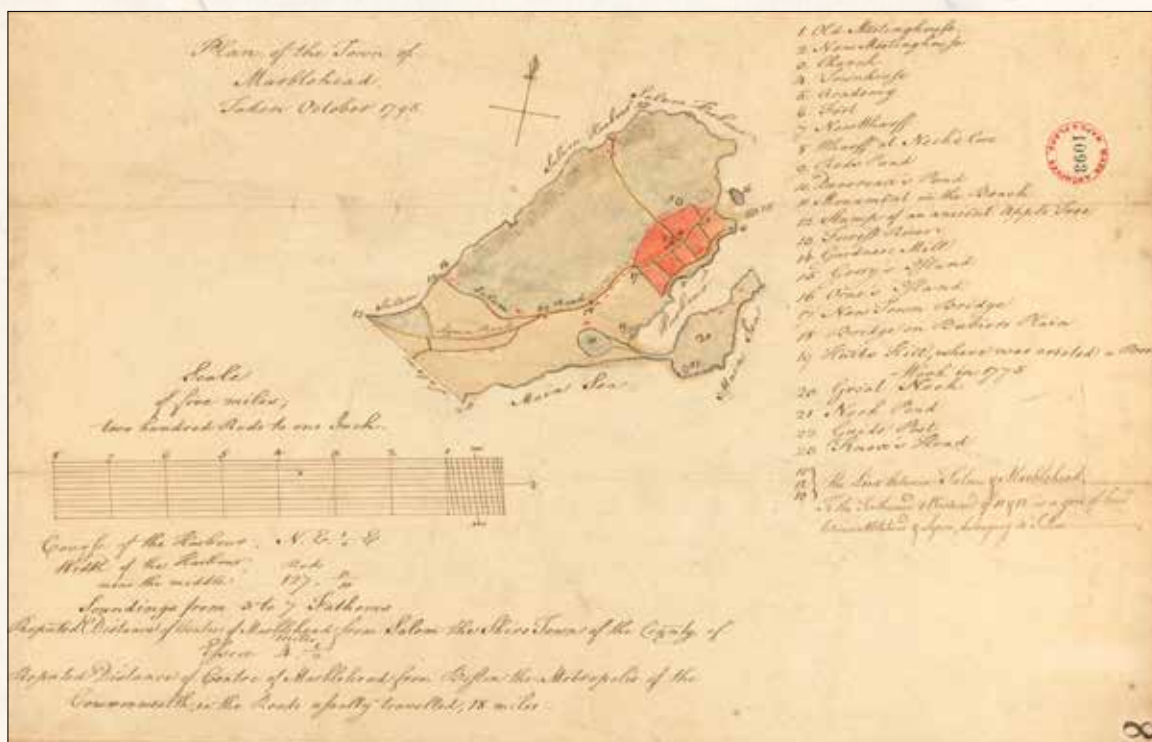# MAPPING MARBLEHEAD
from *Founding* to *Freedom*

Mapping Marblehead: From Founding to Freedom

The town of Marblehead is a whole museum, just waiting to be explored. We experience it every day, but we are not always aware of what we are seeing. The aim and purpose of *Mapping Marblehead: From Founding to Freedom* is to present Marblehead's history from 1600 to 1800 in a way that can be enjoyed and appreciated by all ages and interest levels, and to encourage residents and visitors to walk through the exhibit—and through the town—with a greater understanding of the past.

This exhibit is the work of a great team, with many collaborators. From conception to completion is a long process, requiring a variety of skills, and this project was fortunate to have so much talented help. Chris Johnston, Chair of the Marblehead Historical Commission, began with an idea for an exhibit, based on Marblehead Historical Commissioner David Krathwohl's interest in maps. The exhibit is intended to address the fact that there is no one place in Marblehead to get a sense of the Town's complete history. Local historian and fellow Commissioner Pam Peterson joined the project to work with David to put together an exhibit based on maps and Marblehead history. They soon decided that trying to squeeze all of the town's history in to one exhibit was too much, so they divided the exhibit into three parts. The current exhibit is the first, with maps and history of Marblehead from 1600 through 1800. Two additional exhibits will follow to present nineteenth twentieth and twenty-first century history.

The Harold B. and Elizabeth L. Shattuck Memorial Fund supported the exhibit with generous funding. That support allowed plans to go forward and begin to take shape. Helen Riegle, of HER Design, an experienced exhibit designer, was instrumental in bringing the history and maps to life, giving the exhibit an exciting and innovative look.

David Krathwohl's technology expertise is apparent in the exhibit's interactive iPads and the video loop that, through the use of maps, provides an overview of Marblehead's history and how the town has changed. Finding, utilizing and presenting early maps of New England and Marblehead enables the history of the town to be told in a way that words alone cannot.

Pam Peterson utilized her extensive knowledge of Marblehead's history to identify key elements and create content for descriptive panels as well as creating displays of objects representative of this era.

Once the text and maps were close to completion, they were reviewed by Don Doliber, Town Historian; Bette Hunt, Town Historian Emeritas; and Standley Goodwin, local historian. Doliber's research on Marblehead's Native American sites and history was invaluable. Marblehead Historical Commissioner Edward Nilsson contributed information and expertise about early Marblehead history. Margo Steiner provided and coordinated publicity for the exhibit.

Marblehead residents, students, families, and visitors will enjoy this presentation of Marblehead's early history. We hope they will come away from the exhibit with a sense of civic pride for the determination and courage of early settlers, the ingenuity of fishermen and merchants, and the bravery and vision of supporters of the Revolutionary War. Visitors will be inspired to take their interest out into the town, to see and explore all that Marblehead has to offer.

NEVV
ENGLANDS
PROSPECT.

A true, lively, and experimen-
tall defcription of that part of *America*,
commonly called NEVV ENGLAND:
difcovering the ftate of that Coun-
trie, both as it ftands to our new-come
Englifh Planters; and to the old
Native Inhabitants.

Laying downe that which may both enrich the
knowledge of the mind-travelling Reader,
or benefit the future Voyager.

By WILLIAM WOOD.

Printed at *London* by *Tho. Cotes*, for *Iohn Bellamie*, and are to be fold
at his fhop, at the three Golden Lyons in *Corne-hill*, neere the
Royall Exchange. 1634.

"Marvill Head is a place which lyeth 4 miles full South from Salem, and is a very convenient place for a plantation, especially for such as will set upon the trade of fishing.... Here be a good harbor for boates, and safe riding for shippes."

Marblehead was called Marvill Head in the text of *New Englands Prospect*, but is shown as Marble Harbor on the map that accompanies the text by William Wood, 1634.
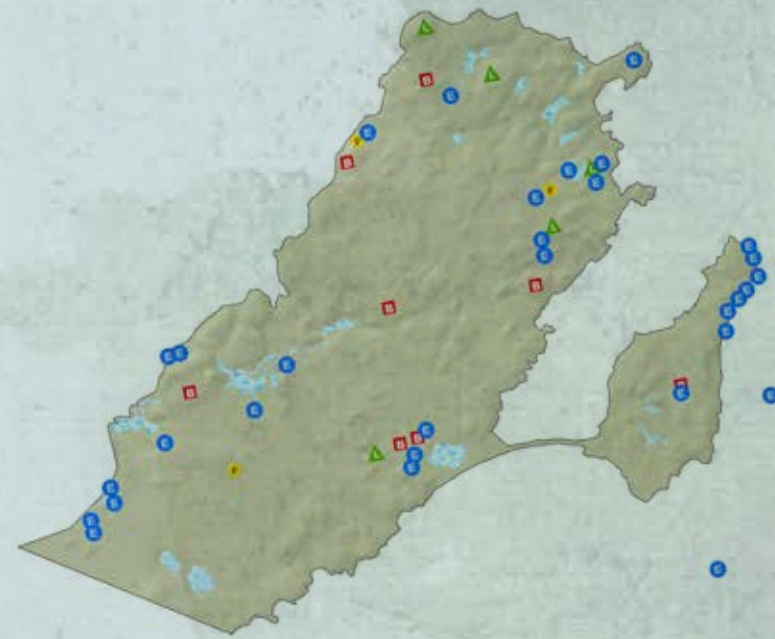
1600-1700

MARBLEHEAD IN THE 1600s

Geography is destiny. Marblehead's settlement, growth, and personality are based on its location. A small peninsula surrounded by ocean, a large, deep safe harbor, and sheltering offshore islands are the physical elements that have always made Marblehead a desirable place to live and work.

In the 17th century, original native inhabitants gave way to English colonists, who established a town and practiced the fishing trade. Marblehead's isolation, its commitment to the demanding trade of fishing, and the challenges of living on cold and rocky shores created a collection of strong, independent personalities. Their stories of success and failure form the history of the town.

Native American Sites in Marblehead

- **B** Burial Uncovered
- **E** Work Area / Encampment
- **F** Fortification
- **A** Lookout Point

Native American sites data by Donald A. Doliber, Marblehead Town Historian.
GIS map data courtesy of MassGIS.

Native Americans as pictured in the 17th century
Detail from "A Mapp of New England" by John Seller, 1675

FIRST INHABITANTS

Before recorded history, the first inhabitants of North America were Native Americans. The Naumkeags, a part of the nomadic Algonquin nation of woodland tribes, came to Marblehead in the warm seasons to live by the sea, to fish, and to collect shells and salt.

Nanapashemet was the best known Sachem, or chief, of the Naumkeags. He was known at the time of the earliest European settlement. After his death in 1617, the population of the tribe was greatly reduced by smallpox as well as inter-tribal warfare. Nanapashemet's wife became Squaw Sachem. She and her son Sagamore George were owners of the land that included Marblehead, which they called *Massabequash*, or Forest River.

Early explorers mapped the region, and John Smith named it New England in 1616.
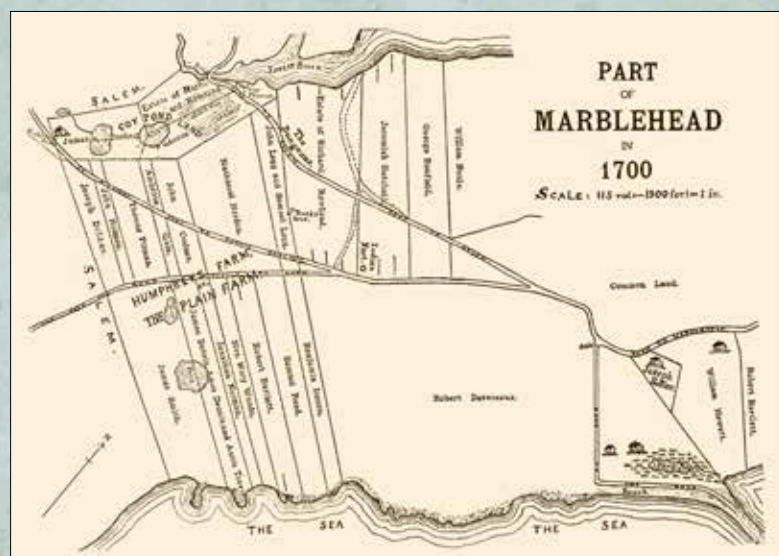
This map shows the first settlers division of land for sale and use of farmers in early Marblehead. Over 100 years ago, Sidney Perley undertook the monumental task of mapping colonial Marblehead. He searched public records, including deeds, wills, town, probate, and court records. His maps and accompanying text are invaluable resources.

FIRST MAPS —
FOUNDING NEW ENGLAND

Early hunters, trappers, and fishermen took advantage of New England's abundant supply of game and fish, even before Columbus officially discovered America. At least 100 years before English settlers came to establish a permanent community of fishermen, Marblehead was an outpost and fishing station for European traders.

It was a natural progression to become a fishing village, settled by English colonists in the 17th century, which established a base for trade between colonial Marblehead and England.

Marblehead's fishing industry, which included catching fish and salting and drying them on the rocky ledges surrounding the town, became increasingly successful. The town grew to include many small farms, established to supply food for the settlers.
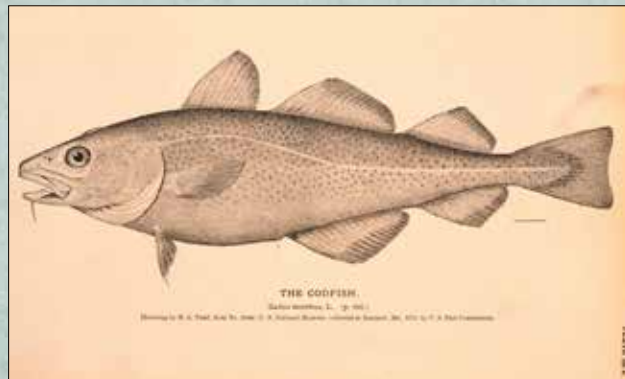

The name Marblehead first appears on this map by John Seller "A Mapp of New England" 1675.

King James I of England
English investors were anxious to encourage new settlers to come to Marblehead. Captain John Smith wrote of the advantages of fishing as a trade, and King James piously added "In truth, 'tis an honest trade, 'twas the apostles own calling."

Codfish were the mainstay of the New England economy. Before refrigeration, salted dried fish and meat were essential sources of protein. There was great demand in England, and also in Roman Catholic countries, to provide food for meatless Fridays. Salt cod was also shipped to the West Indies to feed slaves on the sugar plantations.

EARLY FISHING

While religious freedom, and self-government were noble and admirable reasons to come to the New World, it was commerce that really fueled the early settlement of Marblehead. Fishing was the first and most enduring of the trades that provided income for the colonies. Early settlers were sponsored and funded by investors who made money on the sale of dried fish. To encourage immigration, tales were told of such abundance that men could walk across Marblehead Harbor on the backs of fish without ever getting their feet wet.

Matthew Craddock was the first Governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Though he never came to the American colonies himself, Craddock's ships transported goods to the early New England settlers and returned to England loaded with barrels of dried fish for sale.

Map of New England, John Foster, 1677

Old Burial Hill gravestone of
Susanna Orne, 1777

Old Burial Hill
Old Burial Hill, one of the oldest cemeteries
in the colonies, was established in 1638. The
burying ground grew up around the first
Meeting House.

EARLY SETTLEMENT

England's promotion of New World colonization had a large impact on
the establishment of Marblehead as a town. The earliest immigrants were
fishermen from the Channel Islands and the West countries of Devon, Dorset,
and Cornwall. Attracted by a
safe harbor and good fishing,
they settled around Little
Harbor, and chose the highest
hill as the location for their
meeting house and burial
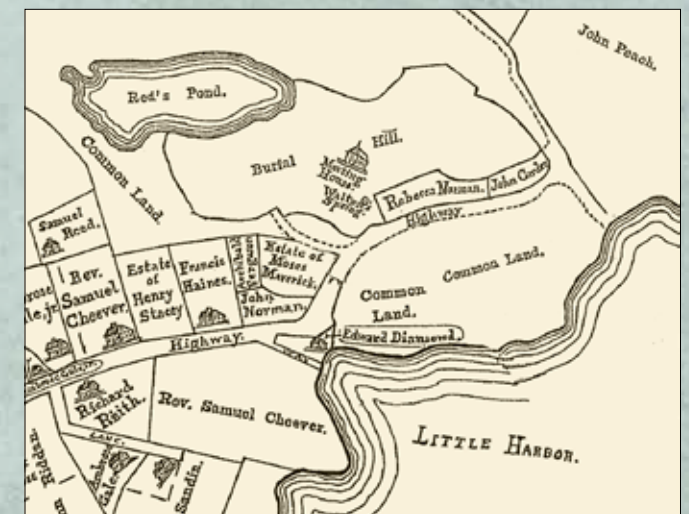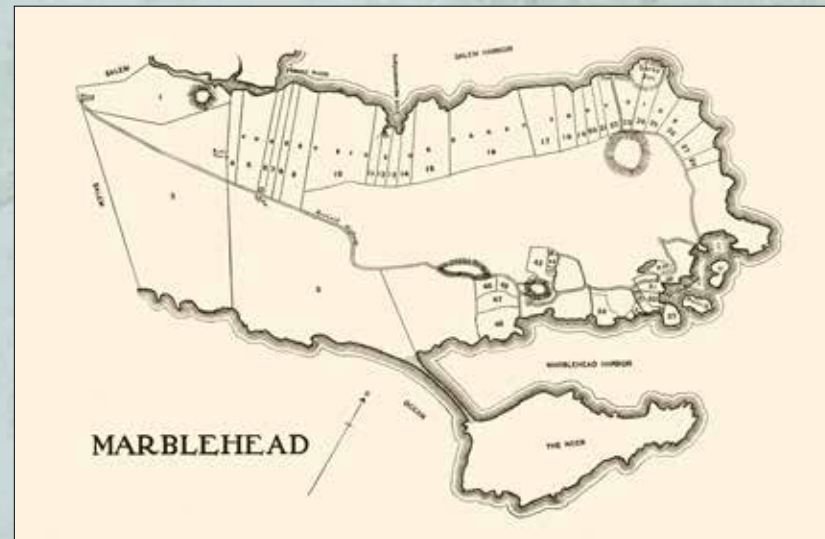grounds. Both the meeting
house and graveyard were
established by 1638.

Little Harbor and Burial Hill
In Sidney Perley's map of Marblehead in 1700, the
settlement around Little Harbor is clearly shown, and
the first Meeting House is pictured on Burial Hill.

In Sidney Perley's map of Marblehead in 1649, much of the town was farmland, including 800 acres (numbers 2 and 3) on the southern end of town.

Marblehead prospered as a fishing village. By 1660 the King's agents declared Marblehead to be "...the greatest Towne for fishing in New England."

MARBLEHEAD BECOMES A TOWN

Marblehead was a part of Salem in 1629. At that time it was a small settlement, focused on fishing. Isaac Allerton, who had arrived on the *Mayflower*, came to Marblehead in 1631, seeking greater commercial freedom than he could find in Plymouth. He worked with Moses Maverick on fishing stations and warehouses to pack fish to be sent to England. Maverick married Allerton's daughter, Remember. Allerton eventually moved on, but Maverick and his wife remained.

Moses Maverick became one of the first Selectmen when Marblehead incorporated in 1649. There had been friction between Marblehead and Salem for some time. Early colonial court records indicate that Marbleheaders were frequently brought into Salem court for offenses such as public drunkenness, foul language, and not attending church—behaviors condemned by Puritan Salem. The separation of Marblehead and Salem was undoubtedly a relief to all concerned.

Marblehead's Town Deed, written on parchment, still hangs in the Selectmen's Room at Abbot Hall. It was signed on July 18, 1684 by the descendants of Nanepashemet, Sachem of the Naumkeags, and the Marblehead Selectmen. They negotiated the purchase of the land for approximately 20 pounds.


Signing the Deed to the Town of Marblehead, painting by J.O.J. Frost, c.1920s. The painting is also on display in the Selectmen's Room at Abbot Hall.

THE TOWN DEED

Though there had been nothing to fear from Native Americans in the Marblehead area, further west in the Massachusetts Bay Colony there was increasing unrest. In 1675, it erupted in what was called "King Philip's War." King Philip, or Metacomet, was the Chief Sachem of all Massachusetts tribes. The war was bloody and brutal—the final stand for Native Americans in the region who saw their land and way of life being taken away.

Questions about land ownership caused concern throughout the colonies and in England. King Charles I of England threatened to withdraw the Massachusetts Bay Colony Charter. English colonial governors had to verify the legality of lands taken in the name of the British Crown. Marblehead's deed was signed in 1684.
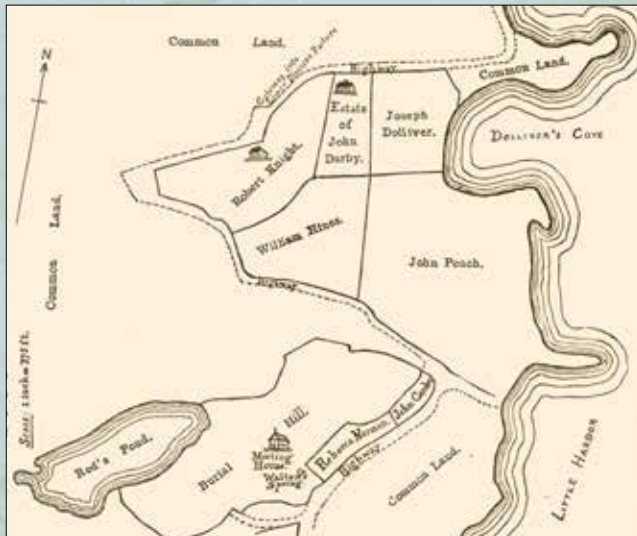
Detail of Burial Hill from Perley's map of 1700 includes Red's (Redd's) Pond, named after Wilmot "Mammy" Redd. She and her husband lived near the pond.

In 2002, the Wilmot Redd Memorial was placed at Old Burial Hill in her memory. Mammy Redd received far more recognition and compassion in this century than she did during her lifetime.

WITCH TRIALS

At the end of the 17th century, fear of the Devil and belief in witches was widespread in New England. Accusations of witchcraft began in Salem Village in 1692. Wilmot Redd of Marblehead was arrested for having "committed sundry acts of witchcraft on 'girls' in Salem Village." When "Mammy" Redd appeared before the judges, several of the girls became hysterical.

Witnesses from Marblehead testified to a curse that Mammy Redd had cast. One victim claimed she was unable to defecate for a month. The afflicted girls claimed that Mammy Redd flew to Salem to torment them.

Wilmot Redd refused to confess to being a witch. No one from Marblehead came forward at the trial to speak on her behalf. She was convicted and hanged on September 22, 1692. Mammy Redd was the only Marbleheader accused and convicted in the Salem Witch Trials of 1692.

Comparing Sidney Perley's map of Marblehead in 1649 with his maps of Marblehead in 1700, the expansion of the town from Little Harbor to the Great Harbor is clear.
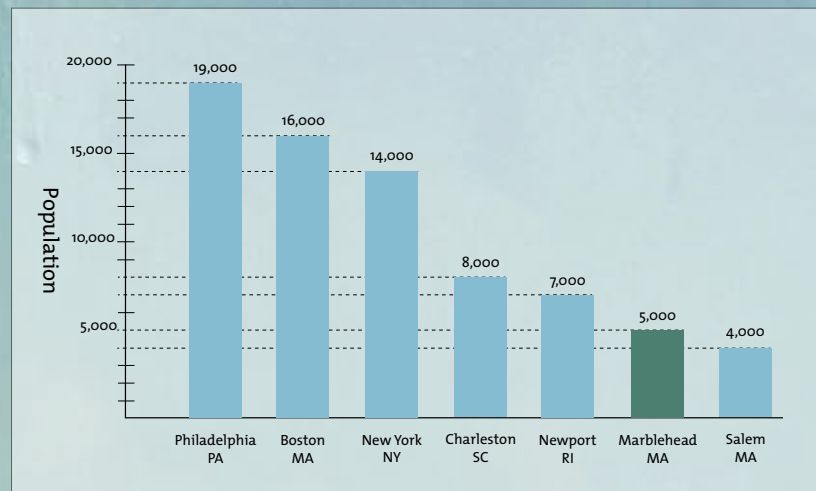
Largest Cities in the American Colonies, 1760

1700-1800

MARBLEHEAD IN THE 1700s

In the first half of the 18th century, Marblehead's reputation, importance, and population increased tremendously. The Old Town House was built in 1727, to be used as the town meeting hall, a central gathering place for news, and an open market. The town center had shifted from Little Harbor to the Great Harbor. Taverns, houses, and wharfs all contributed to the bustle of prosperous activity that took over the town.

Though fishing was still the basis of Marblehead's economy, extensive trade, ship-building, and farming all contributed to the success of the town. Fishing schooners and trading vessels were in and out of the harbor on every tide. All available open land was filled with fish flakes covered with drying fish. The sights, sounds, and smells of Marblehead were very different from what they are today.

Parson John Barnard's house at 7 Franklin Street
(Privately owned, not open to the public.)
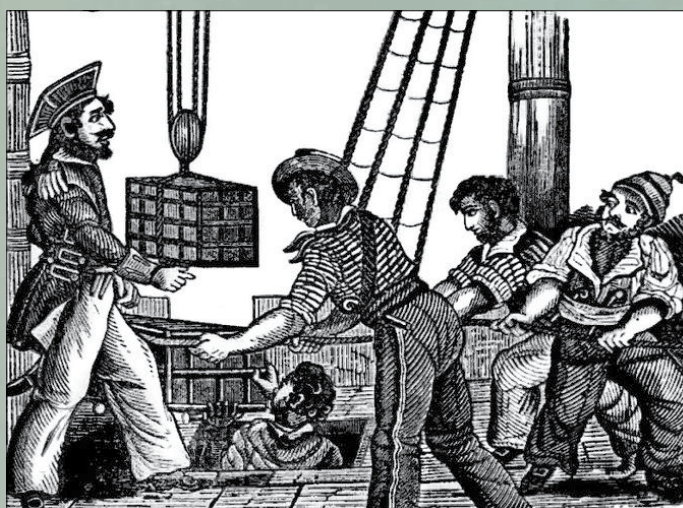
Ned Low, from *A Pirate's Own Book*, 1837
While fishing and trade were creating prosperity, there was also a threat in the colonies. In the late 17th and early 18th centuries, pirates roamed from the Caribbean to New England. One of the most feared was Ned Low, a cruel and evil pirate who plundered his way up and down the east coast of the American colonies. He attacked a Marblehead fishing schooner, looking for men for his crew. Six single men were captured and forced to become pirates or die. Philip Ashton of Marblehead was one of the six men, and his story is remarkable.

PROSPERITY

Parson John Barnard came to Marblehead in the early 1700s, as minister to the First Church. He was an important spiritual leader, but he is best remembered for his financial advice. Under his guidance local merchants took a major risk. Barnard first convinced prominent merchant Joseph Swett to try selling salted fish in Barbados himself, rather than through an agent. His resulting profits were high, which convinced other merchants to follow. This shift in their way of doing business set the stage for Marblehead's prosperity.

To supply increased demand, fishing schooners were making the thousand-mile trip to the Grand Banks, off the coast of Nova Scotia. The size and quality of fish on the Banks made it worth the trip.

Philip Ashton's house at 95 Elm Street
Philip Ashton arrived home two years, ten months, and fifteen days after he had been captured by pirates. The whole town of Marblehead was fascinated by the story, and Parson John Barnard helped Ashton tell the tale, publishing a book in 1725 called *The Strange Adventures and Deliverances of Philip Ashton of Marblehead.*


Map of Ned Low's voyage with Philip Ashton as prisoner
Adapted from *At the Point of A Cutlass* by Greg Fleming.

MARBLEHEAD'S ROBINSON CRUSOE

Philip Ashton was 19 years old when he was captured by the pirate Ned Low in 1722. He became an unwilling pirate for about 8 months, as the ship headed south into Caribbean waters. When it stopped at a small island to take on fresh water, Ashton volunteered to help. As soon as he was on shore Ashton ran away. He hid in the jungle to avoid being caught. Ned Low was furious. He consoled himself that Ashton was marooned, doomed to die alone on a deserted island.

Ashton had a hard time on the island, but he survived and eventually traveled to the island of Roatan. In June of 1724, two English vessels appeared. The sailors were amazed by Ashton's wild appearance, but they rescued him and arranged his passage back to New England.

Lee Mansion
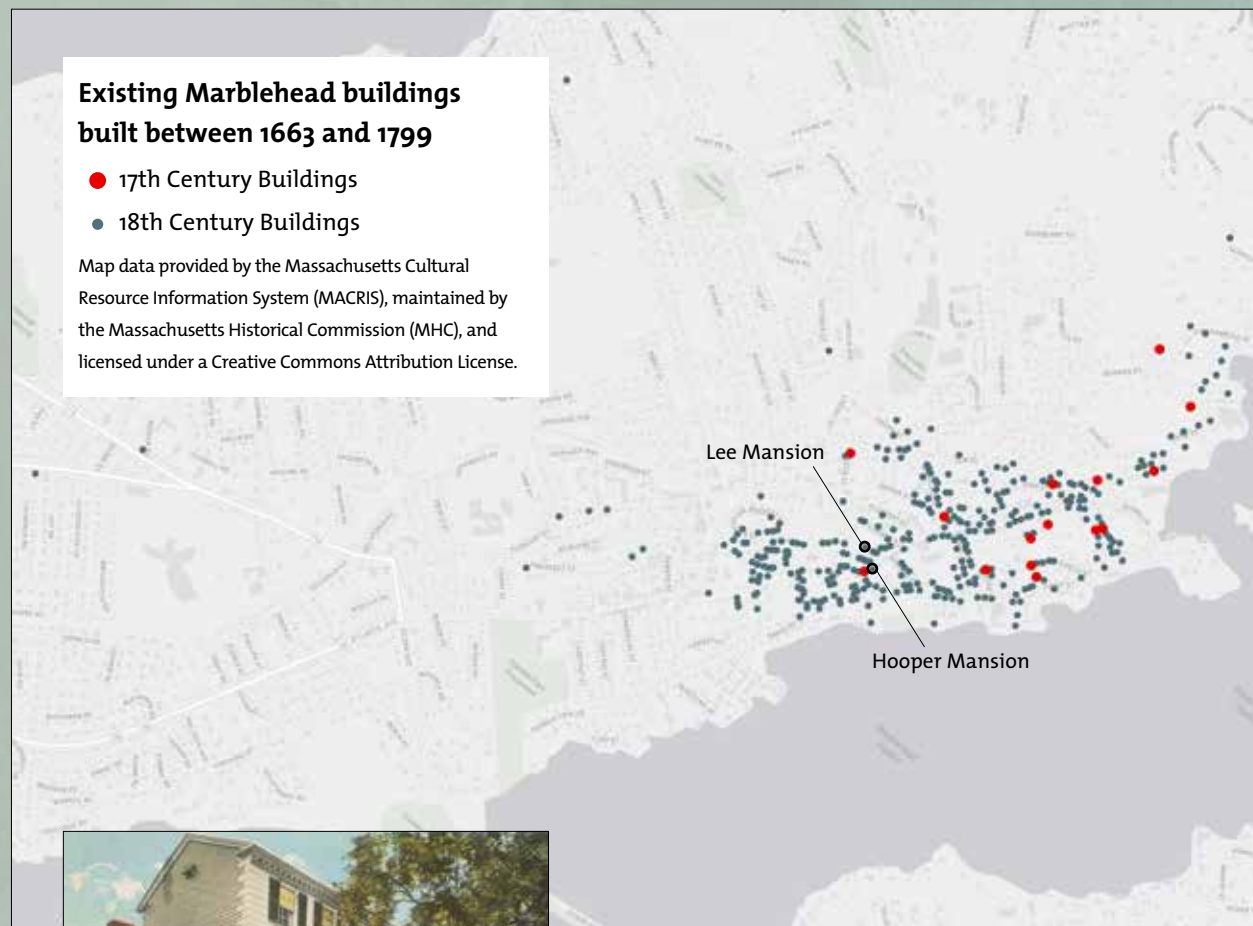
Hooper Mansion

The "King" Robert Hooper Mansion at 8 Hooper Street

The earliest part of the Hooper Mansion was built in 1725, by Greenleaf Hooper. His son, Robert Hooper, was an extremely successful merchant, affectionately called "King" because he was so good to his captains and crew. He built the Georgian addition to the house in 1745, adding an iron sprung floor to the elegant third-floor ballroom. The Hooper Mansion is owned by the Marblehead Arts Association and is open to the public.

CODFISH ARISTOCRACY

Marblehead merchants and ship owners became wealthy through fishing and trade. They built grand homes in the English Georgian architectural style. More than 200 pre-Revolutionary War houses still exist in Marblehead's Historic District, some grand and some modest, but all based on mid-century codfish prosperity.

1768 Jeremiah Lee Mansion at 161 Washington Street

Jeremiah Lee was the wealthiest man in Marblehead, and one of the wealthiest men in the American colonies. He built a stately Georgian mansion, which is considered one of the most important pre-Revolutionary houses in the United States. It is owned by the Marblehead Museum and Historical Society and is open to the public.
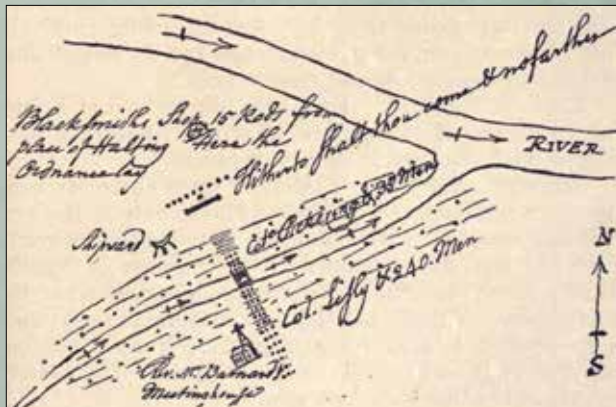
Map of Leslie's Retreat
British General Thomas Gage ordered Colonel Alexander Leslie and his troops to Salem in February 1775. They landed in Marblehead and were observed by Major John Pedrick of the Marblehead Militia. Pedrick rode to Salem to sound the alarm. Leslie and his troops were stopped by Salem's Militia at the North River Bridge. After a brief confrontation, Leslie retreated and marched his men back to Marblehead.

What could have been the first encounter in the Revolutionary War was not to be.
Essex Institute Historical Collections

Lexington and Concord
In April 1775, British concern about colonial stockpiling of weapons and gunpowder resulted in the march on Lexington and Concord. News of the impending action led to Paul Revere's ride to warn "every village and town" that the Redcoats were coming.

Meeting near Lexington that same night were Samuel Adams and John Hancock, along with Elbridge Gerry, Jeremiah Lee, and Azor Orne. It was their fear of being caught by the Redcoats that led Gerry, Lee, and Orne to hide in a cornfield overnight, leading to Lee's subsequent death from pneumonia.

The following morning, April 19, 1775, the American Revolution began.
A View of the South Part of Lexington, 1775.
Courtesy of the New York Public Library

THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION BEGINS

When the unrest that eventually led to the American Revolution began, Marbleheaders took an active part in debates and protests. They felt keenly the need for representation and a voice in governing themselves. They joined committees and worked for the cause. Many fought in the American Revolution, either as soldiers or privateers. Most of those who remained Tories—supporting the King and not wanting to break with England—were literally run out of town. Throughout the war Marblehead men and women worked for the cause of freedom, which led to the ultimate success of the Revolution.

Boston Tea Party
The Boston Tea Party was a reaction against the Tea Act of 1773. The Sons of Liberty, disguised as Mohawk Indians, converged on the East India Company ships and dumped their entire cargo of tea into the harbor.

Dr. Elisha Story of Marblehead was one of the participants in the Boston Tea Party. He was also at Bunker Hill, where he aided wounded Colonial soldiers.
Boston newspaper, 1773

Elbridge Gerry of Marblehead was a dedicated patriot who served the Revolutionary cause and the new United States with distinction. He served in the Continental Congress and was an advisor to General George Washington. He was a signer of the Declaration of Independence. Gerry became the 9th Governor of Massachusetts, and was Vice President of the United States under James Madison (1813-1814).

The Pine Tree flag was the first flag of the American Revolution. In November 1775, Captain John Manley of Marblehead flew the new "Pine Tree" flag, a precursor of Betsy Ross's flag that was most favored by privateers in the first part of the American Revolution. Manley was a very successful privateer, and John Adams wrote, "I assert that the first American flag was hoisted by John Manley, and the first British flag was struck to him."

WASHINGTON'S FLEET

As the Revolutionary War got underway, it became evident that the "people's war" was underfunded and not well equipped. Guns and ammunition had been restricted as imports from England in the years leading up to the war. Elbridge Gerry of Marblehead urged General George Washington to form a Navy, using armed privateers to capture British vessels for their guns and ammunition.

John Glover of Marblehead was authorized to outfit vessels for Washington. The first vessel was one of his own, the *Hannah*. Marbleheader Nicholson Broughton was Captain, and the crew was composed mostly of Marblehead fishermen. The ship was outfitted as a vessel of war at Beverly. She was launched in September 1775, the first ship of the American Navy, known as "Washington's Fleet."

Signatures from the Declaration of Independence, 1776
Elbridge Gerry's signature is on the far right,
6 lines down.

***Washington Crossing the Delaware* by Emmanuel Gottlieb Leutze, 1851**
The most famous engagement of John Glover's Regiment was the crossing of the Delaware River on Christmas night, 1776. They executed a sneak attack on the Hessians, mercenaries of the British army, in Trenton, New Jersey. This was the first victory of the Revolutionary War. Glover and his regiment accomplished an amazing feat, transporting 2,400 men across the icy river. The Marblehead fishermen had the strength and determination to handle the boats they had confiscated for the task. Leutze's iconic painting commemorates that famous moment, important to the Revolution and to Marblehead.

GLOVER'S REGIMENT

When the Revolutionary War began, Colonel John Glover was the leader of the 14th Continental Regiment, which became known as Glover's Regiment. Made up mostly of fishermen from Marblehead, these rugged men were highly valued by General George Washington during the American Revolution.

In the Battle of Long Island, in August 1776, Glover and his regiment saved the Continental Army by executing a retreat, under General Washington's orders. They evacuated over 9,000 soldiers, rowing them across the East River to Manhattan.

At Pell's Point, in October 1776, Glover's Regiment was ordered to guard a defensive position so that Washington could remove his troops from White Plains. This was a significant strategic victory for Glover, which again saved Washington's army.

Glover's account of guns received for use by the 14th regiment, dated 1776
Marblehead Museum Archives
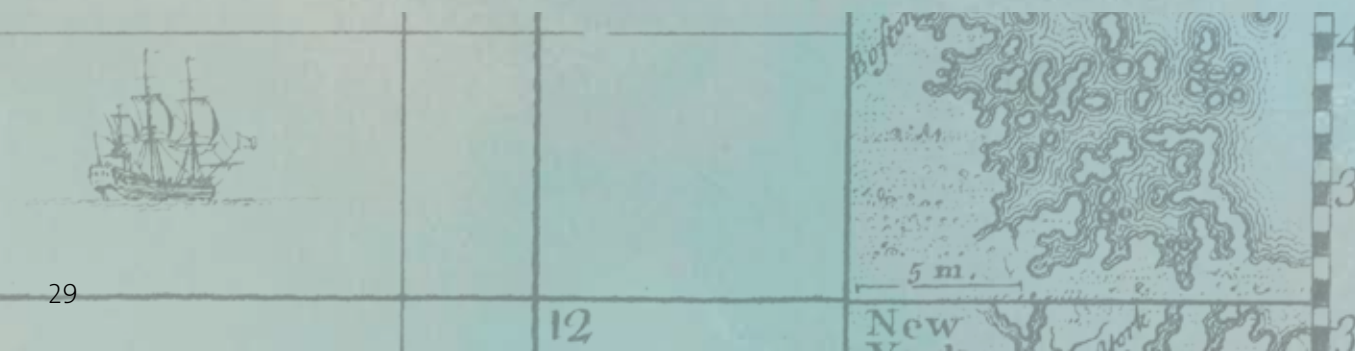
The Marquis de Lafayette (1757-1834) also visited Marblehead, in 1784. He came particularly to honor his friends, General John Glover and Elbridge Gerry. On the occasion, church bells tolled, and everyone in town came out to cheer Lafayette and make him welcome. The Marquis expressed his admiration for Marblehead, "which fought so early and bled so freely" in the noble cause of freedom. He toasted the fishermen of Marblehead and wished "unbounded success to their fisheries."

To the Citizens of Marblehead

2 November 1789

"Your attachment to the

Constitution of the United

States is worthy of men,

who fought and bled for

*freedom, and who know*

its value."—G. WASHINGTON
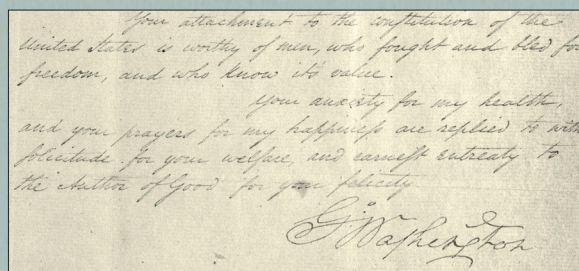
Letter from George Washington to the People of Marblehead, now on display in the Selectmen's Room at Abbot Hall.

AFTER THE REVOLUTION

The American Revolution took all that Marblehead had to give. After the war, the town was in shambles. The fishing fleet was in disarray, as many schooners had been made into privateers and did not survive the war. Many men had been killed or disabled during the Revolution.

At the end of the 18th century, Marblehead began the difficult work of reestablishing itself, working its way back to economic stability, rebuilding its fishing and trading fleet, and preparing for the challenges of the 19th century.

When President George Washington came to visit Marblehead in 1789, he was saddened by the poor and dilapidated look of the town. But he was fervent in his praise and admiration of the people of Marblehead, showing his respect of their courage and patriotism.
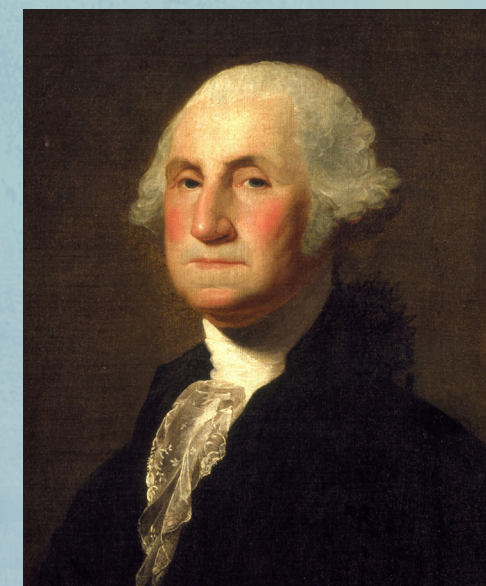
George Washington, portrait by Gilbert Stuart, 1797

Marblehead
Historical
Commission

Cover Images (clockwise from top):
Marblehead Town Plan, Alfred Ingalls, 1795, Massachusetts Archives
Washington Crossing the Delaware, Emmanuel Gottlieb Leutze, 1851
Marblehead in 1649, Sidney Perley, 1926, Essex Institute, Salem, MA
A Mapp of New England, John Seller, 1675, London

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For more information, see the Marblehead Historical Commission web site:
www.marbleheadhistory.org