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A history of the West Barnstable Brick Company, in part taken from Barnstable, Three Centuries of a Cape Cod Town; by D. G. Trayser: Suppl~~ment~~ed by Frederick A. Atwood.

In West Barnstable a pottery was successfully carried on through the 1820's. Before that time the Cape had been supplied from Plymouth potteries, but breakage in transportation was excessive. Noah Bradford, born in Kingston 1761, learned and practiced his trade there. In 1819 he bought of Prince Nye "a piece of land with a potter's shop thereon." He may have leased the land previously and built the shop, or there may have been a potter before him. For ten years he made pottery here until his health failed. In the Patriot, July 18, 1832, Daniel Parker, Jr., informed the public that he had taken the stand of the late Noah Bradford and would "supply Cape towns with earthen ware made from the hands of the Potter who for years had superintended the establishment." But in March, 1833, land and shop were advertised for sale at "public vendue." The kitchens and parlors of the village and the town must at that time have been filled with this pottery. Today it is hard to find pieces we are sure of. Fragments dug from the old yard show the texture and color, and are useful in identifying it. Mrs. Fred B. Livesley and Miss Edfields J. Bradford, Granddaughters of Noah Bradford, have beanpots they know were made here. Information is lacking about the use made of this remarkable clay deposit after the pottery was given up. Bricks were made during the 1860's, but not in great quantity. (The site and foundation of the old pottery has been found and partly excavated by the party who now owns it.)

In 1878, a brickyard was established by Benjamin F. Crocker, Noah Bradford son of the potter (Noah Bradford was a direct descendant of Governor Bradford of the Mayflower, being a nephew of the

third or fourth generation), Levi Goodspeed and Charles C. Crocker.

Ten years later machinery and more modern methods were introduced by the advice of Abel D. Makepeace who moved from Hyannis to make his home in the village, and became treasurer of a reorganized West Barnstable Brick Company. For thirty years or so the company grew, enlarged its yards, employed more men, increased its output. Immigrant labor was a great factor in making the early transition possible and profitable. In 1905, out of 23 of the laboring force there was one native born American, 16 Finns and 6 Portuguese, all immigrants. These profitable years lasted until the middle 1920's.

During the middle 20's the company was bought by two people who floated bonds to make a truly modern facility. Shortly after one of the new owners died, but the company kept on.

The company did expand and put in modern buildings and more modern machinery, but the plans were beyond the scope of the assets. There were other reasons for its downfall. The size of the brick was larger and the builders did not like them as well because they could no longer lay up a chimney with an 8 inch flue without cutting bricks. The clay was not properly prepared and the small pieces of stone would explode from the high heat during final firing in the kilns, therefore the bricks would chip and break more easily. This new brick was molded with the imprint W.B.B., instead of the original mark **WEST BARNSTABLE BRICK Co.**

The brick company was in business during the early 1930's, but was in poor standing financially. About 1932 a test hole was drilled to find how much clay was left. It was estimated that there was enough to last about fifty years, but an artesian well developed from the test hole and flooded all the clay pits and the company, not having funds to recover went out of business.

My father, Martin Atwood, nee Matts Klaus Engleberg Aittaniemi, was an employee there from the middle 1890's to 1912 when he left that employment and became a carpenter, but he continued to work for a short time every spring at the brick yard to refurbish the machinery and pour new babbitt bearings where needed until 1924.

I often went with him when I was a child and spent many interesting days there. Every spring the drying yard, (for the bricks had to be sun dried before they could be handled for the kiln process) had to be made perfectly smooth and level with a very fine clay mixture. Being a barefoot tyke and having little sense of responsibility, that still wet warm clay felt so good under my bare feet, I went and stomped footprints all over it, not realizing the damage done. To say the least I was severely reprimanded, let alone the searing looks that the workmen shot at me when they had to smooth about a thousand square feet all over again. Fortunately the area being yet fresh, they were able to do it quite easily.

At that time the clay was broken up in the pit with course tooth harrow type drags drawn by horses and mules, then gathered with self dumping barrell type scrapers horse or mule drawn. The banks were broken down with hand tools.

Many times, when young, I watched the process from the beginning to the loading of the freight cars.