

Town of Stratham, New Hampshire Incorporated 1716



Living in Stratham

Doing Business in Stratham

Visiting Stratham



Home

Contact Info

Hours / Directions

History of Stratham

[Printer-Friendly Version](#)

- Departments
- Library
- Committees / Groups
- Voting & Elections
- Minutes & Agendas
- Town Ordinances
- Town Calendars
- Stratham Hill Park
- Stratham Fair
- Schools
- Community Information
- Reserve Town / Library / Park Facilities
- Forms / Applications
- Send Us Comments
- Subscribe to E-Notices
- Town Employee Information

Stratham can trace it's roots back to London through a business venture of Edward Hilton, and the Fisherman's Guild of London. When the men first landed with their families and all of their belongings, they began to settle. They then petitioned the Plymouth Council for a grant of land only after setting up a fishery at Hilton Point. It was on March 12, 1629 that the Plymouth Council granted the Hilton Patent which included canacohunt and Squamscott (this is the land that Stratham is now on), to Edward Hilton.

Many of the Englishmen who settled the new land found living conditions very rough, winters very hard and starvation a true possibility. The original inhabitants of Squamscott and their descendants befriended the Indians, treating them with respect. In return the Indians helped them through this very difficult time.

In 1631 Hilton's company in England, sent Thomas Wiggin to the this area to look after their own interests. He was employed to work on a piece of land which was known as Squamscott half way in between Dover and Exeter. Wiggin soon returned to England to gather up more supplies. He returned soon after on October 10, 1633 and began to settle Stratham. Stratham, New Hampshire was formally known by its inhabitants as Squamscott Patent.

The 15.81 square miles known as Stratham was later given to Thomas Wiggin by the men from Bristol who noted his excellent work with the earlier settlement of Dover. He is widely know to be the first settler in the town of Stratham. Before his death he deeded the land to his son who then gave it to his brother, both of whom lived in the town. There are still many Wiggins that live in and around Stratham and in the Southern New Hampshire area. People began to move onto the land of the Squamscott Patent at the turn of the 18th century. During the early 1700's many petitions were made to the Lieutenant Governor George Vaughn over the English Province of New Hampshire. One of those was for the incorporation of the town of Stratham. The petitions were made because the distance that people of Stratham had to travel to get to a meeting house and place of worship was a great inconvenience. The petition that finally gained approval was made on December 3, 1709. It was on March 20, 1716 that the Lieutenant Governor wrote: "Perorder and appointed that Squamscott Patent land be a township by the name of Stratham, and that there be a meeting house built for public worship of God with all convenient speed, and that it stand on the King's Great Road leading from Greenland to Exeter within half a mile of the midway between the two southeast lines of the said town and that a learned and orthodox minister be obtained to preach in the same by the 14th day of March next." And so began Stratham as we know it.

It is not entirely clear where the name for the Squamscott Patent came from. It was formally incorporated as Stratham. There are two likely possibilities, both of which reflect the name. The name may be derived from the name of a town in London, England called Streatham (pronounced "strettam") from where some early settlers may have originated. Another possibility is the name Stratham comes from the word strath which means valley.

[back to Stratham Historical Society home page](#)

Town of Stratham 10 Bunker Hill Avenue, Stratham, NH 03885 (603) 772-4741
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