

THE LATE WILLIAM J. WEEKS.

A Sketch of a Life Both Active and Unique.

Mr. William J. Weeks, '44, died at his home in Yaphank, Long Island, on the morning of Sept. 2d, 1897, of cancer in the stomach. He was 77 years old. The following sketch of Mr. Weeks was prepared for the Class Record sometime ago:

WILLIAM JONES WEEKS, son of James Huggins Weeks and Susan Maria (Jones) Weeks, was born in Oyster Bay, Queen's County, N. Y., on the 21st day of February, 1821. Until he was seven years old, his father, who was one of the promoters of the Long Island Railroad, and from 1847 to 1850 the President of the Company, resided at Oyster Bay, which had been the ancestral home from the time of his progenitor, Francis Weeks, an immigrant from England about the middle of the Seventeenth Century and one of the early settlers of the township. He was named for his grandfather, William Jones; whose father, Samuel Jones, often styled "the father of the New York bar," was the first comptroller of the State, and whose great-grandfather, Major Thomas Jones, after fighting to uphold the fortunes of James II. at the battle of the Boyne in 1690, came two years later from Strabane, Ireland, and settled at Fort Neck, South Oyster Bay.

His father having moved to the town of Brookhaven, his early education was obtained from the district school there until he was thirteen years old, when he was sent to the Academy at Southampton. Here he was first introduced to the study of English grammar and handled the parts of speech in such an extraordinary manner as to upset the mental equilibrium of the assistant teacher. After spending a year at Southampton, his studies were continued for about four years at the academies of Bellport and Miller's Place. He then remained at home for a year and half, principally engaged in the labors of the farm and garden. At this early age he was a practical

surveyor and was occasionally employed in running lines and measuring land. To carry out his wish for a collegiate education, he was sent again to Miller's Place in 1839 and completed his preparation.

An only child, he returned from Yale to reside with his parents, who were then settled on a large estate in Brookhaven. That part of the town was known as Millville, from certain mills previously owned by his father and others, but there being another village in the State so called, the name, on application to the government about 1845 for a post office, was changed, at his suggestion, to Yaphank, the Indian designation of a creek and neck of land on the south side of the town. During all the succeeding years, he had been engaged in practical and scientific agriculture; first, in assisting his father in the management of the property, and subsequently in improving his inheritance. He cleared the swamps, planted vineyards of cranberries and grapes, was awarded many first premiums for these fruits at the annual fairs in Suffolk County and received a prize from the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia in 1876. He was one of the first in the county to engage extensively in cranberry cultivation. When this industry first began to excite much attention in the neighborhood, he undertook to prepare some of his land for the purpose, but it was only by indomitable perseverance and the liberal expenditure of money, extended through a series of years, that he brought the business to the point of adequate remuneration. One product of the landed estate has been cordwood, of which one year he superintended the cutting and sale of 2,000 cords. This was the result, in 1862, of the most destructive forest fires that ever occurred on Long Island, which lasted for two days and in its course swept over some 4,000 acres of his own and his father's woodlands; the high price of fuel incident to the war enabled him to recoup a large part of the first loss.

From the year 1850 he had been an extensive bee keeper, constructing an improved hive for the management of bees and making a special study of

[Continued on 8th page.]



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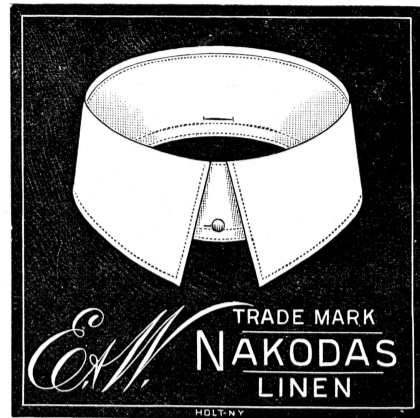
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By the way, Lieutenant-Governor Timothy L. Woodruff, of New York, Yale '79, finished his education with a course at Eastman.