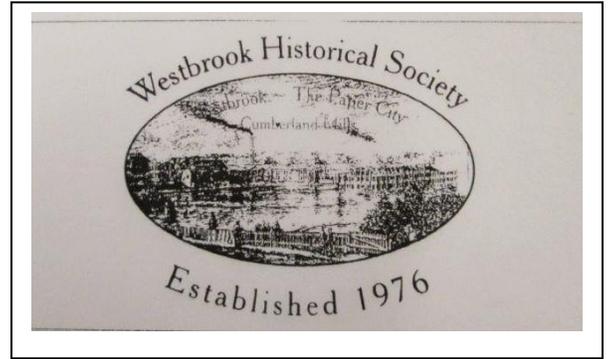


Westbrook Historical Society

"A Society That Preserves the Past"

Spring 2022 Newsletter



OLD FOLKS ON THE FARM

From the Westbrook Chronicle of Friday, December 22, 1882

Students of social problems think they see conclusive proof that grandparents will be less plentiful half a century hence than now. A contemporary inclines to this view, and suggests the keeping of those who have as long as we can. And since enforced idleness is the beginning of the end with men and women whose useful lives cares around the house so make lighter cares around the house so natural and easy for them that they will never know it was planned.

Happy is the man whose younger kinsman will carry on the old farm, and let him work or not as he pleases giving an easy chair by the warmest corner of the fireplace in winter, and a shady nook on the veranda wherein to nod over his newspaper in summer. Thrice happy the good farm wife whose daughter or daughter's daughter, reserves the best ground floor room for her use, and carries on the work herself – all the while pleasing "mother" with the belief that she is still doing it as she did for half-a-hundred years. How sweet and placid the dear old face, as she goes with feeble steps to kitchen and dairy, "looking after things!" She knows just how many chickens there are, and when the speckled hen ought to come off; she passes judgment on the new cow, and gives that finishing touch to the batter which won the first premium before "help" was known in the farmhouse. She "goes to the meeting" with a regularity that shames her children, and passes gently down the slope of the hill of life serenely happy amid accustomed scones and familiar faces.

Are things better now?...this plan sounds good to me!

HISTORY OF WESTBROOK NEWSPAPERS

| | |
|----------------------|-----------|
| Westbrook Witness | 1877 |
| Westbrook Chronicle | 1882-1910 |
| Westbrook Star | 1894 |
| Westbrook Globe | 1894 |
| Westbrook Globe-Star | 1900 |
| Westbrook Gazette | 1901 |
| Chronicle-Gazette | 1903 |

Editor: 1903, Ray Thompson

Formed by the union of: Westbrook Chronicle and Globe-Star and Westbrook Gazette.

Merged with Deering News and Enterprise, to for Deering News and Enterprise Westbrook Globe-Star

Preceding Titles: The Westbrook Chronicle and Globe-Star, Westbrook, Me 1900-1902

Westbrook Gazette, Westbrook, ME 1900-1902

Succeeding Titles: The Deering News and Enterprise, Deering, ME 1898-1905

Deering News & Enterprise 1903

Westbrook American 1953-1964

American Journal 1969-2014

Westbrook Incidents of the Civil War

It is reported that three hundred ninety-five men from Westbrook served in the Civil war. In the words of Edwin Haskell, who was a small boy at the start of the Civil War and later manager of the Haskell Silk Mill, "In the first Lincoln campaign there was formed in the village of Saccarappa, two campaign companies. One was comprised of those whom we boys considered old men. These men had for a uniform a black enameled cape and cap. Members of the company carried open torches and were called "The Wide-awakes". The other company was named the "Lincoln Guards". Their uniforms were red, white and blue cap with a red cape.



"The Lincoln Guards was a political organization in Westbrook before the Civil War. Most of the boys in it joined the First Maine Volunteers and none were over 18 years when they enlisted."

Many of these men served in the 20th Infantry that was made up at Portland and was mustered into the United States service for three years. This company took part in the battles of Antietam, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, and Appomattox, where Lee surrendered, as well as many others.

Among the men from Westbrook who were killed in this war, Grand Army Veteran's Posts

were formed in many states, including Post No. 100 in Westbrook, named for Captain Cloudman, and Sons of Veterans Camp Wade No. 19, named for William Wade.

In 1921 there were still 5 living Civil War veterans in Westbrook. Among them was the Hon. Francis A. Cloudman, then the oldest living ex-mayor of the City. He had enlisted as a private, playing in the regimental band.

James Blanchard recently came into the Historical Society and donated a copy of the **Maine Regiments at Gettysbury**, a notebook with a complete listing of soldiers from this time period.

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EARLY SETTLEMENT AREAS OF WESTBROOK

The 18th and 19th settlement patterns and industrial developments that took place during the mid to late 19th century in what is now Westbrook which was part of a town called **Stroudwater**, which was set off from Falmouth in 1814, included four distinct settlements that remain within the present day boundaries of the city. (**Deering** was set off from the town, now called Westbrook, in 1871). In order of importance, the villages were called **Saccarappa, Ammoncongjin (or more commonly, Congin), Highland Lake (then called Duck Pond), and Pride's Corner**. Saccarappa, the village centered along the western bend of the Presumpscot River, from Old County Road (present day Conant Street) on the west to Spring and Stroudwater streets on the east, was the largest settlement during the years 1750-1850. With as many as 19 saw mills and at least one grist mill in operation along the river at the turn of the 19th century, the settlement was the center of a thriving lumber industry, an industry that persisted until the coming of the textile mills beginning in 1830. Stroudwater Street was surveyed as early as 1735 to provide a direct route for delivering "mast trees" to the King's agent at Fore River in

Stroudwater. This same road provided access, by crossing the river and continuing along Bridge Street to either Methodist Road, a farm road leading to Duck Pond, now Highland Lake, or to Pride's Corner where it met Duck Pond Road, a major component parallel to New Gorham and Longfellow (then called Beaver Dam Road) streets provided access to Gorham to the west, with Spring Street running south towards Scarborough. Saco Street provided access to the rich farm land south and southwest of the village. As would be expected, many of the earliest residences, primarily farm houses built in the 1730 to 1780 period and up to 1820, are situated on these major early roads serving Saccarappa. Important properties, in addition to those listed below for review as possible National register nomination include: 477 Saco (the Hatch House, c. 1789), 541 Saco (1843), 547 Saco (1816 with a second story added in 1856), and 649 Saco (Trickey Farm, pre 1757 but altered); 89 and 161 Conant Street, two early 19th century residences; 471 and 479 Stroudwater Street, two early but altered farmhouses; and a group of early 19th century houses clustered along Spring Street at the landing for the Cumberland and Oxford Canal, started in 1825.

Saccarappa village, then as now "downtown" of Westbrook, grew steadily during the middle of the 19th century. Originally, the village consisted of what is today Main Street, lined on both sides of the street with residences and stores and shops, with light manufacturing uses grouped between Main and the south bank of the Presumpscot, and Bridge Street, running parallel to the river as it turned and ran north towards South Windham and eventually to Sebago Lake, Bridge Street branching off as it does today to run easterly. In 1837 Brown Street was laid out, to be completed to connect with Cumberland Street in 1842. With the exception of Saco, Spring and Stroudwater streets, Brackett Street, laid out in 1842. Was the only street south of Main. The 1871 Cumberland County Atlas shows Mechanic, Central, Fitch, Cross and Church streets in the area between Saco and Spring streets, with the secondary streets terminating at Beaver Pond and the Cumberland and Oxford Canal (approximately today's Valentine and Union streets). The Portland and Rochester Railroad ran parallel to Main Street, one block to the south (the right-of-way now a part of Wayside Drive), effectively setting this new residential area off from Main Street. The 1871 map indicates that little development had taken place along these new streets south of the railroad, with a single residence at Central Street and a group of houses between Brackett and Fitch Streets the only structures noted.



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GINNY DOLL – a Recent Acquisition

Ginny is an American made 8 – 12 inch doll immensely popular from 1951 through 1959. Produced by Jennie Graves, owner of Vogue Doll Company. She was a young mother who enjoyed sewing for her children. One day an acquaintance asked if she would consider costuming some dolls for the benefit of charity. When she later learned that the dolls were in fact being sold for profit rather than for charity Graves decided that if she was making a marketable product, she should be the one reaping the



financial rewards So she began The Vogue Doll Shoppe. From humble beginnings at her kitchen table, she began a business that would become one of the most successful doll companies in America.

Ginny was made of hard, durable plastic developed first for war uses. The doll's size and durability made it convenient for her to accompany a child everywhere.

The Society recently received a donation of a Ginny Doll from **Patricia Murchie** who remembers the excitement of receiving it for Christmas in the 50s.



HIS BRIDE DESERTED – Story of Villainy Has Come to Light in Westbrook

CHECK WAS BOGUS

William W. Damon, Who Recently Married Highly Respected Westbrook Lady, Gave Bride Worthless \$100 Check. January 4, 1902

What looks now like a piece of unmitigated villainy, but which may possibly develop only into a misunderstanding, which time will show to have been all right, even though it all looks so bad on the face, has come to light in our neighboring city of Westbrook. It involves the honor of a man supposed to be wealthy, and the life happiness of a bride who was led to the altar Christmas eve. Deserted, as it now appears, she awaits the return of the man to whom her life was given and bravely maintains that she will see him again, that he has been detained by some accident, anything except that she is dishonorably deserted. If William W. Damon, as the man calls himself, is an honest man and is detained by some reason beyond his control, and is the victim of circumstances he has need to be proud of the faithfulness of his wife, who in the face of most damaging evidence, and after faith had been practically abandoned by her friends, still believes in his truth and faithfulness.

The story is a romance in itself. Years ago, when William W. Damon was a mere youth a clerk in a Boston Store, earning small pay and getting his training in mercantile life, he had a friend in Boston, one Harry Goodrich, with whom he came on several summers to pass a short vacation among young Goodrich's relatives in Westbrook. When here he became acquainted with Miss Bertha W. Knight, a most highly respected young lady, daughter of one of the best citizens of Westbrook. Their youthful friendship was very cordial, and would doubtless have ripened into love had it no been for the objection of one of the young lady's relatives who thought her too young then to receive regular attention from any young man. So, Damon went away, and most of the people of Westbrook forgot him.

Recently he reappeared upon the scene, and laid court to the hand of his early love. Stories were told of his wealth. He had thrived wonderfully in business, was a member of a West Virginia lumber firm and did a thriving business. Money was free with him, he was exceedingly good looking, and attractive, and it was no surprise to those who had known of the early attachment when the wedding ads were received announcing the marriage of Mr. Damon and Miss Knight.

After the ceremony the happy couple started on a brief wedding journey. They went to Boston, were to return shortly before going to West Virginia. It was probable that they would make a tour of Europe in the spring. The brief honeymoon was passed at the Touraine, in Boston. On New Year's morning as a little New Year's gift, Mr. Damon presented his wife with a check for \$100 on the bank where he did business in Pittsburg, Ps. Desiring to make some holiday purchases and to return that day to Westbrook to pass the New Year's evening with her

father, Mrs. Damon made application to a friend of hers, Mr. T. M. Lewis, of Lewis & Co., 145 Washington Street, asking him to cash the check for her. Mr. Lewis says he would not have done it for anyone else, but Mrs. Damon, but having known her for a long time he was disposed to do her the favor, and so, not having the money at hand which he cared to spare that morning, he went to his bank and guaranteed the check in question.

Some doubt existed still in his mind as to its genuineness, so he had is bank telegraph the bank on which the check was drawn, and soon received the reply that no such party was known there, and that the check was valueless. By this time Mr. and Mrs. Damon had started for Westbrook. Mr. Lewis called up a friend in that city, acquainted him with the facts, and asked him to have Damon detained on the charge of cheating on false pretenses. Whether Damon got wind of the fact that they were already after him, or whether he knew in reason what must come, or whether the message that he sent his wife was true there is at present no way of knowing. All that is known is that he took the 1 o'clock train out of Westbrook on Thursday noon, sending a message to his wife, as it is reported, that he had been suddenly called to see his mother in Manchester, N. H. and that he would return on Friday night. He did not return on Friday night, and as far as is known had not yet returned. It is learned upon inquiry at the railroad station at Westbrook that Damon did not buy a ticket before leaving and so all trace of him is lost.

Those who know Mrs. Damon and her father, Mr. Joseph W. Knight have no doubt that Mr. Lewis will not be the loser by the transaction, as the money will doubtless be made good to him. Both Mr. Knight and his daughter have the highest respect of all the community, and to this is added heartfelt sympathy for them in their trouble, following so soon after their great happiness.

And...what happened to this villain, anyone know?



William "Ed" McLellan

Westbrook Blacksmith

By Mark Swett

William "Ed" McLellan was a successful businessman in Westbrook during the 1890s and early 1900s. He was born one of six children – four boys and two girls, twin sisters, who died at childbirth. One brother had died young, and the other moved out of state.

The early roots of his family were in Scotland. His first ancestor, Hugh McLellan, came to America from Ireland and eventually moved to the area, becoming one of the first family settlers in Gorham, Maine.

In 1868, Ed's father started a Blacksmith shop in Westbrook on Main Street across from what would later be the Presumpscot power station. After graduation, Ed went to work with him and alongside his older brother, Henry. It was the only job that he would have. He "never did a day's work for anyone outside the shop."

After the death of his father, Henry took over the blacksmith shop. In 1892 Ed bought the business after

Henry died. It allowed him to support his wife, Annie, and live in a lovely home at 14 Longfellow Street. The shop

was a short buggy ride down Main Street. The workdays were long, starting at 7:00 am and going till 6:00 pm. It was so busy that four men were employed to help complete the orders.

Tubal-cain in the Book of Genesis may be considered the first "forger of all instruments of bronze and iron," but Ed McLellan proudly claimed himself as *"the oldest blacksmith working at the trade today"* in his own shop. It was a controversial statement that he defended when necessary.

Ed was of medium build, with penetrating eyes. He wore a chevron-style mustache on his upper lip and a leather apron on his waist. The best tools of the trade were his large hands and arms that wielded the hammer, tongs, and chisel. It was not an easy job, and the constant sound of striking the anvil took a toll on the ears.

Like most business people in the city, he would use various opportunities to advertise, whether in the city directories or participating in parades. He also enjoyed music and was a member of the "American Band," one of the city's oldest music bands. They performed at various civic functions and public gatherings before stopping in 1894. A picture taken at the Wight Photography Studio shows him wearing his band uniform and holding a hat. He cut a striking figure - a handsome man looking much like present-day actor Nicholas Cage. Many people admired his physical condition, which he said he owed to hard work. One vice we know of is his enjoyment of smoking big black cigars that he would keep clenched between his teeth.

Ed aged well, and the business continued to be prosperous until Henry Ford's automobiles started making an appearance on the streets of Westbrook. The 'machines' changed the lives of many in the community. The once busy shop soon dwindled to just Ed and his helper "Cyclone" Landry.

The new age of transportation did not take long to force him to nail a "For Sale" sign on the building. He believed that he was too old to start over again in a new business and the hard work that it would take. Still, he persevered and held on for as long as he could. When asked how he survived, he responded, "I draw on the bank. There's hardly enough business for a living; just a bare living, that's all."

Ed was the oldest active businessman in Westbrook at the time. The man who would work eleven hours a day became a victim of technology, saying in an interview, *"The auto has killed my business entirely.* There are very few horses left." William "Ed" McLellan died in August 1937 at eighty-three years old and is buried in Saccarappa Cemetery.



IMPRESSIONS OF CUMBERLAND MILLS from The Warren Monthly June 1920

From a letter written by Mr. J. H. J. Adams of the Winchester Repeating Arms Company after a visit to Cumberland Mills

Dear Bob:

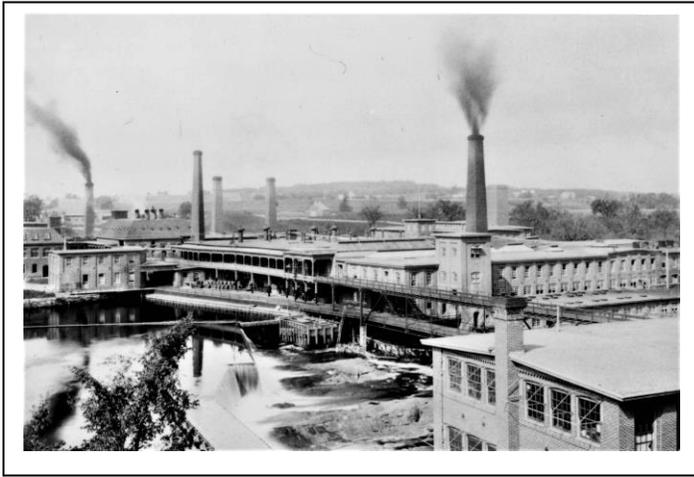
This has been an eventful Week in my life, and I want to tell you all about a wonderful trip I had to the S. D. Warren Company's Paper Mills near Portland, Me.

You can't imagine more congenial company than Mr. Webb, the manager of the A. Storrs & Bement Company in this city where Warren's papers are sold. He worked up a lot of enthusiasm down here among the New Haven printers and paper consumers with a big plan to take a trip to Cumberland Mills – Warren's place – as guests of A. Storrs & Bement Company and S. D. Warren Company. Everyone said he was terribly busy, but when the noon express pulled out for Boston, we were all seated in one end of a Pullman, looking forward to the big things to come. There were William Morris of the Wilson H. Lee Company, Samuel Field of the S. Z. Field Press, Fred Krooner of the New Haven Printing Company, Mr. Carr of the A. C. Gilbert Company and your big brother of the Winchester Arms Company.

You can say all you want, Bob, for southern hospitality, but you've got to go some to beat the hospitality that S. D. Warren Company shows their guest. We were perfectly at home and at ease in the guest house called

“The Elms”. The big rooms seemed to bid us welcome, and with plenty ahead for the next day we went to sleep as happy as kids visiting a rich uncle.

Wednesday morning dawned “brite and fair”, and after a breakfast fit for royalty, Mr. Rogers started us off at an easy pace. We trailed down among the great buildings to meet the battery of boilers in the power plant, which consume as many tons of coal in a day as there are tons of paper turned out. We dodged a train or two running through the yards, and reached a building where great spruce logs were being chewed up into little one-inch squares about an eighth of an inch thick. The logs are as carefully selected as second-growth ash is for Babe Ruth’s bat. We saw the digesters where the chips are treated with steam and sulphureous acid to reduce the chips to pulp. This sulphite as it is called, after being washed and bleached is ready to be mixed in the first of the paper making machines. Because of the long fiber, it is used to give the paper strength and hardness. From building to building we went without once retracing our steps, and we hovered about the paper machines until we almost broke up the sight-seeing schedule. Can you imagine fourteen of these machines, each 250 feet long and 13 feet wide? It reminded me of the time you and I went through the Navy Yard at Newport News but here there were paper machines instead of rows of dry docks.



We saw the process of making the short fibered soda pulp from softer woods such as poplar and spruce. The selected logs are chipped, treated with caustic soda, bleached and sent to the same machines where we left the sulphite pulp. The mixture of the long and short fibered pulp with clay, rosin sizing and color (if used) is thoroughly beaten before running on to the screen of the giant paper machines which take this raw material like so much spawn at one end and roll it into paper, which a gang of men take away with a chain hoist at the other.

The coating of the paper would interest you most. It is prepared by skillful workmen who mix half the colors of the rainbow to get a beautiful sheet of white coated paper. Handling coated paper is not very different from

making dynamite or TNT. You have to do it with the proverbial gloves on and do it quickly.

The big rolls of finished paper are cut into lengths on machines at which keen-eyed girls keep constant watch for imperfections in the paper. The sheets are again inspected and counted by expert operators, who fill a room about the size of Madison Square Garden.

You would have smiled to see the pride with which each man in our party inspected the sheets of paper. Paper, to be sure, is a rather inanimate object, but when you have lived two or three days with the Warren Company you become instilled with the same pride which every one of the men and women employees has for the plant and product.

Living at “The Elms” and being personally conducted by Mr. Rogers, a most patient and interesting guide, appealed strongly to the luxury-loving side of our natures. We said good-bye to our good friend Webber who had looked after the inner man with such cuisine dexterity and Mr. Webb made a strong finish when he managed to get us all on the same train and headed for home.

The trip was of great value to every man in the party from an educational standpoint. It opened our eyes to the extreme care and skill put into the manufacture of Warren’s Standards which we see advertised in such a sincere and straightforward manner, and we all came home with the fullest appreciation for the effort Warren is making to co-operate with the printing trade and the consumer.

Yours, Jim

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Crash Introduces Letarte to John D. Rockefeller

If he hadn’t suffered multiple fractures of the right leg in a skiing accident at Bridgton last Spring, Ray Letarte , popular filling station proprietor, probably wouldn’t have been up Bar Harbor way a month or so ago – and if he hadn’t been up Bar Harbor way, Ray wouldn’t have met John D. Rockefeller III head on, so to speak. – (Though it wasn’t quite that bad, to be sure.)

The long and the short of it is that Ray, still on the recuperative list, and unable to be really active at his service station, found time hanging heavy on his hands a while back, and decided to take a jaunt for himself.

He had gone as far as Bar harbor, and was passing the Rockefeller summer home when zingo – out drove Mr. Rockefeller, crash bang into Ray’s convertible!

“You couldn’t ask anybody to be nicer” enthuses the victim, whose first concern was for Ray’s physical welfare. After making certain that everything, including the already injured leg, was okay, they got along swimmingly, and a satisfactory adjustment was made.

The accident was almost unavoidable, Ray maintains. He had the top of the convertible down, and high shrubbery completely obscured him from the other driver.

The by-product of the mishap, as far as Ray is concerned, was the gaining of a healthy respect for ‘a regular guy’ who proved both his graciousness and his dignity.

Ray now looks forward to the day in the not-too-distant future, when he’ll once more have full use of both his legs, and can go back to a regular schedule at his Main Street gas emporium. (These days he’s only an occasional visitor.)

Last week saw tow re-letter days for the impatient patient – his cast, and all the ‘hardware’ inside the leg – pins, plates and what-have-you were removed. Friday, he wore a shoe on the right foot for the first time since the accident.

He’s still on crutches, but says another two weeks or so will probably see him on regular duty. “My crew have done a swell job – but I like to have my own finger in the pie”, says Ray.

People who don’t know Ray Latarte might wonder how he feels about skiing again.

Those who know him don’t need to hear him say he’s just as enthusiastic as ever. He is! And with good luck, Ray will be in pretty good shape by the time the first snow flies in New England. He’s counting on it, anyway!

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Officers: President- Mike Sanphy , Vice President- Roberta Wyer Dutton Morrill , Secretary- Lorraine Glidden, Treasurer- Tom Clarke **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. Maintained by Donna Conley

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