



History of Woodstock, Me: With Family Sketches and an Appendix (Classic Reprint)

William B. Lapham

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Excerpt from History of Woodstock, Me: With Family Sketches and an Appendix

The history of the town of Woodstock presents no startling incidents, and few if any circumstances not common to other of the late-settled, interior towns of the State. It was settled long after the last hostile demonstration by the Indians was made in Maine, and therefore can contain no thrilling incidents common to Indian warfare in frontier life. The natural facilities for manufacturing were very limited, and from its settlement the inhabitants have mainly been engaged in pastoral pursuits. The history of such a town, except to the people who inhabit it, cannot be especially entertaining, and is valuable in a general sense only as its statistics aid in making up a complete history of the State. But to the inhabitants of Woodstock, and especially to those born there or descended from the pioneers, an account of its first settlement and its gradual development from an unbroken wilderness, through its plantation life, to a prosperous municipality, filled by an industrious, thrifty and intelligent people, should possess some degree of interest.

It is eighty-four years since the first clearing was made with a view to settling upon the lands within the limits of that town, and it will be eighty-four years in November next, since the first two families moved in. It is sixty-seven years since Plantation Number Three was incorporated and became a town, and all those who participated in organizing the new municipality have passed away. The last was Gideon Swan, who was born in 1784, and was a lad of seventeen or eighteen years when his people came here. He died in 1877. Next to the last was Jacob Whitman, who was one of the first five families; he died in 1873. But few of the children of the early settlers now survive, and the number grows less year by year. Those who survive are old, and in the course of nature must soon pass away. When one of them goes, the sources of information concerning the early settlement of the town are diminished, and it will not be long before the last link that connects the present with that early period will be broken. It was this fact that induced me to undertake the task of collecting and recording, before they had all gone, some of the incidents connected with the first settlement, plantation period and early municipal life of the town of Woodstock.

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