

Great granddaughter Suzanne men



SARAH GERTRUDE BROWN, 1841-1917.

By DOTTIE DUMAS
 HAMPTON FALLS — Her husband wrote of her in History. "She was a person of living, left a legend from her Victorian days as the wife of a gentleman farmer in Hampton Falls.

Through the diligent and devoted efforts of her granddaughter Suzanne Perfect Crowell, Sarah Norris Brown's life has been memorialized for generations to come with this recent publication of Suzanne's book "Sunnyside Files."

Sarah Norris Brown, (1841-1917) was a remarkable woman whose life reflects the epitome of American Victorianism. She was a writer, business woman, architect, homemaker, and resident of Hampton Falls.

Born Sarah Gertrude Norris, she was a native of Dover and was educated in the public schools of Lowell, Mass. In the Hampton, New Hampshire town report of 1864 Sarah was listed as a school teacher. The report states: "Miss Norris succeeded in gaining the affection of her little pupils and had a happy way of imparting instruction. The examination at the close of the winter term was highly satisfactory."

Sarah married Warren Brown, historian and farmer, on Jan. 1, 1867 and settled down in Hampton Falls, where she was to live the rest of her life. The Browns had four living children; Harry Benson, Arthur Warren, Gertrude Norris, and Mildred

Her household was overflowing with a growing family, several farm hands, and a succession of hired girls. Sarah did all the cooking, cleaning, washing and ironing for this entire assemblage.

It was nothing for Sarah to use one barrel of sugar every four weeks, and one barrel of flour every two weeks. She canned fruits and vegetables and made every type of preserve and marmalade possible. Sarah made wine, baked breads and filled crock after crock with pickles.

For years Sarah constructed a dream house in her mind. Finally, in 1879 she engaged Mr. Bruce, an architect from Newburyport to help her with the final plans. The house was to have 28 rooms in all. It was a practical Victorian home.

The home was built high on a hill on Brown Road in Hampton Falls. There would, as the years

outbuildings built around the lovely house named "Sunnyside" by Sarah.

Sarah Brown was also a renowned seamstress. She made all her family's clothing, her handsewing and small stitching in garments still exists today. She took the better part of two years to make all the rugs, curtains, and shades for the entire Sunnyside.

Sarah Norris Brown was a centennial woman. She lived and enjoyed every bit of her fascinating time in American history. She and her husband loved to travel. They attended the Centennial Celebration in Philadelphia; took their family to the Bunker Hill Centennial at Boston and Charlestown, Mass.; visited Washington, D.C. where Sarah and Warren were invited to many receptions and teas, and attended a banquet at the Willard Hotel hosted by Secretary Chandler.

President Arthur entertained them at a reception given at the White House.

In 1883, they visited Montreal, Canada, observing the Queen's birthday.

For 47 years of her life, Sarah kept a diary. She also began writing in the Boston Globe under the name of "Sunnyside." For many years she wrote a column filled with household hints and recipes. It was at this time that she began her files, cutting and snipping prized recipes and adding her own in polished script, filling several

She also started a lucrative business: weekly she would churn many pounds of butter and together with the eggs she gathered, went to Newburyport to sell her products. During 1883 she noted in her diary that she had made 2,216 pounds of butter, averaging \$58 monthly income!

Sarah lived a long, active happy life. Some of her dreams came true; some did not. Her life was not without its tragedy. She lived to see many much wanted grandchildren; but also saw two of her children die. Sarah and Warren celebrated their golden wedding anniversary on Jan. 1, 1917. Later in the month Warren was to write in his journal, "A cold unpleasant month. There is snow enough for sleighing most of the time. Not much thawing. The necessities of living have advanced in price. Mrs. Sarah G. Brown, wife of Warren Brown, died."

Sarah Norris Brown's great-granddaughter, Suzanne Perfect Crowell says of this great Victorian gentlewoman, "Sarah left a legacy, a strong will and invincible spirit. Her accomplishments were numerous and are remembered in many ways.

The above account of the life of Sarah Norris Brown is contained in a book entitled "Sunnyside Files," written by her great-granddaughter, Suzanne Perfect Crowell.

Suzanne, (described by her writer husband, Gary, as "the reincarnation of Sarah,") is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Perfect of Brown Road, Hampton Falls.

She is a graduate of Winacunnet High School, class of 1960. At one time the Art Supervisor for the Rye School system, she went on to be the chairman of the art department of the Bristol, Vt. school system.

She performed with the National Marionette Company which appeared at Hampton Beach as a popular attraction for children in the summer of 1972.

Suzanne and Gary live at Gemeinschaft Farms in Monkton, Vt., where the couple is presently collaborating on another book.

"Sunnyside Files" was born when Suzanne started xeroxing Sarah's recipes for distribution among family members.

When her cousin Pearl Marston lent Suzanne 45 years of great grandmother Sarah's diaries, and she read through them, she realized that what she had undertaken could be expanded into a book for publication.

Sarah's husband, Warren, author of the Hampton Falls History, was a well-known man in the community and the state.

Memorializes Sarah Brown in new book

lucrative Sarah in her diaries the more she realized that she was a strong Victorian lady whom people knew little about.

"Everybody knew about Warren," said Suzanne, "but nobody knew much about Sarah." Suzanne added that "because Sarah was a unique centennial woman, it was most appropriate to memorialize her through the publication of 'Sunnyside Files' in this bicentennial year."

Sunnyside Files is a unique collection of recipes, remedies, and rhetoric from the diaries and files of Mrs. Brown. Sun-1917. Later the Victorian home of the Brown family still stand today. Suzanne explains in her book, "The house stands alone... a dignified and stately... a monument to Sarah."

Sunnyside is now occupied by the Wright family, who revere the home which is so chalk full of wonderful memories. Mrs. Wright was also featured as Cook of the Week in December of last year.

The following receipts are reproduced exactly as they appeared handwritten in Sarah's files. Suzanne has reprinted many of them in her book. These recipes are delightful to read and are quite delicious.

RAISED DOUGHNUTS

At noon;
Scald and cool ½ pint of sweet milk
Add:
½ c. sugar
pinch salt
½ compressed yeast cake (dissolved). St. Louis (or pastry flour) to make batter stiff

Mix together. Let rise until night, then add 1 egg, beaten, 1 Tbs. soft butter, and ½ c. sugar with sufficient flour to roll (as other doughnuts).

Set where it warm and let rise overnight.

After breakfast I stir it down and let it rise again; then roll and cut out, with a hole-cutter, put on a floured board and set in a very warm place to rise, twice as thick as at first.

As soon as fat is VERY HOT, fry them, turning but once. They should NEVER sink from sight but FLOAT immediately. They fry much thicker than common ones. I have a large sheet of brown paper to place them on after frying, to absorb the fat. If flavoring is liked add grated nutmeg or cinnamon.

CIDER CAKE

Two pounds of good flour, the best superfine.

A pint of good cider is better than wine

Of nice powdered sugar, 16 ounces

Of raisins and spices your judgment counts

½ pound butter
1 Tbs. soda

SALMON CHOWDER

One-half pound salt pork. Fry it in the kettle you make your chowder in; then add 6 onions, 6 potatoes and ½ can salmon, water enough to cook until the vegetables are tender. When ready to serve add 1 pint milk and season to taste.

And then Sarah had a list of remedies for ailments:

FOR BRONCHITIS

Cook 2 onions; strain and put a piece of rock candy in the juice. Take a tsp. every hour. At night rub camphor oil on the chest.

CHERRY RUM

Take 1 gallon of best old Medford, 1 pound of granulated sugar, 1½ pints of fresh-picked wild cherries; don't bruise them; now put all in a 2 gallon jug, and shake well every day or so for a month; the longer you keep it the better it will be.



SUZANNE PERFECT CROWELL, great granddaughter of Sarah Brown and author of "Sunnyside Files"



SUNNYSIDE, designed by Sarah Brown in Hampton Falls in the 1800's. (Ralph Morang)

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