

THE WESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

OCTOBER 1967, Vol. IV, No. 1



Restoration Underway!

The lady volunteers who were stripping wallpaper from the walls of the Isaac Fiske Law Office, our new headquarters at 626 Boston Post Road, had their animated conversation interrupted on September 20th by uproarious laughter from the step ladder outside. Peering out, they asked the husband who was painting the exterior with another coat of donated paint "What's the matter with you?" "Ho! Ho!," he guffawed, "All of a sudden I said to myself, what kind of a deal is this? While I'm wielding this brush as a labor of love, think of those painters who are getting \$20.00 an hour of my money painting my house at the beach while I am doing this for nothing!" That is the spirit, though, that makes Weston such a wonderful town. Taxes may be high, but how much higher they would be if we didn't have hundreds of citizens giving of their talents and time to civic work.



More volunteers are needed at the Law Office to help sand floors, remove paint and wallpaper and do other things scheduled for this fall in order to restore this charming building to its early character. Just telephone Leslie Ford at 899-8171 and tell him what you can do — he will have a job for you! Many are already working during the week and some are giving a few hours each weekend. The two original rooms have cards posted to show what needs to be done and Mr. Ford's committee will show you how. Let's have every member give a little of his or her time to this work so that before snow falls, the restoration will be a transformation of lasting value and significance.

Mrs. J. Herbert Lawson has recently given 9 chairs which will be used for meetings held at the Law Office. Other gifts that will fit into the early 19th century period of the building are needed and will be gratefully accepted.

The Burgoyne Elm

August 15, 1967 was a sad day. After almost 300 years of stately life, the Burgoyne Elm had its limbs and all but 20 feet of its majestic trunk removed. It is planned to cap the top of the trunk with a protective covering so that this relic of yesteryear will stand alongside our headquarters for years to come.

Welcome to New Members

The following residents of Weston have recently joined the Society: Mr. and Mrs. A. Stuart Hunter, 120 Summer Street and Mrs. L. B. McConaghy, 15 Eliot Lane.

Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

Notice of Annual Meeting

Tuesday, November 14, 1967 – 8 p.m.

Following a short business meeting, Mr. Howard Gambrill, a charter member of the Society, will speak to us on "Chasing Paul Revere." A local historian of note, he has devoted himself to the task of locating and interpreting documents pertaining to the Golden Ball Tavern and to the seven generations of Jones who lived there. We applaud all that the Gambrills have done to revitalize the family of a practical Tory and their efforts to preserve an historic landmark.

In our beginning, a "Jones was here," for at the Town Meeting on March 2, 1746, James was chosen as one of three members of the committee for the First Precinct of Weston. The land on which his Golden Ball Tavern was situated comprised eighty-five acres to the south and to the east of what is now the Post Road and Highland Street. Much of it is in our town cemetery, but the Jones story is by no means buried there.

This tale of adventure will be brought back to life in the "chasing" to be added to the Paul Revere legend. Members and interested guests are invited to hear about it after the Annual Meeting to be held at the Country School at 8 p.m. on Tuesday, November 14th.

Town and Gown

Two developments of active Town and Gown relationship augur well for accelerated research into Weston History.

Under their teacher, Dr. Vera Laska, a member of our society, 17 history majors at Regis College are preparing theses on the following subjects: Archives of Weston, Weston Library, The Town Crier, The Josiah Smith Tavern (Jones House), Weston Historical Committees and Our Society, Clubs and Groups of Weston, Regis College, Memories of Old-Timers, Golden Ball Tavern, Weston in International Life, The Police Department, Oldest Houses, Women's Community League, Churches of Weston, Cemeteries and Parks, The Saga of Sergeant Howe, and The Weston School System. Each student needs a local member as sponsor and advisor for suggestions as to where she should go, whom to see and what to search. Dr. Laska, 237-1447, will welcome your volunteer suggestions.

Simultaneously, another fellow member, Mr. William Hollman, Curriculum Director of the Weston Public School History Department, is introducing an archaeological project into the curriculum under a grant from The Society of the Cincinnati. Initial plans call for digging, under adult supervision, at one of several prospective sites by his students including the grounds of the ancient Hewes Pottery Works, the Whitney Tavern now in the process of restoration, and the cellar holes of two old houses.

The activity and interest of our younger generation in these fields deserve the fullest co-operation any of us can render. It should be so mutually stimulating and rewarding that such projects can become a steady feature of our daily community life.

Woes of a Researcher

"My dear Mr. Lamson —

I wish I had been of royal birth, and then my family records would have been officially taken care of . . . the answers to some of your questions bother me in two ways — First, because I can't read your writing, in some cases, and second because I don't know what to say — I can read that you have "dug up" the Strattons, but who the next ones to be resurrected are I don't understand —

You say you wouldn't sleep nights until you found your grandfather (I guess you wouldn't if you did find him). My grandfather is all right, but it's my *great*-grandfather who is missing. . . . They say it is a wise child that knows its own father, but I begin to think it is a *wiser* who knows its own *grandfather*. I have examined your records and feel you haven't 'got *us*' yet. . . .

I am beginning to get interested in my own account and if we should have a fair warm day I believe I shall set out in search of my ancestors. I am not sure, I think my *great*-grandfather may have been buried in the old burying ground in Weston. Perhaps if the *living* can't give us any information, the *dead* may.

Yours truly (until heard from again)

Emma W. Gale

'90"

(Ed. note — the excerpts above are from two letters written to Col. Lamson by Mrs. Emma Gale, great-grandmother of Mrs. George Foote of Weston and grandmother of Mrs. S. Abbott Smith, now of Boston.)

Was Weston Once a City Established by the Norsemen?

When you buy the historical map of Weston that will be published by the Society in late October, you won't find the answer to the above question but you will learn a lot about the documented history of our town. The map is artistically beautiful and historically sound. On its reverse side, the descriptive material, complete with illustrations, and written by Brenton H. Dickson in his own inimitable style, is, of necessity, a capsule version of the 254 years that have transpired since Weston was incorporated as a Town. Mr. Dickson, however, has included an introductory paragraph entitled "Early Weston" that will certainly make all readers realize that the true history of Weston began well before 1713.

In the Fall of 1966 a committee headed by Mr. Homer C. Lucas was appointed to achieve a closer relationship between the work of the Society and the needs of the many schools in Weston in teaching students the history of our town. For its first project, the committee, composed of Mr. Brenton H. Dickson, Mr. William A. Hollman, Curriculum Director for Social Studies in the Weston Public Schools, Mrs. H. Eugene Jones and Mrs. John L. Kronenberg has created an historical map of Weston. This map includes descriptive material about its taverns, industries, schools etc.

The maps will be on sale for 50¢ each at the Newton-Waltham Bank and Trust Company in Weston Center and at the Jones House during the hours that the Society keeps it open each week. On the current dues notice members will have an opportunity to designate how many copies they wish to order and these will be delivered to them. The various schools in town are interested in purchasing maps for distribution to students in history courses, and visitors to the area will welcome them as souvenir items.

A Musical Treat

Members of the Weston Historical Society are urged to give their fullest support to the piano concert by our famous fellow-townsmen Arthur MacKenzie, at the High School Auditorium on October 20th. You have all received invitations from the Golden Ball Tavern Keepers and a full house is anticipated. Don't delay in getting your tickets.

The proceeds of this concert will go into an endowment fund that will ensure the perpetuation of the Golden Ball Tavern — a landmark that is a vital part of Weston's growing historical image.

Additional Funds Urgently Needed by the Society

With such a lively program, now augmented by the expense of restoring and maintaining the Fiske Law Office, the Board decided at its September 13th meeting not to raise our nominal dues at this time but to ask all members to make an additional voluntary contribution, as they did last year, and to get their neighbors and friends to join also.

The cost of Bulletin, Program, Hall Rentals, Printing and Postage, plus restoring, furnishing, and maintaining the Law Office, approximates \$3,000 per year. Obviously only 600 members at \$2 each will not suffice, so your active and generous support will be most welcome. We urge each member to get a new member and to support our work to the full. In case you're in doubt as to whether or not the person you have in mind is already a member, just call our Secretary, Mrs. C. V. Cooke, 893-0950. By year's end, with such cooperation, we should have 1,000 members. All checks should be payable to Weston Historical Society, Inc. and mailed to Harry B. Jones, Treasurer, 448 Concord Road, Weston, Massachusetts 02193.

Random Notes from The Jones House (Josiah Smith Tavern)

As in the past, the Historical Society rooms will be open on Wednesday afternoons from 2-4. Mrs. McLeod, Curator, urges that more members take advantage of the displays to be seen, and visit more frequently with their children and guests.

The Curator and the Archivist, Mrs. Fraser, are planning an afternoon in the Spring when members' collections of blue Canton, pink lustre, rose medallion china, pewter etc. will be shown. Anyone interested in participating in this exhibition should contact Mrs. Robert F. McLeod, 893-0406.

Thanks have been given to Mrs. Russell of the Russell Florists in Wayland for contributing the geraniums used on the doorstep of the Jones House during the summer.

The next time you are in the Ball Room, cast your eyes on the 1800 grand piano donated by Mr. J. H. Weeks of Newton. The mahogany and rosewood, the 43 ivory keys and the heavy turned legs are in excellent condition. It is under our protective care and will be used only on historic occasions.

OCTOBER 1967
Bulletin
The Weston Historical Society



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

Extra copies of the "Bulletin" are available for 15c. Please contact Mrs.
H. Eugene Jones, Bulletin Editor, 899-0177.