

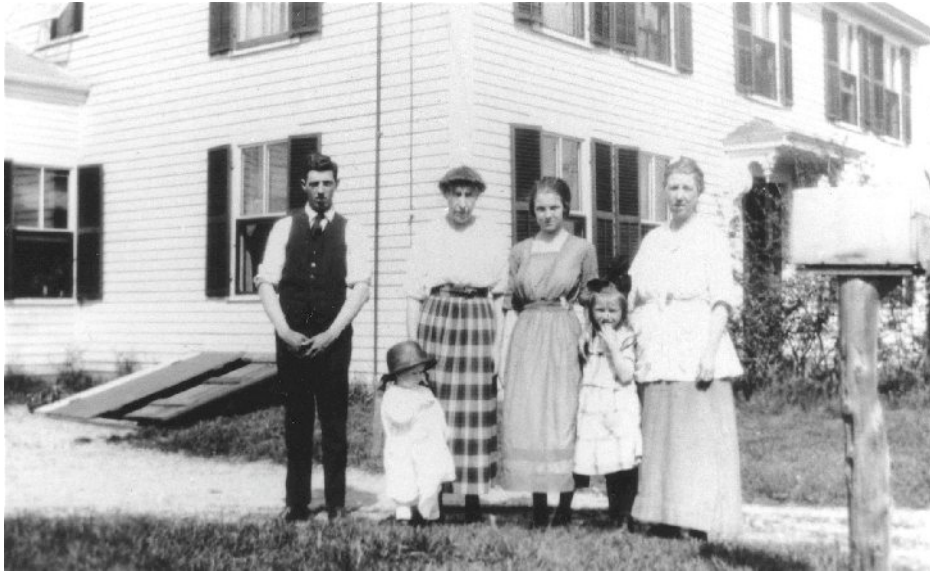


*An estate sale was held on October 26 and 27, 2007, at 157 Oak Street, the home of Nelson McNutt. His home was so full of his collections that he lived diagonally across the street at the home of his sister. At the October sale, antique dealers and town residents picked through bottles, books, MA license plates, sheet music, lamps, walking sticks, costume jewelry, carnival glass, candy dishes, art, furniture, mirrors, and a huge assortment of machinist and gardening tools -- looking for treasures or mementos of Nelson. (Photos by Pamela W. Fox*

## **The End of an Era: Estate Sale at the Home of Nelson McNutt**

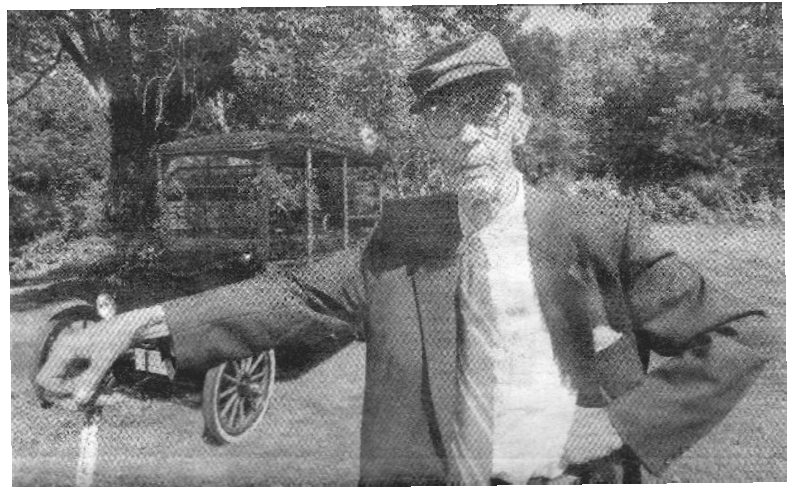
Nelson McNutt passed away in 2004 at age 105. In late October of this year, an estate sale at his Oak Street home attracted antique dealers, curiosity seekers, and town residents seeking mementos of one of Weston's most colorful characters.

Except for brief interludes, Nelson lived his entire life at the "Four Corners," where Glen Road intersects with Cliff Road and Oak Street. He was a familiar figure in the neighborhood, where he held court under a maple tree next to his dilapidated cottage at 157 Oak Street, chatting amiably with townspeople who walked or drove by.



*Early 1920s photo (l-r): Nelson McNutt; Sophie Hamilton; Sophie's daughter May; Florence and Evelyn McNutt; and their mother, Elizabeth Wyman McNutt, standing in front of the Wyman farmhouse at 317 Glen Road. (Below) Nelson McNutt at age 100 (Weston Historical Society files)*

Charles "Nelson" McNutt was born in 1899 at 317 Glen Road, the farmhouse that his great-grandfather, Daniel Wyman, had purchased in 1850. The Wymans farmed the land on three of the Four Corners. Nelson's mother, Mary Elizabeth Wyman, met her husband, Charles McNutt, while he was working as a teamster for neighboring farmer Edward Jennings. They had five children: Ella, Charles Nelson, Edith, Florence, and Evelyn. Charles McNutt left the family shortly after his youngest daughter was born in 1915, later divorced. Mary Elizabeth and the five children lived with her bachelor brother, George Nelson Wyman, who farmed the land until the day he died of a heart attack in 1934. They grew their own food and earned just enough to pay property taxes and buy a few necessities. The cash crop was strawberries.



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For his early schooling, Nelson walked two miles each way to the one-room District School #5 at South Avenue and Ware Street. As a young man, he took the train from Wellesley Farms Station into Boston to study automobile mechanics at the YMCA, now Northeastern University. Sometime before his 20th birthday, he went to work at the nearby Charles Dean estate as a "day man," chopping wood, gardening, picking apples, cutting ice, making butter, or doing whatever job was needed at the time. Nelson loved the ladies, but he never married and often attributed his longevity to his bachelor status and habit of "living day to day."

After his uncle's death, Nelson and his four sisters inherited the 50-acre Wyman farm. Nelson's house at the northwest corner of Oak Street and Glen Road dates from 1938, when it was rebuilt following a fire. The house diagonally across the street at 326 Glen Road was built in 1939 for his sister Edith. At the turn of the 21st century, these two modest homes were still owned by the family. When asked, as he often was, about selling the land, Nelson is reported to have said that he didn't need the money and was very happy living the way he did.

For many years, Nelson lived in Edith's house and took care of his sister Evelyn, who was deaf. He kept a large vegetable garden. His own house was packed with his many treasures. Nelson saved everything and added to his collections with regular trips to the Weston and Wellesley dumps. Up to the time he died, friends continued to take Nelson to the dump, where, because of failing eyesight, he chose his objects by touch.

Slowly, the Four Corners has been changing. In 1994, a large shingled house was built on the northeast corner, on land that had belonged to another sister, Ella McNutt Morse. The property at the southeast corner is now owned by a developer, who has already built a house at 300 Glen Road, one of three lots. Dr. Richard Ulbrich, a Wellesley orthodontist who befriended Nelson decades ago and helped care for him, inherited 157 Oak Street and plans to build a new house on the site. Unlike the typical Weston house of today, Ulbrich envisions something of a reasonable size, low-key and unassuming, as befits the memory of Nelson McNutt.

*by Pamela W. Fox*

## **One Hundred Years Ago in Weston (1907)**

Items from the *Waltham Daily Free Press Tribune*

“There was a very pleasant New Year's eve in the Town Hall. Just before midnight young 1907 appeared on the floor in a toy automobile and chased 1906, who was dressed like Old Father Time, out of the hall.” (January 4)

“A Kendal Green man who was caught napping, when the first freeze came, by not planting his outdoor bulbs, did so Tuesday, much to his pleasure. He says that there was no frost in the ground and that he dug up several good fat fish worms.” (January 11)

“A young lady of Weston was on her way to Stony Brook early in the month to go to a theatre in Boston when one of our prominent citizens passed her in his automobile. The machine was going at a gait quite up to the legal limit, and as it went by she was covered with mud and slush thrown by the wheels. The theatre had few attractions for her on that day. “(January 18)

“A Bantavia Jungle game-cock, believed by its owner, George W. Emerson of Weston, to be inspired by the evil one, is exciting interest and amusement among visitors at the Boston Poultry show in Mechanics' building. “Murderer” is the name of this fowl, and Mr. Emerson says the