

The Narragansett Sun.

HISTORY OF WESTBROOK

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 1895

CHAPTER XIV.

A Soldier's Discharge over the Autograph of Gen. Washington.—Who was Joseph Curtis?—Captain Joshua Brackett and his company of Minute Men.—The Bracketts and other Families in Westbrook, lineal Descendants of George Cleeve the first settler in Portland.

“By His Excellency George Washington, Esq.; General and Commander in Chief of the Forces of the United States of America.

These are to certify that the Bearer hereof Joseph Curtis private soldier in the Second Massachusetts Regiment, having faithfully served the United States six years and being enlisted for the War only, is hereby discharged from the American Army.

Given at Head Quarters the tenth day of June 1783.

Go : Washington.”

The rarest of the curios in Mr. Henry B. Walkers collection of Lunt papers is that just transcribed. And who was this private soldier, Joseph Curtis, who being enlisted for the war only, had “faithfully served the United States six years?” At the date of his enlistment he was a rebel against his king, but now, on the tenth day of June 1783, he was a patriot, nay more in the land which he had helped to make a sovereign nation, and where there were no more kings, he was a prince. Some time or other he was a citizen of old Falmouth, says tradition, and abode upon the same farm now owned and occupied by Mr. Walker; but I fail to find that he was ever a land owner. His name does not occur in the Cumberland Registry of Deeds. We are left, therefore, to infer that he was a member of one of the Lunt households, perhaps a relative who had no family of his own, and subsisted after being discharged from the service till the time of his death upon his pension. When he was born, where he came from, and when he died are matters upon which I have no information whatever, but his discharge paper over the characteristic autograph of him who was “the first in the hearts of his countrymen,” is now an invaluable relic and should

save his humble name from oblivion for a long time yet to come.

I have indicated an intention in a former chapter, of dealing at some length with the history and genealogy of the several Brackett families who were among the very early settlers in this town; but I fear that to a great extent the intention will have to be accepted in lieu of the performance. The first Bracketts of old Falmouth were Anthony and Thomas, sons of Anthony of Portsmouth, “Selectman.” Concerning them the late Hon. William Willis writes as follows: “We first meet with Anthony's name in 1662, as witness to the delivery of the Bramhall farm to Hope Allen, June 3rd of that year. He married Ann, the daughter of Michael Milton and occupied the 100 acres granted her by her grandfather, George Cleeves at Back Cove. “He subsequently enlarged his farm to 400 acres.” These were the lands now occupied in part by the well known Deering mansion in the city of Deering, and the pleasant suburban village of Oakdale. Mr. Willis continues: “His brother Thomas married Mary, another daughter of Michael Milton, and occupied the homestead on Clark's point. Thomas Brackett was killed near his dwelling house, in 1676, by the Indians; and Anthony, by the same enemy, on his farm at Back Cove, in 1689.” All the Brackett families who settled in what is now Westbrook, were descendants of these two brothers and their descendants as well as the descendants of the Proctors and Larrabees now residing in this city, are also the descendants of Portland's first settler, George Cleeve. From Thomas Brackett, the distinguished statesman Hon. Thomas Brackett Reed is a direct descendant. The line lately given me by Mr. Reed himself is as follows: “Anthony Brackett of Portsmouth, Thomas Brackett (killed by the Indians in Portland,) Joshua Brackett, Anthony Brackett, Thomas Brackett, Mary Brackett, (married Joseph Reed,) Thomas B. Reed, senior, Thomas B. Reed junior.”

Zachariah Brackett, whose father, Anthony, was killed by the Indians in 1689, returned to the Back Cove farm in 1720. He sold the farm about 1740, and moved to Ipswich where he died in 1751. His children were as follows:

1. Sarah, born 1st March 1709, married 1st Isaac Sawyer of Back Cove, 2nd Jonathan Morse.
2. Jane, born 18 January 1711, married Daniel Mosher of Gorham.
3. Anthony, born 25 August 1712, married 1st Abigail Chapman, 2nd Abigail a daughter of Joshua Brackett. He died 1775.
4. Abraham born 3rd July 1714, married Joanna Springer 1743, died in 1806. The foregoing were born in Hampton New Hampshire. Those who follow were born in Falmouth.
5. Zachariah, born 30 November 1715, married Judith Sawyer in 1742, and died in 1776. He lived at or near Stevens Plains.
6. Thomas married Mary Snow. He probably settled near Pride's Corner in Westbrook, and it is probable that John Snow Brackett, whose name occurs in William Lunt's ledger was his son.
7. Susannah born 13th February 1720, married John Baker in 1740.
8. Joshua, born 7th June 1723.
9. Abigail, born 21st August 1727, married James Merrill 3rd of Falmouth. The name of James Merrill occurs in Lunt's ledger and it is probable that he also lived in the vicinity of Pride's Corner, or perhaps, within the present town of Falmouth.

Joshua Brackett (8.) above named, who was born in 1723, married Esther Cox, a daughter of John Cox, commonly called "The old Ranger." It will be remembered that Cox has a grant of land on the northerly side of the Presumpscot, which included the Proctor mill privilege within its limits. The Cox, Proctor and Brackett families were all connected by intermarriages and it is probable that several of the name settled as neighbors, on that account, near Pride's Bridge and vicinity. Joshua Brackett lived probably on the farm lately owned by Alton C. Brackett who appears to have been his descendant. He was captain of a company of minute men in the war of the Revolution and marched with them to Cambridge in 1775. It was in this company that Daniel Lunt, afterwards Captain Lunt, first served. According to Willis, Captain Brackett who died in Westbrook in 1816, had by his wife Esther Cox, children as follows:

1. Anthony who lived in Westbrook, where the family of the late A.C. Brackett now live.
2. James who lived in Westbrook.
3. Abraham who lived and died in Limington.

4. Joshua, who also lived and died in Limington.
5. Tabitha, married _____ Tobey.
6. Mary, married Benjamin Lunt.
7. Samuel died in the army of the Revolution.
8. Joseph died in Westbrook.

R.

TO BE CONTINUED.

HISTORY OF WESTBROOK

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 1895

CHAPTER XIV. – CONTINUED.

Several Brackett families of Portland, Westbrook and other towns and cities. Their connection with the Warren, Fabyan, Quinby and Proctor families.

The first Bracketts who settled in Portland married daughters of Michael Mitton—not Milton as the compositor made me say in the first part of this chapter. According to Mr. Willis there were two families of Bracketts among the early settlers of New England, one in Boston and one in Portsmouth. The first of the name found in New Hampshire was William, who was sent to Piscataqua in 1631, by Capt. John Mason among "his stewards and servants." Anthony Brackett who is supposed to have been the father of Anthony and Thomas who came to old Falmouth, is known to have been in Portsmouth in 1740, in which year he gave a deed of "glebe lands" to the church wardens for a parsonage. It is probable from this that Brackett, like most of the early settlers in Portsmouth was an Episcopalian; in fact this town seems to have afforded refuge for Thomas Walford and other Episcopals whom the Puritans found in possession and at once proceeded to exile from Charlestown and other Massachusetts towns. Walford, here mentioned, I suspect of being the maternal grandfather of Colonel Thomas Westbrook, a native of Portsmouth, probably, and not of England as Mr. Willis supposes, from whom this city was named.

Thomas Brackett, who, as we have seen, married Mary Mitton and was killed by the Indians in 1676, is known to have had a son Joshua born in Greenland, N.H., (whither the family had fled during the Indian wars) in 1701. This second Joshua and his brother Anthony born in Greenland in 1707, returned to Portland upon the re-settlement of the

town, and became large land holders. Joshua died in March 1794 aged 93 years. Anthony married 1st Sarah Knight in 1733, and 2nd widow Kerenhappuck Hicks in 1756. I have not learned whether there were any children by the first marriage, as the dates of his children's births I have been unable this far to find. His second wife who was the daughter of Samuel and Sarah (Brackett) Proctor seems to have been his cousin. He died in 1784, aged 77 years. After his death a large tract of land was set out to his widow from his possessions in the upper part of Portland, which was long known as the "Brackett dower." His children ten in number were:

1. John, who married Mary Fabyan of Scarborough. He lived in Saccarappa in the same land now owned by Mrs. Conant on the old Gorham road. His son John, Jr., married Jane Warren, daughter of John and Jane (Johnson) Warren, and sister of the well-known lumber merchants John and Nathaniel Warren. He lived at one time on the farm in Gorham, now owned by Samuel Fenderson, but subsequently removed with his family to Parsonfield. John Brackett, Sr., had other children as follows. Mary married Eleazer Burbank, Lucy married Asahel Foster of Harrison, and Sally who married 1st. Simeon Quinby and 2nd Thomas Mayberry. She was the mother of the late Charles Quinby, who lived on Main street, where B.F. Roberts now lives, and of Simeon Mayberry, who lived on the Windham road in the house now owned by Abner L. Hawkes.
2. Thomas whose daughter Mary was the great grandmother of Hon. Thomas B. Reed.
3. James.
4. Mary whose second husband was James Smith. It was at the house of her grandson, James Smith of Gorham, that the widow Kerenhoppuck who usually wrote her name "Happy Brackett," died in 1822, at the age of 93.
5. Joshua settle in Gorham near South Windham, formerly known as the "Factory Village." Most of the name in that vicinity and several in Portland are believed to be his descendants.
6. Elizabeth married Dr. James Brackett of Lee, N.H.
7. Keziah married _____ Bancroft.

8. Samuel who appears to have died unmarried in Portland.
9. Nathaniel of Portland, followed the sea.
10. Sarah married Joshua Fabyan of Scarborough. I have the impression that she was left a widow by the death of Fabyan and subsequently married Solomon Haskell, Jr., as his second wife, his first wife who died the 17th of May 1806, at the age of 40, being a daughter of Peletiah March, who as has been already noticed in a previous chapter, married as his second wife, the widow of the older John Brackett.

It was by Marsh and his second wife, Mary and the children of Brackett, that the homestead on the Gorham road was conveyed to Daniel Conant, Sr., from whom it passed by descent and conveyance to the present owner.

From another family of Bracketts, Brackett street in Saccarappa received its name. The block of brick houses on this street, a little off from Main, was built by Zachariah Bangs Brackett, the father of our late fellow townsman, Sewall Brackett. Z.B. Brackett came to Saccarappa from Pride's Corner some half century, or more, ago, where he had previously owned a farm. I am unable to discover the manner in which he was connected with any of the other families of the name who precede him. He had a brother Barnabas who lived, at one time in Denmark in this State, and a brother Joseph who was a prominent member of the New Gloucester society of Shakers. His name would indicate that he was connected with the Bangs family of Gorham, and it is probable that members of the Bangs and Brackett families united with the Shakers who once had a settlement in Gorham, at the same time. From recitals in conveyances on record in Cumberland county, it would seem that Z. B. Brackett was in some way connect with the Stevens families of Stevens Plains.

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TO BE CONTINUED.