

The Narragansett Sun.

HISTORY OF WESTBROOK

THURSDAY, AUGUST 22, 1895

CHAPTER IX.

Samuel Webb an early settler in Saccarappa and first schoolmaster in Windham.—Eli Webb's letter to his half-brother, Samuel of Weymouth, giving an account of the family in Maine.

No history of Westbrook, past or present, would be complete that did not devote more than passing mention to Samuel Webb, the patriarch of a large family of the name in this and adjoining towns, and the first schoolmaster in New Marblehead, now Windham. According to one of his descendants, who reduced much of the traditional lore of the family to writing, he was born on Christmas day, 1696, at a place called Redrift, near London, England. The date, however, does not agree with that given in a letter from his son, Eli Webb of Gorham, to his half brother, Samuel, written the 23rd of April 1807, from which I make the following extract:

“My grandfather, Samuel Webb, was a native of the City of London. He followed the sea; was master of a ship. He was married and had five children, two sons and three daughters. My father Samuel, was the second child. His children were, Margaret, Samuel, Susan, Elizabeth and John (or Hezekiah,) I am not positive which. My father was born in the year 1697. After the death of his father he came to America, and landed at Rhode Island in the year 1716 in the 19th year of his age. Finding himself in a strange land, and not money to support him he bound himself to a blacksmith and learned the trade. After your mother died he married the widow of David Spear late Bertha Farrar of Rhode Island, by whom he had ten children, seven sons and three daughters, David, John, Ezekiel, Seth, Susanna, Eli, James, Josiah, Abigail, Elizabeth, and he moved from Rhode Island to New Marblehead, now Windham, in 1744, where he lived twenty-three years, and then removed to Deer Isle with brother Seth in the year 1767, where Seth and Father both died, as I understand you know and I need not repeat.

Concerning my brothers and sisters, David married and lived in Falmouth and had five children, two sons and three daughters; John lived in Falmouth and had eight children, three sons and five daughters; Ezekiel married his wife at Cape Cod and had one daughter, He followed the sea, and went away and nobody knew what became of him, until the time of the American war he was at Bagaduce, commander of one of the English ships. After then I heard not from him until the year 1791; he came to Portland, master of an English merchantman, and stayed three days and went away without my seeing him. Seth married in Windham and had nine children, and moved to Deer Isle. Susanna married with Thomas Mayberry of Windham, and had two children, son and daughter, and died young. And myself, I have had ten children, five sons and five daughters,—and eight now live; James married in Windham, and had two children, son and daughter, Josiah died at seven, Abigail died at five; Elizabeth married Jonathan Roberts, and has nine children and lives in Buckfield, forty miles from me. This being as accurate as my memory affords me of all from my grandfather. But I suppose all by the name of Webb in this country are akin, for I have heard my father say that his grandfather was the only one of the name that survived (accompanied with one brother) the Plague in A.D. 1666.”

E. WEBB

The forgoing is evidently a postscript and is followed by a second post script from which it appears that the entire letter was written by Mr. Seth Webb, late of Brooks in this state, a son of Eli Webb (of Samuel,) who took much interest in the history of his family, of which he left at his decease a manuscript history of curious interest combining incidents and legends touching the early history of Windham and vicinity. The second postscript is as follows:

“Thus I have penned as accurate an account as I could receive from my father, and if it should prove any satisfaction to you, it will indefinitely compensate me for what pains I have taken. It is

my desire to come to see you but if I never do, I hope we shall be so happy as to meet each other in the world above, where parting will be no more, where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest. May God grant this to be our happy lot for Christ's sake.

SETH WEBB."

The descendants of Samuel Webb are not agreed respecting the name of his first wife. Seth Weeb, of Brooks, states, presumably on the authority of family tradition, that Webb was apprenticed at Siverton, Rhode Island, to a Mr. McIntire, a blacksmith, whose daughter, Mary, he married on Christmas day, 1718; but others of the descendants say that the name of his first wife before marriage was Randall, and that she was not of Siverton but of Weymouth, Mass. Samuel Webb had two sons by his first marriage, Samuel and Thomas, who settled respectively in Weymouth and Hingham. From a letter written me some years since by a great-grandson of the first Samuel, who resided at the time of writing in Weymouth, and bore the ancestral name, I make the following extracts:

"Seth, his grandson, always speaks of him (the first Samuel Webb) as moving into Maine from Siverton, R.I. Did he move to Siverton after marrying his second wife? I have always doubted it. In 1740 he was certainly on Maine. Seth says "he removed from Siverton in 1744 by land to Boston, by water to Falmouth, (now Portland), and so to Saccarappa. By this time the excitement had drawn so many into the place that no one could realize over ten dollars in any way whatever for a day's labor. He bitterly repented leaving Siverton (or Weymouth?), foreseeing that the lumbering business was going down, but he had sold his property at so great a sacrifice that he felt himself poor. He made the best of it, and the next year moved to Windham, on his own land, where his wife's father lived."

Another extract from this letter is of interest as confirming the tradition respecting the location of the first grave in Windham. Seth Webb says: "My grandfather Farrow, suffered extremely from the consequences of the (Indian) war, which so operated upon him and his wife that it shortened their lives. At their decease there was no public cemetery in town, and they were buried near their log house on the banks of the Presumpscot river. After their death their children sold the premises and went away,

leaving no monument to mark the spot. The field grew over with saplings so no one can point out their resting place to this day."

The sons, Samuel and Thomas, according to the letter from which I am quoting, were left in Weymouth by Samuel Webb "with his first wife's father, Captain John Randall, when he moved away. * * * My father told me quite a pathetic story of these two boys, Samuel and Thomas, going down to Gorham to see their father after they had grown to be young men. They walked most of the way. They came to Gorham in the edge of the evening; one of their half brothers was driving up the cows from the pasture, and they inquired if that was Mr. Webb's house. Their father was standing in the doorway as they came up. and they stopped and talked with him, asked him about the farm, the town, etc., their father looking all the while in an inquiring sort of way from one to the other until one said, "Well, you didn't know us?" when he stepped quickly down, and, putting an arm around each, drew them to him, saying, "O, Samuel and Thomas!" But all this belongs to that silent sea of buried hearts, which comes to all ages and all times,—everything to the background of all individual life,—nothing to the story of a country or a town."

I doubt not that this meeting between the father and sons, whom he had not seen for years, took place not in Gorham, but in Windham, somewhere in the first division of home lots of twenty acres each, ten acres on each side of the river road, not inappropriately called, in former days, the "old Dominion." The lot which Samuel Webb took up and cleared was numbered twenty-four, of ten acre lots.

It would seem that when Samuel Webb was drawn hither, Saccarappa was just recovering from its earliest "boom." On the decade preceding, Ingersoll and his partners had built the first lumber mills on its still magnificent water power, and at the period of Webb's coming, 1744, Daniel Godfrey, Thomas Haskell and his sons, and the two Conants, must have been the leading citizens and men of affairs, in the then young and thriving village.

R.

TO BE CONTINUED.

HISTORY OF WESTBROOK

THURSDAY, AUGUST 29, 1895

CHAPTER IX. - CONTINUED.

Tiverton, Rhode Island.—David Webb and the Peabody Family.—Jonathan Webb, an Early Lumber King of the Presumpscot.—Joshua and other children of Jonathan and Mary Coverley Webb.

A town in Rhode Island, not far from Fall River, Mass., still rejoices in the name of Tiverton, not Siverton as the printer insisted upon making me give it in the former portion of this chapter. From Tiverton according to one of Windham's early historians, came several of the early settlers of that town, including John Farrar (or Farrow) whose daughter, Bethiah, at the early age of fifteen years, found herself the widow of one Captain David Spear, and mother of an infant daughter also named Bethiah. This young widow soon dried her tears and entered a second time into the honorable estate of matrimony with Samuel Webb as we have already seen. It was Bethiah Spear, daughter of Mrs. Bethiah Webb, by her first marriage, and not Susanna Webb (who, by the way, married William Maxfield of Windham,) who became the wife of Thomas Mayberry. The eldest son of Samuel Webb, by his second marriage was David, born according to some authorities in Tiverton, R.I., on the first day of July 1727. His marriage is thus recorded in the book of church records by Rev. John Wight, first minister of the church in Windham; "David Webb of this place and Mrs. Dorothy Peabody of Falmouth." The marriage took place on the 16th of November 1749. The bride was designated as "Mrs.," not because of a previous marriage, but in recognition of her eminent respectability, for in that age, especially in England, to speak of a single woman as "Miss," we are told, was to call in question her reputation for chastity. Dorothy Peabody was the daughter of Francis Peabody Esq., and Dorothy his wife of Middleton, Mass., and sister of Mary Peabody, who previous to her own marriage, had become the second wife of Samuel Conant of Saccarappa, as we have noticed in a former chapter. She was born on the 27th day of March, 1720, and was therefore, a trifle of seven years older than her husband. A brother of hers, Samuel Peabody, lived for

several years in the last century on the farm in Gorham, now owned and occupied by Mr. Samuel Fenderson. Another brother, Francis Peabody, Jr., was the father of Joseph Peabody, formerly a distinguished merchant of Salem, who passed several years of his early life with his relatives in Saccarappa, leaving here about 1785.

In the letter from which I have quoted, David Webb is said to have resided in Falmouth, but this is probably not strictly true. His farm was probably always in Gorham, not far from the Falmouth (now Westbrook) line, after he left Windham. On the fifth day of January, 1756, he bought of David Gorham of Barnstable, "one hundred acres of land in Gorhamtown," on which he was living the twenty-third of August, 1764. A daughter, Dorothy, and a son, David, children of David and Dorothy (Peabody) Webb, were baptized by Rev. Mr. Wight. Of those children nothing further is known. Jonathan Webb, son of David and Dorothy, according to the inscription on the headstone in the old Conant cemetery, was born in Gorham the twenty-fifth of November, 1756, and died (in Saccarappa) the eighth of April, 1810. He was for years a leading citizen, and manufacturer and dealer in lumber in Saccarappa, and also kept a public house in the same building, (much modified, however,) now known as the Presumpscot House, and on the same spot. Bethiah, a daughter of David Webb, was married by Rev. Dr. Deane, to Prince Hamblen of Gorham, on the twenty-second of March, 1781. David Webb is described in all conveyances as a blacksmith. On the 25th of Aug., 1763, he and one Thomas Jackson of Falmouth, received a deed from Francis Peabody, Jr., of Middleton, who acted "by virtue of a power from his father, Francis Peabody of Middleton, gentleman, and Dorothy, his wife," of waterpower and mills at Saccarappa. Webb conveys his interest in this purchase to Jackson on the 28th of September following, and from that time, so far as the records are in evidence, had no further interest in lands or waterpower in Saccarappa.

Jonathan Webb, I have little doubt, was employed about the sawmills of Saccarappa from his boyhood, for as we have seen in a former chapter, his maternal grandfather Francis Peabody was interest in mills and water power here as early as 1758; and Webb himself became interested in this class of property when he began to buy up the interests of the Haskells and

others about 1790 and during the two decades following. He was married to his first wife, Mary Coverley, on the 4th of March, 1781. The children by his marriage were:

1—Joshua, born 12th January, 1782, married _____ Quimby. He, like his father, was at one time extensively engaged in manufacturing and dealing in lumber in Saccarappa, and in the zenith of his prosperity erected as his private residence the large brick mansion now used as a boarding house by the Westbrook Manufacturing company. One of his sons was recently living in Lowell, Mass.

2—Mary, born 26th September, 1784, married Samuel Deane Pike, one of the sons of Timothy and Elizabeth (Jones) Pike. She was the mother of the late Samuel G. Pike of Calais, and received by the division of her father's estate the well known Pike field, now owned by the Westbrook Manufacturing company and including the territory now familiarly called "Scotch Hill."

3—David, born 30th November, 1786, married Jane Bailey. She died 17th 1848, and is buried in Saccarappa Cemetery. The date and place of his death are unknown.

4—Elizabeth, born 21st January 1791, married Capt. Henry Babb, at one time a well known lumberman in Saccarappa. Mr. Babb died the first day of February 1834, at the age of forty-nine years. He was a son of William and Elizabeth (Conant) Babb, and like his wife and in the fourth generation from Francis Peabody of Middleton.

5—Dorothy, (usually abbreviated to Dolly) married Col. Geo. Small of Westbrook. She was born the 9th of November 1800, and recently died in Deering in her 95th year.

Mrs. Mary (Coverley) Webb died in 1808, aged thirty-eight years, and Mr. Webb married as his second wife, Susanna Smith, one of the twelve daughters of Capt. John Smith of Stoughton, Mass. By her he had two daughters of whom further mention is reserved for a future chapter. After the death of Mr. Webb, his widow married Capt. Nathaniel Partridge by whom she had two sons. After the death of Capt. Partridge she married as her third husband, the well-known Parson Bradley. She died in 1843, at the age of sixty two years and lies buried with her second husband in the Saccarappa Cemetery.

R.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)