

In Memoriam: Vera Laska (1923 – 2005)

Vera Laska, long-time Weston Historical Society board member and Bulletin editor, died on December 11, 2005, after a long illness. In 2004, author William Martin, WHS board member and past president, delivered the following tribute in her honor at the society's annual meeting.

“It is often said that Americans who are born here never quite appreciate their history or their freedom as fully as those who adopt this country as their own. Well, nobody embodies that truth more fully than Vera Laska. While most of us, to use her words, came to citizenship through happy coincidence, she made a conscious decision to become an American.



“As a young woman, she knew better than most what freedom meant. She fought for it in the Czech Resistance during World War II. And she can still describe, in vivid detail, the day that she stood on a train platform, looked to her left and looked to her right, and saw the black leather coats of the SS moving toward her from both directions. Fifty years later, the thought of them still makes her angry. She spent the rest of the war in a German concentration camp.

“But then, in 1946, she came to America. She came to study American history —she wanted me to emphasize that — and she earned her PhD. at the University of Chicago. She reminded me, a Harvard gradu-

ate, that Harvard is really the University of Chicago of the east. In 1966, she and her husband, Andy, settled in town and raised two sons here. She became a professor of history at Regis College, enlightening her students on both national history and the history of Weston. She has since written some 350 articles, including her wonderful series on local history in the *Town Crier*. She has also written books on the life of Ben Franklin and the lives of the Founding Mothers and edited the acclaimed *Women in the Resistance and in the Holocaust: The Voices of Eyewitnesses*. She has taught under Fulbright and George Washington Fellowships. And of course, she has been one of the pillars of our historical society.

“I asked her what she would like me to say about her this evening and she said, “Tell them that I loved Weston, and I hope that Weston loved me.”