

Westbrook History Quarterly

*The Newsletter of the Westbrook Historical Society:
A Society That Preserves The Past*
Spring 2011 – Donna Cousens Conley, Editor

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As we leave 2010 and move into 2011 there are new and exciting things ahead for the Westbrook Historical Society. The biggest thing is our anticipated move into new quarters at the Westbrook Community Center. This move will give us better exposure and accessibility to the membership and the public. Hopefully by the next newsletter we will have plans locked in place for this move and we can share them with the membership.

We also have some great programs lined up for our upcoming monthly meetings and I look forward to seeing you there.

I want to thank the Officers and Board of Directors for the great job they continue to do and it is my pleasure to work with them. Hope to see you soon!

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Scott Dyer, Windham, ME
Brenda Miles Perry, Steuben, ME
Wayne Chick, Westbrook
Raymond Ouellette, Westbrook

Memorial Gift Plaque addition: Clifford Thompson
[refer to Standing Rule #15 of our By-laws]:

ANNOUNCEMENTS

2011 marks the start of the country's celebration of the sesquicentennial of the American Civil War (April 12, 1861 – April 9, 1865). Visit your Society at 17 Dunn Street to see a display about Westbrook's contributions to that event: photos, diaries, artifacts, medals.

CLOUDMAN RELIEF CORPS, NO. 18

The National Woman's Relief Corps, Auxiliary Fraternity of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), was a patriotic organization organized in Denver July 25, 1883. Its purpose was to provide aid and comfort to all veterans and their dependents and to promote patriotism.

Locally the Cloudman Relief Corps No. 18, Auxiliary to the G.A.R. was organized in 1884. At that time only mothers, wives, daughters and sisters of soldiers and sailors in the Civil War were eligible for membership; in later years granddaughters, nieces, grandnieces, and cousins of veterans as well as army nurses were eligible to join the Corps.

The Relief Corps provided flags for the Cloudman Post No. 100 and for several schools, raised a monument in Riverbank Park as a memorial to veterans of the Civil War, provided a tablet for the Walker Memorial Library which lists all veterans who enlisted from Westbrook, and all names of veterans who resided in Westbrook after the war.

A collection of Cloudman Relief booklets, applications, photographs and pins may be seen at the Society. We are proud to remember this Westbrook organization.



THE MUSEUM CORNER

DID YOU KNOW?

By Hal Cram

[Taken from Portland Telegram June 7, 1914]

- That the section known as Cumberland Mills was at one time an Indian planting ground?
- That the lumber business began in Westbrook in 1729?
- That Deering was a part of Westbrook until 1871?
- That the (Presumpscot) river drains 23 district lakes?
- That the town sent over 100 men to the defense of the Republic in the Civil War?
- That 20 of these volunteers died during services?

The following item appeared in a local newspaper in 1976:

Percy Conant and his daughter, Eleanor Conant Saunders, collaborated to pose a list of puzzlers to those who attended the dedication of Bicentennial Park in Westbrook Sunday [July 7, 1976]. The dedication program asked, "Can you recall and identify locations?" of the following list.

Recently we asked Eleanor, who is a long-time active Honorary member of the Society, to fill in the answers for our clarification. A partial list follows:

- Little Canada – North St., area of St. Hyacinth School
- Hottentot – old name for Cottage Place
- The Flats – lower Main St., from City Hall to Riverside St.

Cellar Field – sunken field bordered by Conant, New Gorham and Saco St.

Scotch Hill – Bridge, Walker, Pike and Webb Sts.

Irish Hill – from Saco to Spring St.; the hill area

Dagger Town- Polish neighborhood: Falmouth and George Sts.

French Town- Brown St. from Bridge to Cumberland Sts

"Pork" Hill – old name for what's now Park Hill; [this was a corruption of the name 'Park Hill' because the English garrison was situated there and the English ate a lot of pork, whereas the local ate more beef]

Lost Nation – area off to the left side of Longfellow St (after 108 Longfellow) that was not passable in mud season

Duck Pond –US Rte. 302, Highland Lake region

Saccarappa – original name of village at west end of Westbrook

The Village - Saccarappa Center

Brickyard – Hawkes Brickyard, Hawkes St (where Hannafords is now)

Pride's Corner –Rte 302 from Presumpscot River to corner of Brook & Bridgton Rd (actual corner)

Ammon Congin – old name for Cumberland Mills; original name of village at east end of Westbrook

Cumberland Mills – area near Sappi (SD Warren Paper Mill); old village at east end of Westbrook

Bird Land – development off County Rd near Spring St: Oriole, Cardinal, Finch, etc., Streets

The previous two articles, in complete form, and other interesting facts about Westbrook can be found in the Society's extensive collection of scrapbooks, news clippings and reference books.

A Few Recent Gifts to the Collection

1881 – 1882 *Portland Daily Press* Newspapers (articles about trial of Pres. Garfield's assassin.)

Knowlton Machine Co. photos

Sisters From Hardscrabble Bay, by Beverly Jensen

Valentine Hose Co., Eng. #2 call group photo, 1965

ROOT Family records

LABRECQUE Family genealogy

For those of you with computer access, check out:

<http://augustlegacy.blogspot.com/> for some interesting history on the ALBERT/GAGNON family of Westbrook

Remember this?



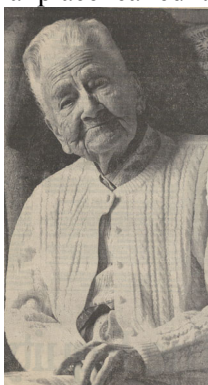
Paper City Lunch and the Brown Block...later became the Warren Memorial Library building.

The role that common wives and mothers played in our history is often overlooked. How they must have struggled under severe hardships during the early settlement years of our state and city! How difficult it must have been for them to manage the household duties, child rearing and the outside work while their men were off fighting for our freedom or lost to the ravages of war. But old diaries, letters and interviews sometime offer the opportunity to look into their lives.

[The Historical Society is seeking people interested in doing oral histories such as the one that follows, which was done by Vaun Born in 1976. Please contact any board member if you would like to assist in this very important piece of Westbrook history preservation.]

Pearl Parker Bachelder (1887 – 1988): Interview

I was born [in Westbrook] May 9, 1887, in a place called the beehive on Brown St. It was probably the first apartment house ever built in Westbrook. It was built by the S.D. Warren Co. for their employees. My Dad [Phineas Cushman Parker] was an employee of the mill, and mother said it was a very nice place. ...I lived there about five years, then we moved to the other side of the river to Rochester St...



Before I entered the Forest St. Grammar School --it was practically a new school then-- I went down and stood on the corner of Main St. and Forest St. and watched many men come out from that school in uniform. They were about to march away to a war which they never found, the Spanish-American War, and they were in uniform. They had been drilling there every week... They came back... at the end of a few months, some of them in very poor health; but that was Co. M of the Maine National Guard, and perhaps my first appearance with it.

We've come to the year 1898 and several important things happened, and I have memories of those days, happy and unhappy. One Saturday [after Thanksgiving] proved a stormy day, Saturday night one of the worst storms I ever remember. The next thing I remember was a beautiful Sunday morning, one of the most beautiful days you can imagine after that terrible storm, sun shining, pure white snow everywhere. My dad went down to the drugstore to get the Sunday paper, as always; and he came back with a troubled look, and he said, "They tell us the Portland has not come in. She was

due at 3 o'clock this morning" and mother said, "Well, of course that boat didn't go out last night in that terrible storm," and dad said, "She did, she did go out and she hasn't appeared. They're all worried." And indeed they had cause to worry. That was the famous Portland storm when the Steamer Portland went down with over 100 people on it; and for many, many years nothing was ever heard of her, nothing at all. Finally she was located down off Cape Cod somewhere where she still lies; and every year there is an anniversary observance of that terrible storm where wreaths were thrown in the water in memory of the Portland men who went down. It's still called the Portland storm. There were dozens of vessels that went down. That was such a tragic event with everybody on it going. On our Street lived a Mr. and Mrs. Verrill. Mr. Verrill was the Chief Engineer on the Portland, and as the day went on mother went down to call on Mrs. Verrill, to see if there was any news. Although there were telephones, we didn't have one, so we didn't know all of the news as it came in as we do today. That storm has left an imprint on my memory I shall never forget; that and seeing the boys go away to war. Alas I have seen other boys go away to other wars since, and it's always a tragedy, I think....

The full transcript of this interview may be read at the Society library and a diary and cap of Chief engineer Charles E. Hodgkins of the Steamship Portland may be viewed. Mr. Hodgkins was not aboard the Steamship that fateful day.



Olive A. Quinby: Diary

The following article contains excerpts from two letters written to John O. Quimby by his wife Olive A. Quinby. [It is interesting to note that Olive spells her name Quinby whereas John signed his letters as Quimby.] John was a resident of Westbrook who enlisted in the Union Army at age 35. He mustered in on September 29, 1862 as a musician (drummer) in Co. E of the 25th Maine. He mustered out in Portland on July 10, 1863. As was common at that time, his enlistment was for nine months.

Saccarappa Nov. 30, 1862 Sunday Eve,
My Dear Husband,

I take my pen to write you a few lines...

The children are well...I have a very bad cold and cough have felt most sick some time but my cough is loose and I think will soon be better. I received your letter ...was very glad to hear from you... I don't feel as lonely if I get a letter, it is company for me...

Thanksgiving day brother Neal and wife invited me and the children to dine with them and we went had a very nice dinner but it was different from any other Thanksgiving I have ever enjoyed for it was not like having you at home an having Thanksgiving ourselves but we must expect changes perhaps it is all for the best we will try and think so if we can... I am very sorry that there is so many of the boys sick but hope they will all get better soon. I feel very thankful that you are so highly favored and blessed with health...

Mrs. Brown had a box with Horace's things in it yesterday, [*Horace T. Brown enlisted 12/10/61 in Co. E, 13th Me. Infantry and died 10/13/62 @ Fort St. Phillips, LA*] ...she feel very bad poor woman I pity her. She is very patient and seems to put the best side out. She is a going tomorrow into the house where Mr. Jewett moved out. Will is getting better, James Brown is living but very sick don't think he will live but a short time, Kate is not so well as she was before Ira got home.

[About] my beets and turnips, have as many as I can eat all winter, my cabbage is rather slim but 5 or 6 good heads as many as I shall use for some time, quite a lot of loose heads. I wish you were here to help eat them don't you.

Saccarappa Dec. 24, 1862
My Dear Husband,

Wednesday Eve, I take my pen to write you a few lines this eve, it is now eve before Christmas. I was in hopes to get a letter from you today but did not hope to get it in the morning. We are all well as common and hope this will find you much better than when you last wrote. I have felt very anxious to hear from you again, I have feared that you was sick so you can't write now I don't know what I should do if you were very sick and I could not take care of you and be where you was but think if you were very sick I should come out there where you was but I hope for the best and that you are better.

O the unhappiness this war makes, how I wish it was at and end and peace proclaimed throughout the land. It has come to an end with a good many in their last battle and a great many are mourning themselves to death at home about them that is gone but we must keep up good courage that is all the way we can live, it is for only nine months

and we will try and not worry through that if we can.

I have tried to get me some hard wood but can't at present, it is the feeling here now no snow as soon as we have some snow to make sleighing it will be hauled in to market the I will have some, it is 6 dollars a cord and slabs is rise to 4 dollars. We get nothing but what we have to pay higher for then we did in the summer, someone is making money out of this but it won't be the soldier that has gone and gets 13 dollars a month.

Now John tomorrow is Christmas, perhaps you will like to know what I have bought to put in the stockings for the children have gone to bed and I hung them up. Well I bought each a book, Belle's was 14 cents, Sarah 17 cents and a few cents more of candy, that is all I felt able to buy. I tell them there cloaks was a Christmas present and I think they will feel satisfied in the morning. Belle want to know what I wanted, I told her I wanted you to come home the most of anything and so she thought she did but she and Sarah went out and bought me something and have put it in my stocking so in the morning I can see what I have got, nothing great for 9 cents I don't think but all I want of candy now.

The children [send] their love and a kiss and a Merry Christmas, my love and a good kiss and God bless you and bring you safe to me is my prayer. Now good night John for this time and receive this from your wife. Most affectionately yours

Olive A. Quinby

God bless you and bring you back to me.
A Kiss for you.

That Ham fellow that tended for Clay that went to war was wounded in the foot and has head home to have his foot taken off.

A transcript of the Letters of John O. Quimby, Drummer, Co. E 25th Me. Vols, may be read in the genealogy section at the Society. Olive's letters are contained in that transcript.



1861 issue 1¢ postage stamp

Martha Roberts (1842 – 1897): Diary

Martha Roberts was born to Joshua D. and Ellen Babb Roberts in 1842. The family lived in the brick house at 342 Saco, where Martha would live her adult years, married to her 2nd cousin, John L. Roberts. In her diary of 1863 [transcription may be read at the Historical Society], Martha writes of life in Westbrook. A woman never went unaccompanied to town, after dark, whether by sleigh, or horse or wagon. Her world was small as she usually writes of visiting relatives and taking tea.

As for life on the farm, she is alone this year as her husband in enlisted in the 25th Me., Co. E, and is away in Arlington Heights near the Nation's Capitol...She has a great deal of family support and is busy with her daughter, Flora, who is three. Many women in Westbrook are working in the mills, but she is able to stay home. She fills her time with knitting stockings for her husband and making garments for her family. As a homemaker, she writes of making cornstarch pudding for supper. News in the town was often noted. Pauline Woodman was married today. Temple Snow married today. Lewis Edwards opened his store today, another newsworthy entry.

Most of her entries regard her neighbors, the Quimbys, the Partidges, the Trickeys and the Hatches and her relatives along Saco Street. They all helped each other and helped with chores when someone became ill. There were some entries mentioning a circle held at Father's where 50 people attended. [The Circles referred to various organizations which were in place to help those in need. The Martha Washington Society was one such group which had roots in Westbrook.]

Travel was slow. It was a big event to go to Portland, usually consisting of shopping, and visiting relatives, sometimes taking dinner with them.

Martha's life included much socializing. She attended usually two church meetings on Sundays and wrote of various Westbrook Regiments coming home from the Civil War. ... she wrote that her husband had arrived home at midnight and she prepared a meal for some men from his Regiment who would be continuing their journeys home.



Martha died at the age of 57 and was buried in Saccarappa Cemetery.

Thanks to Suzan Roberts Norton for the use of this abridged story taken from her blog at: //blog.likes2write.com

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

March 2, 2011 - The July 4, 1866 Great Fire of Portland - Don Whitney, retired Portland Fire Department Lieutenant, and Mike Daicy, a Portland Firefighter on Engine 11, will speak about the events and consequences of this devastating Portland fire. Don and Mike are both historians and members of the Portland Veteran Fireman's Association which runs the Portland Fire Museum. They have collaborated on a book about the event

April 6, 2011 - Antique Postcards - Patti & John Vierra from the Pine Tree Post Card Club will share the history of antique postcards. They will also display some of the magnets and matted prints that they create from old post cards

May 4, 2011 - From the Hedgerows of Normandy - During WW II Dick Goodie served as a squad leader in the storied Third Armored Division where he earned five Campaign Stars. His recent book, *Raindrops on a Nail Keg*, includes several essays of the war's major battles presented in a day-in-the-life-of mode of a young combat soldier. Now living in Westbrook, Mr. Goodie will speak of his war experiences.

May, date to be announced - 5th Annual Westbrook Immigrant Program, featuring stories, photographs and memorabilia related to some of the immigrants who settled in our City. [This will be a Saturday afternoon program and an extra program for May.]

Note: If you would like your family featured in the Immigrant Program, please notify Suzan Norton at 809-9723 or stop by the Society.

All programs are free and open to the public. If you have an idea for a future program, please contact Suzan Norton or any board member.

Watch the web site for an updated Program listing

Westbrook Historical Society

Purpose and Principle

The purposes of this Society are to bring together those people interested in the history of Westbrook, Maine, and to discover, collect, and preserve any materials and objects that establish and illustrate the history of the area. The Society shall make all such materials and objects accessible for viewing or study on the premises. The Society shall arouse interest in the past by holding meetings open to the general public, by marking historic buildings, sites, etc. and by using other media to gain public interest in Westbrook history.

The membership meets regularly for business and entertainment at 1:30 o'clock on the first Wednesday of each month, with the exception of July and August.

Officers

President- Mike Sanphy
Vice President- Roberta Wyer Dutton Morrill
Secretary- Andrea Pacillo Vasquez
Treasurer- Nancy Joy Curran

Directors

Suzan Roberts Norton – Al Waite
Nancy Crump – Diane Turgeon Dyer
Donna Cousens Conley

Email address

info@westbrookhistoricalsociety.org

Webpage

www.westbrookhistoricalsociety.org

Tel: 207-854-5588

The doors of the Westbrook Historical Society are open to the general public every Saturday morning, 9:00 o'clock to noon. Capable volunteer staff is present at that time to help visitors with their interests and their needs.

The doors are usually open again on Tuesday mornings while volunteer workers are doing their chores, at which time the general public is also free to visit.

Westbrook Historical Society
17B Dunn Street
Westbrook, ME 04092

**Meeting: Wednesday, March 2, 2011
1:30 PM at 17B Dunn Street**

“The Great Fire of Portland, 1866”