

GLIMPSES INTO THE PAST

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Editor's note: One of my goals in writing this newsletter is to share information about the people who live, or have lived in our town. Each issue will include some genealogy and stories about those residents that relate to the featured topic.

JUST WHO OR WHAT ARE OUR STREETS AND ROADS NAMED FOR?

PART ONE

IN THE BEGINNING



Did you ever wonder who or what our streets and roads were named after? Were they named after someone famous? Were these names of important persons in our community? Were they so named because a family lived in that location for many years? Was it for a building that is related to that place, or some naturally occurring feature there? Well, the answer is all of the above.

Many family names are heralded by the street and road signs we pass by every day. Spear, McConley, Young, Morrison, Merriam, Stevenson, Napper, Dudley, Decker, Sherman, Merrihew, Harris, Sisco, Marks, Barksdale, Worman, Eggleston, Fitzgerald, Pierce, Boyle, Goff, Meigs, McMahon, Delaney, Presbury, Taylor,

Alden, Loukes, Hald, Walker, Frisbie, Angier, Barber, Frisbie to name a few. This list is not inclusive, but at this time I am not focusing on those signs which designate a "private road". If you know of other public roads or streets with a family surname please let me know. Of course, not all of our streets and roads are named for families, but some are named for buildings, businesses, brooks and other natural occurrences, like Rock Harbor, Old Arsenal, Furnace Point, Bay Breeze, Ledge Hill, Hammond Brook, Congress (where did that come from?), Harbor View, Orchard Terrace, Country Club, Lakeshore and more. The reason for some of these names is obvious. But others might make us wonder!

As Caroline Halstead states in her book, "Bessboro: A History of Westport, Essex Co., NY" which was published in 1902, the first streets were named Washington, Liberty, and Water Streets. These are shown on an 1800 map drawn by Ananias Rogers. (see below). Rogers also has a "Main Street", which Royce omits. She does report about a 1802 map which includes Main Street. Then, in 1819, according to Royce a new map was drawn by Diodoras Holcomb having been employed to do so by Charles Hatch. According to Royce, a copy of this map "hangs in the village library". Five additional streets were named: Pleasant, North, East, Mill, and Charles. We still have streets named Main, Washington and Liberty, but what happened to the others?

The aforementioned book only covers the hamlet of Westport, and does not offer a history of the hamlet of Wadhams, which we all know is part of the Town of Westport. For that, one has to turn to other sources. The named streets and roads in Wadhams will be discussed in future issues of this newsletter.

So...in the beginning...there were those first 4 streets, Washington, Water, Main and Liberty. Washington Street, we must assume was named after the "Father of our Country", not a local resident. It ran up the hill from the lake where the Marina now stands and extended up past the library. Many of us remember that changed with the latest 911 "re-addressing" of streets in 2001-2002. Washington and Liberty ran parallel to each other, and perpendicular to Water and Main. Water Street and Main Street intersected both Liberty and Washington. Royce says that the only part of Water Street now in use as a street is the road leading

"from the wharf to the old stone mill. The cluster of old buildings removed when the land was bought by the Westport Inn was supposed to stand upon the ancient Water Street." The 911 re-addressing now has Washington Street forming the "U" from Main Street down "dock hill" to the Marina, past where the old stone mill stood, past the road to the old beach and back up to Main Street.



The part of the old Washington Street which crossed Main Street and went up past the library is now called Stevenson Road.

Since Liberty Street was named in 1800, it was probably so named because of the remaining feelings of freedom in our newly created country having freed itself from Great Britain. This street actually opened in 1836-7, but never extended to the Lake as Rogers drew in his map. In viewing the old map, you can see the numbered plots with number 1 being on the corner of Main and Washington. Royce says this was the home of John Halstead, the first frame house in the village.

As for those 5 streets named in 1819, the name "Pleasant" remained until the 911 re-addressing and has now become an extension of Main Street; North Street, was also known as North Main, and is now Champlain Avenue. Charles Street was probably named for Charles Hatch who came here in 1802. Royce says this

street, located just south of the M.E. Church was to run from the east up the hill, past Mr. Andrew Daniels, but was never opened. East Street ran "along the western bank of the brook toward its mouth, turning in at the west of the bridge". Mill Street ran along the brook which was called "Mill Brook" from its mouth to the dam which had been built as early as 1807 as evidenced by an agreement between Ananias and Platt Rogers, and Asa Durfee.



This was a grist mill, and probably built by Charles Hatch in the early 1820's. The boats loaded and dropped off their cargo at a wharf below the mill. In the early 1900's the roof and chimney fell in. The picture above shows its appearance after 1900.

A copy of Roger's first map is on the next page. You can see the May 23, 1800 date and Ananias Rogers, Surveyor above and below the drawing.

The Family of Platt Rogers

The Rogers family came to Northern New York sometime after the end of the Revolution. Ananias was the son of Platt and Ida Wiltse Rogers. Platt and Ida were married in Dutchess County and that is where Ananias was born. Platt served in the Revolution having enlisted in the second Regiment which was commanded by Col. Morris Graham, according to an on-line Sons of the American Revolution application. An article written for the Press Republican in 1962 by Marjorie L. Porter, reports that Platt was a "surveyor, road builder, and explorer of sorts." He purchased land in Basin Harbor, Vermont in 1790 and in the same year began a sailboat ferry from there to Rock Harbor in what is now Westport. He also bought land in Plattsburgh, NY; had a part in building the first dam across the Saranac River, as well as saw and grist mills. He also succeeded in obtaining a ten-year lease on a Iron Ore lot near Port Henry so that the Plattsburgh Forge would be supplied with ore. (Transported on Lake Champlain by pirogue, or dug-out). Platt was also one of the surveyors of "Rogers Old Road", the first north-south road from Washington County to the Canadian Border (1789-1793). The State of NY paid for his labor with land.

Platt died in Plattsburgh on October 7, 1798. He is buried in the cemetery at Basin Harbor, VT.

Ananias' sister, Phebe, married John Halstead, who has already been mentioned as the "owner" of plot number ONE on the earliest map of Westport shown above. Her son, Platt Rogers Halstead, served in the War of 1812. He was also a surveyor, and was the builder of the brick home on Stevenson Road formerly owned by the Volckmann family and now by Nancy Page.

Another sister, Ida, married James Winans. Winans was the brother of John Winans who built the second steamboat in the world...the *Vermont*, which was built in Burlington.

Ananias died in 1838 and is buried in the Basin Harbor Cemetery.

Charles Hatch

Charles Hatch, the son of Timothy and Eunice (Beardsley) Hatch was born in Dutchess County in 1768. He came to Brookfield, with his wife, Amy Low, in 1790, and to Westport in 1802. They had children Betsy and Charles Beardsley Hatch. After the death of his wife, Amy, Charles married Lydia Clark and had children Eunice and Edwin. Lydia was a sister of David Clark and half sister of Aaron B. Mack. In 1845, he married again, this time to Maria Ferris.

Betsy married Samuel H. Farnsworth and had children Mary Ann, Elizabeth, Samuel and James Hiram (the progenitor of the Farnsworth families we know in Westport); Charles Beardsley Hatch married Margaretta Winans, the daughter of the aforementioned James Winans and his first wife. The children of Charles B. and Margaretta were Percival, Winans, Mary Elizabeth who married Amos Prescott, and Sarah who married Edwin Prescott.

Charles acquired two nicknames, according to Royce: the "Judge" and the "old Squire". In 1825, Hatch built the home across from the Bank, most recently occupied by Caroline Phillips. He was the first proprietor of the Marina, a store on the north corner of Main and Washington, and built the old stone mill.

Charles Hatch died in 1856 at the age of 88. He had lived in Westport for 54 years. He is buried in Hillside Cemetery.

Many descendants of "the Old Squire" live in Westport and surrounding towns today.