

come. Being the last house for many miles it is a landmark in this section and distances are reckoned as so many miles from "Finley's," as from a point of departure.

We passed the mouths of numerous small streams and twelve miles above the falls came to the mouth of the Musquacook, a river of considerable volume flowing northward into the Allegash from a long lake which extends away down into Piscataquis County. Large lumber operations are carried on upon this stream and many logs are driven from it every spring. Mr. S. Walter Stevens has cut about seven millions upon Musquacook each year for a number of years and will this winter cut about the same quantity. Mr. W. H. Cunliffe's operation this winter will be upon the Allegash on Township 14 and 15, Range 11 and 12, 13, 14 and 15 R. 12. Both these operators have a large number of men and horses already in the woods, and with a favorable winter will have large drives.

---

## LIMESTONE

---

Directly north of Fort Fairfield in the tier of townships lying along the boundary line lies the flourishing town of Limestone. Unlike many of the comparatively new towns in Aroostook County, the first opening made upon this forest township was for manufacturing instead of agricultural purposes.

In the year 1845 Gen. Mark Trafton of Bangor, then Custom House Officer at Fort Fairfield, conceived the idea of building a mill upon the forest tract to the north of that town for the purpose of manufacturing clapboards to be shipped to Boston market. The township was then known as Letter E, Range 1, and was wholly in its original wilderness state. A strong flowing stream ran through the township and emptied into the Aroostook River a short distance above its junction with the St. John. In the report of the Scientific Survey this stream was denominated Limestone Stream, from the geological formation near its mouth, and was so named on the Maine charts, though known in New Brunswick as Little River.

Gen. Trafton associated with himself Mr. B. D. Eastman of Washington County, who was at that time living at Fort Fairfield, and having previously obtained from the State Legislature a grant of 1600 acres of land in aid of building the mill,

commenced in June, 1845, to clear a tract of land on the bank of Limestone Stream, upon which it was proposed to erect the mill. Mark Trafton, Jr., a son of Gen Trafton, was also admitted as a partner in the enterprise, and the new company was called the Limestone Mill Company. With a party of axe men to clear the way through the forest, and with one pack horse to carry their provisions, they crossed the Aroostook River at Fort Fairfield and travelled through the forest in due north course until they struck the Limestone Stream. A large clearing was made during that summer and the next year, the summer of 1846, the new mills were built. A substantial dam was built across the stream and upon this dam was erected the saw mill containing an up and down saw, clapboard machine and shingle machine, and also a grist mill with one run of stones. The shingle machine was a Muzzy machine built in Bangor and hauled by ox team to Houlton, thence across to Woodstock, whence it was boated up the St. John and Aroostook Rivers to Fort Fairfield and hauled through the woods to the mill. The grist mill was built because the company had faith that the town would soon be settled and that then the mill would be needed. In the fall of 1846 the mill was completed and the business of sawing clapboards was commenced. A road was cut through the woods from the mill to the St. John River at a point called Merritt's Landing, about ten miles below Grand Falls, and over this road the clapboards were hauled during the following winter, and in the spring of 1847 they were rafted and floated down the river to Fredericton, whence they were shipped to Boston.

In the following year the road was made passable for wagons in the summer time. In 1847 the Traftons sold their interest in the enterprise to Mr. George A. Nourse, a son of Dr. Nourse of Bath, who had come to the forest of Aroostook for the benefit of his health. In 1848 the new firm of Nourse & Eastman built another small clapboard mill about a mile upstream from the original mill, and in 1849 undertook the hazardous experiment of driving bunches of clapboards down the stream with the intention of taking them from the water when the drive reached the St. John River and there rafting them. They turned 400,000 of pine clapboards in bunches into the stream and started to drive them down the stream as they would a drive of logs. The experiment proved unsuccessful and resulted in the loss of nearly the entire lot of clapboards. This, with other misfortunes, caused the failure of Nourse & Eastman

in 1851, and for a number of years not much business was done at the mills.

In 1847 the township was lotted and opened for settlement. In that year Andrew Phair took up a lot on the hill near the mill and Bernard McLaughlin took a lot some two miles distant, at what is now known as the "Four Corners." They were the first settlers who came upon the township for the purpose of farming, although some crops had already been raised by the Mill Company on the tract of land cleared near the stream. In the same year Orrin Davis took up a lot on the road opened from the mill to the St. John River, about a mile distant from the mill. At that time lots were sold to actual settlers for \$1.25 per acre, 50 cents of which was to be paid in money and the remainder in road labor.

After the inauguration of Gen. Taylor as President, Gen. Trafton retired from the custom House at Fort Fairfield and was elected as a representative to the State Legislature and it was largely through his influence that a change was made in the law relating to settling lands. The price of land was that year reduced to 50 cents per acre to actual settlers, the whole amount to be paid in road labor. A number of the earlier settlers who had already performed the requisite amount of road labor under the old law, but who had not made the required cash payment, now took certificates under the new law and again paid for their lots in road labor at 50 cents per acre.

The years immediately following the failure of Nourse & Eastman were hard years for the little settlement. No business was done at the mill and the greater part of the settlers left the town. Mr. Albion Whitney, foreman in the mill, removed to Minnesota, where, being unsuccessful in business, he removed to California, where he amassed great wealth in trade.

In 1857 Ephraim Osborn and Daniel Libby obtained possession of the mills and business at once revived. During the next four years there was a large immigration to the town and many lots were taken up. In that year Daniel Libby was appointed local agent for the town and he at once proceeded to lay out roads in different parts of the town for the convenience of the new settlers. Among those who came to the town in the years 1857—61 (which was a most important period in the history of the new settlement) and who remained to become prominent citizens of Limestone, adding much to its wealth and influence, were I. W. Kennerson, J. E. Spear, L. G. Morris, Josiah M. Noyes, Hosea Webster, Josiah Ward, R. B. Chase, Charles

Stetson, P. B. Sayward and James Edgecomb. Mark Trafton, who had previously married a daughter of Daniel Libby, came to the town in 1857 and bought a lot of land on the tract granted to the Mill Company, about a half mile from the mill on the road to the St. John River. Here Mr. Trafton made a fine farm, upon which he continued to reside until 1888. In connection with his farming operations, Mr. Trafton commenced trading in 1863, and in 1876 established a store at the mills, where he and his son, Charles W. Trafton, have continued to trade until recently, Mr. Trafton retired from the business and his son is now sole proprietor. In 1889 Mr. Trafton built a beautiful mansion on the high ground east of the mill and fitted it up with much taste and elegance, and with all the modern conveniences.

Messrs. Osborne & Libby continued to operate the mills until 1866, when they sold to Mr. Dennis Getchell. Mr. Getchell at once put in a large rotary and planer and made many other improvements. In 1877 the mills were destroyed by fire and about the same time Mr. Getchell died. His sons proceeded at once to rebuild the mills and have since continued the business under the firm name of Getchell Bros.

The history of Limestone during the war is much like that of many other of the new towns in Aroostook County which were at that time in the early stages of development. The breaking out of the war found the town with nearly every available lot taken, and small clearings were being made in all parts of the town. Many of the younger portion of the settlers, who had just commenced the work of clearing their new farms, went into the army and a large portion of them never returned to the town. Since the war the growth of the town has been gradual and no great number of settlers have come in at any one time. The soil proved to be as fertile as any in Aroostook and, being free from stone, was easy to clear and to bring under cultivation and there are now in this town some of the finest farms to be found anywhere in the county.

In 1876 a starch factory was built at the mills by the firm of Eustis & Aldrich of Boston, and Mr. Alfred Lovering of Colebrook, N. H. The establishment of this enterprise at once gave a great impetus to the business of the town and was of immense benefit to the farmers. They at once went to work to smooth up their fields and to fit them for the working of farm machinery and for the easy cultivation of the potato crop on a more extensive scale. The business also brought much ready money to the farmers of the town and thus enabled them to improve

their farms and build better buildings. Hardly a log house is now to be seen in the town and one is struck with the number of fine farm buildings, neatly finished and painted, to be found in all parts of the town. The mills and starch factory served as a nucleus around which has grown up a handsome little village which is destined to grow and become one of the handsomest country villages in Maine.

The starch factory is now owned by Mr. C. W. Trafton, who last year manufactured nearly 250 tons of starch. About 1885 Mr. Josiah M. Noyes bought the privilege where the second clapboard mill was built by Nourse & Eastman, about a mile up the stream from the village. Upon this site Mr. Noyes erected a large new mill which is a model of its kind.

The village of Limestone is beautifully situated in the valley of the stream, the land rising gradually upon either side and broadening out in every direction into large and well cultivated farms, with smooth and fertile fields. The houses in the village are neat and the grounds around them tidy and well kept, and the whole aspect of the place is one of thrift and enterprise. There is very little waste land in the town, and nearly every lot could be made into a good farm. There is still considerable vacant land in the town belonging to proprietors, though every State lot is taken up. It is safe to say that there is hardly a lot in the County fit for settlement now belonging to the State. This shows how much more quickly the resources of Aroostook might have been developed, and her forests converted into fertile farms had the State retained possession of all townships suitable for settlement, and lotted them out for the benefit of those who wished to make homes for themselves and families. Mr. Jerre Hacker of Fort Fairfield owns a large tract in the northern part of the town, which he is offering to settlers at a reasonable price. Other proprietors are also willing to sell good land upon fair terms.

The Plantation of Limestone was originally organized in 1848, but subsequently lost its organization and was reorganized in 1858. In the early days of the settlement of the town, schools were supported by private subscription, and after the organization in 1858, schools were established and supported by taxation. The town was incorporated in 1868 and at once adopted the town system of schools, which has been maintained ever since and has given general satisfaction. The schools of the town are now in good condition and are generally supplied with comfortable schoolhouses.



The population of Limestone in 1880 was 655 and its valuation \$76,583. In 1890 the valuation was \$149,938, and its population was 933. The rate of taxation is .916.

Limestone has a fertile soil, grand water power and favorable location, and we see no reason why the town has not a grand future before it when its resources shall be fully developed.

---

### DYER BROOK

---

Though the development of Aroostook County has thus far been more rapid in the two tiers of townships lying next to the eastern border, yet there are in the western part of the county many fine agricultural towns with strong, fertile and productive soil and grand natural resources, only awaiting the opening of adequate means of transportation to develop into populous and prosperous communities. Of these western townships the plantation of Dyer Brook is naturally one of the best. This township was formerly known as No. 5, R. 4, and has Merrill Plantation on the north, Oakfield on the east, Island Falls on the south and Hersey on the west. The stage road from Houlton to Patten runs through the entire length of the township in a southerly and southwesterly direction near its eastern border. The surface of the town in this section is rolling and somewhat hilly, but not sufficiently broken to interfere with easy cultivation. In the western portion of the town are broad stretches of more level land still in its forest state and containing much fine farming land.

The first settlement was made upon the town about the year 1844, as nearly as we have been able to trace it. In that year Mr. Orrin Laughton came from Smyrna and took the lot near the northeast corner of the town, upon which Mr. J. E. Tarbell now lives. Mr. Laughton made a clearing upon the lot and built a log house. After living on it a number of years he sold to a Mr. McMonagal, who died a few years after purchasing it. Mr. Oliver Dow then took the place, but abandoned it after a few years and the lot reverted to the proprietors of the town. In 1857 Mr. J. E. Tarbell took the place and cleared up a large farm and built a handsome set of buildings.

Benjamin Gerry, the second settler upon the town, came