

Christmas Eve at Old Samuel Webb House a Century Ago



Doubtless at the time that the Samuel Webb homestead was built, Stamford's busy Atlantic St. was little more than a pathway, which was then known as "East Rocky Neck Lane," a name that clung to it for many years. Tradition states that in the year 1760 Dr. Samuel Webb was born in this old house and that his father, Colonel Charles Webb, had later become very distinguished in the Revolutionary War. Indeed, it is quite possible that the Webb homestead had been the property of his father some years before Samuel's birth; and, as it was torn down but a few years ago to make room for modern progress, its existence covered a long period of time. It is interesting to know that a descendant of Colonel Webb, Mrs. Naomi Webb, or "Aunt Nomy" as she was affectionately called, occupied the house more

than a half century ago and that she was well known for her charitable works. Later it became the home of Mrs. Webb's son-in-law, David L. Scofield, whose name is still spoken of with great respect at the present time.

In the above picture the artist has drawn the old Samuel Webb house as he thinks it must have appeared in its earliest years. The covered porch undoubtedly was added much later and on the north side of the house a slight change has been made in the slant of the roof. The picture is also intended to show the spirit of Christmas in those years of simplicity, when jingling sleighs brought the invited guests, arrayed in curious costumes, to the holiday feast. Such merry gatherings they were, as all crowded around the big open fire with its crackling

flames dancing up the huge square-mouthed chimney, and all joined in songs and laughter. And what a feast! Roasted turkeys and baked hams, squash and turnips and riced potatoes, port and cider, and last of all, bulging mince pies, such as only grandmothers knew how to season, and blazing Christmas puddings! And the youngsters! How thoroughly they enjoyed the games and the quaint dances that followed until the partings came and the jingling sleighs announced the passing of Christmas!

Just around the corner is another Christmas, the Christmas of 1934. Automobiles have now taken the place of the more poetic sleighs, which doubtless enables "Santa Claus" to make his rounds at a much faster clip. But the spirit of Christmas still remains unchanged.

Whitman Bailey