

Captain John Bates

CAPT. JOHN BATES "BRICK ENDS"

The Capt. John Bates House, a handsome 19th century Federal Style house, Thompson Road, is impressive architecturally as well as historically significant.

Refined, yet exhibiting a commanding presence, the house appears to have been built in about 1825; an attachment to the original 18th century dwelling, now an ell. The latter is a "central chimney cape" whose chimney was extended to allow for smoke clearance at the time the finer house was built onto its front.

The house, which has been owned by the same family for nearly 200 years, has a history that is as varied as the many names by which it has been known: the Bates Place, the Fox and Hounds Tavern, the Brick End House, and Anedjo Farm.

The Bates' property, extending at one time the full length of Thompson Road from the State of Connecticut to the section of Massachusetts that became known as the East Village in Webster, was purchased by Capt. John Bates, the great-great-great-grandfather of the present (1979) owner, during the years 1783/85.

Capt. John Bates was a descendant of Clement Bates, an early settler of Hingham, Massachusetts, who arrived on the ship "Elizabeth" in 1635. A biographical history of Massachusetts written in the 20th century by Samuel Atkins Eliot states that "Clement Bates and his immediate descendants were farmers by occupation, and, as the record reads, 'soldiers when necessary'."

This description certainly fits John Bates, who lived in the house for a time. A yeoman, he also served in the Revolutionary War as a private.

It is, however, due to John's son Alanson (1772-1842), that the house acquired some of its most fascinating memories.

Records suggested that Alanson may have acquired the house before his father's death in 1834.

At some time during Alanson Bates' ownership of the property, the structure was known as the "Fox and Hounds Tavern." Indeed, one might even speculate that Alanson built the fine house onto the front of the original farmhouse to serve the dual purpose of tavern and home.

As the "Fox and Hounds Tavern" it served as a stop on the stage coach line, which connected Providence, Rhode Island with Springfield, Massachusetts. This stage coach travelled on an old road which appears on the 1795 survey map of Dudley, locally known as "Dudley Road" (and "old Thompson Road").

A remnant of this road, covered with grass and flanked by two old stone walls, still exists, passing in front of this house.

Originally, the road turned shortly after this house, near the house of Abel Bates (recently demolished), going into the woods past the old cranberry bogs (now a Conservation District), and coming out by the Brackett Place (Snow's Corner). In addition to connecting Providence with Springfield, the old road was significant locally in that it connected outlying farms with the Meetinghouse on "Dudley Hill."

Alanson Bates, the tavern host and farmer, was also active in civic affairs. He was a selectman in Webster for three terms, 1833, 1835 and 1837.

Additionally he appears to have had some responsibility, either officially or self-assumed, for the care of paupers. The financial records of the Town of Dudley for the years 1823-1827 (prior to the incorporation of Webster) show some intriguing entries:

August 30, 1823 Captain Alanson Bates \$68.64 for providing for Henry Curtin's family and for the widow of Jd. Curtis.
 April 5, 1826 Capt. Alanson Bates \$161.11 for keeping paupers for year past
 May 7, 1827 Capt. Alanson Bates \$3 cash paid Aaron Batchelder for doctoring the Griggs family and setting a broken bone.
 April 7, 1828 Alanson Bates \$86.49 in full for supporting the poor for the year 1827

(These entries represent only a few of many. Research with Dudley town records from the late 18th century onward would probably provide additional information about the activities of the Bates family in the community.)

Alanson's son Nelson (1801-1889) eventually bought the farm from his father, and lived in the house, farming the land well into the 1880's.

An article in the May 15, 1874 Webster Times reports on a party given for him and his wife in the house on the occasion of their 50th wedding anniversary. It mentions the fact that Nelson and his wife had lived in the house for most of their married life.

Another article about Nelson Bates, "An Octogenarian. A Sketch of Nelson Bates" (July 22, 1881) credits Mr. Bates with improving the farm and house and praised him as a excellent farmer "never behind the seasons with his work."

Nelson Bates, though a prominent figure in 19th century Webster and a selectman during the year 1839, was not very active in civic affairs. The article gives an explanation for this by saying that he had always preferred private to public life, honest industry to idleness or speculation. He was, however, active in the Methodist-Episcopal Church as member and Trustee.

One of Nelson Bates' sons, Andrew Jackson Bates (1839-1915) was to bring more honor to the family before his father's death in 1889. Andrew Jackson Bates left his paternal home at the age of 18 to seek his fortune; in later years he returned, bringing with him good fortune for the community. The book "Biographical History of Massachusetts. Biographies and Autobiographies of the Leading Men in the State" explains his adventures as well as his significance in manufacturing and Webster: "When 18 years of age he went to New York City and entered the employ of Tyson and Elliott, Rubber and Footwear Merchants. In 1866, he established the firm of A. J. Bates & Co. of New York to deal in shoes and rubbers. This firm began the manufacturing of shoes in Webster in 1886."

Records indicated that he opened his own manufacturing plant in Webster because he wanted to control the quality of shoes that he distributed through his New York office. Apparently, he was a believer in good value, who insisted that his shoes must wear better than higher priced shoes because he did not sell to the "carriage trade".

The biography further states: In 1905 the firm of A.J. Bates and Co. was dissolved, and the corporations of A. J. Bates Co., Webster, and A. J. Bates and Co., New York City were formed; Mr. Bates was President of both corporations until his death. This firm is today one of Webster's major manufacturing enterprises.

With the success of Andrew J. Bates, the family moved to New York City, still retaining ownership of this historic house as well as other properties. In the late 1880's,

<https://www.ancestry.com/media-viewer/tree/1180990/person/-1979053234/media/8a47f95a-79df-40aa-9bd4-852906716ef8?destTreeId=45284075&...> 1/2

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a summer house was built next to the farm house (then called AnEdJo Farm after Mr. Bates' three sons, Andrew, Edgar and John) where Hubbard Regional Hospital now stands. Called Werdna Weirs, it was built in the shingle style and was connected by foot path with a children's pavilion at Bay View. Later, another house, "Pine Needles" was built about a mile away on the shores of Webster Lake.

In this write-up we have been concerned primarily with descendants of John Bates who were associated with this historic farm house, but it is worth mentioning that various family members were active in the religious and civic affairs of Webster throughout the 19th century.

Actually, the family's historical significance goes back prior to the turn of the 18th century. In 1812, just prior to the erection of Samuel Slater's cotton mill at the head of the lake (which sparked the social and economic growth of the area), the Bates' family was prominent in this vicinity. "Historical Collections, Vol.1" by Holmes Ammidown states that at this time "...men of prominence in the vicinity...were Elijah Pratt, Asa and Samuel Robinson, John and Alanson Bates, and several by the name of Kingsbury, all being men of considerable character and standing, maintaining good moral, social and religious society."

Charles Leavens, a local, self-styled historian whose life spanned the last half of the 19th century as well as the first half of the 20th, related the following information about John Bates who first settled here.

"...and John who we have heard our parents speak of as Grand Dad and Squire Bates..." In 1783, "to the shore of our beautiful lake came John Bates and his family, and here also came his parents Jacob and Molly Bates to end their days near their son.

^(or Mary Clark)
"The Squire was an energetic man and a very prosperous one. Besides keeping a public house, he sold hides, lent money for mortgages and acted as High Sheriff, settling many disputes that arose about him. Very often he was summoned to the Gore for this purpose."

Whether from poetic inspiration or oral history, Leavens remembers in his "mind's eye" a "large, heavily built man, with the ruddy complexion that distinguished many of his descendants, rowing across the lake in his flat bottomed boat to the Gore."

(Architectural and Historical Survey of Webster, Massachusetts, Webster Historical Society, October 1979)

Jacob + Molly (Mary Clark)
(1710-1795)
son John (1748-1834) wife Chloe Fuller (1746-1825)
son Alanson (1772-1842) wife Levina Brown (1792-1874)
m 28 Sep 1814 Dudley
son Nelson (1801-1889) wife Lucia Jacobs (1804-1895)
"Lucy" int. 19 Apr 1824
son Andrew Jackson Bates (1839-1915)
wife Harriet M. Bartlett
m 3 Sep 1862 (1841-1887)

Note: This information was posted by someone on Ancestry.com