufus paid 28 pounds for the parcel. That deed was still in the possession of Rufus' great great grandson Henry Sears of Pudding Hollow Road in 1991. In 1792, in the middle of this period, John Taylor served as one of the Surveyors of Highways for the Town; it was his one public service.

Finally, on April 10, 1794, John sold the last, southern third of Lot 134 to Lucius Allis and Noah Look for 91 pounds (B. 8 p. 574). The extra high price received for this lot may reflect the fact that Allis and Look were getting John's house and barn as well as some cleared land.

With his nestegg of funds, John then moved south. On May 6, 1794, he purchased the northern third of Lot 135, immediately to the south of his previous property, from Edmund Longley, for 80 pounds (B. 10 p. 134). This is the parcel on which was located the dam and mill he had helped to build in the previous decade. He (and Moses Rogers) then may well have completed work on the first dam and the mill, and possibly the foundation of yet a second mill located just north of the dam. (The foundations of both above-mentioned mills, and the remains of half of the dam, are still visible in the chasm of Mill Brook opposite the old Hawley Town House, at the intersection of Middle and Pudding Hollow Roads). John stayed here for 13 years. In 1799, the Assessors' records indicate that John had 2 acres of tillage, 3 acres of mowing, and 2 acres of pasture on his 42 acre parcel in Lot 135; he had no house (meaning that he lived in a log cabin), a barn worth \$60, and a total valuation of only \$278 in that year. This parcel is now part of the west side of the main property of Singing Brook Farm Trust (Harrison Parker).

In a special town meeting on December 29, 1795, the voters approved a road "from John Taylor's land to Bozrah Road." This certainly is the first time that the lower part of the now discontinued Potash Hill Road is mentioned in town records. This road starts from the present intersection of Middle and Pudding Hollow Roads and runs eastward towards the old Town Common. The location of the upper part of this road is more uncertain. It is likely that it ran straight northward through Lot 140 to an intersection with the old 1795 layout of the Charlemont-Plainfield County Road at the boundary of Lot 141, instead of doubling back up through Lot 139 and up to the old Town Common site as the final layout of Potash Hill Road in 1814 shows. The surviving old stone walls on both sides of an old road running north and south through the southern half of

Betsy b. 10/14/1777  
m. Joseph Marsh, Jr.  
John, Jr. b. 9/9/1780  
m. Lona Bardwell  
Dolly b. 9/20/1782  
m. Capt. Asor Peren, Savoy

Rachel b. 7/29/1784  
m. Ruel Farnsworth

Chaise (Shays) b. 3/7/1787 d. before 1820?

(Sources: Johnson, pp. 6, 12, 55, 299-300, 330; Franklin County Probate Docket No. 4728.)

The fact that these records show that John had a son, born in 1787, named Chaise (or Shays) opens up an interesting possibility: was John Taylor a follower of the 'rebel' Daniel Shay, who led an insurrection of debt-ridden farmers in Western Massachusetts, in 1787? If so, why is there no mention made of the Shay's Rebellion in the records of Hawley?

The following evidence is offered to support the hypothesis that John Taylor was a Shay's rebellion supporter, and that he must have lived a double life for at least 16 years (from 1771 to 1787), spending part of each year as a settler in Hawley, but also part of each year in his original town of Whately. The Whately town records show that a John Taylor was a Revolutionary War veteran from Whately. He served as a Private credited to Deerfield on two different enlistments, first as a Minuteman for 9 days, in April 1775, and then for a month in October 1777 (see *Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors in the Revolutionary War*, 1907, Vol. XV, pp. 435, 438-39). The Whately records also say that he was a Shay's Rebellion rebel from that town. What is most interesting is that a special section of Whately's Shay's Rebellion records shows the names of those rebels who named a son after the rebellion's leader, and John Taylor's name is on that list (see Alan Bloom, *The So-Called Shays Rebellion - A Neighborhood Study of Whately, Massachusetts*, unpublished manuscript, PVMA Library, Deerfield).

Other records in the town of Whately then provide information on who this John Taylor was, and show why the Proprietors of Plantation No. 7 may have contracted with him to come as one of the first settlers in Hawley in 1771. For John Taylor was probably the eldest son of Lt. Adonijah Taylor, a Revolutionary War veteran. Adonijah also was a Minuteman for 14 days in April 1775, but he then was commissioned a First Lieutenant in the 5th Hampshire County regiment of militia in 1776-77, and saw action at Lake George (see *Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors in the Revolutionary War*, 1907, Vol. XV, p. 415). Adonijah Taylor built a dam, sawmill and gristmill on Roaring Brook in Whately before 1767—one of the first mills in that town. Those same records state that Adonijah himself "removed to Hawley, where he died" (see James M. Crafts, *History of the Town of Whately*, Orange, Massachusetts, 1899, p. 590; and Ena M. Cane, *Whately, Massachusetts 1771-1971*, Northampton, Massachusetts 1972, pp. 58, 109). (No record exists of Adonijah's burial in Hawley. Could he have been buried in the oldest first cemetery, now in the State Forest, and his grave then lost? Adonijah does not appear in the 1790 or 1800 Hawley census records).

The Whately records indicate that Adonijah's son John Taylor also went to Hawley, thus confirming the records in Hawley. John must have had years of experience in stone masonry and mill construction before 1771, and would have