

The Narragansett Sun.

HISTORY OF WESTBROOK

THURSDAY, JULY 11, 1895

CHAPTER VI.

Dr. Benjamin Haskell and His Descendants.—
Lydia Freeman, His Second Wife, and Her
Ancestry.

Carelessness on the part of the writer in reading proof of the preceding chapter, caused the statement to go forth that Enoch Freeman, Jr., died in 1732. The event occurred just one hundred years later, to wit, 1832. There was a connection between this family of Freemans and that of the family of Dr. Haskell's second wife, whose parents were William and Hannah (Atwood) Freeman of Harwich, one of the towns on Cape Cod. William Freeman's father and grandfather both had the name of William, and like his grandfather, says the historian of Cape Cod, he had only two children, who bore the names of William and Lydia. This last named William was born 22d March, 1741, and settled in or near Liverpool, Nova Scotia, where his descendants are numerous. Lydia Freeman, who married Benjamin Haskell, was older than her brother by about four years, as would seem from the age given on the double headstone, already so often mentioned, and now, by the way, no longer legible, having been broken down almost to the ground since the inscriptions were copied some ten years ago.

It was announced in advance, before the printing of those chapters was begun, that a connected history would not be attempted at this time. Hence no apology is required because of the return, in this place, to the Haskell family, concerning whom I had exhausted, in a previous chapter, all the information that during many years of inquiry and research I had been able to obtain. But now through the kindness of a descendant of Benjamin Haskell living in a neighboring town, and also interested in matters pertaining to local and family history, I am able to state that Benjamin Haskell had eleven children, nine of whom lived to maturity, and

seven at least married and left children. By the first marriage to Abigail Parsons, there was one son, Thomas, who on the first day of May, 1792, sold to his half-brothers, William and Bani, all his interest in the estate of this father, both real and personal. Of his subsequent career nothing is known.

The oldest child by the second marriage (with Lydia Freeman,) was given the name of Benjamin. He doubtless died in early childhood, as his is one of the names given on the double headstone. William, the second child by this marriage, was married to Lucy Neil of Portland the 8th March, 1792, Rev. Elijah Kellogg, Sr., performing the ceremony. He was by trade a cabinet maker as has been previously stated. In 1797 he is described as of Portland in a conveyance of land at Saccarappa to Edmond March. This land I judge to have been near to, or identical with that now owned and occupied by Mr. David G. Hayes. On the 18th of February, 1804, he was living in Gray, and sold to Benjamin Larrabee Jr., of Falmouth, the pew formerly owned by his father, Benjamin Haskell, in the Capisic church. The same year he sold lands in Gray to Moses Haskell of North Falmouth, In 1806, he was again in Portland which appears to have remained his home for the rest of his life. Some of his descendants still reside there. In the city records of deaths, Lucy, wife of William Haskell, is said to have died the 6th of December 1838.

Bani Haskell married Catherine Jordan, probably of Raymond, and settled in Limington. They had five children, Parsons, who was a minor at the time of his mother's decease, married Hannah Holt and settled in Albany, Me. They had seven children. Mercy daughter of Benjamin and Lydia Haskell, married Israel Swett of Portland, and had eight children. Abigail married Peter Chick and settled in East Limington and had eight children. Lydia Parker died young. Hers is one of the names on the old headstone. Hannah, the seventh child, by the second marriage, and one of the maiden sisters to whom the brothers Bani and Parsons allowed the "privilege of one room in the house of

Saccarappy” so long as they should remain unmarried did not marry but lived and died with the Shakers. The deed of the room was dated the 8th of March, 1799, and the same day by another deed. Bani secured to Hannah one-sixteenth part of the income of the old Haskell grist mill for her support. Probably some different provision was made for her within the next year, for the 17th of December, 1800, Bani and Parsons sell to Jonathan Webb fifty-one and one-half acres of land which they had purchased of their mother Lydia Haskell, another tract of thirteen acres between the above and land of Daniel Bailey and the Windham road, and an undivided forth part of the Haskell gristmill. This was “all the land, buildings and privileges” which they had in Falmouth.

The exact location of the dwelling house and lands mentioned above would be a matter of no small interest, at least, to the present writer. The tract of fifty-one and one-half acres was no doubt one-half of the tract of one hundred and three acres concerning which the elder Thomas Haskell had had the contest with the Cloice heirs, whose entire right in the township he had finally purchased and subsequently conveyed to his son, Dr. Benjamin Haskell.

Sarah, the ninth child of Benjamin and Lydia (Freeman) Haskell, became the wife of Samuel Pike and had six children. This Samuel Pike should not be confused with Samuel Deane Pike, who married Mary, a daughter of Jonathan Webb, and was the father of the late Samuel G. Pike of Calais. Samuel Pike, who is described as of Berwick, blacksmith, on the fourteenth of November, 1791, bought one acre of land at Saccarappa of Joseph Noyes, beginning at a stake north eighty degrees east four rods from easterly corner of Haskell’s grist mill, with liberty to erect a building thirty feet square below the bridge with a running floom of water.” This fixes the location of Pike’s building and of the Haskell grist mill on the present site of the Westbrook Manufacturing Co.’s property on the lower falls. Pike’s residence was on the acre which he bought of Noyes, which must have included the present site of the old Joshua Webb mansion, now used as a boarding house, as well as that of the agent’s house, corner of Brown and Bridge streets. Samuel Pike was one of the founders of the old Falmouth (afterwards Westbrook) Social Library in 1802. The first of May, 1806, he sold one-half the land which he

purchased of Noyes to Elias Merrill, then a trader at Saccarappa, but afterwards for many years Register of Deeds for Cumberland County. Merrill had a dwelling house and himself resided on his purchase. On the twenty-eighth of July, 1806, Pike sold what appears to have been all the residue of his Falmouth property to Jonathan Webb. As none of his descendants are known to reside here, and not even tradition reaches back to him, it is likely that he soon after removed from town.

R.

TO BE CONTINUED.

HISTORY OF WESTBROOK

THURSDAY, JULY 18, 1895

CHAPTER VI. – CONTINUED.

The Descendants of Dr. Benjamin Haskell. –
Elder William Brewster, of the Mayflower.

I have stated that Samuel Pike probably left Saccarappa in 1806, after disposing of his real estate to Jonathan Webb. There is reason for supposing that he removed to Limington, where his brother-in-law, Bani Haskell, finally settled. The 23rd of March, 1827, Samuel Pike of Limington, yeoman, sold to Archelaus Lewis of Westbrook, a small piece of land in Saccarappa, bounded and described as follow, viz.: “Beginning at the southwest corner of the Widow Freeman’s garden, and running westerly to the Windham road, or near the end of the bridge; thence by said road northerly in the lane that leads in by the Widow Freeman’s garden; thence by said lane in the north-west corner of the Widow Freeman’s garden; thence southerly by said garden to the corner or bounds of beginning.”

This conveyance was drawn by the late David Hayes, Esq., who subsequently owned and occupied the mansion house at the corner of Bridge and Brown streets which was built by Daniel Thompson. This house has already been mentioned as the present residence of Mr. David O. Hayes. At the date of this deed, the large brick mansion of Joshua Webb had already been erected, and, if I mistake not, had passed into other hands. From such estimates as I am able to

make from courses and distances given in the deed of Noyes to Pike, I now have little doubt that the site of the Haskell grist mill was in the vicinity of the present fishway on the lower dam, and that the land mentioned as leading to the Widow Freeman's garden, subsequently became the passage way known as "Mill Lane," which has been closed to travel within a few years past, and taken into the mill yard by the Westbrook Manufacturing Co. It will be seen, therefore, that the Widow Freeman's garden was a part of the present yard of this company, and that the land above described included that where the company's office now stands. This view is aided by the fact, that the half acre which Samuel Pike had sold to Elias Merrill was conveyed by the latter to Capt. Nathaniel Freeman, (husband of the Widow Freeman,) with the buildings thereon, and accordingly became the home of this worthy couple, whose daughter, Hannah, became the wife of the late John Stiles, and the mother of our townsman, M. W. Stiles, Esq. The conveyance by Merrill to Freeman was made in 1809, after the removal of the former to Portland to assume the duties of his office as Register of Deeds for the county.

Since the first installment of this chapter was written, I have ascertained from minutes, made and published by the late Isaac Cobb, who was more fortunate in copying the inscriptions on the old double headstone than I have been, that Benjamin, the oldest son of Dr. Benjamin and Lydia Haskell, died the 9th of April, 1765, at the age of eighteen months. The last inscription on the stone, Mr. Cobb gives as follows:

LYDIA PARKER HASKELL,

Obt. June 7, 1782,

Aet. 7 years.

From this it would seem that she was born in 1665 and was the second child of her parents.

Mary, the tenth and youngest child of Benjamin and Lydia Haskell, will be remembered as one of the maiden sisters to whom was secured the privilege during her unmarried life, of occupying a room with her sister Hannah, in the family dwelling house. She was born the 25th of November 1779, and therefore had not completed her sixth year at the death of her father. She did not long remain single after the considerate provision made in her behalf by her brothers, for on the 19th of

February 1801, she became the wife of Nathan Hunt of Gray. She was the first lady school teacher in that town. She had eight children, two of whom are still living,--one of the latter being Mrs. Sarah O'Brion of Deering, widow of the late Col. Thomas O'Brion.

Through their ancestress, Lydia Freeman, the family of Dr. Benjamin Haskell trace direct descent to Elder William Brewster of Mayflower fame.

Several families bearing the name of Freeman have lived in Westbrook, all of them, no doubt, more or less closely connected through their emigrant ancestors, or some common progenitor on the other side of the Atlantic. The family of Rev. Benjamin Freeman, whose death was lately noticed in this paper, is known to have sprung from the same American branch with Mrs. Lydia Haskell. Of Captain Nathaniel and his wife Lydia, who after his death was called the "Widow Freeman" I would gladly know more as I have been hitherto unable to connect them with any of the other Freeman families in this vicinity.

I suspect that there was a connection between the family of Mrs. Lydia (Freeman) Haskell and that of Daniel Godfrey mentioned in a former chapter. It will be remembered that the great-grandfather of Mrs. Haskell was William Freeman, who married Lydia Sparrow, and that like her father he had but two children, who bore the name of William and Lydia. Now this last named Lydia, according the genealogist of the Freemans (whose work is so incomplete as to do little more than sharpen the appetite for the information which it fails to give,) -- this last named Lydia became the wife of Richard Godfrey of Chatham in 1701, and by him the mother of six daughters. This, it is true, brings us no nearer to finding out the parentage of Daniel Godfrey than we were before, but it establishes the fact that there was a Cape Cod race of Godfreys, one individual of which intermarried with the Freemans. It is also known that in the emigration of Cape Cod families to Liverpool, Nova Scotia, which included William Freeman, the only brother of Lydia Haskell, there were persons bearing the name of Godfrey whose descendants are found in that vicinity at the present day.

The question naturally suggests itself, although the true answer after the lapse of years may never be given. Had not the presence of Lydia

Freeman in Saccarappa and her acquaintance and marriage with Benjamin Haskell, some connection with the fact that Daniel Godfrey had previously found a home on the shores of the Presumpscot? True, Godfrey had been some time dead before her marriage with Haskell, but that does not militate against the theory that she came hither because of some connection with him or his family. I am fully aware that theories and conjectures are of no value in matters of history, except in so far as they assist in getting at the real facts; still, so long as they are offered for what they are worth, and nothing more, they can do no harm. In this connection, therefore, I will cite the fact that among the early settlers of Gorham, who came in the two decades previous to 1750, were many families from Cape Cod, including persons by the name of Freeman; and on this base the further conjecture that Mrs. Lydia Haskell may have been connected with some of these, whom she accompanied to their now home. And the work in hand is, in large measure, tentative, as the writer has frequently announced, he not only invites, but earnestly solicits, information from any and all who are able to give it.

R.

TO BE CONTINUED.