



Brockton Massachusetts (North Bridgewater): History 1645-1911

Kenneth E. Bingham

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Describes the history of the places and people of Brockton (North Bridgewater) from 1645 through 1911. Foreword by Kenneth R. Feinberg as follows: Brockton is a state of mind. Its history, going all the way back to the mid-17th Century, and continuing until the present time, tells us a great deal about the character of the City and its diverse population. Brockton grew up with the Nation. As the United States became an industrial giant in the 19th and 20th Centuries, so, too, did Brockton lead the way, primarily with a huge expanding shoe industry. "Shoes from Brockton" was the phrase heard around the world. (During the American Civil War, half the shoes worn by Union soldiers were manufactured in Brockton.) And with this flourishing industry, came a civic responsibility shared by employers and employees alike. Pride in Brockton was the watch word. And the business community, in particular, gave back to Brockton, donating land for public use and supporting numerous secular and religious charitable causes. Meanwhile, a Brockton population—consisting of a healthy mix of Yankee and immigrant residents—became a melting pot in which a rising tide of economic success raised all ships and triggered a civic sense of optimism in all Brockton citizens. It is this community-wide sense of optimism—a collective belief that life's goals could be achieved through personal initiative, determination and allegiance to a communitarian ethic—that accounts for the uniqueness that can be found in Brockton's history. Shared values, community support for each other, a work ethic grounded in cooperation and an optimistic look at the future, all made Brockton a true 19th and 20th Century success story. Even today—with Brockton shoe factories being converted into condominiums and rental apartments, and with community-wide optimism diminished by concerns about Brockton's future—there still remains a recognition that Brockton is "special," that its history and heritage will yet provide the blueprint for a new success story. In this excellent history of Brockton, author Kenneth E. Bingham tells the story of Brockton's beginnings, from its early days as North Bridgewater through its era as an industrial powerhouse in early twentieth century America. Examining these pages gives the reader a clear understanding of why Brockton is unique and why, despite all challenges and setbacks, there is a real enthusiasm and civic pride that can never be extinguished. —Kenneth R. Feinberg Kenneth R. Feinberg is a former Brockton resident who served as Administrator of the Federal September 11 Victim Compensation Fund and One Fund Boston.

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