

The Narragansett Sun.

HISTORY OF WESTBROOK

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19, 1895

CHAPTER XVII.

The Babb family of Westbrook.

The Babbs are an old New England family, whose ancestor came over, most likely, with the first settlers of "Strawberry Bank," now Portsmouth, N.H. As early as 1653, a Philip Babb lived upon one of the group known as the Isles of Shoals, and in some record of the vicinity, but I have failed to note whether of Portsmouth or some other town, I find that Mary Babb, daughter of Peter Babbe, was baptized in 1713. I also find in the same record that Jeanne Babbe, daughter of Philip, was baptized in 1719, and Philip, son, no doubt, of the same Philip, in 1726. From records of marriages in Portsmouth, William Colton and Esther Babb, both of said Portsmouth, were married the 6th of May, 1741. The church records of Greenland, N.H., formerly a part of Portsmouth, show baptisms of children of Philip Babb, as follows: Peter, 1730; Nathaniel, 1732 and Judith, 1735. Persons of the name were among the early settlers of that part of Scarboro' known as Dunstan, having come hither, I suspect, in the employment of Col. Westbrook. Southgate mentions John and Nathaniel Babb among the Dunstan settlers, and says that Nathaniel was one of the Scarboro' colony who settled in Machias, where he and one Munson won as a wager a barrel of rum for moving a stick of timber after a pair of oxen had failed to do so. The first of the name of whom we find a record in Westbrook was James, who sometime in the last century bought land of Westbrook and Waldo. This was probably the same land now occupied by our venerable citizen, Mr. James Babb.

William Babb, a son of this first James, has been already mentioned in these chapters. He was born, as he informs us in a deposition recorded in the Cumberland Registry of Deeds, "within a mile of Saccarappa." In 1805, when the deposition was given, he was sixty-three years old, making it obvious that the year of his birth was 1742. In a deed dated the 3d of March 1807, he conveys to his son Henry, his interest in the land, one hundred

acres, which his father, James Babb, had bought of Westbrook and Waldo. William Babb married, before 1770, Elizabeth, daughter of Samuel and Mary (Peabody) Conant, who according to a deposition given at the same time with that of her husband, was three years his junior. The children of William and Elizabeth Babb whom we do not attempt to give in the order of births, were as follows:

1. Solomon, born in 1770, died in 1854. He was the father of the late Oren Babb, and had his home where the widow of Oren now lives.
2. Alexander, married Esther Wescott. He had sons, Smith and Samuel C., and several daughters, and lived where Smith Babb now lives.
3. George, the father of our fellow townsman, David Webster Babb.
4. William, Jr., who had a son Solomon, a daughter who married Samuel Cox, and another daughter, Mrs. Stephen Babb, still living in this city.
5. Henry, who married Elizabeth, a daughter of Jonathan Webb, and was engaged extensively in the manufacture of and sale of lumber. His residence was the house on Bridge street next south of that of the late Rufus King. Mr. Henry Babb died in 1834 at the age of 53.
6. Daniel, married Abigail Freeman, a daughter of Enoch Freeman, Jr., still pleasantly remembered as "Aunt Nabby."
7. Lucy, married Samuel Plummer who came to Westbrook from Scarborough
8. Elizabeth, married Hugh (?) Woodbury.

I have been unable to ascertain the precise connection between the family of William Babb and the other families of the name in Westbrook. I am informed by Mr. James Babb, already mentioned that his father was one of seven brothers but the name of their father I have not learned. The names of the brothers were as follows:

1. Peter, married Lucy Bailey, and had sons, Charles and Peter, and daughters, Mary L., married Nathan Libby, Apphia married

- James Frost, Jane married Gardner Waterhouse, ____ married Joseph Whitten. Charles Babb married Rebecca Proctor and was the father of Mrs. B.J. Woodman.
2. Joseph, who was drowned the 5th of April, 1819. His sons were Elias, Henry C., Lemuel, John and Joseph. John married Rhoda, daughter of Abel Quinby and was the father of the late John Redding Babb, Marshall L. and several daughters.
 3. Zebulon, father of Warren P. Babb, and daughters, Philena, widow of William Mayberry, still living at a great age, Mrs. Elwell, Mrs. David Dyer, and Mrs. Montgomery Anderson.
 4. Nathaniel, whose son Josiah died a few years ago in California. He left a daughter who was the wife of the late Tritten Best and mother of John L. Best of Portland.
 5. Mark, who married a daughter of Daniel and Anna Haskell Conant and settled in the town of Harmony in this state.
 6. Capt. John, who lived on the farm now occupied by his son, Mr. James Babb, and Isaac G., the son of James. The late Samuel S. Babb was also a son of Capt. John Babb.
 7. James who died young.

On the 24th of June 1760 a Peter Babb was married in Falmouth to Anna Haskell. The bride is supposed to have been one of the ten children of the old Patriarch Thomas Haskell already mentioned in previous chapters. Anna Haskell, the daughter of Thomas, was born the 22nd of April 1737. It is possible therefore, that her husband was Peter, son of Philip Babb, who was baptized in Greenland, N.H., in 1730. So much in favor, however, was the name of the great Apostle as a praenomen in the Babb family, as to occasion no little difficulty by its frequency in the public records. In 1770 a Peter Babb, of Falmouth purchased land of Nathaniel Jose of Scarboro' and in 1788 and 90, Rhoda Babb, widow of Peter was living in Windham near Great Falls. The 26th of August, 1841, Peter Babb of Westbrook, deposes that he was seventy-one years old the 10th of that month, was born in Westbrook and went with his father to Great Falls when he was sixteen years of age. From his own statement of his age he must have been born in 1770, so that he would have been sixteen years old in the year 1786, which makes it possible that he was the son of Peter and Rhoda; and if he was identical with the person of the same name who married Lucy Bailey, Peter

and Rhoda must have been the parents of the seven brothers above named; but this is mere conjecture, and as we have remarked in a former chapter, conjecture is of little value where certainty is attainable.

Other Babb families have settled in Gorham and other towns in Cumberland Country where their posterity is numerous.

It may be of interest to persons of the name or descent to know that Mr. Edwin A. Babb whose address, in 1803, was 505 Sears Building, Boston, Mass., is collecting materials for a complete genealogy of the family.

R.

TO BE CONTINUED.

HISTORY OF WESTBROOK

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 26, 1895

CHAPTER XVII. – CONTINUED.

Some facts concerning the Johnson Family of Westbrook.

It was announced in advance that in the preparation of these chapters a history, in the proper sense of the word, would not be attempted; but rather a somewhat immethodical bringing together of materials for the use of the future historian. With the present issue these articles have appeared from week to week for a period of ten months, a much longer time than was anticipated when they were begun. The subject is still very far from being exhausted, but not so the materials which have been collected by the present writer. It is deemed advisable, therefore, to suspend the work for the present with the hope that it may be resumed and finished at a later day. It will have been noticed by the reader that up to this time, we have dealt for the most part with the history of families, avoiding as much as possible the dry details of mere genealogy. But in pursuing this course the fact has not been lost sight of that the beginnings and subsequent growth of the great industries that resulted in the planting of two large and prosperous villages in the valley of the Presumpscot, which have since become united as a still more prosperous city, would form the subject, in competent hands, of a series of very instructive and entertaining chapters. The work of gathering the histories of the early families, however, is still hopelessly incomplete, and is only

given up at the present time, as already stated, for the want of data.

One of the first grantees of the water power at Saccarappa in 1729 was John Bailey. Of him and his descendants too little is known to justify an attempted sketch of them at the present time, and the same may be said of the Partridges, Smalls, Trickeys, Barbours and several other families whose ancestors were among our early settlers.

The same is true of the Johnsons still residing in this and the adjacent towns. There is reason to think that most of the Johnson name who settled in this vicinity were of one kindred. Johnsons were among the early settler in York county, but I have suspected that the progenitors or progenitors of those who settled in old Falmouth came with the Scotch-Irish immigrants who landed at Cape Elizabeth in 1718 and after a winter of great privation departed to Londonderry, N.H., where they were early settlers. Included among these colonists, who were called "Irish" at the time when they came, is said to have been John Barbour, ancestor of all of the name in this vicinity, as also persons bearing the names of Means and Armstrong. They doubtless embarked from Ireland in coming to America, but they were for this most part Presbyterians and were the descendants of Scotch families who had settled in the north of Ireland during the religious wars which succeeded the Reformation. Among the Cape Elizabeth colonists were persons bearing the name of Anderson, but it is not known that any of the name in this region are their descendants. In one family at least of the Johnsons of Westbrook there was a tradition that their ancestors were from Ireland. This was the family several generations of which resided on Saco street, on the farm lately owned by Rufus and Gardner Johnson, both now deceased, sons of Jeremiah Johnson. James Johnson, the first of this line of whom we find any mention, was in Falmouth as early as 1767, in which year he conveyed to his son, George Johnson, father of Jeremiah, above named, one hundred acres of land near Stroudwater which he had purchased of Gen. Waldo.

In the deed he is described as a weaver. Afterwards George Johnson conveys the same land to John Johnson Jr., which makes it evident that there must have been a John Sr. The land conveyed began at the corner of Porterfield's land which was the same in part at least now embraced in the farm of Mr. Edward Trickey on the Stroudwater road in the city. The farm on the same road formerly the homestead of the late Cushing Pratt was sold in

1791 to Samuel Batts of Portland, by a James Johnson who describes it as the land which he had purchased of Waldo and Tucker and William Porterfield. On this farm was born according to tradition the late Charles Johnson Esq., of Windham Hill, who was the father of the late Mrs. Anne Johnson Walker of Portland, wife of Joseph Walker, who gave to Westbrook, the Memorial Library. The most of the Johnsons appear to have bought their farms of Waldo or his heirs. In 1765 John Johnson of Falmouth sells his son Robert Johnson one moiety of the farm where he lives which he had purchased of Samuel Waldo. In the same vicinity at a still earlier date lands (at Birch Hill) were owned jointly by Benjamin Johnson and John Bodge. Bodge is supposed to be the person of the same name who soon afterward went to Windham, where he married the daughter of Thomas Chute, the first settler in that town, and through his son Benjamin, became the ancestor of all of the name in this vicinity. A Robert Johnson purchased one eighth of a double sawmill at Saccarappa in 1761, of Benjamin Godfrey, being the same which Benjamin had purchased of Daniel Godfrey.

The father of Robert Johnson as we have seen bore the name of John, and Robert had a son who bore his own name who settled in Gorham, presumably in the present "Johnson neighborhood" of that town where his descendants have long been thrifty and enterprising farmers.

George Johnson, son of James the weaver, is known to have had sons, George, Jr., Francis and Jeremiah, and a daughter Anna Sinnett. Jeremiah married a daughter of Capt. Nathaniel Hatch and succeeded to the homestead of his father, the well known Johnson farm on Saco street, above mentioned. George Johnson, Jr., married Anne (or Nancy) Quinby a daughter of Benjamin Quinby, clothier, who came to Saccarappa about 1785, from Somersworth, N.H. Francis died unmarried. Nancy a daughter of George Johnson, Jr., married Nathaniel Knight of Windham, and was drowned at Little Falls, in 1808, by the horse running off the unrailed bridge. It was the occasion of her death that inspired one Thomas Shaw, a somewhat famous rhymester of his day, to write the wretched doggerel ascribed in the "Poets of Maine" to Nathaniel Hawthorne.

R.