

A short glimpse into Taunton's long, rich, and diverse history

By Bailey Bisson.

Taunton, Massachusetts, located in Bristol County, has a rich history dating back to the 17th century.

In 1637, Taunton was founded by settlers from the Plymouth Colony. The land was purchased from the Wampanoag Native American tribe and was named after Taunton, Somerset, in England.

As quoted from Samuel H. Emery's book written in 1893, "The 'natives' were recognized by these first settlers as holding, by virtue of birth and possession, rights to the soil and streams which constituted their territory."



Quilt donated to the Old Colony Historical Society to represent Taunton's wool production. Bailey Bisson photo.

During the colonial period, Taunton was a major center for iron production. The town had several iron forges and mills, which produced a wide range of iron products, including tools, horseshoes, and cannons.

In 1774, Taunton played a key role in the American Revolution. The town hosted a large gathering of colonial leaders, who formed a committee of correspondence to communicate with other colonies about British actions. Taunton also had a militia company that fought in several battles, including the Battle of Bunker Hill.

During the 19th century, Taunton became a major center for the production of textiles, including cotton and wool. The town was home to several large textile mills, which employed thousands of workers.

Famously known as "Silver City", Taunton is known for Reed and Barton, a silver company which specialized in crafting silver kitchen utensils, and was established in 1830. In 2003, the silver company officially went out of business, however, the building still remains. There are also Reed & Barton Christmas ornaments still for sale at The Old Colony Historical Society.



Silver created by Reed & Barton at the Old Colony Historical Society. Bailey Bisson photo.

In the early 20th century, Taunton underwent significant economic changes. Many of the textile mills closed down, and the town became a center for manufacturing and commerce. Today, Taunton is known for its manufacturing, healthcare, and education industries.

Taunton has also played a significant role in the arts. The town is home to several museums and art galleries, including the Taunton Art Association and the Old Colony Historical Society.

Overall, Taunton has a long and diverse history, and its legacy continues to shape the town's identity today.



National Register of Historic Places. Bailey Bisson photo.



Silver created by Reed & Barton at the Old Colony Historical Society. Bailey Bisson photo.