

# THE WESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

MARCH 1966, VOL. II, No. 3



## The Scott House

The oldest house in Weston stands at the corner of Chestnut and Wellesley Streets and is now the residence of Mr. and Mrs. John W. Scott who restored it in 1961. During the restoration it was possible to examine structural features which otherwise would have been concealed, and many historical facts, heretofore undisclosed, were brought to light.

Mr. Charles Fiske in his 1896 address claimed that the house was built in 1696 which appears to be essentially correct, but with one definite reservation — it had undergone three major changes and bore little resemblance to the original. He did not realize that it was a composite house not running true to form — nor was there any way of his knowing this without a systematic investigation of what lay behind the walls. But now, thanks to the Scotts thorough research we have a good idea of the history and evolution of this interesting building.

The 1696 house, built of oak and pine in roughly equal proportions, had but two rooms — one on the ground floor and another above it, each measuring 18' by 18'. Adjoining the downstairs room was an entrance hall from which stairs went up to the second floor — and behind the stairs stood the great chimney. The original staircase was removed during subsequent alterations and two closets were built to occupy this space. Behind one of these is the old smoke room where, it has been said, a British spy was concealed in Revolutionary times. It seems very unlikely, however, that the Rands, who lived there at the time, would have housed a British spy as Mr. Rand and his son were "Minute Men" and joined the Weston contingent in its march to Lexington and Concord.

The original house with its two rooms remained unaltered until 1720, or thereabouts, when a lean-to was added with a large fireplace incorporated into the existing stack. The original fireplace was made shallower, the brick work at the back being left intact and the smoke room built in the resulting void.

About 1760 came the second set of alterations — the addition of a room to the right of the front entrance, a milk room and a new stairway, while the old lean-to was removed and a new one erected. This completed the major alterations to the main part of the house and gave an outside appearance similar to what we see today. It appears that the interior of the 1760 lean-to took a number of years to complete, for under the plaster, rough boarding was discovered, fastened horizontally to the studs. On this boarding there is much doodling by children and other signs of wear, all of which would have taken years to accumulate. The ceiling was also left unplastered for a considerable period as evidenced by smoke-blackened timbers and floor boards. There is little question but what the builder intended to plaster the walls at some future date because he made the window casings wide enough to accommodate not only the preliminary rough boarding but also left extra width for plaster when he got around to putting it on.

In 1790 a shed was added to the lean-to and it remained there until 1929 when Mr. Ralph Slayton, owner at the time, pulled it down and added an ell in its place.

The original house was probably built by Thomas Allen (Allin or Alling). Eventually it became the property of Thomas Rand who was living there at the time of the Revolution and later passed it on to his descendants, one of whom, Oliver Robbins, occupied it until 1903 when the property was sold to William H. Hill of Brookline. The ownership later passed to the Slaytons and finally to the Scotts.

*This is the second in a series of articles on historic Weston buildings by our Historian, Brenton H. Dickson III.*

## 'Twas Ever Thus

For many years the citizens of Weston have voted to keep their town free of package liquor stores and public barrooms. This virtuous decision is obviously in accord with a description of the community over one hundred years ago.

An item in the "Waltham Sentinel," dated June 19, 1863, quotes from the report of the South Middlesex Temperance Union meeting held on June 5th. The Secretary had prepared a report on the state of the temperance cause in the surrounding towns. On conditions in Weston, he wrote:

"We find them generally a steady, temperate people. But little, if any, illegal traffic is carried on in this town, and few, comparatively, as tiplers or inebriates. No special attention is given to the cause (temperance) though something should be done here, as in every place until the last sale is made, the last glass drank, and the last drunkard reformed." Signed: N. A. SOULE, Sec'y., pro. tem.

A letter to the "Waltham Sentinel" published several weeks later evidently felt that the report from Weston might be slightly prejudiced because "Very much depends upon the reporter at such times. Some let their charity and love of the good reputation of their village cover a multitude of sins."



**“New” Math!**

**“New” Science!**

**What About “New” History!**

***How Can This Society Contribute to the  
History Program in the Weston Schools?***

**These Questions to be Discussed at  
Spring Meeting of the Society**

**April 12, 1966, 8:00 P.M. First Parish Church Hall**

At what points can a Weston Society organized with history as its central interest be of constructive service to the community? Your Program Committee feels that a vital area of concern is the relationship of our Society to the teaching of history in the Weston schools. The much publicized changes in the teaching of science, math and languages are heard on all sides, but the new approaches to history are of equal significance. Before being able to tap what resources we may have to the advantage of our schools, we need a better understanding of how and what history is taught in Weston today.

For our April meeting, Mrs. Stanley G. French of the Program Committee and Mr. Ernest L. Hunter, Principal of the Brook School, are planning an informal, exploratory discussion between members of the Weston Historical Society and representatives from the Weston school system. Audience participation will provide an opportunity for the expression of a variety of opinions, ideas and questions directed toward establishing a strong, fruitful relationship.

**Welcome to New Members!**

The Society takes great pleasure in welcoming the following new members: Mr. and Mrs. Donald D. Douglass, 650 Old Road; Mr. and Mrs. Mortimer T. Farley, 95 Summer Street; Mrs. John M. Lord, 316 Wellesley Street; Mr. and Mrs. Henry M. Merrill, 215 Boston Post Road; Mr. and Mrs. James B. Muldoon, 280 Boston Post Road; Mr. and Mrs. Edward S. Stimpson, 3rd, 370 Glen Road, and from Weston, Connecticut, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Neffert.

The Chairman of the Membership Committee is Mr. Philip F. Coburn.

## Bay State League Meetings Open to Our Members

Our members are automatically invited to all meetings of The Bay State League of Historical Societies. These are attended by several hundred people from all over the state and usually include sightseeing under the direction of the host society in the morning, followed by lunch and a business meeting in the afternoon.

The next League meeting will be held at The Wayside Inn on Saturday, April 23rd. There will be sightseeing in the morning and a business meeting with a speaker at 2 P.M. in the Martha Mary Chapel. On June 18th the Nantucket Historical Association will be host for the annual meeting. This will provide a wonderful opportunity to see this quaint island through the eyes of its historically minded citizens!

Let's give our Weston Society, one of the youngest and largest in the state, some good representation at these meetings. Mark the dates on your calendars, round up your friends, and plan a day that will be both informative and fun. Mrs. F. Leslie Ford, Liaison Chairman, will be delighted to answer any questions that you may have. Her telephone is 899-8171.

## The "Lamson" Family

The name of Lamson first appeared in Town Records 257 years ago, and 5 years later, just one year after Weston was incorporated, John Lamson purchased a large acreage extending from what is now Route 20 in the center of town to a point in the vicinity of the present Viles Street. It was over "Lamson Hill" 61 years later that Weston's "Minute Men" under his son, Captain Samuel Lamson, marched toward Concord and Lexington, as re-enacted in last April's pageant by the Weston Historical Society.

Subsequently and steadily the name of Lamson appears prominently in town records. We find Samuel Lamson, Jr. and Amos Lamson members of their father's Militia Company in 1780, (He became a major in 1783 and is listed as "Colonel Samuel Lamson" in 1787), — we note Major Daniel S. Lamson and Amos Lamson as members of the 3rd Middlesex Regiment when it received General Lafayette in 1812, — and we must never forget our debt to Captain Daniel S. Lamson, a major of the 16th Regiment in 1861 who died, with the rank of Colonel, before he could publish his treasured book "History of the Town of Weston, Massachusetts 1630-1890." Thanks to the late William O. Kenney whose daughter and son still reside here, and to the generosity of the late Horace S. Sears who presented a copy thereof to each family in the town, the book was finally published in 1913 in time for the 200th Anniversary celebration of the Town's incorporation.

Nor should we ever forget the devotion of many of these Lamsons to the town we love so well and should be anxious to preserve in charm, dignity and history. Serving as Selectmen were John Lamson in 1771, Samuel Lamson from 1781-1785, and Isaac Lamson from 1800-1803; as Town Clerk, Samuel Lamson in 1778 and 1787 albeit Town Treasurer from 1774-1778; John A. Lamson as representative in the General Court of the Commonwealth in 1852



and 1953; author - historian - soldier Daniel S. Lamson who served as Town Clerk in 1822 and 1823; and finally Samuel Lamson our Town Clerk from 1884-1887.

In subsequent issues we intend to review the records of other old Weston families to whom similar homage is due.

## **“Backyard” Historians Owe Thanks to Mr. Riley**

Many of our members are particularly interested in delving into their own neighborhood history as well as learning more about the town as a whole. The field of historical research is at all times challenging, and yet most of us as amateurs are hesitant to venture deeply into it because of our lack of “expertise.” Fellow-member, Mr. Stephen T. Riley, Director of the Massachusetts Historical Society, is helping our Research Committee to accumulate pamphlets and periodicals that describe simple ways of digging up facts.

No one is closer to the latent history of Weston than we but it will only be uncovered and put into a permanent form as a result of our own work and initiative. All interested members are encouraged to take advantage of the material that the Research Committee will have available. That same committee will be eager to learn what you discover about the history of your own “backyard.”

## **Historical Guide to Include Weston Landmarks**

The Boston Chamber of Commerce has asked the Weston Historical Society to submit descriptions of local points of historical interest for inclusion in the Chamber’s tourist guide.

The Chamber of Commerce, working in connection with the New England Mutual Life Insurance Co., has compiled a list of some 140 landmarks without the inclusion of Concord, Lexington or Plymouth. Weston has several sites worthy of note, principally the two Revolutionary taverns, the Burgoyne elm and many colonial homes.

Chosen sites will be indicated on a large folding map on a range that will encompass Ipswich, Sudbury and Plymouth. More than 350,000 of these will be printed and distributed.

## **A Gracious Favor!**

Mr. Alpheus Fulton of Waltham kindly volunteered to repair the flax-wheel displayed at The Jones House. He has returned it glued, cleaned and refinished to be preserved as an attractive antique. We are greatly indebted to him for his thoughtful and skillful cooperation.

## Ellen M. Jones Goes to School

The January Bulletin carried a reference to Dr. Samuel Kendal. In 1794 the good and still active minister gave to Weston a plot of ground, high on the ledge opposite the west end of Crescent Street—then a curve in the Post Road — “to erect a School House upon.” Somewhat more than a century later, the schoolhouse was converted into a dwelling and is now privately owned by Mr. James B. Muldoon. Until the early 1890’s, however, it was known as the “Schoolhouse on the Rock.”

During the 1870’s one little girl, named Ellen M. Jones, living in what at present is called The Jones House or Josiah Smith Tavern, went to this school. Each morning the stagecoach driver on his way from Marlboro to Stony Brook Station would rein in his four horses in front of her house to take on the small Ellen. All starched and be-frilled in sedate mid-Victorian mode, she was helped to the lofty seat beside the driver by her father.

One can picture her on a sunny, spring day in Weston, full of childish joy as they rumbled down the Post Road to her beloved A\*B\*C’s. Her blue eyes sparkle, she clutches a dinner pail on her lap, her feet dangle, the ribbons on her corn-colored pigtails and on the back of her round, straw hat fly in the breeze as she sits in demure dignity beside her kind, Yankee driver. He cracks his whip, badge of latter-day knights of the road, not to spur on the horses, but as an outlet for his pride in his craft. Arriving at the high ledge, he pulls his horses to a halt, jumps down and swings his small companion to the ground, remounts and is on his way. Ellen starts up the stone steps, turns at the top to wave, then scampers into the one-room school.

This same little Ellen lived all her life with her sister, Alice, in the Jones House and when she grew up became a teacher in the same schoolhouse. For fifty years Ellen M. Jones taught both day school and Sunday School. Ready to retire, she mystified her young pupils by the question, “Fifty years in day school and fifty in Sunday School; how many years have I taught?” Also, when she did retire, someone said “Now you can do what you want to do.” Her reply, “I’ve always done what I wanted to do — I wanted to teach.”

Exteremely near-sighted, Ellen said that until she put on glasses in her middle teens, she had never seen the stars. Of course she had heard people speak of them, but she could only wonder what they looked like. Glasses she wore throughout her life and on occasion would take them off the better to see very fine print or fine stitches in her exquisite Italian embroidery. Some of the fine print may well have been in the scripts for “Friendly” plays for which she served as prompter for many years.

Any person who ever knew her would say that with her active mind and keen wit no one could have had a greater abundance of “star-shine” than Ellen M. Jones.

—Rebecca McKenna

The foregoing account was prompted by Edward S. Coburn, member of the Historical Society. More about the Jones girls may be found in “Once Upon a Pung” and “Weston: A Puritan Town” — both on sale at the Village Book Stall.

Annual Dues: \$2.00 per person

Gift Memberships are suggested

Life Memberships (\$200) are also available

Contributions to the Society are always welcome

Checks should be made payable to Weston Historical Society, Inc., and sent to Mr. Harry B. Jones, 448 Concord Road, Weston 02193.

*President*

Mr. Harold G. Travis  
899-4515

*Information Chairman*

Mrs. H. Eugene Jones  
899-0177



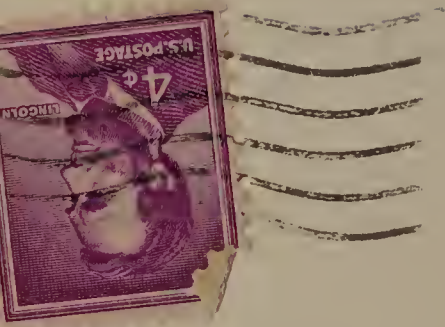


MRS. JAMES E. FRASER  
24 OAK ST.  
WESTON, MASS.

MARCH 1966

Bulletin

The Weston Historical Society



# WESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC

## Calendar Highlights

(Please save the dates)

1966

- April 12: Open Discussion — 8:00 — First Parish Church Hall  
Subject: "How can this Society contribute to the History program in the Weston schools?"  
(See page 3 for more details)
- April 23: Bay State League Meeting at The Wayside Inn
- June 18: Bay State League Meeting at Nantucket  
Every Wednesday from 2 to 4 P.M.  
Open House at the Jones House (Josiah Smith Tavern)