

The Narragansett Sun.

HISTORY OF WESTBROOK

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 1895

CHAPTER X.

Innkeeping in Saccarappa a Hundred Years ago.—Jonathan Webb again.—Prince Hamblen of Gorham and his Descendants.—The Old Thurrell House, where it Stood and what Became of it.

It was earlier than the time stated in the last chapter that Jonathan Webb began to acquire real estate in Westbrook. On the fifth day of March, 1786, he received a deed of "one half of a saw mill, and one-half of the falls on which said mill stands, from Jesse Partridge, this appears to have been the Bailey mill, which stood where the electric plant now is, upon the island. Other fractional interests were subsequently acquired by him from members of the Bailey family. On the third of May, 1793, he bought of General Peleg Wadsworth one-third of the "Forge" which stood where the gingham mill now stands. About this time he acquired by purchase of Mrs. Elizabeth Wise, one of the daughters of Judge Moses Pearson, one-fifth of Forge's Island in Sebago Lake. This purchase was doubtless made because of the timber growing upon this island, which subsequently became a famous resort for blackberrying parties. The twenty-fourth of September, 1787, Solomon Haskell and John Quimby sell him land on the southerly side of the present Main street, adjoining land of Jesse Partridge, "then occupied by said Webb." Probably Webb had previously built on Partridge's land the dwelling that he used as a hotel, which ever after remained his private residence, and was the beginning of the present Presumpscot House, as already stated. From a reservation which was inserted in a deed of his son, Joshua, of a mill which stood on the lower dam on the westerly side of the river, it would seem that Mr. Webb had water for domestic uses brought to his house from the flume at this mill. For this to have been feasible the Main street must have been at a lower grade then, than at the present time. Because of the freedom with which spirituous

liquors could be retailed in these days, hotel keeping was much more lucrative than at present. A small annual license fee appears to have been the only restriction, and Saccarappa with a comparatively small population could at least sustain more than one public house. Jonathan Webb, in 1786, when he made his first recorded investment in sawmills was about thirty-one years of age. It is fair to presume that he had already found innkeeping lucrative in Saccarappa, and was now fairly embarked upon the highroad to a prosperity which was promoted by the aqueduct that ran into his tap-room. Had the supply of beverage from the mill pond been greater, and that from the West India market in exchange for "Jamaica" been less, far better had it been for his thirsty customers, a fact however that few of them would have conceded at the time.

As we have already stated, Bethiah, the only daughter of David Webb of whom we have any account, became the wife of Prince Hamblen of Gorham, who in the several conveyances of real estate where his name figures in the Cumberland Registry of Deeds, is invariably described as a "gentleman." He never resided in Westbrook, but as many of his descendants still live here, and he is remembered by many of our older residents, some notice of him may not be out of place in these chapters.

Like the other Hamblens of Gorham, he is said to have come of an old family of Barnstable, Cape Cod. His father, Samuel Hamblen is said to have married Temperance Lewis also of a Cape Cod family. Samuel Hamblen was a mute. The children of Prince and Bethiah Webb Hamblen are given as follows by the late Hon. Hugh D. McLellan of Gorham, who however had fallen into one or two errors respecting names:

1. Dorothy, married N. Rand in 1798.
2. Nancy, married E. Bishop in 1804.
3. Joseph, died in 1784.
4. Solomon, died in 1785.
5. Fanny, married Isaac Chesley in 1803. She died in September, 1856, aged 70.

6. Sally, married L. Wallace in 1808.
7. Katy, married John Wallace in 1810. (This was probably an error, for on the monument erected by her descendants, her name is given as Dolly, born in 1782, which would make her the oldest child. It is probable, therefore, that the sister who married Rand must have borne some other Christian name. Possibly the error would be corrected by transferring the names.)
8. Bethiah, married Nathaniel Watson in 1825. (I presume they were the couple who long had their home on the "old town house road" in the present city of Deering, near the crossing of the Portland and Rochester Railroad.)
9. David, died unmarried.
10. Dennis, married Sally Crocker and lived in the town of Wilton, Maine.

Prince Hamblen was a Revolutionary pensioner, and lived during the last years of his life in a small house on the old road from Saccarappa to Gorham, directly opposite the homestead of the late Captain Daniel Mosher. It was afterwards used as a workshop by the late Merritt W. Mosher, and is still well remembered by those who had occasion to pass that way a few years since, as standing in a condition of partial collapse during the same period that the various vehicles, machines and other personal property of an ejected tenant were suffered to litter the two sides of the highway in that region for a long distance.

In the last years of his life Prince Hamblen is said to have been in extreme poverty, having little to subsist upon except his pension. In 1799, he leased from James Mosher a small tract of land where the dwelling house, just described stood. This house, according to Colonel McLellan, from whom we have already quoted, had been previously occupied by a family named Thurrell, and had then stood on the spot where the large mansion of Mr. Freeman Richardson now stands. Having purchased this old structure, Hamblen removed it to the land which he had leased of Mosher and made it his home until the time of his death. The lease of the land terminated with his life, and after his death, the house as we have stated was used as a workshop by members of the Mosher family, until its final collapse, which was simultaneous, figuratively

as well as financially speaking, with that of its latest proprietor.

R.

TO BE CONTINUED.

HISTORY OF WESTBROOK

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 1895

CHAPTER X. — CONTINUED.

William and Kiah Webb.—John Webb, who married Susanna Swett, and his Descendants.—James Webb of Stroudwater.—Samuel Parkman, of Boston.—Henry Webb, who married Anne Riggs.

It will be remembered that the statement is made in a former chapter that David and Dorothy Peabody Webb had a son David, who was baptized in infancy by the Rev. Mr. Wight of Windham, the baptism taking place on the 5th day of April 1752. This second David was therefore some three or more years the senior of his brother, Jonathan Webb, the early hotel keeper and lumber king of Saccarappa. Of this David nothing is now known beyond the fact that he was baptized; but I am inclined to the belief, on the strength of a family tradition, that he was the progenitor of certain Webbs who lived on Saco street in the early years of the present century. These last named Webbs bore the names respectively of William and Kiah, and I suspect they were father and son, but the order of the relationship, cannot be determined by any recorded data. William Webb was a house carpenter and was the bearer in his day of an uncomplimentary nickname which will be much better forgotten than perpetuated in these pages. It will be recollected that there was a tradition referred to in the letter of Eli Webb of Gorham to his brother Samuel of Weymouth, that a brother of the Emigrant Samuel remained in London and bore the name of John or Hezekiah; but which of these it was, Eli Webb had forgotten. Now there is no such similarity of sound in these names as to confuse the memory of any person young or old. It is far more probable that John and Hezekiah were both familiar names in the family, somewhere and at

some time, and Eli Webb had forgotten which of these belonged to the uncle who had remained in the old world. Again "Kiah" being only a common abbreviation of the old scripture name of Hezekiah, the latter was doubtless the baptismal name of the person who lived on Saco street; hence the conjecture. Which is hazarded as such and nothing more, that William and Kiah Webb were connected with the family of David Webb of Gorham and through him with that of Samuel of Windham. If I am wrong, I trust that some truth-loving and benevolent person will put me on the right track, for facts, in matters of this sort, are worth infinitely more than conjectures.

Another family of Webbs connected only remotely, if at all, with the family of Samuel of Windham, are still honorably represented in Westbrook by persons bearing the name, and others. They are the descendants of John Webb who was born in 1750, probably in Falmouth, but in what part of the old town I am not informed. On the 6th of November 1781, this John Webb was described as John Webb Jr., in a conveyance to him of land on Scarborough from one Knight. This land was near the present Coal Kiln Corner, on the road leading from Buxton to Stroudwater. Here he took up his residence and lived for many years, and here most, if not all of his children were probably born. He was married on the 27th of July 1779 to Susanna Swett, by Rev. Thomas Brown. Stephen Swett a brother of Mrs. Susanna Webb lived at one time on the westerly side of the road from Cumberland Mills to Portland on a spot near the present residence of Mr. W. H. Holston. He was the father of Capt. Joshua Swett, at one time a leading citizen and business man at Little Falls, (Gorham.) John and Susanna Swett Webb are known to have had the following children, but I do not undertake to give them in the order in which they were born:

1. Thomas, married Lydia Bickford. Their descendants are believed to be living in Portsmouth or Dover, N.H.
2. John settled in Danville, now included in the city of Auburn, Maine, where he left descendants.
3. Stephen married Mary Paddon of Portland. He lived at first on the farm with his father in Scarborough, but subsequently purchased and resided upon the Chute farm in Windham. The farm is still owned and occupied by his son John, the

father of our fellow citizen ex-Mayor Mahlon H. Webb. It was on a portion of this farm that the first settlement in Windham was made by Capt. Thomas Chute, who came hither from Massachusetts, and not from London, as most writers have asserted.

4. Mary married John Goodell, of Windham, well remembered as "Potter Goodell," whose earthenware, once in general use in Windham and the adjacent towns, was rendered all the more famous by the quaint recommendations of the man who was employed to "peddle" it. This eccentric individual is still quite as well remembered by the older inhabitants as the articles which he was employed to sell.
5. Betsey married Josiah Freeman of Scarborough and Windham. They had three sons and two daughters. Stephen W. Freeman, of Windham, and Hon. Benjamin Freeman, now deceased, a member of the Executive Council when Hon. Lot M. Morrill was governor, were their sons.
6. Hannah married Isaac Gibbs Walker of Scarborough and Westbrook. She died in 1878, at the age eighty-eight years. Moses B. Walker, the well known teacher and a former principal of Westbrook Seminary, was their son; as was also the late Isaac Walker, a very successful instructor in the terpsichorean art. Mrs. Babb, now deceased, the wife of our venerable fellow townsman, James Babb, was their daughter.

Mr. John Webb died in Windham in 1835, at the age of eighty-five. In 1777 the following Webbs were taxed in Falmouth, which then included all of this old town except Cape Elizabeth, which had received separate incorporation in 1765. viz.: John Webb, John Webb, Jr., John Webb, 3d, William Webb, William Webb, Jr., James Webb, Henry Webb. It may be that the father of John Webb, who married Susanna Swett, also bore the name of John; but be that as it may, I am well assured from information obtained some years ago from

an aged member of the family who has since deceased, that James Webb and Henry Webb, named in the above list, were brothers of the John whose children we have just given.

James Webb and Henry Webb both lived at Stroudwater. James is described in real estate transactions as a trader, and was at one time in possession of large tracts of land in Bakerstown, now Poland. But he subsequently met with financial reverses and his real estate at Stroudwater was levied upon by Samuel Parkman and Edward Blake of Boston, who went to the length of settling out a part of the dwelling house in which he lived to satisfy their demand. Samuel Parkman was a wealthy merchant in Boston, and the father, I think, of Dr. George Parkman of tragic memory, and grandfather of Francis Parkman, Jr., the distinguished historian, lately deceased. Samuel Parkman was the original proprietor of the town of Parkman, in Piscataquis County, which on its incorporation was named in honor of himself. It is probable that James Webb had bought his merchandise from him at wholesale with the disastrous results above noticed.

Henry Webb is described in old deed as a mariner. He was married on the twentieth of March, 1778, to Anne Riggs, by Rev. Thomas Browne.

One of two traditions is perpetuated in most American families regarding their ancestry. The first is that of the three brothers, who came over and separated; one remaining at the landing place and the other two going, the one south and the other east. The other tradition is that of an English great-grandfather (never more remote) who had no relatives of this side of the Atlantic. The latter tradition I have encountered in both of the older families of Webbs, now represented in Westbrook; and its unreliability is fully demonstrated in the case of the descendants of Samuel, if not in that of the other families.

R.

TO BE CONTINUES.