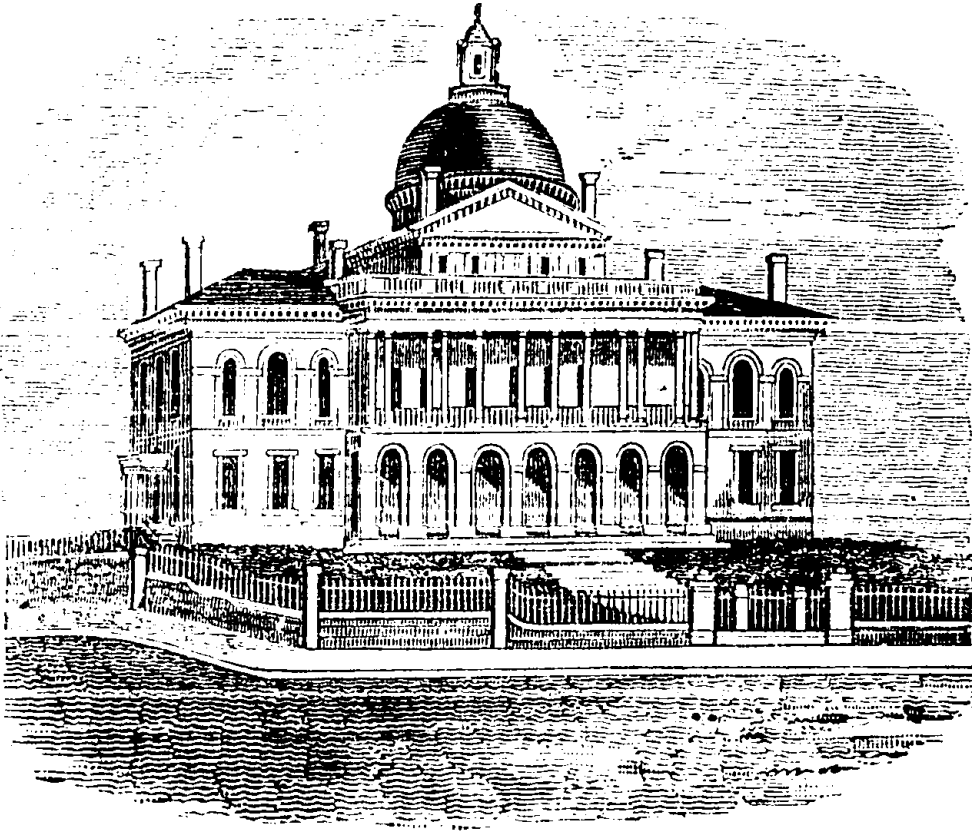


# HISTORY OF BOSTON.



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BOSTON :

LILLY, WAIT, COLMAN, AND HOLDEN.

1834.

## CHAPTER VI.

*Governor Leverett. Great fire. Loss of Charters. Sir Edmund Andros. Connecticut Charter. Expulsion of James II. News received in Boston. Imprisonment of Andros. Sir William Phips. His arrival in Boston. His death. First Newspaper. Benjamin Franklin.*

1. MR LEVERETT was governor of the colony from 1673 to 1679, when he died in the month of March. In early life he had been a soldier. He was much beloved by the colony, and his annual election was never contested. Nothing of importance happened during the time he remained in office, excepting the Indian wars.

2. In 1679 there was a great fire in Boston, which broke out about midnight on the eighth of August, and raged with extreme fury. Eighty dwelling-houses and seventy warehouses were consumed. Several vessels with their cargoes

were burned. It was supposed that the fire was purposely kindled, by some miserable wretches, who were soon after ordered to quit the town and never to return. The town passed a regulation, that a man should be stationed on the top of every meeting house, during the Sunday services, to give the alarm in case of fire. The houses and ware-houses, re-built after this great fire, were constructed of brick, or plastered on the outside with a strong cement, mixed with gravel and glass, and slated on the top. Several of these plastered houses are still standing in Ann street, in their original form.

3. About this time the colonists fell under the displeasure of the English king. In consequence of some offence which they had given, the crown in the years 1684–1687 deprived them of their charters. These charters were parchment rolls given to the early settlers of different parts of the country, signed and sealed by the king of England, at different periods. On these rolls were written the privileges given to the parties holding them, the extent of country granted to them, and the manner in which that country was to be governed.

4. By depriving the colonists of the charters, the king deprived them of the rights and privileges which those charters granted. They had before been allowed to choose their own governor, but in 1686 Sir Edmund Andros was appointed by King James II, governor of the whole country. He was authorized, with four of his council, to make laws, raise taxes, without the consent of any assembly of the

people. Among his other orders he was instructed to allow no printing press.

5. In 1687 the new governor marched, at the head of a body of troops, into Connecticut. It was his intention to seize the charter of this colony by force. The assembly of the colony met, and the charter was brought out into a room, where they were conversing with Andros. The meeting was prolonged till night, when the people rushed into the room, extinguished the light, and secreted the charter in an old oak tree which is still standing in Hartford.

6. James II of England was a Catholic, and attempted to restore the followers of the pope to power. His conduct disgusted the English nation. William, prince of Orange, had married the princess Mary, and on perceiving the discontent of the people, he landed in England with an army, and expelled James from the kingdom. This happened in 1688.

7. When news of these events reached Boston, Sir Edmund Andros issued a proclamation. In this, he charged all the officers and people to hold themselves in readiness to resist any forces, which might be sent to the colonists by the prince of Orange. The people became angry and turbulent at this measure. They heard of the expulsion of James with much joy, and, raising a mob, seized their new governor, with the most active members of his council.

8. The former governor, with several assistants, immediately entered upon the direction of public affairs. William and Mary were soon proclaimed king and queen of England,

and approved the course pursued by the people and the old magistrates. Sir Andros and his friends remained for many weeks in confinement, and at length, by order of the king, were sent back to England.

9. In 1692 a new Charter was granted, and Sir William Phips was appointed the first governor under it. He was a blunt, honest man, ardent and generous, but rather coarse in his manners. He was born in Maine, his father died when he was a mere boy, and left a family of twenty-three children. William bound himself as apprentice to a ship carpenter, and in the course of time engaged in business on his own account.

10. In 1683, when about thirty-three years of age, he sailed from England in search of a rich Spanish ship, which had been wrecked near the Bahama Islands. After one unsuccessful attempt he discovered the wreck, and obtained from it about 300,000 pounds. From this sum he received a very ample compensation. He was soon after knighted by the king, and appointed high sheriff of New England.

11. He held this office for some time, and during his occupation of it resided in Boston. In consequence of some difficulties, however, he returned to England. On receiving the appointment of governor in 1692, he again sailed for Boston, where he arrived about the middle of May.

12. On the Monday following his arrival, he was conducted to the town-house, by the magistrates, the clergy and principal inhabitants of Boston and the vicinity, followed

by a large military escort. The charter was then read, and the commission of the governor proclaimed. A public dinner was afterwards eaten, and the governor was attended back to his house. This house is still standing at the North End, and is now occupied as the Asylum for poor boys.

13. Governor Phips remained but a short time in his new office. He was faithful, but was too hasty and quarrelsome, so that he often gave offence, and many complaints were made against him. He was sent for to England to answer these complaints. After making a sufficient defence, he was preparing to return to his government, when he was taken sick and died in London early in 1694.

14. I have told you a good deal about him, because he was quite remarkable for his perseverance, industry and good sense. From being a poor and ignorant boy, he raised himself to wealth and power. All of us cannot be rich and great, but we can learn, from such an example as that of Sir William Phips, that good conduct and unwearied labor will meet their due reward.

15. The year 1704 is remarkable for the appearance of the first newspaper, published in the English colonies in America. It was printed in Boston on a very small half-sheet, and was called the *Boston News Letter*. There are now in the United States alone more than twelve hundred newspapers.

16. Benjamin Franklin, so distinguished in American history, was born in the year 1706. His father was a soap and

tallow chandler, and Benjamin was the fifteenth of seventeen children. As every thing in respect to great and good men is interesting, I will just mention here that the house in which Franklin was born is still standing. It is at the north part of Boston, at the sign of the Blue Ball, hanging at the corner of Hanover and Union streets.

17. The brother of Franklin was the printer of the second paper published in Boston. In 1721 he published the third paper of the country, under the title of the New England Courant. It was in this paper that Benjamin first began to write. He at first sent his pieces secretly to the office, and concealed that he was the author. Finding that they were well received, he confessed that he wrote them, and obtained much credit for them. These were the first efforts of a poor and humble boy, who afterwards stood with honor in the presence of kings, and was regarded as one of the first philosophers of his age.