

THE SUTTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SUTTON, MASSACHUSETTS



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Paper Manufacturing In Sutton 1776-1813 And Until 1857 In Millbury

Excerpts from the Sutton History Vol. 1 1704-1876 and the Millbury History 1915 — Ed

...on a stream from Crooked Pond (Singletary)...in few towns in this State, as early as 1793, surpassed Sutton in manufacturing enterprise, is evidenced by the fact that at this time there were within the limits of the town, ...one paper mill...fine water privileges along the outlet of Crooked Pond were at an early date utilized for manufacturing purposed. ...The next privilege (dam and water wheel power, -ed)...was occupied by the paper mill of Abijah Burbank. This was the first paper mill built in the county, and fourth or fifth in Massachusetts. Its erection appears to have been suggested by a resolution passed in a convention of the committees of several towns of the County of Worcester.

The convention held its first session, August 9, 1774, and...holding its last meeting, May 31, 1775...the resolution...passed...as follows: 'Resolved, that the erection of a paper mill in this county, would be of great public advantage;...'...Mr. Burbank...set about building a paper mill in the early part ...of...1776...and it was put in operation in June.

November 13, 1777,...advertisement ...in the MASSACHUSETTS SPY...'The Paper Mill ...must immediately stop... (until) people are more careful in preserving their Rags. The advanced price of Three Pence per pound, for clean Linen or Cotton and Linen Rags is now given...'

...in June (1778)...Abijah Burbank, has lately procured...a Complete Master of the art of paper making...

THE MASSACHUSETTS SPY...November 26, 1778...the following advertisement: 'It is that the Fair Daughters of Liberty,...would not neglect to serve their country, by saving for the PaperMill in Sutton, all Linen and Cotton Rags for the purpose of making paper...will at least have the satisfaction of...doing an exceptual service,...with Eight Pence per pound...now given...will be a sufficient reward.'

This mill was, during most of the Revolutionary War...the sole dependence...of the printing office of Isaiah Thomas in Worcester. ...its paper capacity was thirty reams per week, during eight months of the year. It was not kept in operation during the coldest weather.

Mr. Caleb Burbank, son of Abijah, was associated with his father and succeeded him...increasing somewhat the production,...and greatly improving the quality. Mr. Burbank, kept a team employed distributing his paper in this State, Rhode Island and Connecticut. He was also a publisher of books, among which are a hymn book containing the psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs of Isacc Watts, and various school books.

After the mill became well established, five men

and twelve women were employed. By operating the two engines to their full capacity for the accustomed fifteen hour day, about fifteen hundred pounds of paper was produced. It was hard labor that was chiefly instrumental in producing the writing paper in the mill. Each sheet of paper was treated separately five or six times before it was ready for market and three months were required in making the paper from the time that the rags were received until the finished product was ready for the market.

Until about 1812 the Burbanks controlled the water on Singletary stream and, as they apparently decided to give special attention to the manufacture of paper, they took others into the partnership with them or sold the other privileges (water rights) or sold the rights entirely. In view of this retention of the paper mill, other water rights were sold in terms of water to run two machines in the Burbank paper mill, so that enough water was granted to the privilege, now occupied by the West End Thread Company, and to the privilege now occupied by the Mayo Mill #3, sufficient to keep two paper machines running within certain working hours.

Caleb Burbank continued to operate the mill until late June 1836 and as there was need of having a certain amount of water required to run the paper machines, a legal disposition was given him which allowed him a suitable water supply to run all the machines.

The two engine (water wheels)...were estimated to have capacity of six hundred horsepower each. In the summer of 1831 two larger ones were installed and in 1833 a third engine was put in. At this time an apron was put under the water wheel to save water which was wasted from the wheel buckets and with this apron in place the three engines could be carried as well as the two previously could.

In 1834 Caleb Burbank became financially involved with his brother, Elijah,...and business passed into the hands of Silas Goddard, who had been his superintendent. Later the industry carried on by Briely and Company who maintained a paper mill until 1857.

MAGOR-GENERAL CALEB BURBANK

Maj.-Gen. Caleb Burbank was descended from John Burbank who settled in Rowley, Mass., about 1640. He was the eldest son of Capt. Abijah Burbank and was born in Sutton, July 18, 1761. As a youth he worked on the farm of his father and learned the art of papermaking in his father's paper mill at Bramanville.

It was as a paper manufacturer that General Burbank was best known in the industrial world, although he also owned a part in most of the other mills on that stream. He greatly steadied the outflow of the water from the pond by raising its level several feet and he also built a storage basin for the papermill. When it has passed into his possession he added both to the quantity and the quality of the output of paper from the papermill.

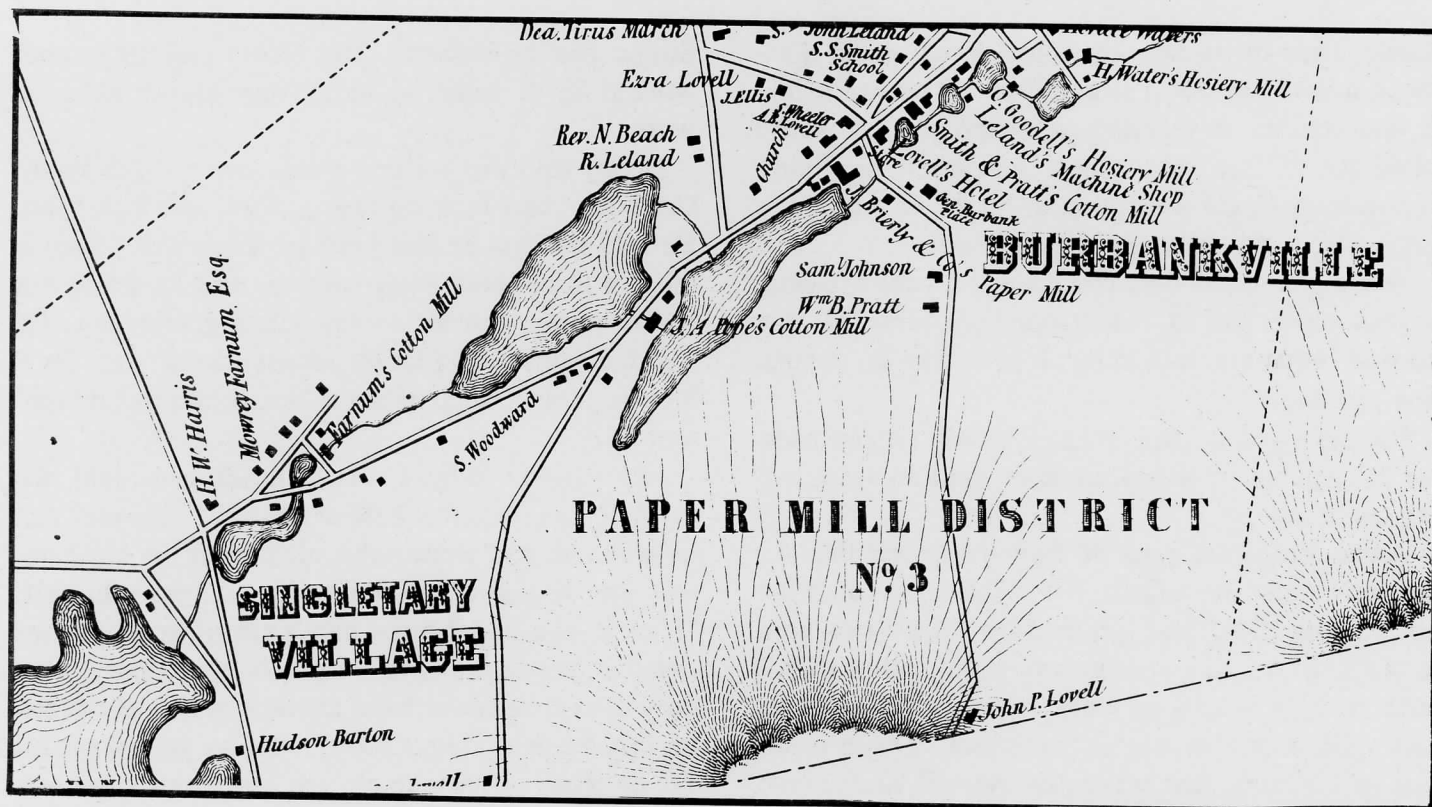
General Burbank was in the prime of his manhood when Millbury was set off as a separate town from Sutton (in 1813) and at the time he was probably the richest and most prominent man in the new town. He selected the name "Millbury" for the town and, apparently by his sole influence, prevented the adoption of some other name.

In personal appearance General Burbank was of medium height, about one hundred and forty pounds in weight, erect, and moved with a martial step. "General Burbank was for many years a conspicuous character. He always came to church at the 'Old Common' in a hack drawn by a span of white horses with a driver and surrounded by a bevy of young, beautiful girls whom he employed in his paper mill works. He was generous, public-spirited and kind-hearted." He was reputed to have been exceedingly generous. As an instance we may cite that, when the house of Stephen Blanchard was burned, General Burbank went the next day to view the ruins and at the time presented Mr. Blanchard with one thousand dollars as a help toward rebuilding. Although a man of a kind disposition General Burbank is reputed to have been strict in his military and business affairs. He loved the pomp attached to his military rank and undoubtedly exercised his command with uncompromising rigor.

For twenty-eight years he was an officer in the state militia. He was commissioned lieutenant, in 1790; captain, in 1794; major in 1797; lieutenant-colonel, in 1801; brigadier-general, in 1807; and major-general, in 1813. Five years later he was dismissed from the service.

General Burbank built a residence, pretentious for those days, on Burbank Hill.

In his old age the General met with financial reverses, but it is to the credit of Millbury officials that, in consideration of what he had done for the town, a comfortable home was secured for him in the family of Deacon Tyrus March.



Bramenville District - 1776 Sutton, 1813 Millbury

ROUND THE STOVE

With **FRED L. BATCHELLER (1871-1964)**

as told to Ben and Marie MacLaren

Seems how lots of folk figure th' Good Lord didn't plan too good when he decided on jest how much hair we might need, what color it might otta be, or how tall we might find proper. As for hair, if I really needed it during fly season I'd a'bin in a sorry fix most of my life.

Wa-a-a-al, too, how tall a body oughta be ain't a fuss neither. I been jest about tall enough right along to fill up th' space from the top of my head to whar th' bottom of my feet commence. T'was a good thing, as I see it, 'cuz if'twere more I'd a'been too big for my britchers. — Ain't that how i'tis with some?

Mostly we boys and girls set to th' oposite sides of th' room to th' Eight Lots School. One teacher mixed us up 'cuz she said that life was that way - not all t'one side nor t'other. When that happened Anna Marsh set in front of me a good deal of th' time. I liked that 'cuz I kind'a took ashine to her. She was rough as a cob most times. We boys plagued her somethin' awful. We dipped her pigtail in th'ink jar,

tied her jacket sleeves in knots, and lit fire to th' cob webs under th' privy when she was in thar tendin' business. She would just whack us and yammer a bit.

Well sah, this one time I crooked a pin just right so'st'would stand up by itself. While she was to th' front recitin' I set it on her seat. She come back all proud of what she had jest done and set square on that pin. For a minute thar I wished I hadn't, but then everybody but Anna was laughin', so I was sure I done right.

"Yeeyooow! Fred Batcheller, that hurt!" yelled Anna.

Th' teacher said, "Freddy, did you do that?"

Sei, (said I) "Yes I did."

Th' teacher said, "Well, then, go fetch a switch." I didn't need more tellin' to know jest what the switch had to be. We boys got 'em on a regular basis. Th' switch had to be fresh cut and limber so's to make a swishing noise, but firm enough so's she could grip it good. T'was required to be 42 inches exact because that was th' best length for her to swing. Some teachers prefered it other lengths. Th' nubs had to be cut off clean, and th' bark peeled off without gouging th' wood so's not to weaken it none. Then, because th' wood was green, t'was wet so you had to git a hand full'o ashes from th' stove and rub th' switch with 'em real good so's t'wouldn't slip from her

hand. Then th' teacher examined it real good, measured it, and swished it to and from. If t'warn't right it went into th' stove, and you started over. T'warn't often that th' fust one was jest right and to her likin'. If t'were just right it went on th' blackboard tray so's every one could study on th' evils of sin.

When goin home time come you got your whackin. It hurt some, but th' wurst part was sittin all day knowin' what you was in for; kind of like th' dentist, don't ya know?

Reflecting on it, time 'n again it didn't do no harm for th' teacher to whack in at th' bottom what had missed th'top.

Anna cried when I got th' switch and said that she was real sorry she yelled. Th' next day I filled her pocket with chalk dust jest to show t'warn't no hard feelin's. In th' days before my time Sutton didn't have no high school to speak of, so private schools took quite a part in teachin' activities. Down to th' east part o' town thar was a Mr. Newell Wedge who built just such a school. T'was in th' section where Fayette King lived near whar th' Armsby Cemetery is on Armsby Road.

Mr. Wedge graduated from Amherst College in 1840 or thar 'bouts. He took it on his shoulders to start th' Wedge School, and it was built into quite a school. — Yes, quite a school.

My mother and her sister went thar. They lived on Burbank Road, and walked to school every day. T'was a short walk, me'be two - three miles, but some of the scholars had quite a distance to walk. 'Course, then they had to walk home after school. Them days there warn't no other way 'cept to walk.

Thar was me'be eight - ten blacksmith shops hereabouts when I was a boy. Some just shoed oxen and hosses, so warn't full blacksmith shops. These were called farriors, but most of 'em did just about everything. They made wagons, sleds, buggies, and milk wagons. Now they've all pretty much faded out. They's no oxen left and it looks like horses are 'bout done, too. One of these blacksmiths was Henry Putnam. This Henry was connected to th' Brigham family. There was another Henry Putnam at th' same time, but not connected. Yes, suh, same name, but not related that I know of.

Anyway, this here Henry that was th' blacksmith was an interestin' fellow. His father had th' shop up by th' fork in th' road as it turns off from th' road to Oxford and goes to Webster (now Joe Jenny Road off

Sutton Ave in Oxford.) But Henry and his brother worked for th' father and they were known for good work.

Henry told me a story about how he was in th' Civil War, and took up heavy drink as a bad habit. He told me that he had been on a bad one all night long. I forgot how many beers he said he drank, but it was quite a number — yes, sah, a good many. He said that stuff would let the mouse tree th' cat. He'd best be gone, though, when th' cat comes down in th' mornin'.

Henry said, "Why, I was so drunk that night that my hair was so stiff it held my hat up." He said that he woke up and went to his anvil with his big hammer and brought it down hard and sez to hisself, "Henry, you and I have had a lot of good parties together, yes sa, we have — good ones! Henry, what do you say we never have another one. Let's break up this business corporation. You go your way and I'll go mine. Henry, don't you ever drink no more; no more drinking beer and whisky." "Henry," sez I ta myself, "It's a go!"

Well, sah, Henry never drank no more. He got to be one of th' strongest and soborest temperance men in our town.

Well, now, Henry had three sons. One was Harry, who went into the blueberry business. His real name was Joseph Harry Putnam, but no body used the Joseph. He graduated from the agricultural college up to Amherst. He worked around for a time and then got pretty excited about blueberries. His father, Henry, owned the farm whar Eric Jacobson (now James Weidman, 527 Boston Road) sold a while ago, and he come back to it. They had quite a large number of blueberry bushes thar with nice berry's. People come from all around to pick'em. They was th' nice old fashioned kind, but big, too. Well, sa, every fall Harry went through th' patch and marked them bushes that had th' best berries with tags so's they could better copy how they grew. He dug 'em up and planted them where he thought they otta be. Ever'body was sure he had a little problem with thinkin' right, but liked him, so didn't say but very little bad about him.

Well, sa, Harry got connected with other blueberry folks and they all went into cultivating blueberries as a full time thing. They done real good at it, too. They stopped growing'em in Sutton, though, 'cuz th' season was too short to really get th' best crop. They

dug up th' best bushes and planted 'em in Florida and on Cape Cod.

Harry's father, Henry Putnam, married Miss Abby Lock. She was a teacher at the Newell Wedge School.

Commin' up what's now Boston Road from th' old Henry and Harry Putnam Farm goin' toward Freeland Triangle thar's somethin very interestin'. It seems thar usta be a Baptist Church about whar Lesley Merrill's chicken yard's now. That church later was made into a Methest Church. Warn't long before that church failed up. Th' church never was finished and never had a steeple. T'was just a big square buildin'. After they failed up as a church th' buildin' was moved to Millbury and t'was made over into a tenement house for one o'th' mills. 'tis th' second house up toward th' Singletary Nook from th' corner of th' road to Sutton Center from Millbury. (now the home of Joe and May Brady, 129 West Main Street, Millbury)

Well sh, that ain't what I was gettin to. Whar that church was thar's one granite grave stone. It now stands right in th' middle of Les Merrill's chicken yard. It says, "Mrs. Mary Quinn - died 1848." T'was a little cottage down near th' John King place (now Anna King's) where some Quins lived. Thar was a boy, John Quinn, that went to th' Eight Lots School with me for a time. I ain't sure, but I think that was a grandson of th' Mary Quin on th' grave. Mr. Merrill's been willing to show th' stone to them with an interest.

Up thar near Ramsharn Pond thar was a man named Walsh —not Welsh. He was Irish just th' same as th' Welsh family, but not related that I know of. He was a natural bonesetter, he was. I don't recall any talk of any trainin' to do it — jest somehow larned it.

Well sh, my father had reason to need him. My mother fell and put a bone out in her foot. She had a full pain and saw doctors about it. They saw nothin' wrong 'bout it. Father had me go fetch Mr. Walsh. He looked over her foot and told us thar was a bone out. He sez he couldn't put th'bone back 'til th' cartilage was softened. He told us to soak th' foot in water for twenty four hours and then fetch him again. Why! — we did that and he come and just wiggled that foot some and brought that bone right back whar it belonged. Mother never had any trouble with it again.

Father gave Mr. Walsh two chickens and Mother

gave him some fresh baked bread. Thar was a lot of that sort of thing in them days. Thar warn't no doctors to speak of, and you paid with what you had. I reckon you did as best you could and made do.

My good wife, Florence, was all th' difference in my life. I shan't get so close to good times again as t'was before she died at just 48 years. I wondered how I'd get on when she died. Thinkin' on th' good we had made it better. Things would sour up some and our load would fall in a hole. Then, 'stead of pulling, we'd team up t'other end ta push amite. Didn't alas make it no load a'tall, but it got us whar we had a mind to be, more or less. All told it come out pretty fair. She was of th' Merritt family of Gardner, don't cha know?

T'warn't just th' family she helped get on. She al'as helped them in a tight place time and again if they was between th' tree and th' bark. One such time was when Mrs. Nancy Ward died. I think that was her name, Nancy, yes that was it. She left two little boys and two little girls. She died while borning her fifth child. That died too. They lived up on th' road to Purgatory in a little run down house. Being on the Welfare Board I had to go. Florence came too to help out with th' children. Mrs. Mary Dwight King was a neighbor up thar, and come to help too. They found a dress for th' poor little mother and one for the baby, and dressed them for a funeral that th' town did. Them four little children stood next th' casket without so much as a tear. Th' oldest girl, Nancy, she was 'bout thirteen, said she'd like to jest stay by the casket for a bit, but then we had to get on with it. T'warnt a buryin' like you'd like ta have, but it was better for Florence bein' there. Mrs. King, Florence, and I were th' only people thar with th' four children. Th' father had run off and left that poor family alone, and with only food and such from the town. The baby and the mother were buried in one casket in a little cemetery in West Sutton. Because thar was no family th' children had to be turned over to th' State for care. Miss Nancy Ward was th' oldest child. As I recollect, th' mother and th' daughter had th' same first name. She stayed in Sutton with th' Dexter Kings and was a good scholar in th' Sutton school. She grew to be a real credit to th' town. She came to see Florence often during her last sickness, because she said that Florence helped her so much when her Ma died.

MONTHLY MEETINGS

March 7 - The Society met in the General Rufus Putnam Hall at 8 pm. Due to the resignation of former president, Malcolm Pearson, the following persons were elected to serve until the annual meeting in October; president, Benjamin MacLaren, vice president, Elinor Hutchinson, treasurer, Barbara Weaver. Other officers will remain "as is". Wayne Krause was elected to the Board of Directors. The loom donated by Eugene Goguen to the Society is now re-erected and on display in working condition. The balance of the land in the triangle bounded by the Eight Lots School was donated by deed from its previous owner, William Welsh, containing about 9000 sq. ft. The program speaker, John Karagosian, related about a historic personage, "A Little Known New England Hero".

April 4 - The Society met in the General Rufus Putnam Hall at 8 p.m. A moment of silence was observed in memory of Mildred Hutchinson. The heating system installed in September, 1994 after a successful membership fund drive, has proven to be efficient and economical...fuel costs are lowered by nearly a 1-3 factor. Robert Kinnerly presented a rather vivid account of the 1692 era witch craft episode in Salem Village, Massachusetts. Some of the persons involved were ancestors of Suttonians.

May 2 - The Society met in the General Rufus Putnam Hall at 8 pm. Discussion centered around the project of binding a collection of Society BULLETIN issues randomly printed during the past twenty-five years and to include a possible complete chronological record. Leeni Gravlin-Dunn, weaving instructor at the Worcester Center for Crafts prepared a "hands-on" demonstration of weaving techniques utilizing the loom donated by Eugene Goguen whose blind sister, Leona, had commercially woven items as a source of income in her lifetime.

June 6 - The Society met in the Manchaug Church at 8 pm. As the President, Ben MacLaren, was absent in Scotland, Vice-President, Elinor Hutchinson, presided. After a short business meeting the speaker, Nicholas Longheart, illustrated with slides and explanations about the evolution of early meeting houses and their functional architectural transition into contemporary church structures.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Alyse Aubin and Richard Lindstrom
M/M Hagop Malkasian
Kay Sheldon

Armidee Bordo
M/M Andrew McGrath

M/M Richard Kenary
Wahnetta H. Overton
Genevieve Vaundell

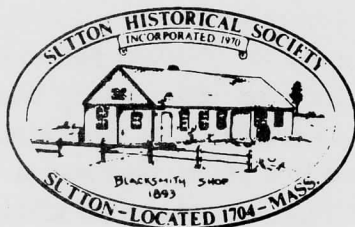
IN MEMORIAM

Florence C. Baldwin Raymond E. and Mildred Hutchinson Margaret E. Ritchie Norman E. Shaw

STOCKWELL REUNION

August 11, 12, 13, 1995

This reunion will begin Friday, August 11, with registration from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. at the Sutton Historical Society in the General Rufus Putnam Hall, Sutton Center. On August 12 registration will continue from 7:00 a.m. to 12 noon. (Note: the previously scheduled Valley Tour bus trip has been cancelled. An alternate option is planned). From 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. the event program will center around the Congregational Church, Sutton Center. Evening — supper on your own. The Sutton Historical Society quarters will be open for hospitality purposes. On Sunday, August 13 at 8 a.m. meet for breakfast (meeting place to be announced). Then attend churches of your choice. Self-guided tours with directions and maps provided. Further details are being mailed to Stockwell family members.



General Rufus Putnam Hall
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