

THE WESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

BULLETIN

OCTOBER, 1964, VOL. I, No. 1.

Editorial

After two and a half centuries Weston at last has a historical society, 650 members strong. In this first Bulletin issue, we are moved to remind our readers how important it is for all time that each of us be an active working member.

Think of the history that's buried here — of the stories these old cellar holes and lost forgotten roads can tell! Now, before it's too late, let us all resolve to do all we individually and collectively can to cooperate with the historian, the archivist, and the various research sub-committees in bringing back the facts and artifacts of yesteryear. Not many towns in the country have so much latent history available for re-discovery, restoration, and preservation.

This Society will be what we of today make it. Then indeed will we leave to our children a heritage that is real and inspiring.

Harold G. Travis,
President

Purpose

It is appropriate to print in this Bulletin the primary purpose of the Weston Historical Society as stated in the By-laws:

"To gather, study, preserve, house and make available for use the records, relics and memorabilia relating to the history of the Town of Weston and its people, including current items which may become of historical interest in the future; and to disseminate information, particularly to the inhabitants of Weston in cooperation with its schools and otherwise, intended to promote greater understanding and appreciation of the history and traditions, both past and in the making, of the Town of Weston and its neighboring communities."

This Bulletin will be mailed several times yearly to Weston Historical Society members with the aim of fully informing them of the Society's program and of better acquainting them with the history of this town.

The picture below shows some members of the Bulletin's Information committee at work. From left to right they are: Mrs. Eric Reissner, Mrs. William G. Burt Jr., Mrs. Raymond A. Paynter Jr., and Mrs. H. E. Jones Jr. Mr. Erlund Field and Mr. Henry W. Patterson were unable to be present for the photograph.



The Golden Ball Tavern

At its September 17th meeting, the directors unanimously passed the following motion by Henry W. Patterson, seconded by Mrs. Homer N. Sweet:

"Resolved that: The Board of Directors of Weston Historical Society, Inc. expresses (1) its deep appreciation to Mr. and Mrs. Howard Gambrell, Jr., for acquiring the Golden Ball Tavern, rich in American and Weston history, unique in the fact that it was owned and occupied for more than two centuries by successive generations of the same family, and (2) its desire to support the movement to restore, preserve, and maintain this important American landmark, to help raise funds for such purposes, and to assist the trustees of the Golden Ball Tavern Trust in various ways including the collection of articles for display therein of historic character and value."

It was further moved and unanimously voted that: "In accordance with the above, the President convey a copy of the above resolution to Mr. and Mrs. Gambrell with the request that they advise us how the members of our Society may assist the Trustees in the above objectives."

It is hoped that all members of the Society will join the directors in thus supporting the preservation of this landmark, so rich in character, significance and

Open House

Every Wednesday is Open House at the Jones House, known as the Josiah Smith Tavern. Visitors are received from 2 to 4 P.M. by hostesses, who are glad to supply information about the objects of historical interest displayed in this building, once a Revolutionary War Period tavern. These Open House afternoons have been held weekly since May 30, 1964. Ladies who wish to serve as hostesses are asked to telephone Mrs. James E. Fraser, TW 4-2872, or Mrs. E. Stanley Hobbs, Jr., 899-5766, who will welcome assistance in this gracious attempt to make Weston's past, and therefore its present, more meaningful.

Annual Meeting

The first annual meeting of the Society will be held on Tuesday, November 10, preceding Mr. Riley's lecture. Present officers are: Mr. Harold G. Travis, President; Mr. Harold B. Willis Jr., Vice President; Mr. Charles P. Gorely, Jr., Second Vice President; Mrs. C. Vinal Cooke, Secretary, and Mr. Harry B. Jones, Treasurer.

The directors are: Mr. J. Kenneth Bennett, Mr. John G. Brooks, Mr. Brenton H. Dickson III, Mr. Erlund Field, Mr. Grant M. Palmer, Jr., Mr. Henry W. Patterson, Mrs. Homer N. Sweet, Mr. Harold G. Travis, Mr. Wilmot Whitney and Mr. Harold B. Willis, Jr.

Committee chairmen for the current season are: Mrs. James E. Fraser, curator; Mrs. Edmund U. Ritter, archivist; Mr. Brenton H. Dickson III, historian; Mr. Erlund Field, research; Mr. Harold B. Willis, Jr., house; Mrs. Boardman Bump, program; Mrs. E. Paul Floyd, hospitality; Mrs. Eric Reissner, information; Mrs. F. Leslie Ford, liaison; Mr. Wilmot Whitney, membership; and Mr. Leonard Dowse, finance.

Helps for Weston Ancestor Hunters

In Weston's Library are the following valuable volumes, edited by Mary Frances Peirce, indexed by names, subjects, and places, and thoughtfully published by the Town of Weston:

RECORDS OF THE FIRST PRECINCT: 1746-1754; and RECORDS OF THE TOWN OF WESTON 1754-1803, published 1893.

RECORDS OF THE TOWN CLERK 1804-1826, published 1894.

VITAL RECORDS (Births, marriages, and deaths) 1707-1850.

(Gravestones) 1703-1900.

(Church) 1709-1825, published 1901

TAX LISTS 1757-1827, published 1897

Along with other fine and rare old books in Weston's library, is Henry Bond's volume "Genealogies of the Families and Early Settlers of Watertown", second edition comprising 1094 pages, and published in 1860. It is known to genealogists of this area as "Our bible". It is a very rare volume and the genealogical section of the research committee could use one or two copies to great advantage. If you have a copy to lend, please phone Mrs. McKinley H. Warren, TW 3-4476. At nearby Waltham Library are the 16 volumes of "Soldiers and Sailors of the Commonwealth."

tradition. To that end, they have dedicated the current year's program to the fulfillment of the above so that a spirit of devotion to our heritage will continue to characterize the Town of Weston.

The Oldest Historical Society in the U.S.

A major event of the fall, opening the Society's first full season, will be a lecture by Mr. Stephen T. Riley of Weston, on Tuesday, November 10, at 8 P.M. at the Town House. Mr. Riley, a member of our Society, is the Director of the Massachusetts Historical Society. He will discuss the origin, purpose and collections of that organization.

The Massachusetts Historical Society is the parent of all other such societies in this country, having been founded in 1791, about a decade earlier than the second oldest, the New York Society. With headquarters at 1154 Boylston Street, Boston, it is a privately endowed research organization which specializes in rare books and manuscripts. It is second only to the Library of Congress in the number of important American manuscripts it owns, including the famous Jefferson, Adams and Revere papers. Its printed materials include 300,000 titles in American history, many of which relate to Massachusetts and New England. It owns maps, prints, drawings and portraits, including Copleys and Stuarts. It displays such historical objects as Washington's epaulets and the pen with which Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation. It welcomes annually some 1,500 visiting scholars, and it would be difficult to find a major work dealing with the history of this area that does not depend in some way upon the resources of the Massachusetts Historical Society. Since its founding 173 years ago, 160 volumes have been published under its aegis.

Mr. Riley, a native of Worcester, studied at Clark University, where he received his doctorate in history. His personal interest is the Revolutionary War period.

Mr. Riley's lecture will include readings from some of the great documents owned by the organization he directs. Though these documents are too valuable to travel, he expects to have some photographic copies for display.

All members and their guests are cordially invited to attend.

Red Letter Days

Other important events that have been planned for the 1964-65 season include The Charter Anniversary Dinner on Wednesday, February 10, at which Mr. Roland Robbins of Lincoln, archaeologist, will speak, and a Patriots' Day Pageant in April on the Town Green, directed by Dr. Robert J. MacMillan of Weston, which will re-enact events on the Green 190 years ago. Watch for further details about these two occasions.

The Seal

To Mrs. John L. Kronenberg we are indebted for the design of a seal for the Society. This seal, which commemorates the incorporation both of the town and of the Society, appears on the outside of this Bulletin.

It is our hope that many members will avail themselves of these treasures and will want to do research into the history and times of their local ancestors, thus helping our Society materially in its objective of perpetuating the Weston Heritage.

Once Upon a Time

A yellowed newspaper clipping dated March 1, 1870, describes a surprise party for three Weston bachelors which was attended by "a goodly number of marriageable damsels" with "bright eyes and smiling faces."

"Our quiet town," the article reads, "has, like Rip Van Winkle, awakened from a long state of lethargy, and our ancient Burghers are again reminded of the days when they were wont to enjoy the 'merrie dance and song.'"

The three bachelors were Mr. Charles Cutter, Jr., Mr. Samuel Warren and Mr. W. Seaverns, Jr. Mr. Cutter lived at Cutter's Corner and was the great-uncle of three present-day Westonians: Mr. Charles Cutter, Jr., Mrs. James E. Fraser and Mrs. Stewart Chamberlin. Mr. Warren was a relative of Mrs. George W. Cutting and lived in the Newton Street House in which she now lives. Mr. Seaverns was a great-uncle of Mrs. Stephen Colpitts.

The 94-year-old newspaper story continues: "As usual *the Elder bachelor* was the life of the party, and with his basket of 'Hearts and Rounds' called about him a bevy of the fair sex, who with their bright eyes and smiling faces made him regret that he had lived so long without a *helpmeet*."

This puzzles the editor of this Bulletin, who wonders who was "the Elder bachelor" and what was a basket of "Hearts and Rounds"? Can any one explain?

This party, alas, failed in its objective. Two of the bachelors remained unmarried and one, Mr. Seaverns, took a bride not from Weston but from far away Newton.

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Annual Dues: \$2.00 per person
Gift Memberships Are Suggested
Life Memberships (\$200) are also available

MR. & MRS. EDWARD W. MARSHALL
10 CRESCENT ST.
WESTON, MASS.

October, 1964

Bulletin

The Weston Historical Society



CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

1964-1965

November 10: Annual Meeting at 8 P.M., Town House
Speaker: Mr. Stephen T. Riley

February 10: Charter Anniversary Dinner
Speaker: Mr. Roland W. Robbins

April 19: Patriots' Day Pageant on the Town Green

Every Wednesday from 2 to 4 P.M.:

Open House at the Jones House (Josiah Smith Tavern)