

WATERTOWN:

THE SITE OF THE ANCIENT CITY OF

NORUMBEGA.







LINCOLN

MEDFORD

MALDEN

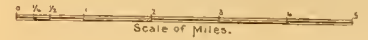
SABANT

REVERE

EVERETT

"RIVER FLOWING THROUGH A LAKE  
INTO THE SEA"  
VINLAND OF THE NORTHMEN

copied Under Instruction by  
Geo. Davis, Civil Engineer.



x = SITE OF LEIF'S HOUSES.

WESTON  
WINTHAM  
WATERTOWN  
BRIGHTON  
NEWTON  
FEEDHAM  
DORCHESTER  
HYDE PARK  
MILTON  
BRAINTREE  
WEYMOUTH

WINTHAM  
WATERTOWN  
BRIGHTON  
NEWTON  
FEEDHAM  
DORCHESTER  
HYDE PARK  
MILTON  
BRAINTREE  
WEYMOUTH

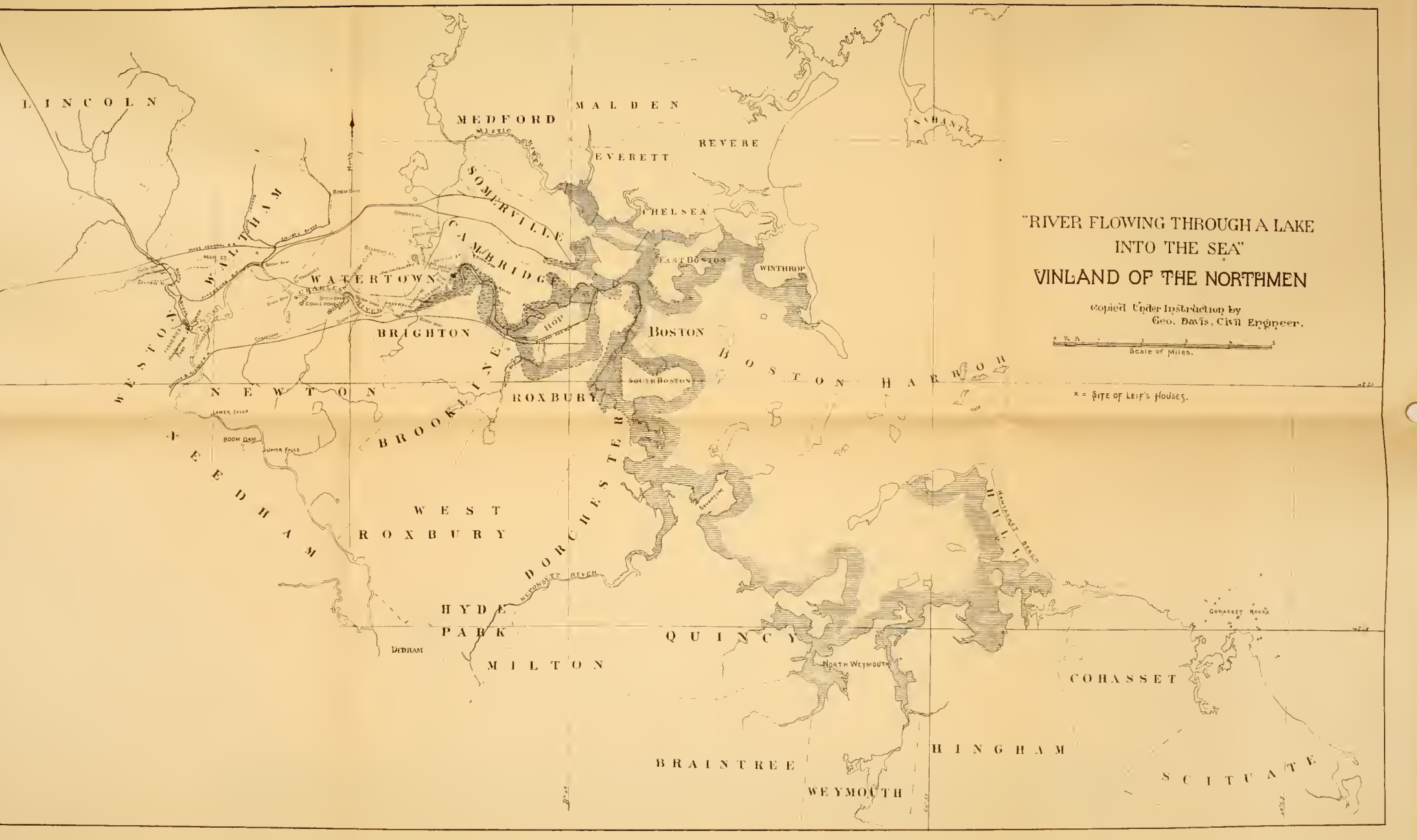
SOMERVILLE  
CAMBRIDGE  
BOSTON  
ROXBURY  
DORCHESTER  
QUINCY  
MILTON  
BRAINTREE  
WEYMOUTH

MALDEN  
REVERE  
EVERETT  
CHELSEA  
EAST DORSET  
BOSTON  
SOUTH BOSTON  
DORCHESTER  
QUINCY  
MILTON  
BRAINTREE  
WEYMOUTH

BOSTON HARBOR  
DORCHESTER  
QUINCY  
MILTON  
BRAINTREE  
WEYMOUTH

BOSTON HARBOR  
DORCHESTER  
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BRAINTREE  
WEYMOUTH

BOSTON HARBOR  
DORCHESTER  
QUINCY  
MILTON  
BRAINTREE  
WEYMOUTH





REMARKS

— BY —

EBEN NORTON HORSFORD

— AT THE —

*Second Anniversary*

— OF THE —

WATERTOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NOVEMBER 18, 1890.





INTRODUCED BY THE PRESIDENT, REV. DR. RAND,

MR. HORSFORD SPOKE AS FOLLOWS:

MR. PRESIDENT, AND LADIES AND GENTLEMEN OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY:

I have to thank you for an election to Honorary membership in the Watertown Historical Society. If anything could add to the pleasure which this distinction gives me, it is that it carries with it an assurance that you look with interest and a measure of gratification on the work of archaeological research in which I have been engaged. It has been my privilege to find that the seat of your society is also the seat of the earliest city in America, north of the ancient Spanish Possessions. I cannot better show my appreciation of the honor you have conferred upon me than by giving you in somewhat new relations, and, in a measure, anticipating my next publication, a brief summary of what I have discussed under the title of the "Defences of Norumbega."

There are three questions involved:

1. Was there a city of Norumbega?
2. Where was it?
3. Who were its inhabitants?

In reply to the first:—

WAS THERE A CITY OF NORUMBEGA:

I shall leave with the Secretary for the use of the Society for a few days a collection, not yet published, of photographic facsimiles of maps and charts bearing on this subject. On some twenty of these maps, which I have placed for convenience on a single sheet, going back to records of 1520, you

will see the name Norumbega, and in most cases a little device near it, indicating that the name applied to a city, as it was called. What does such a display of coincident cartography mean? My interpretation is this: Unless there was a conspiracy extending through more than a century and a half, among the explorers, geographers, and map-makers of most of the prominent maritime nations of the globe — some of whom, as Spain, Portugal, England, France, Holland and Italy, were rivals in the spirit of discovery and acquisition of new countries, there *must have been* a Norumbega. Is such a conspiracy conceivable?

A few years ago, Rev. Dr. Leonard Woods, President of Bowdoin College, found in England, a manuscript copy of a communication entitled "Western Planting." It was written three hundred years ago, at the instance of Sir Walter Raleigh, in the hope of inducing the Government of England — *i.e.*, Queen Elizabeth — to lend the Royal patronage to the encouragement of a grand enterprise for taking possession of and settling, by Englishmen, a country in the Western World, known as Norumbega. Of this country and its almost fabulous natural resources much had been heard. Sir Humphrey Gilbert, a kinsman of Raleigh, undertook an expedition, one of the objects of which was to find the country — and its principal town. It was understood between Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir Philip Sidney, Cecil, Walsingham and others, devotedly loyal to the crown, that a chief end of the enterprise, if not one of the most important, was to establish for England a sort of Bermuda, from which British cruisers might issue to threaten Spanish galleons bearing homeward treasure from the possessions of Spain about the Mexican Gulf; and so compel Philip the Second to maintain a naval force in the waters of the Western Atlantic; and thus prevent the threatened siege and invasion of England by this powerful Catholic Sovereign. This was in 1583–1585. The rumbling of the Spanish Armada had already been heard.

The letter was written by Richard Hakluyt, a very learned young clergyman. In the course of the letter Hakluyt presents the evidence of the riches of the country, in its climate, soil, fruits, and varied productions; in its furs, fisheries and mines; and gives the testimony of men who had visited the country, and the city, and who had seen its resources in material for commercial enterprise. This paper was first put in print some years ago by the Maine Historical Society, and edited by Dr. Woods and the late Dr. Charles Deane of Cambridge.

Why has it received so little attention? Mainly because of the adverse reports and opinions of Champlain and his lieutenant historiographers as to the existence of the city of Norumbega on the *Penobscot*, where he and they had expected to find it. And yet it is to appear that while Champlain's maps of 1612 and 1632 show that he had been conducted to the site of Norumbega on the *Charles* (see Purchas, 1613, p. 628), the few remaining dwellings his party found, were ascribed wholly to the Indians. He could not see in the squalid cabins, which he figures on his maps, anything corresponding to the city his imagination had pictured.

I hazard nothing in saying that whoever now reads "The Western Planting" will not for a moment doubt that somewhere there was a Norumbega.

### NOW WHERE WAS IT?

The sheet of maps to which I have referred, and the numerous others which accompany it, will show you that it was on a river which has borne a succession of names. It was first called the Rio Grande by the Portuguese (1500-1504); then it was Anguileme by Verrazano (1524),—the translation of the Indian Mishaum—Big Eel; then Gamas—a corruption of Gomez (1526); then Soie, on Ulpius's Globe (1542); then Allefonsee spoke of it as the River Norumbergue (1542-43); then it was called Gathas, or Guast

or Gas (De Laet), by Champlain; then Mess-adchu-sec — (Rasles); and before, and after Rasles, the Charles, the name given by Capt. John Smith, in honor of his Prince—Charles I.

Besides all this multiplication of names of one river, there were other sources of confusion: capes and bays and islands along the coast had each borne a variety of names. A country called Norumbega was said (Parmentier) to be near, and to the southwest of, Cape Breton, and Lo! there were *two* Cape Bretons, and they were several degrees apart.

But there came a time when the fact of the two Cape Bretons was recognized and made clear, and by a man whose authority could not be called in question: it was Allefonsee, the pilot selected from all the officers of the French Marine, by Francis the First, to accompany Roberval. This French admiral (also spoken of as Lord of Norumbega) was appointed to supersede Jacques Cartier, who had failed to find a passage through to the Pacific. Allefonsee gave the latitude of the southern Cape Breton, and pointed out near and south of it, as already remarked, a river Norumbergue, on the banks of which, some fifteen leagues from its mouth, he found and described the city of Norumbergue. The cape and the river and the city, according to Allefonsee, were in the 43d degree.

Let us now look at the significance of this determination. On a known north and south coast, all that you need to fix the absolute geographical position of any point, is the *latitude*. Allefonsee gave the position of Norumbega—spelled variously, as you will have remarked—within less than a degree.

But after Allefonsee came Thevet, who described and figured the city, and observed and recorded the exact latitude of the mouth of the Charles River, at Nantasket Roads. He made it 42 degrees and 14 minutes. The Coast Survey makes it 42 degrees 18 minutes.

Now the latitude of Nantasket Roads is within a few minutes of a degree

of the latitude of Boston and of Watertown, which is about 42 degrees and 20 minutes.

On this river Norumbega—the Charles—according to Allefonsee and Thevet, a few leagues from its mouth, was the city of Norumbega. The river runs from west to east for some distance. Where on the river was the city? We may look for traces of some kind.

There are remains of an ancient ditch, forming a loop at the mouth of Stony brook. At the loop was what was called a fort. There was a settlement and a fishery there, and they were mentioned by Thevet. I found the evidences of them five years ago. The fort has nearly the same latitude as Watertown. It is the most considerable ancient work on the river west of us. The mouth of Stony brook is some thirty feet above tide-water. Here at Watertown is the limit of tide-water. Here, in your town, are wonderfully-preserved remains of stone-walled docks and wharves, of a massive stone dam, a walled basin and fishway, and extended stone walls reaching on either side of the river, more perfectly on the left bank, with some interruptions, nearly to the United States Arsenal, a mile below. The office of these river walls in straightening the channel, and so deepening the waters in the docks at high tide, is obvious, on a little reflection. The wall on the north shore may be seen for a few minutes going westward after leaving Faneuil Station, on the Boston & Albany Railroad.

The stone dam gave rise to the fall which created the well-known fisheries of Watertown and Brighton, discontinued since 1860. The fall was the origin of the fisheries, since the fish could not pass it on their way to spawning-ground. The fisheries were here when Roger Clapp came, and he shared the product of these fisheries with the Indians, in exchange for biscuit—an incident appropriately signalized in a familiar escutcheon in your town history. Clapp was the first of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, in 1630, to ascend the Charles beyond Charlestown.

All these stone works are built of what are called rolling-stone. Some of them are tons in weight. These remains are in keeping with the cartography which I have left for your inspection. They are in keeping with the historic paper of Hakluyt. They are in keeping with the latitudes of Allefonse and Thevet. I believe they are the remains of the ancient city of Norumbega. Let me express what seems to me self-evident.

He who, taking all things into account, still doubts that here was the site of Norumbega—of the ancient seaport, on the Charles—has the burden of accounting in the writings of the Puritans, for these miles of walls, still standing, without mortar, and wholly composed of field boulders. In regard to the period of their construction, from the dawn of English colonization in America, history is silent.

The last question is —

#### WHO BUILT AND OCCUPIED THE CITY OF NORUMBEGA?

To this I called your attention a year ago, on the occasion when you did me the honor to come together in the Town Hall, to attend a special meeting of the American Geographical Society, convened to hear the story of Norumbega.

The answer to this question covers also the question of Vineland. Leif passed a winter in Vineland, where the shortest day was nine hours long—that is, it was four and a half hours on either side of midday, and this gives to astronomical calculation, according to Prof. Bugge of the University of Copenhagen, a latitude of 42 deg. 20 min.—the latitude of Boston. Leif's house, the site of which I predicted more than a year before I thought to look for remains of the house, was in 42 deg. 22 min. 22 sec. The Vineland of Leif's time was the place of early Settlement of the Northmen:—as the

region of Norumbega was, later, the Province of the Northmen. The site of Leif's house and the site of Norumbega were scarcely three miles apart.

In the collection of maps which I leave for a while with the Secretary, you will find that this region was the earliest New France. It was the Gallia of Verrazano, 1524, in the region occupied by the Breton French when John Cabot made his Landfall on Cape Ann in 1497. It was the Terra Corterealis of 1500, the Arambe of Ayllon of 1520, and the Land of Gomez of 1526.

You will find, as you glance at the maps, how it came about that the French diplomats, according to Mr. Bancroft, always held that Boston was in the original New France.

You will also find that in this New France was the province of Norvega, which is the same name, precisely, as that on another map by the same map-maker, of the northernmost country of Europe,—Norvega. He gives the name in the same kind of capital letter on *both* maps. Whoever prepared *one* of the charts for Solis, the engraver of both maps (Seville, 1598), was palpably familiar with the story of the Vineland Sagas. Its details of names and outline wonderfully fit the region as given on the map. The Icelandic word Hóp describes the ancient Boston Back Bay. Vigfusson defines Hóp to be—*A small land-locked bay, salt at flood tide and fresh at ebb.* Thorfinn mentions the great Islands at the entrance to Boston Harbor, which appear on all the early maps, where Cohasset in various languages is called the “Cape of Many Islands.” Carenas, the heir of the Kjalarnes of Thorwald and Thorfinn, appears on the map of New France, which contains Norvega; and Claudia, a name marking the early province of missionary effort, appears on that and also on that which contains the Norvega of Europe. *Norvega* in Europe has the geographical place of our *Norway* in Europe.

Norvega is philologically Norbega or Norbegia, and so appears on a great number of maps in my possession. The *v* and *b* are equivalents. Of this I could give you many illustrations:

Our Silver is the Silber of the Germans.

Our Cavalier is the Caballero of the Spaniard.

The Cavo of the Portuguese is the Cabo of the Spaniard.

Balboa and Valboa are the same.

Marvil Head and Marblehead were interchangeable in our early history.

Norvega differs little from Norvegr, one of the earliest names of Norway in Scandinavian literature. Rafn, the author of the *Antiquitates Americanae*, translates Norvegr into the Latin *Norvegia*.

Larousse says "Norvegia or Norbegia."

*Norvega and Norbega are the same.*

The Indians of this region could not utter *b* without putting an *m* before it. I have maps—having on them Noero mbega, Nere 'mbega, Norombega, Norimbega, Naranbergue, Nuremberga, Norimbega, and many other modes of spelling the name. In my collection of maps there are some forty different forms of the name of Norumbega.

Several of them, as you will observe, showed in the printing the suspended utterance before the *b*.

From these various forms of the name to Norumbega, is, to the student of philological and dialectical equivalents, not far.

The province bore the name of the home country, as we have New Spain, New France, New Holland, Nova Scotia, New England, New Belgium and New Sweden, in this country, bearing the names of the parent countries from which the early settlers or discoverers came.

Please hold in your memory that Solis—the best cartographer of all in the sixteenth century who made maps of this region—has left us a chart wholly in keeping with the Vineland story; and this chart plainly says, in the language of cartography, that the valley of the Charles was colonized by the Northmen, and in that valley, within the province of



Norvega and in the country of the original New France, which held the site of the city of Boston, he has placed the city of Norumbega.

To minds constituted like mine, the conviction is irresistible that the city of Norumbega was in a province of Norway,—a district, so-called, settled by Northmen,—and on the banks of the Charles.

### VINELAND.

Now let us look at the name Vineland as applied to the country to which the early Northmen came. The name was given by Leif Erikson in compliment to the grape vines which he found here.

Let us see if this name has been preserved.

You are all familiar with Vineyard Sound and Martha's Vineyard and Vineyard Haven. These are names in use by men of English descent. But two hundred and seventy-five years ago, the Dutch explorers were on our coast. You will find in the collection of maps of which I have spoken, a Dutch map of 1616, and another of 1671, on which in place of Vineyard appears Weingaerts or Wyngaerts—Weingaerts Hoek and Wyngaerts Eylandt, etc. These are Dutch equivalents of Vineyard or Vinyard.

But earlier still—1604—Champlain translated the name into liberal French and called one of the points Bacchus Island—which another Frenchman distinguished by giving the two names “Bacchus *or* Wyngaerden Eylandt.” Now Wyngaerten Eylandt is the Dutch for *Vineland Island*, thus distinguished, as many geographers of the time believed, as one of the cluster of islands making up what was later recognized by all to be a continent. The King of Denmark spoke to Adam of Bremen in the 11th century of Vineland as *one of several islands*. This Eylandt was, therefore, *Vineland*.

Still another Frenchman gave the name Vingaerts Eylan against Cambridge, the very site of Leif's house. Earlier still Verrazano had given the name of Norman Villa, *Northman's House*, to the same point—a spot which I have identified on the Charles. A little later Gomez kidnapped in Boston Bay—where he found the name Norumbega—and carried away to slavery fifty of the trusting natives,—which doubtless led to the law among them,—according to Allefonsee—that condemned to death every man captured in Boston Harbor, who had a black beard. The scene of this atrocity and the jurisdiction over which this law prevailed was in Norumbega,—in Vineland. Was there old Norse vengeance in the blood?

Champlain came to throw a cloud over the site of Norumbega, at the beginning of the 17th century. He saw what was pointed out to him as remains of the ancient city, but could not believe it. Some years earlier Englishmen had visited the city. In 1583 Stephen Bellinger of Rouen told Hakluyt, as related in “Western Planting,” of his visit to the city of Norumbega, where he found great collections of peltry and other articles of commerce; and counted eighty houses still standing; and less than fifteen years earlier—1569—Ingram was here and found a city three quarters of a mile long. He sailed soon after, from the Bay of St. Mary's—well known and on numerous maps as an early name of Boston Harbor, but a few hours distant from Norumbega.

Of the discovery of the Vineland of the Northmen, which, as you may see, preceded Norumbega, but occupied, as later recognized, the same region, time will not permit me to say more than a word.

My paper on the subject is nearly through the press, as well as the other to which I have alluded on the “Defences of Norumbega.” If one could only stop finding new things, in such unexplored and prolific fields, he might promise the date of publication with more precision.

I regret much that, for this want of time, I cannot go a little into the details of demonstration that Leif Erikson landed first at Cape Cod and then came to Boston Harbor; ran aground on an ebb tide, and with the flood tide floated up the Charles to the first convenient landing place, and built his house near the Cambridge City Hospital,—the site and remains of which I have had the honor to point out to some of my friends here present. It is a rather long story, but it will all appear at no distant date.

Let me add to what I have said, as to who were the inhabitants of this region, the record of Peter Martyr, that all through this region were white men, having yellow hair, such as was found by the Pilgrims in 1620 in the grave of a man buried on Cape Cod. These white men narrated stories and sang songs in their households (a usage of the Northmen), and kept chickens, ducks and geese,—had herds of deer, which wandered through the fields and woods by day,—of which herds, the does came home at evening to their fawns, and permitted themselves to be milked. Such was the relation to Peter Martyr by the Spanish explorer Ayllon, who told of Norumbega and Cohasset and Saco and Chicorua and the stretch of coast far to the north, in 1520. Over this Norumbega, of which he heard as Arambe, and many other regions whose names he learned, Ayllon was made Adelantado—Governor—by the Spanish crown. You will find Norumbega on Peter Martyr's map—as Arembi—the abbreviation of Arambec—the dialectic equivalent of Norambec—of Norumbega. It is situated on the river Gamas—the Charles.

Of these white people Verrazano writes in his letter to the King in 1524; and Jacques Cartier in 1534-35. (D'Avezac's *Life of Cartier*.)

But we have a nearer testimony with which you are familiar—to use an Hibernicism—without knowing it. I have discussed it at length elsewhere, and can only allude to it here.

The great King Philip, the son of the Good Massasoit, was a *Wampanoag*, and his home was on Narragansett Bay. Now, the *Wampanoags*

were the people of *Wamp-an-akke*—the White-Man's-land. *Wamp* is "white" (Roger Williams); *an* is "man,"—abbr. of *anini*—(Heckewelder); and *akke* is "land." The White-Man's-land was the Huitra-Manna-land of the Sagas, the land mentioned by Thorfinn as being near to Vineland, and was, not improbably, the land which Verrazano visited and described, in 41 deg. 40 min. on Narragansett Bay, where he found white men, and which to-day holds the ancient Newport Tower.













