

competitors. If quality is obsolete, so are we.”

## *Customers Say Good-bye*

Puopolos has been a touchstone in the life of the community for many years. Customers have been coming into the store to talk about old times and what the store has meant to them. Older town residents have been shopping here for decades. Even children feel connected to the store where they picked out sleds and classic yellow Tonka trucks at holiday time. Paul Puopolo’s guest book now holds dozens of farewell messages including this one from author David McCullough, a resident of Martha’s Vineyard who has been coming to the store several times a year for decades, when he visits his local dentist:

What a great store—in the grand, old way of first-rate goods & friendly, knowledgeable service. We’ve enjoyed being one of your customers & we’ll miss you. . . .

Another customer wrote: “You claimed a space in the heart of the community.”

*by Pamela W. Fox*

## **Folk Art and History in Weston Family Registers**

*Early this year, the Weston Historical Society purchased a Livermore family sampler and family register that had surfaced together in a local antiques market. We thank members and friends who contributed toward this important acquisition. By fortuitous coincidence, WHS board member Mary Gregory found an online exhibit of family registers created by the New England Historic and Genealogical Society. NEHGS owns a second Weston register, created for the Hews family. Mary found a third Weston-related example in the book *The Art of Family: Genealogical Artifacts in New England* by D. Brenton Simons and Peter Benes, published by NEHGS in 2002. This article is based on research from that book supplemented by material from WHS archives.*

Printed and freehand family registers became popular during the late 18th and early 19th century, evolving from notations in the family Bible. Probably the best-known examples were created by Pennsylvania Germans and were known as *frakturs*. New England examples are similar in content but differ in decorative style.



Last spring the Weston Historical Society purchased this family register belonging to the Livermore family, along with a sampler worked by Mary Livermore.

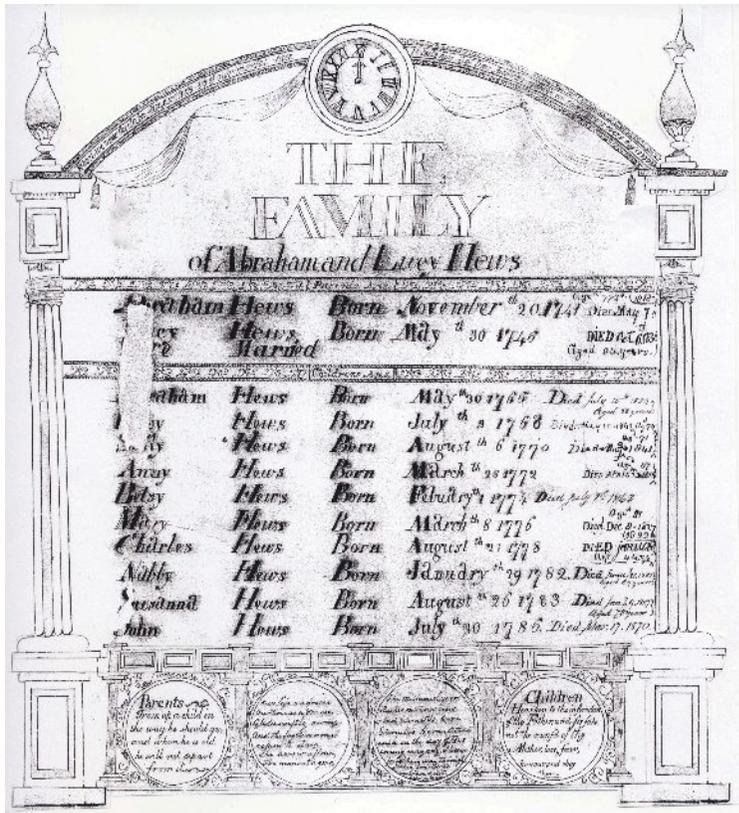
A framed family register could decorate the living room wall and also help families keep track of births, marriages and deaths. The purpose of family registers was “to encourage remembrance of the past,” according to *The Art of Family* by D. Brenton Simons and Peter Benes. Designs incorporated traditional motifs such as interlocking circles, hearts, and entwined flowering vines as well as architectural motifs such as pillars and columns. They note that at some point, possibly after 1810, a clock face appeared in the archway between the two columns, perhaps influenced by the growing presence of tall clocks in New England. All three of the Weston-related registers utilize this motif.

According to *The Art of Family*, “families wanted a cheaper and more personal visual remembrance of their ancestry” than the family portraits commissioned by wealthy Boston residents in the mid-18th century. Various mediums could be used, among them watercolor, oils, pen and ink, embroidery, and paper cutwork. Timothy Salls, archivist at the New England Historical Genealogical Society, believes that some registers were done in schools as part of a calligraphic or

decorative arts curriculum. Others may have been the work of commissioned professional artists, teachers, or talented town clerks. Copying existing printed work may have been common. In the late 19th century, printed registers evolved with backgrounds that could be filled in with names and dates.

The similarities between the society's Livermore register and the Merriam and Hews family versions is remarkable. All three have the same basic structure: pillars on each side connected by a segmental arch with a clock

in the center. Beneath the arch, capital letters are used to spell THE FAMILY, followed by information about the parents and a list of children and their date of birth. Across the bottom, the space is divided into three or four sections filled with admonitions to parents and children. In the Hews register, parents are urged to "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart



This image of the family register of Abraham and Lucy (Jennison) Hews of Weston. is courtesy of the R. Stanton Avery Special Collections Department, New England Historic and Genealogical Society.

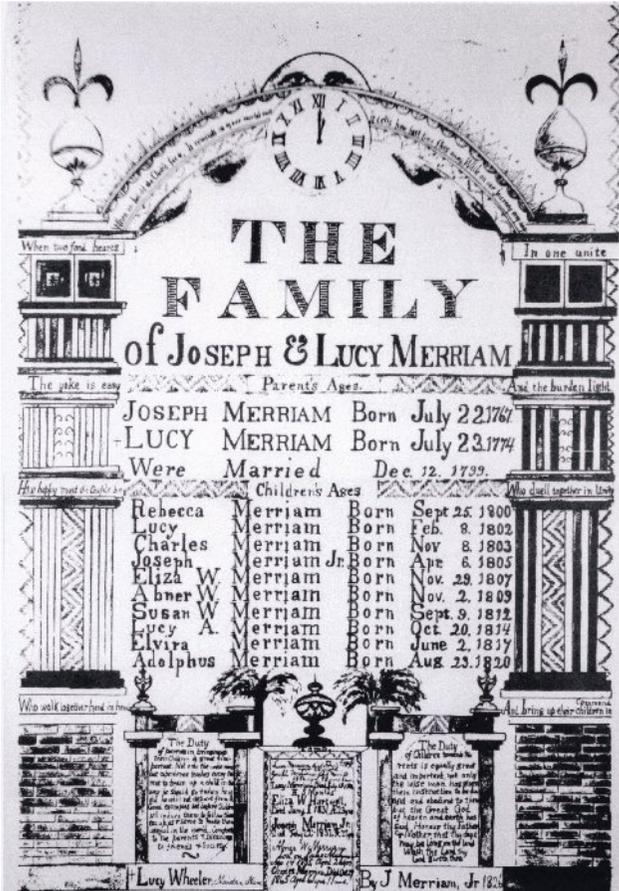
from it.” and children to “Harken to the instructions of thy Father, and forsake not the counsel of thy Mother, love, fear, honor and obey them.”

The Livermore, Hews, and Merriam families all have close ties to Weston. Generations of Livermores made their home here. Ephraim Livermore (1762-1833) was the great-great-nephew of Joseph, who built the house known as Hayfields at 823 Boston Post Road. Ephraim and his wife Elizabeth had ten children.

Abraham Hews (1741-1818) began the family’s pottery manufacturing business on Boston Post Road in the 1760s. He and his wife Lucy also had ten children, including Abraham Jr., who joined his father in business. Abraham’s great-grandson finally moved the business to Cambridge.

Many Hews family members lived along Boston Post Road just east and west of the First Baptist Church.

Joseph Merriam (b. 1767) and his wife Lucy were married in Concord. Coincidentally, they also had ten children. The oldest son, Charles (1803-1865), was 18 when he moved to Weston. He worked at Lamson’s store and proved to be such a popular and enterprising merchant that he took over the business after Lamson’s death in 1824. He married a woman from Newton and built a house on Boston Post Road. As Weston’s popularity as a retail center began to falter in the mid-1830s, Merriam moved his store and fam-



Joseph Merriam (b. 1767) and Lucy Wheeler (b. 1774) were married in December 1799. This register is marked “By J. Merriam, Jr 1826”. Joseph Jr was born in 1805 and died in 1832. The location of the original watercolor is unknown. (Courtesy of Concord Free Public Library)

ily to Boston but retained his ties to Weston. Charles's younger brother Joseph Jr. created the Merriam register in 1826, when he was 21.

Regarding dates or date ranges for the registers, the Hews example appears to be the oldest. The last of the Hews ten children, John, was born in 1786. This example is the most freely lettered. The Livermore example was executed after the birth of the 10th child in 1805. The lettering appears to have been stenciled. The Merriam example is dated 1826, six years after the birth of the 10th child. It is the most elaborate, especially the patterning of the pillars. We may never know the connection between these three samplers. Did a family member create them? Was there a local or regional school that encouraged students to produce a family register? We welcome your thoughts, as well as contributions toward the Livermore Sampler Purchase Fund.

*by Pamela Fox and Mary Gregory*

## **The History of the Melone Homestead and Sears Conservation Land: Part II**

*[Editor's Note: Since 2004, Cindy Bates has been researching the Melone Homestead at 27 Crescent Street, within the Sears Conservation Land. The small frame house is owned by the Town of Weston, administered by the Weston Conservation Commission, and leased to Land's Sake for use as office space and employee housing. Beginning this fall, it is being rehabilitated using Community Preservation Act funds.*

*The history of the house has long been the subject of debate. How old is it? Who built it and why? Was it ever moved? Was it used to house chair factory workers? Below is Part II of an abbreviated version of Ms. Bates's report. Part I appeared in the Spring 2008 issue. The extent and complexity of her research is even more evident in the complete report, which includes extensive footnotes and bibliographical information along with many additional illustrations and maps. Copies will be available at the Weston Public Library and Weston Historical Society]*