



continued working there after the property was purchased in 1950 by Leonard and Edith Shulmann. Leonard operated a dog training and veterinary facility until his death in 1970, after which his widow kept it going for another two decades. In 1994, Wellesley Homes purchased the 8.6-acre property and subdivided it into 10 lots. The Colonial houses built along the new Hastings Road were criticized as being too large for their lot size and out of keeping with the neighborhood. After more than half a century as the “Weston Dog Ranch,” it is not surprising that many Weston residents still use that name for the subdivision rather than the more genteel “Weston Farms.” The Lederhos arch on North Avenue, pictured at left in 1994, was removed and sold at Skinner auctioneers.

*by Pamela W. Fox*

## The Scrapbooks of Edith May West

*The Society would like to thank John Sallay for his gift of three scrapbooks compiled by Edith May West (right) and used as the primary source for this article.*

Turning the pages of Edith May West’s three oversize scrapbooks, we enter the world of early 20<sup>th</sup> century Weston. From her teenage years until 1940, Edith pasted in photographs and memorabilia that provide a window into the life of an ordinary young woman as she graduates from high school, gets a job, marries, loses a first baby, and raises a daughter.

Edith was born in Weston in July, 1895. Her father, Robert West, died when she was only a few years old. Her mother, Nova Scotia-born Hannah Eliza (Morton) West, was remarried in 1901 to





Weston farmer Edward R. Sibley. Hannah was 44 and Edward, who was a widower, was 60. Edith grew up on the Sibley farm, in a Greek Revival house still standing at 761 Boston Post Road (left).

Edith participated enthusiastically in the rich social life of a small country town. Her scrapbook is filled with

tickets, programs, playbills and mementos from events at the American Legion post, Weston Grange, First Baptist Church, and other local groups. She went to band concerts at Canobie Lake Park, banquets at fraternal lodges, ladies nights at Nuttings-on-the-Charles in Waltham, and plays at the Wilbur, Shubert, and Colonial Theaters in Boston.



Edith saved report cards for four years at Weston High School, as well as her 12<sup>th</sup> grade English home reading list (see page 8) and the words and music for the 1913 Class Song. She pasted in a complete collection of 1913 Bicentennial memorabilia, along with her invitation in 1919 to join the newly-organized Women's Community League. She saved Valentines, Christmas, New Years, and birthday cards, and even one chain letter. Excerpted on page 8 is a letter from a friend in Wellesley that shows how our pace of life and modes of communication have changed, while the preoccupations of adolescence remain the same.

According to newspaper sources, Edith's stepfather sold his farm in September, 1915, and died later that year. By 1916, Edith and her mother (left) had moved to White Lane, now Brook Road, where





they lived in one of the modest cottages built by Francis Henry Hastings for workers at the nearby Hook & Hastings organ factory. Two of her photos on this page show these houses as originally built.

In 1916, Edith pasted in a receipt for tuition and supplies at Mellors

Commercial School in Waltham. She learned shorthand and got a job as a clerk and later bookkeeper at the Boston and Maine Railroad freight office in Waltham, where she made \$1067.81 in the year 1918, as shown on her income tax worksheet. She had an employee railroad pass and a membership card in the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks. Also in the scrapbook is a 1918 typed request for a week's vacation in August, along with her boss's refusal.

The pages from 1919 are filled with cards congratulating Edith on her engagement to Henry Almon Crommett of Lancaster, a foreman in the sales department of C.F. Hathaway Baking Co. in Waltham. According to newspaper reports, Harry and Edith were married at her home in the presence of 25 guests. Rooms were decorated with evergreen ropes, white chrysanthemums, palms, and potted plants. Edith tucked a sample of the white *crepe de chene* dress fabric into a small envelope in her scrapbook.

After a wedding trip to the Berkshire Hills, the couple took up residence on White Lane. In July,



1920, Edith submitted a letter of resignation from her post as Assistant Cashier. She was pregnant. But Edith and Henry lost their infant son, who was born in November but died shortly thereafter at the Waltham Maternity Hospital. In her scrapbook is the funeral bill for \$30.00. In April, 1923, she answered an advertisement in the *Daily Globe*, noting that



she was a Protestant, age 28, with several years of office experience. She took a clerical position at the Hotel Bellevue on Beacon Street in Boston at a salary of \$17.50 a week. In 1924, she and Henry had their first and only child, Phyllis Amy, born at the Cutler House in Waltham. Photos show Phyllis at Bass Rocks on the North Shore, at the Franklin Park Zoo, and at Benson's Wild Animal Farm in New Hampshire.

Edith and Henry later moved to a small house at 663 Boston Post Road directly west of the First Baptist Church. Edith was active in the church, and her scrapbook includes pictures of the new parsonage at 687 Boston Post Road. She was still living on the Boston Post Road in 1932, when the road was dedicated as the George Washington Memorial Highway in ceremonies attended by a costumed Washington on horseback.

In the late 1930s, Edith took a sales job with Maisonette Frocks. In 1938, she became manager of a new branch of the Newton-based Tip-Top Cleaners & Tailors at 478 Boston Post Road. The third scrapbook ends in 1940. From town records we know that she was living with her mother at No. 663 when Hannah died in 1949 at age 91.

*by Pamela W. Fox*

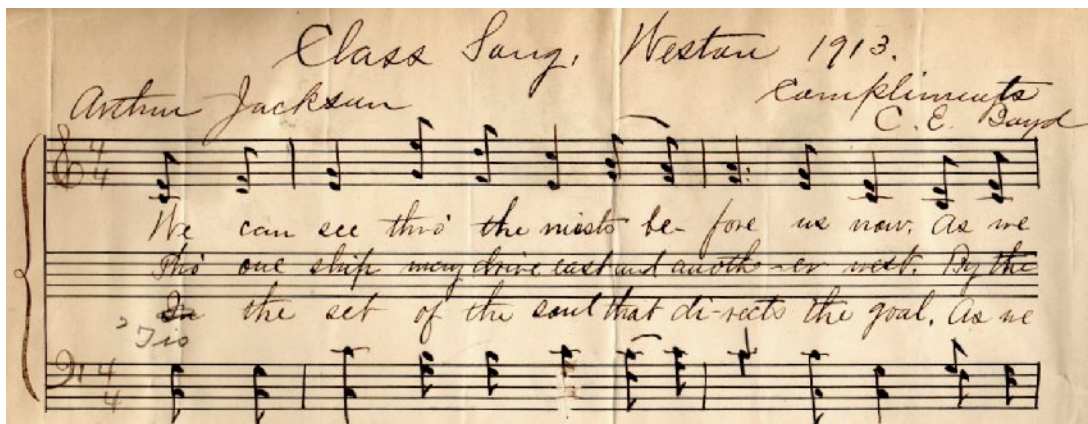


*(above) Phyllis Amy Crommett in baby carriage, c.1924*

*(below) 663 Boston Post Road*

Weston High School Books for Home Reading ENGLISH I (Choose Five)

<i>Tom Brown at Oxford</i>	Hughes
<i>Monsieur Beaucaire</i>	Tarkington
<i>Red Rock</i>	Page
<i>Jane Eyre</i>	Bronte
<i>The Newcomes</i>	Thackeray
<i>Hugh Wynne</i>	Mitchell
<i>Pickwick Papers</i>	Dickens
<i>Life of Nelson</i>	Southey
<i>The Aeneid</i> (Williams Translation) Vergil or any one of the American Statesman Series	



Excerpt from a letter to Edith May West from MBI of Wellesley, October 20, 1913

“Dear Edie,  
Did you ever in all your life see the heat of this weather? I’m sure I never have. What are you doing to keep out of mischief? I was going to be very, very nice yesterday and answer a stack of letters which I’ve owed for many days but — someone gave me a book and — you can easily guess how many letters were written by M.B. I. yesterday! The name of the book is “The Luck of Rathcoole.” It was very good but I’ve read better ones. Elsie Smith called in the afternoon. She seems to be growing yet, and I think is much better looking than she used to be. She is having her teeth fixed and they make a great difference in her appearance. Good teeth are a blessing . . . I’ve been wearing my hair parted on the left side recently and have been told several times that it is very becoming! (Please don’t think me vain) I like it that way myself for a change. The fire on the hearth is so cheery and bright these gray days and we shall miss it dreadfully when real cold weather comes and we shall have to put the stove up, for we should surely freeze with the open fire. Oh, you will receive McCall’s magazine about the twentieth of November. . . . My subscription ran out this month so when I renewed it I subscribed for you for the next year, too. You will recollect I promised it to you for a Christmas present, Miss West.”



## Edith's Story Continues: Phyllis Crommett Wheeler

*Editor's note: In preparing the Bulletin, I was looking at materials donated to the society by the estate of Phyllis Wheeler (1924-2005), a life-long resident of Weston. I came across a 1913 Weston High School graduation program with the name "Edith West" handwritten at the top, then a photo of a house on White Lane that was identical to one in Edith's scrapbook (see page 4 - 7 of this Bulletin) I suddenly realized that Phyllis Wheeler was the daughter of Edith May West.*



Phyllis Amy Crommett wrote her nickname, "Pete" next to her 1942 Weston High School yearbook picture (left). Also in the class was Allan Thorpe Wheeler Jr. The Class Prophecy correctly predicted that Phyllis and Allan would get married. But first, Allan went into the army, as did others in this war-time class. Included in Phyllis Wheeler's memorabilia are letters to Allan from Weston resident Austin Hale, who sent regular news-laden mimeographed missives to all Weston men in uniform, Hale's letters always began with the phrase "Here and There to Show we Care." Soldiers wrote to Hale from all over the world and he passed on their news (see below)

Phyllis and Allan were married in October, 1946. He is listed on the marriage license as a mechanic and she as a retouch artist. In 1949, they built a small house at 655 Boston Post Road, where Phyllis lived until her death in 2005.

