

Westbrook Historical Society

"A Society That Preserves the Past"

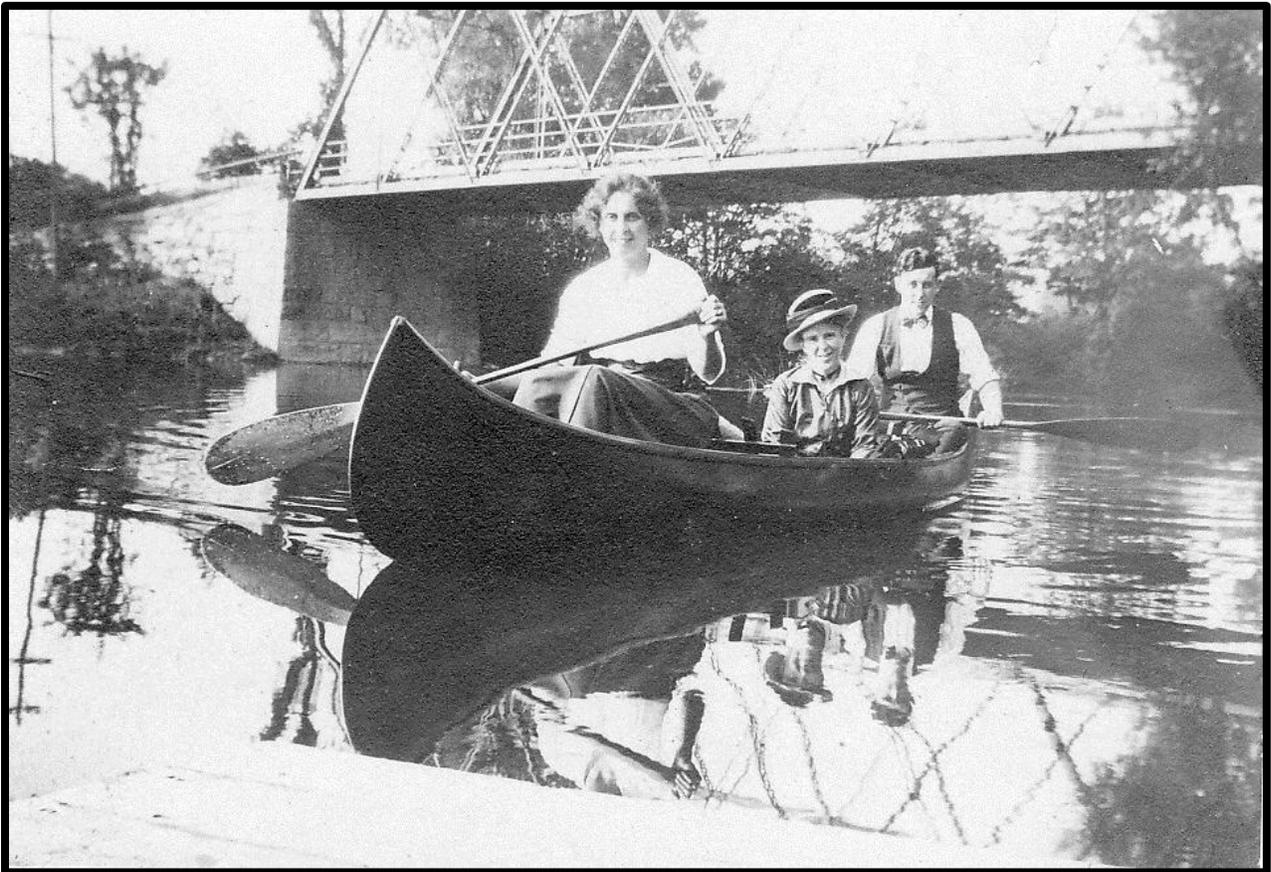
Spring 2013

Purpose:

The Westbrook Historical Society meets regularly in its rooms at the Community Center at 426 Bridge Street, Westbrook at 1:30 pm on the first Wednesday of each month. The purpose of the Society is to bring together those people interested in the history of Westbrook, and to discover, collect, and preserve any materials and objects which establish and illustrate the history of the area.

SPRING COMES TO THE PRESUMPCOT

The photograph below depicts boating on the Presumpscot River in 1916 adjacent to Riverton Park and the Forest Avenue Pride Bridge. In the boat are Vaun Born's father, Jim Dole, and grandmother, Alice Dole. A friend, Winnie Curtis, is the lead paddler. Vaun Born is an active member of the Westbrook Historical Society and has generously shared this family picture.



CIVIL WAR REMEMBERED

Approximately 73,000 Mainers served in the Union Army and Navy during the war, the highest figure in proportion to population of any northern state.

In the early months, Maine met its draft quotas easily, furnishing altogether 31 regiments of infantry, three of cavalry, and one of heavy artillery, along with assorted companies of artillery, sharpshooters, and unassigned infantry, and 6,000 sailors for the Navy.

Many served with distinction. The 7th Infantry, for instance, fought bravely during the Peninsula Campaign in spring 1862 at Williamsburg, Garnett's Farm, and White Oak Swamp, winning acclaim from Major General George B. McClellan, and again under Major Thomas W. Hyde during the desperate battle of Antietam in September 1862 at the Piper and Roulette farms. The First Maine Heavy Artillery suffered more battle losses than any other federal regiment (having 12 companies rather than 10) in an attack on the Confederate defenses at Petersburg. Joshua L. Chamberlain of Brewer best exemplifies Maine's role in the war. A Bowdoin College graduate and professor of rhetoric and modern languages at Bowdoin at the time of his enlistment, Chamberlain took part in 24 major battles, was wounded six times, and led a desperate charge at Petersburg in 1864. He is most remembered for his role in the valiant stand taken by the 20th Maine at Little Round Top during the battle of Gettysburg, for which he was awarded a Congressional Medal of Honor.

More than 150,000 soldiers fought in the three-day battle, resulting in 50,000 casualties and making Gettysburg the largest battle ever fought in North America. On the first day, holding actions by units of Maine's 2nd Artillery and 16th Infantry helped delay Lee's advance while Union forces found positions. On the second day, Lee sent troops in a flanking maneuver around the southern slope of Little Round Top, where Chamberlain's 20th Maine Regiment was positioned. The troops held up under relentless Confederate assault, and as their ammunition ran low, Chamberlain, by his own account, noticed that southern troops were equally exhausted and nearing the end of their own supplies. In a desperate gamble, he ordered a bayonet charge.

The 20th routed the Alabama infantry and halted the Confederate flanking maneuver. Chamberlain was later promoted to brigadier general and chosen to receive the surrender of the Confederate Army at Appomattox.

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An article in the Portland Evening Express on April 14, 1921 paid tribute to 25 Civil War Veterans still alive and living in Westbrook. Many of them were not born in Westbrook, but moved there before enlisting or arrived after the war to find employment in Dana Warp Mill and S. D. Warren, for example, or set up their own business.

"When the great struggle was finally ended and the boys came marching home, many of them with empty sleeve and scars of battle, some people wondered just what would become of them." At the time of this article the "boys" were in their 70s and 80s and had done well.

Entitled the Wearers of the Little Brass Button the article pictures each of the 25 Veterans and gives a brief description of their experiences. The newspaper article is on display at the Westbrook Historical Society. Following is a list of the 25 individuals included.

- Franklin F. Andrews – 13th Maine Regiment
- Alphonse M. Swett – 12th Maine who served as orderly under Col. Edwin Lindsley in the Campaign of Shenandoah Valley, Savannah and Thomasville.
- John El Thompson – 16th Maine – Battle of Fredericksburg where the Regiment lost 50% of its members.

- Albert Graffam – 9th Maine
- William H. Kelley – 144th New York Volunteers
- Francis A. Cloudman – 5th Maine Volunteers—at that time was the oldest living Westbrook Mayor
- Hebron Mayhew – 1st and then 10th Maine – battles at Winchester, Cedar Mountain Rappahannok, Antietam, Sulphur Springs.
- James W. Morris – 20th Maine Volunteers
- George F. Hunt – 17th Maine – Peninsula Campaign, Fredericksburg, Cedar Creek, Fortress Monroe and others.
- John W. Jordan – 5th Maine – four years in major battles
- Philemon Harriman – enlisted at age 15, witnessed the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, Cedar Creek, Marvin Hill, Winchester, Antietam, Red River campaign under General Banks.
- Peter S. Graham – 20th Maine under Joshua Chamberlain
- Ambrose Goozey – 1st Vermont Heavy Artillery – Second Bull Run, Shenandoah Valley, Winchester, Cedar Creek, Fishers Hill, Richmond, Petersburg.
- George Bixby – 12th Maine Regiment
- Elias Howard – 25th Maine
- William H. Holston – 7th Wisconsin Battery
- William P. Hadsdon – 12th Maine – Battle of New Orleans, Shenandoah Valley with General Phil Sheridan, Red River Campaign
- Hezekiah Elwell – 1st Maine Regiment. 10th Maine, 29th Maine – Many battles
- John Van Bushkirk – 12th Maine
- William Roberts – 25th Maine
- John O. Winship – 5th Maine Regiment
- Wesley C. Herrick – 32 Maine Regiment
- Eben Leighton – 20th Maine
- Woodbury K. Dana – 29th Maine
- Joseph Anthoine – 25th Maine, 7th Maine Battery

Other Civil War information at the Historical Society includes all the names of Westbrook residents listed in the [Civil War Research Database](#). This lists names, residence, age, companies in which they served with dates and transfers along with dates they mustered out.

The obituaries of Civil War veterans are available. These give much information for genealogy searches. Many other interesting items are available. Among them a [Diary of a Musician from the 30th Maine Regiment Band](#). Here is a sampling of the entries:

- Feb, Sunday 14, 1864 fine weather and think of home all day
- Feb, Monday 29, 1864 Weather fine – Gammon sick- orders to go to new Orleans- Gammon sick and cannot go – a man of the 29th cut his fingers off and the Dr kills him.

- March, Monday 29, 1864 Weather rainy – marched at 9 o'clock – hard marching in forenoon – very good marching in afternoon – went in camp at 5 – marched 18 miles – went to camp in a cornfield – had a bad headache – got some tea of the Dr and drank and feel much better.

Reading this gives one the flavor of the times.

Access to the transcription of this diary is on the Westbrook Historical Society website.



Small sample of materials and information available at the Historical Society

VETERANS MONUMENT DEDICATED IN 1917

From article in American Journal of May 24, 1995

The monument in Riverbank Park of the Civil War Rifleman was donated by Mr. and Mrs. Woodbury K. Dana. Dana fought with the 29th Maine Regiment in the Civil War, and in the year after that war ended founded the Dana Warp Mills, which became one of the city's biggest industries.

In June 1914, when Westbrook was celebrating its 100th year as a town, a Monument Association was organized to raise funds and plan a design of a monument for the park as a fitting tribute to all veterans. Oscar G.K. Robinson was Mayor of Westbrook at the time. On July 4, 1917 he accepted for the City the 8-foot marching bronze figure in Civil war uniform atop its 9 ½ foot base of Barre granite. It was the work of sculptress Alice Ruggles Kitson of Quincy, Mass. It was cast by Gorham Manufacturing Co. of Providence. The granite base was placed by the City under contract with Charles Ames of Westbrook. The expense of \$500 for the base was listed in the City Annual Report of 1917. A portion of the \$500 came from the schoolchildren of Westbrook who purchased shares in the Monument Association at 10 cents a share.

Inscriptions on the Soldiers and Sailors Monument read: *Westbrook honors her sons and daughters who strove by their loyalty, self-sacrifice and devotion to preserve and cement the Union in the days of the Civil War, 1861-1865.*

Note that the inscription honors men – and somewhat ahead of its time – women, who served and will serve in all the nation’s wars. Vaun Born researched this material for the memorial service in 1995.



Civil War Memorial in Riverbank Park



Veterans Memorial in Riverbank Park

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

Spring has finally arrived, the weather can only get better and I’m looking forward to seeing more of our members at the Historical Society. We have several exciting projects that we are working on; Donna Conley is working hard on our Second Annual History Contest and I want to thank her for all her dedication to this program and her continuing work on our Website and the handling of inquiries. The Contest is open to members and non-members and I would encourage you to submit an entry if you feel you have something of interest to offer.

Second, I want to mention that we are looking at opening the Historical Society during the evening at least once a month. Nancy Crump is working with some volunteers to try this on a trial basis and I want to thank Nancy for all her work on this.

I would like to also thank Suzan Norton for all the work she does on getting speakers for our monthly meetings.

A project that I am working on is the production of a book to commemorate the Westbrook Bicentennial in 2014. I am working with Arcadia publishing Company and I am looking for volunteers to work with me on this, if you are interested please contact me.

Our move to the Community Center has certainly been beneficial to the Historical Society, We are seeing a lot more visitors and I want to thank Maria Dorn, Greg Post and their staff for all their efforts to work with us and accommodate all our needs. Hope to see you soon!

Mike Sanphy, President

SECOND ANNUAL WESTBROOK HISTORY CONTEST ANNOUNCED

Purpose of the Contest is to record a history of Westbrook's People, Places and Events through residents' memories and illustrations.

Entries must be submitted to the Westbrook Historical Society by May 1, 2012. Submit in typewritten form to Westbrook Historical Society, 426 Bridge St, Westbrook, ME 04092. Entries should consist of 500 words or less. Video or Power-point presentations of 20 minutes maximum. Adult and Student entry levels. 1st prize \$50 plus 1 year membership, 2nd prize \$25 plus 1 year membership. Winners announced at Westbrook Together Days in June 2013. Anyone is eligible to enter but entries **MUST be about Westbrook**.

Details on web site www.westbrookhistoricalsociety.org

Contact Information: info@westbrookhistoricalsociety.org Telephone 207-854-5588

Officers: President- Mike Sanphy , Vice President- Roberta Wyer Dutton Morrill , Secretary- Ellen Burrill, Treasurer- Nancy Joy Curran **Open Saturday and Tuesday mornings from 9 am to noon.**

Our website: www.westbrookhistoricalsociety.org – gives a fascinating outline of the Collections, Research Library and Exhibitions of the Society.

UPCOMING EVENTS: April 3 – 1:30 pm Monthly Meeting & Program

May 1 – 1:30 pm Monthly Meeting & Program - Bill Norbert –Westbrook Quakers-Hall Family

June 5 – 1:30 pm ANNUAL MEETING

Martha Brackett - Newsletter Editor

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