

## Benton History Timeline

For thousands of years, generations of Native peoples have moved through and settled the region of this state, beginning with the Paleo-Indian or Red Paint peoples.

1769 Kennebec Purchase (from the late Colony of New Plymouth) was incorporated as proprietors of this area. The land was surveyed and people were encouraged to settle here.

First dam built at the upper falls (in now Benton Falls). It had a gap for fish.

1773 First sawmill in town of Clinton built on Sebesticook (in now Benton).

1776 Revolutionary War

1781 About two dozen families and one dozen men were settled in an area of Clinton briefly known as Hancock Plantation.

1789 Town's first doctor (in now Benton Station) Ezekiel Brown, Jr.

1794 A second sawmill and a gristmill in operation on the west side of the Sebesticook (in now Benton).

1795 Incorporation of Hancock Plantation into the town of Clinton.

"Of Sebesticook" - those settlers living north of Winslow line and along the banks of the Sebesticook River.

1795 Tanning business started on the West Bank of the Sebesticook.

Before 1800 a toll bridge was built and carried away several times by high water.

After 1800 some of the larger mills began making beds, tables, window frames, coffins and wooden ware.

1809 a dam built at the lower falls, with no fishway. It restricted fishing and was cut away several years later.

1811 First Clinton post office established in Flagg's store (in now Benton).

1812 War of 1812

Bridge near the falls rebuilt.

1816 Kennebec Purchase Co. was dissolved. Our region of Benton being part of Clinton, was then under the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

1818 Blacksmith shops in areas of Benton Falls, Benton and Clinton.

A tavern was kept (Benton Falls)

1820 Maine Statehood

A gristmill on the east side on the Sebesticook River at the upper falls, approximately one mile north of the Winslow town line.

1828 Congregational Meeting House: the town's first church structure completed. Last bell to be shipped out of the Paul Revere Foundry, purchased for the Meeting House.

1831 Clinton Female Academy was built beside the Meeting House.

1833 First town meeting hall erected on Town House Hill.

1840 Toll bridge (Clinton's last) became privately controlled.

1842 March 16th the town of Benton was incorporated under the name Sebesticook.

There were nine school "districts".

1849 Library Association was formed and library established in the Clinton Academy.

1850 Town's name was changed to Benton in honor of Thomas Hart Benton ( a prominent legislator)

1853 Traveler's Home closed to the public. The stagecoach was replaced by the steam railroad.

1858 The Academy closed and was eventually sold to District 5 (school house #5).

1870 The library was lost when Clinton Academy burned.

1871 The Academy/school building was rebuilt.

1883 The upstairs hall of the school building was finished.

1888 First fire department organized.

1892 The Methodist Church was built on the west side of the Sebesticook at Benton Proper.

1895 mill in Benton. The river still main mode of transportation. Largest pulp drive (4,000 cords) all destined to the mill in Benton.

1899 An electric railroad was built between Benton and Fairfield, mainly for freight, but also passenger service.

1900 Library at the Falls was established in a storehouse belonging to the old Asher Hinds Store.

The Friends Church was built at East Benton.

1906 Benton Grange was organized at Benton Station school house hall.

1907 Turner Center Dairying Association had a branch in Benton. At one time, over twenty-five tons of milk were handled in a single day. Eleven train cars were shipped in a week. When the railroad at Benton Station was no longer in service, fourteen horses were needed to transport the cans to the railroad station in Fairfield.

1914 Withee Store burned, taking with it the library.

1915 The present Benton Grange Hall was dedicated.

1917 The railroad station in Benton was discontinued.

1925 The town voted to pay for street lights. Prior to this, women of the town baked and served suppers to maintain street lights at the station at Benton Proper and a few at Benton Falls.

1936 Flood: The Seabasticook bridges were swept away.

1942 There are four schoolhouses in use: East Benton, West Benton, Benton Proper, and Benton Falls, in addition, Lawrence High School in Fairfield.

1957 The rural schoolhouses were consolidated. Students attend Benton Elementary on Benton Neck Road.

1958 Schoolhouse #5 was no longer in use. The town sold the building to the Benton Falls Congregational Church for one dollar.

1986 New Seabasticook bridge opened. (Replaced iron arched bridge)

1987 Flood in April

1988 Seabasticook dam built

1990 New Benton Elementary was opened. (for Benton and Fairfield students)