GLIMPSES INTO THE PAST

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DO YOU KNOW: Westport's "Catalog Houses"

The Westport House 1895

The Westport House was built in the mid 1870's by Albert Gates. The time it was built coincided with the building of the Train Station which was built in 1876. It was first called "The Gates Hotel". Mr. Gates sold it to Charles N. Williams. James A Allen bought it in 1879, and it became "a popular stopping spot" according to H.P.Smith in his book The History of Essex County. Over the years, this hotel has been owned by many, yet it has been in continuous operation since its doors opened over 130 years ago. An article in the 1889 Plattsburgh Sentinel newspaper notes that Mr. C.W. Fordham purchased "The Allen House", and it became "The Pleasant View House." In 1890, it was sold by Mr. Fordham to Aiken Blinn, of Keene Valley, and it became "The Blinn House". Mr. Blinn also bought the boat livery from W.R.Carey and rented boats to the guests of the Westport Inn. An article in the Post & Gazette on April 20, 1893, reports that the hotel "just below the D. & H. R.R. station has been newly repainted

The Westport Hotel 2007

and rechristened "the Westport." Its next owner, Mr. E.M. Crawford sold it to John Vaughan about 1897, who, in turn, sold it to James E Patten, Esq., and his son Case L. Patten in 1901. It changed hands again in 1904, when it was purchased by Daniel Disotell of Elizabethtown, a son-in-law of James E Patten. In 1907, Mr. Disotell rented the hotel to Daniel Dodge of AuSable Forks. After Mr. Disotell's death in 1918, his widow, Bessie, continued to operate the hotel until 1946, when she sold it to Robert Moore of Port Henry. The hotel underwent minor changes and redecoration, and became "The Country House." This began another succession of owners who were there for the short term: Lloyd Prescott, Ed Reagan, Thomas Fitzpatrick, Frederick King and William Buchanan III. Francis (Meko) and Marion Merrow operated it under the name "The Crooked Eye". It was later owned and operated by Ralph and Rita Warren, until it was purchased by the current owner, Wayne Deswert.

The Country House 1953

FEATURED WEBSITE

www.findagrave.com

If you are looking for ancestors, and can't find them on the usual research sites, try looking for their gravestones on www.findagrave.com There are many volunteers who have photographed entire cemeteries, and there is much to be learned from the inscriptions on those stones. Of course birth and death dates can be found there, but sometimes names of parents, place of birth, and place of death which can put you on the track to further information. Once you find your ancestor, you can also find all other persons in that cemetery who have the same surname, with one click on the left hand menu.

You can search this site by location, or by name. And sometimes you will find links from one stone to another which can build an entire branch of your family tree. Another interesting feature of this site is that you can leave a note and a "virtual flower" at the gravestone.

FEATURED BOOKS

Gib White wrote several booklets about the Westport community. One about the district schools, one listing streets and numbers in the village with their residents at the time, 2 volumes reminiscing about "yesteryears", and one about visualizing some of the changes in Westport from the years 1934 - 1964. These booklets give us a look at Westport through his eyes, causing those of us old enough to remember some of those sights to do some reminiscing of our own. I was lucky enough to get a copy of each of his books from his daughter, Jean Dickerson. Jean has recently donated a complete set of his books to the Westport Library. Gib passed away several years ago, but his legacy to Westport, through these booklets, will last forever.

GENEALOGY

some early SMITH families

The 1820 census shows 5 Smiths living in Westport. Carolyn Halstead Royce states that there was a Smith family in Wadhams before the War of 1812 though she doesn't name the family, so it must have been one of these: Amos, Benjamin, James, Joshua or Lyman. She does say that these families "claim no relationship to one another!" The following is exerpted from her book, "Bessboro, A History of Essex County, NY" published in 1902.

"Edmund J. Smith, of the well known family of Smith Street, Shoreham, VT, came about 1840 and opened a carriage and blacksmith shop on Washington St. His wife was Emma Larrabee, sister of Mrs. Dr. Shattuck, and his children are Frank E. Smith , of the firm of Smith & Richards, and Mrs. C.A. Pattison.

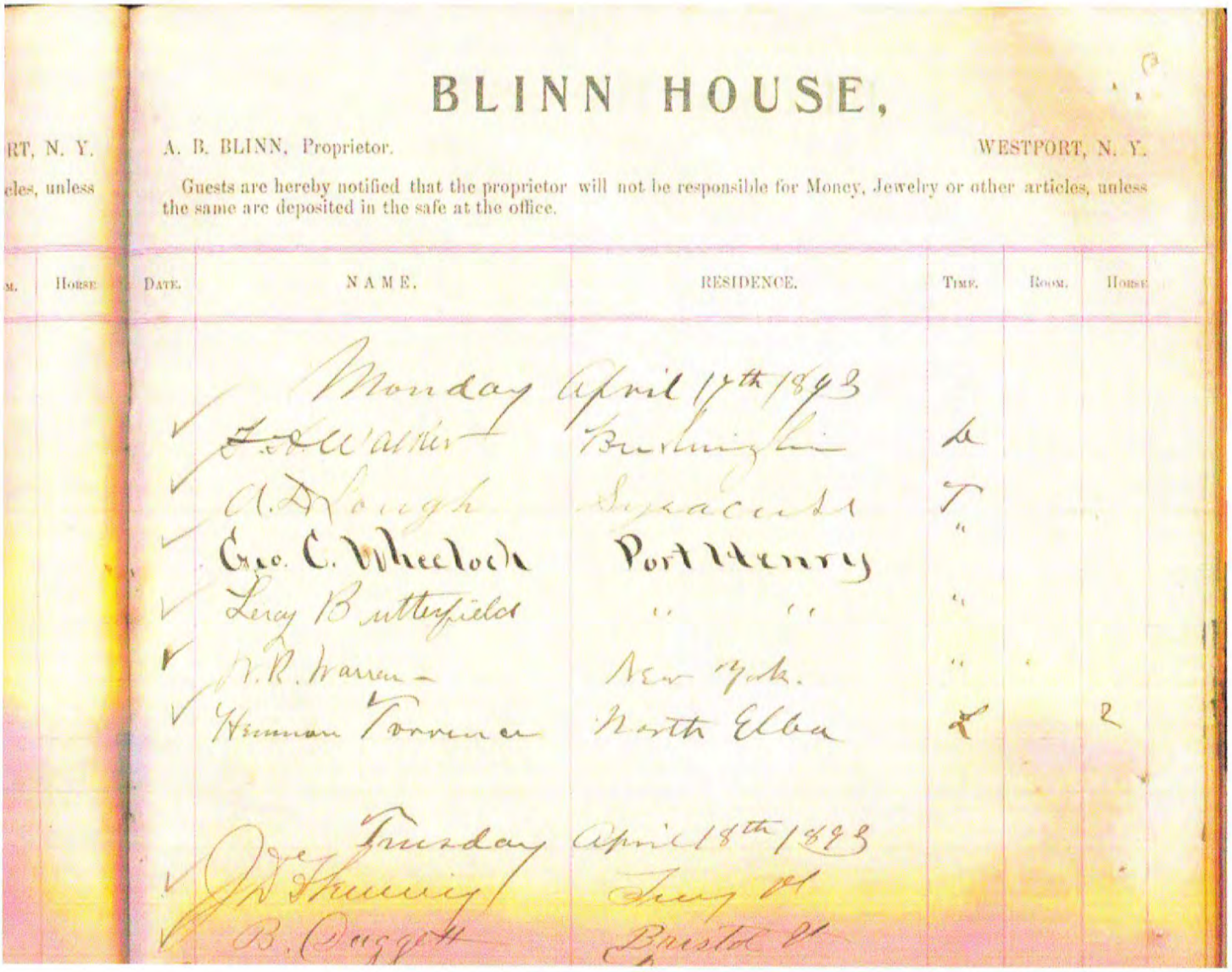
James A. Smith came from Brooklyn in 1859, and made clay pipes at Coll's Bay. His wife was Marietta Munerette, and his children are Gabriel, Peter and Sarah, (Mrs. John Farnsworth).

John E Smith came from Canada and settled on the Iron Ore Tract, on the road to Seventy-five. He was the father of William Smith, of John Smith, the undertaker and of Mrs. James Patten. (Mandana Smith Patten is the mother of Case Patten).

Ira Smith was a shoemaker, and kept the toll-gate [on the Westport-Elizabethtown Road] for a long time. His son, Arthur, is a graduate of Cornell. Leslie Smith, brother of Ira, is a carpenter, now living on Pleasant Street." [Ira Smith born about 1843, died in 1899.] Besides brother Leslie, he had sisters Elizabeth and Flora and another brother Albert. His mother Hannah and these children are listed in the 1850 census in the Town of Elizabethtown.

BREAKING NEWS!

September 19, 2008. A fire in the Westport Hotel, apparently started when a floodlight was being used by a guest as a lamp. It became too hot and ignited materials near it. The fire was quickly extinguished, but the hotel is closed for repairs.



BLINN HOUSE,

A. B. BLINN, Proprietor. WESTPORT, N. Y.

Guests are hereby notified that the proprietor will not be responsible for Money, Jewelry or other articles, unless the same are deposited in the safe at the office.

Date.	Name.	Residence.	Time.	Room.	Horse
	Monday	April 17th 1893			
✓	F. A. Walker	Burlington	D		
✓	A. D. Lough	Syracuse	T		
✓	Geo. C. Wheelock	Port Henry	"		
✓	Leroy Butterfield	" "	"		
✓	N. R. Warren	New York.	"		
✓	Herman Torrence	North Elba	L		2
	Tuesday	April 18th 1893			
✓	J. D. Fleming	Troy Vt			
✓	B. Daggett	Bristol Vt			

The above page from the ledger of "The Blinn House" in 1893 shows just a few of the places from which people traveled to Westport.

One page of the ledger lists all the members of Sautell's circus that must have performed in Westport. Many of the occupants probably came to Westport on the train, but others from places like Vermont, must have traveled here by horse and buggy. And many of the persons who signed in were from nearby towns such as Elizabethtown, Keene, Moriah, and Willsboro and Wadhams Mills. Many were even from Westport!. The most far-reaching ones were from New Orleans, LA; St. Louis, Mo., Denver, CO; Oshkosh, WI; Chicago, IL and Cleveland OH.

The back pages of this ledger list the boats that Mr. Blinn rented out during the summer of 1893. Mr.. Blinn purchased a boat livery from Willard Carey, and rented them to residents of his hotel and of the Westport Inn, in addition to the local people. It appears that they rented for less than 25 cents an hour or $3.50 for the week.

Many thanks to Bill Hoyenski, of Port Henry, who loaned me this wonderful piece of Westport's History.

BITS AND PIECES OF THE LIFE OF

CASE LYMAN PATTEN

- Stats: Case Patten was 6' 0". Weight 175. Batted both right and left handed.
- Was known as "the sorrel-topped Southpaw" according to some published reports. (his WW1 draft card, signed Sept 12, 1915, gives his hair color as auburn)
- won Player of the week award on 5/31/1901, 6/21/1901, 7/7/1903, 6/27/1904, 7/11/1904 and 7/2/1906.
- Hit his first career homerun on 6/14/1901
- Injured on 9/19/1901 with a pulled rotator cuff muscle and was out for 3 weeks.
- was injured again on 7/29/1905 with a bone chip (shoulder).
- Played his first American League game on May 4, 1901 and his last on June 18, 1908.
- www.baseball-reference.com

DO YOU KNOW

about Westport's "Catalog Houses"?

Before the days of mobile homes, prefabricated houses were sold by Montgomery Ward and Sears and Roebuck.. In 1909, Case Patten had such a house built. It is reported to have been ordered from Montgomery Ward and looks much like the one you see here.

If you think this looks a lot like Gib White's house on Main Street you would be right! Gib bought the house from Case Patten. Construction was begun on this house in 1909 when Case decided to make Westport his permanent home after leaving his baseball career. There are several other homes in the same section of town which are similar to this one.

From a 1924 newspaper clipping: "The genial Case Patten took a whole truck load of people up to the Elizabethtown ice skating rink on Sunday, March 2nd. The party was a very merry one, enjoying themselves tremendously".
(The Record Post March 6, 1924)

From a 1928 newspaper clipping: "Case Patten, one of the star twirlers of the American League some years ago, when he played on the Washington team, has been elected a trustee of the village of Westport. He owns a farm near that village and is rated as one of the leading farmers of the Champlain Valley."
(Ticonderoga Sentinel April 19, 1928)

From a 1934 newspaper clipping: "While blasting the frozen ground at the Westport school grounds a woodchuck was unearthed ten feet below the surface of the ground. The woodchuck was dormant and did not move; whether he was affected by the blast or was just asleep is not known. Case Patten wrapped him in a fur coat and put him in his truck. At night when he got home as he was about to take him out of the coat, the woodchuck came to life and Case narrowly escaped a bite. Case has him in his cellar and will keep him there until he can release him in the spring. The woodchuck will now sit up and eat carrots out of Case's hand."
(Lake Placid News Feb 22, 1934)

OBITUARY
CASE PATTEN

CASE PATTEN, NOTED BASEBALL PLAYER, DEAD

Westport Resident a Sensation in Big League Nearly Forty Years Ago

Case Lyman Patten of Westport, one of the most noted baseball players of 35 or 40 years ago, who was well known throughout Essex and Clinton counties during the early stages of his baseball career, died at Rochester of heart trouble early last Friday morning, aged 61 years.

Mr. Patten was born at Meigsville, a little hamlet near Westport, the son of the late James E. Patten and spent his boyhood days in Westport. While a student in the Westport schools he became noted as a pitcher for his school team, and in 1891 and 1892 pitched for teams in various towns of Essex County, including AuSable Forks. He rapidly gained a reputation as a "southpaw" twirler of unusual ability.

It was in these days that semi-professional baseball ran rampant in such cities and villages of Plattsburg, Malone, Burlington, Ogdensburg, Montpelier, Barre and St. Albans, and scouts for these communities were constantly looking for material to strengthen their outfits., especially in the pitching department, and the Plattsburg management quickly signed Patten, who pitched for that team of the then Northern League during the seasons of 1894-5 and at the close of the latter season was signed by a scout for the Washington team of the American League, who had watched his performance with the Plattsburg team. Patten quickly became a sensation at the national capital, and several of the leading teams in the American League endeavored to secure him from the Senators. In 1907 the New York Highlanders, now the Yankees, endeavored to secure his services, offering the Senators, "Happy Jack" Chesbro and Yeager, two of their stars in a trade for the Westport boy. Patten was not averse to this trade, as it would have brought him to a far better team than was the Senators at that time, but the trade fell through and Patten remained in Washington and was the leading factor in the winning of the league championship for the Senators at a later date. Later the Senators arranged a deal for the transfer of Patten to the Boston American League team, but this did not meet the approval of the Westport star, and he gave up his big league career rather than go to Boston, and he returned to Westport where he coached and played with local Essex county teams for several years before retiring from baseball permanently and devoting his energies to successful farming.

He is survived by his wife, Marie [Eastman] Patten, and one son, Junior Patten. Four sisters, Mrs.. Frances Stack, Mrs. Grace Sullivan, Mrs. Daisy Nagle and Mrs. Bessie Disotell also survive him. [He was predeceased by two brothers, Bert and Charles].

His funeral was held from his late home in Westport, Rev. W.W.Morrow officiating, and his popularity among his fellow townsmen was demonstrated in the large number who attended the obsequies and the floral offerings sent to the house of mourning. The interment was in the Westport Protestant cemetery."

[Editor's note: Although a gravestone was found in this cemetery for his wife, Marie, none was found for Case Patten.]

Adirondack Record-Elizabethtown Post, June 6, 1935