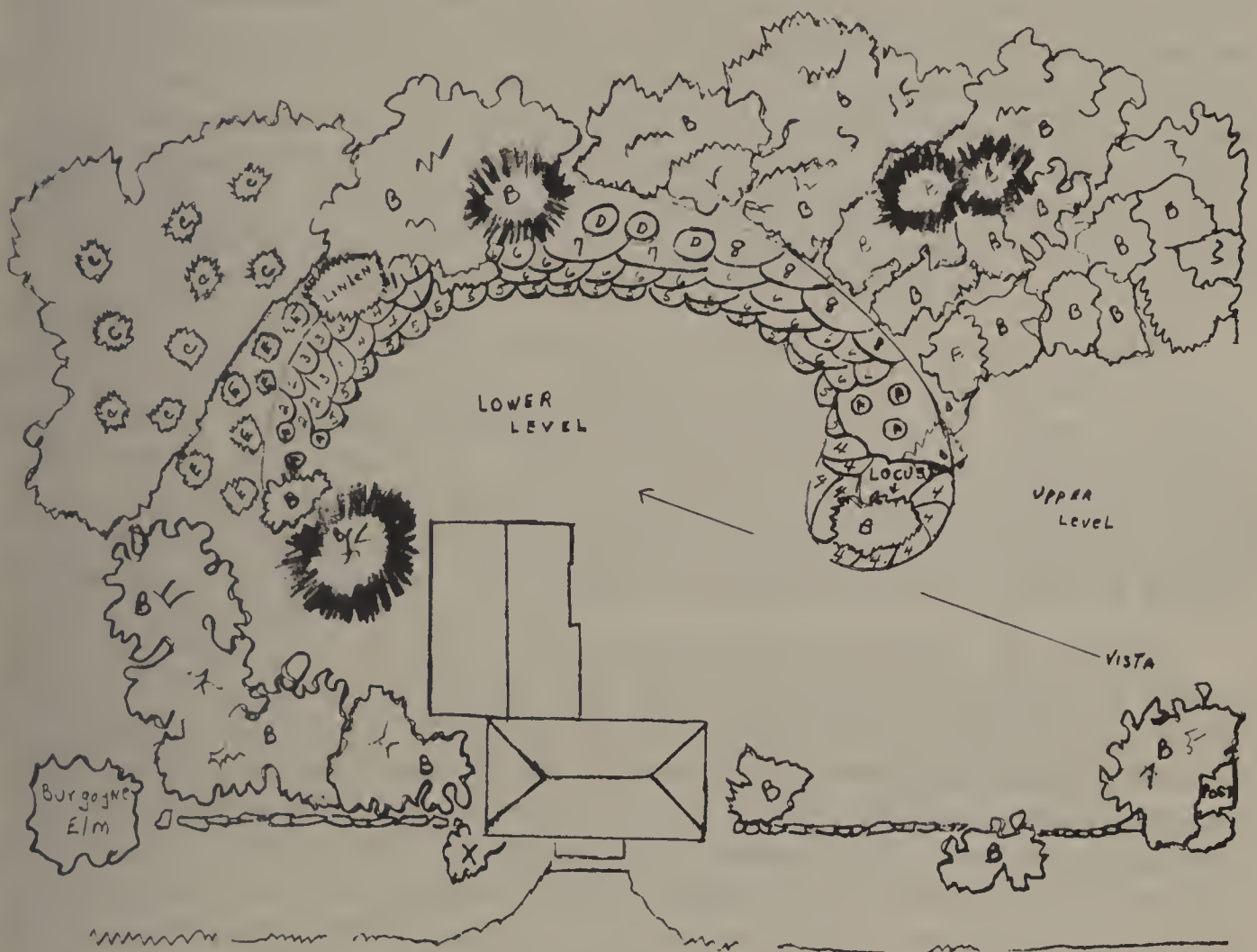


THE WESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

JANUARY 1970, VOL. VI, No. 2



PRIZE-WINNING LAW OFFICE BULB GARDEN
See Story on Page 2

America's Oldest Inn February 15th — A Real Treat

In the ballroom of the Josiah Smith Tavern (The Jones House) on Sunday afternoon, February 15th at three o'clock in the afternoon, our guest speaker will be Mr. Francis J. Koppeis, Innkeeper of Wayside Inn, Sudbury, Massachusetts. He will entertain us and our guests with his well-known lecture **BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF AMERICA'S OLDEST INN**. He will carry us into the present from the very earliest times, delightfully describe features of the building itself, its ownership, the people who frequented it, and include many of the anecdotes surrounding its long, historical life. Mr. Koppeis is full of enthusiasm for his subject and we hope to see a large turnout of members and their guests.

This event has deliberately been planned for the afternoon in deference to older members who may be prone to shy away from an evening adventure in the dead of winter. Refreshments will be served at the conclusion of the program, and the Society's Museum downstairs will be open for browsing. Let's have a pleasant afternoon with our friends at the Tavern.

A Living Memorial To Weston's Civic Spirit

During the three years of restoring and refinishing the quaint little Isaac Fiske early nineteenth century law office for the headquarters of our Society, our workers would look out the windows and exclaim: "How attractive a small Colonial bulb garden would look out there: how lovely to have a touch of color and design to enhance what nature has created here!" The idea met with enthusiastic response from all three of the garden clubs of Weston and working together, they formed a Civic Beautification Project. At a joint meeting on November 7, 1968, Mesdames Benedict, Bergstedt, Berry, Downing, Matz, Munson, Schwartz, Jr., and Travis discussed and approved a design submitted by Mrs. Allard Valentine incorporating their ideas of "a simple bulb garden of nostalgic charm" in the rear of the grounds at 626 Boston Post Road.

The finished plan was presented as an entry in the Bay State Civic Beautification Contest and to everyone's delight, received the Sears, Roebuck and Company Award of two hundred dollars. To head the unified project Mrs. Gordon Benedict of Country Garden Club, Mrs. J. Edwin Matz of the Community League's Garden Interest Group, and Mrs. Everett Schwartz Jr. of Weston Garden Club were chosen. They selected one of our directors, Mr. Charles P. Gorely, Jr., prominent local landscape architect, to be their advisor.

During the summer of 1969, ground was prepared and additional loam secured and spread. On October 20th, nine hemlocks were planted southeast of the Law Office to screen the concrete wall of the filling station nearby and to serve as the garden's scenic background. Then came seven *Latifolia Kalmia* Mountain Laurel and six swamp azaleas of the Downey pinxterbloom variety, the latter characterized by fragrant pink flowers that bloom late in May, — the hardiest of all azaleas. To the right of the tall spruce tree were planted three hybrid lilacs to prevent erosion and add color. Two of these were double whites of the Madame Lamoine variety and the third was a single Congo wine. The climax of the planting project came amidst copious rains on November 10, 1969 when, appropriately clad and with undaunted spirit, the bulb brigade of Mesdames Schwartz, Benedict, Berry, Fackler, Gallagher, and Studley arrived to plant 225 daffodils (50 each of Scarlet Elegant, Aronjuez, and Unsurpassable Cheerfulness), and 200 *Muscari* grape hyacinths. In addition to the Sears money, generous donations by all three of the clubs defrayed the cost of the bulbs, and at our annual meeting on November 17th, Mrs. Schwartz read the following quotation which she said characterized each of her avid associates: "She must look like a girl, — think like a man, — act like a lady, and work like a dog." She concluded by saying "I'm sure you agree that this will be the longest winter ever as you share our eagerness for spring and the beauty this garden will bring forth."

To all three garden clubs of beautiful Weston, the Weston Historical Society expresses its deep gratitude for such a significant achievement. This quaint and simple garden will, with faithful care, always remind us that Weston cherishes its past and the natural charm of its countryside.

Charter Anniversary Dinner April Sixteenth

Mark the date in your "Must" calendar now. Thursday evening, April 16th in the Dining Hall of the New Junior High School, which many of you will perhaps be seeing for the first time, will mark the seventh Charter Anniversary Dinner of the Weston Historical Society. Always attended by hundreds of our active and enthusiastic members, it is the highlight of the year's program and indeed of Weston's community life. We are fortunate to have as our honored guest, Mr. David B. Little, Director of the world renowned Essex Institute in Salem. He will speak to us on "AMERICA'S FIRST CELEBRATION OF THE CENTENNIAL OF THE BATTLES OF LEXINGTON AND CONCORD." Fuller details will be forthcoming in our next Bulletin, but meanwhile be sure to save this important date, and help us maintain the high caliber of this always happy and successful event.

We Welcome New Members

Since the last Bulletin, Mrs. A. L. Gates, Dr. and Mrs. David D. Donaldson, Dr. and Mrs. Ralph E. Earle, Mr. and Mrs. Richard S. Gallagher, Mr. and Mrs. Paul F. Hannah, Mrs. Frank Holmes, and Mr. and Mrs. David G. Williams have been enrolled as active members.

Encompassing all phases of Weston's past, present, and future, The Weston Historical Society deserves the full support of all residents. A growing membership is healthy and in talking with your friends and neighbors, don't hesitate to invite them cordially to join us in our worthwhile projects. Dues at \$3 per year for single persons, and \$5 per family, have purposely been kept nominal in order to encourage townwide participation. The membership committee, headed by Mrs. Joseph Stubbs, will gladly assist you.

Travel and Transportation Through Weston

Presented at the Weston Historical Society Charter Anniversary Dinner April 15, 1969 by Brenton H. Dickson.

PART III (Conclusion)

From early railroads to the present.

In New England railroading, Weston nearly scored another first, for the Boston and Worcester Railroad passed within its borders. The first passenger train on this line began operating between Boston and Newton in May 1834 but by August, when trains were running through Weston to Wellesley, the Boston and Providence had already initiated service as far as Dedham. The Fitchburg Railroad through Kendal Green was completed eleven years later and now the only stage coach through town met the train at Stony Brook to take passengers and mail to Weston, Wayland, Sudbury and Marlborough.

Railroads were sharply criticized in their early stages. "You get upset in a coach and there you are," one veteran of the road remarked. "You get upset in a rail car and, damme, where are you?" An early objector to the Boston and Worcester extending to Albany remarked ". . . the project of a railroad from Boston to Albany, a project which everyone knows who knows the simplest rules of arithmetic, to be impracticable and as useless as a railroad from Boston to the moon." A coach driver declared that his coach

was big enough to carry all who could afford to travel — another maintained that a locomotive couldn't go against a strong wind and a farmer was sure that the noise would prevent his hens from laying.

But progress pays no heed to narrowminded Jonahs. The railroads were built and suffered growing pains of considerable magnitude. For example, "at Natick, ran out of wood; went to Needham and took wood; backed to the ledge and took water. Passengers sent on by horses. About 2½ miles from Framingham, hose froze, and at Framingham the hose and pipes were thawed out. About ¼ mile beyond Framingham, tubes burst in the boiler, and engine was hauled back to Framingham by horses."

By the time the Fitchburg Railroad came through Weston in 1844 railroading was no longer in its infancy and the management, benefiting from the experiences and mistakes of the pioneers, found progress comparatively trouble free. This line skirted Walden Pond where Henry Thoreau lived in a cabin. He made observations on the railroad as well as on nature and as his vivid descriptions could apply to any part of the line, a few passages might be quoted here. "The Fitchburg Railroad," he wrote, "touches the pond about a hundred yards south of where I dwell The whistle of the locomotive penetrates my woods summer and winter, sounding like the scream of a hawk When I meet the engine with its train of cars . . . with its steam cloud like a banner streaming behind in golden and silver wreaths . . . when I hear the iron horse make the hills echo with his snort like thunder, shaking the earth with his feet, and breathing fire and smoke from his nostrils . . . it seems as if the earth had got a race now worthy to inhabit it.

"What recommends commerce to me is its enterprise and bravery, It does not clasp its hands and pray to Jupiter . . . I am refreshed and expanded when the freight train rattles past me and I smell the stores which go dispensing their odors all the way from Long Wharf to Lake Champlain . . . Here comes the cattle train bearing the cattle of a thousand hills . . . the air is filled with the bleating of calves and sheep . . . as if a pastoral valley were going by . . . A carload of drovers too . . . their vocation gone but still clinging to their useless sticks as their badge of office. But the dogs, where are they? Methinks I hear them barking behind the Peterboro hills, or panting up the western slope of the Green Mountains . . . their vocation too is gone . . . they will slink back to their kennels in disgrace, or perchance run wild and strike a league with the wolf or the fox. So is your pastoral life whirled past and away . . . Now that the cars are gone by and all the restless world with them, and the fishes in the pond no longer feel the rumbling, I am more alone than ever."

Construction began on the Massachusetts Central Railroad in 1872 but the line was beset with so many financial difficulties that it wasn't completed until 14 years later. Service on this line reached its height in the early years of the 20th century with trains through Weston nearly every hour and two long distance trains with Pullman cars, one to Washington, D.C. and another to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. And during these years Weston's transportation picture was brightened by a unique personality — Patrick J. McAuliffe, who ran a livery stable just up the rise from Weston station. Everyone in town knew him, liked him, respected him and depended on him; in short he was Weston's most unforgettable character. He loved to tell stories on himself, like the time he was driving a lady through Weston Center to look at a house she was considering renting for the summer. She pointed at the stone church and asked what denomination it was. "Unitarian," said Pat. "Are you a Unitarian?" — "No," said his passenger, "I'm an Episcopalian." — "Then," said Pat, "you might just as well rent a house for the summer in Hell as here."

Besides running the livery stable he was also Weston's police chief and as such was sometimes called on to 'fix' the traffic violations of Weston citizens. Once a Westonian was stopped for speeding in Newton and Pat said he'd take care of it for her. A week or so later he called back in great distress. "I can't do anything," he said. "They've got a new police chief in Newton and he won't cooperate. For the last two days I've had men out all over town trying to pick up someone from Newton but they haven't found one yet."

Commuting to Boston by train became so convenient that Weston turned into a residential community, beginning soon after the Civil War and continuing on to the present day. The history of commuting and commuters is a subject in itself and not within

the scope of this article. Suffice it to say that improvements in public transportation were responsible. Automobiling at first was a strictly seasonal proposition. A trip of any distance had to be carefully planned as tires were short-lived and gasoline dispensaries few and far between. But this situation was soon corrected and for many years Weston was on the main automobile route between Boston and New York and remained so until the old Worcester Turnpike was rebuilt in the late twenties and rechristened Route 9. This diverted much of the through traffic away from tortuous Route 20 and was a welcome, though temporary, relief to the residents on the Post Road. North Avenue became the eastern section of the Mohawk Trail and was a busy thoroughfare until Route 2, more or less using the course of the old Cambridge-Concord Turnpike, was constructed.

In the late teens a new type of public transportation came to Weston — the *Jitney Bus* that went from Waltham to Wayland and charged a 5¢ fare. It caught on after a few weeks and later the line was extended to Maynard and continued operating until about the start of World War II. A second line ran from Waltham to Lincoln along North Avenue. A resident of North Avenue tells me that she used to take this bus to the movies in Waltham and that her father would give her a quarter to cover expenses — 10¢ for the round trip, 10¢ for the movies and a nickle for an ice cream cone! The Worcester bus is an offshoot of the Boston and Worcester Street Railway, an interurban line that followed the Worcester Turnpike from Brookline Village to Worcester and was torn up when Route 9 was constructed.

Development of airlines marked the next change in the transportation picture and though Weston never boasted a commercial airport there has been plenty of traffic passing over the town. And so each decade has seen new improvements in transportation — improvements undreamed of by earlier generations. Less than 200 years ago it took a week to get to New York; it is now possible to get to the moon and back in less time than that with a few orbits of our planet and satellite thrown in for good measure. Today we are faced with a new phase in transportation — the supersonic jet. Just as it was hard getting accustomed to the noise of a slower plane passing overhead, so will it be difficult to get used to these new creatures and adjust ourselves to a point where we can take the sonic boom for granted. And remember, the boom is not localized to the place where the sound barrier is first broken but, like the bowwave of a boat, follows along with the plane so long as it exceeds the speed of sound — frightening the timid, breaking windows, and causing no end of annoyance along its route.

Today we get around in a way our forefathers would never have thought possible; the transportation of tomorrow can only be hypothetical; and by the time tomorrow becomes yesterday — well — your guess is as good as mine.

Note: The next issue of The Bulletin will describe The Isaac Fiske Law Office Restoration as told by those who participated in this historic venture.



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10 CRESCENT ST.
WESTON, MASS.

JANUARY 1970

Bulletin

The Weston Historical Society

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NEW CASTLE, N. H. 03854



Annual Dues: \$3.00 per person, \$5.00 per family

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 P.O. Box 343, Weston 02193

President

Mr. Harold G. Travis

899-4515

Extra copies of the "Bulletin" are available for 25c. Please contact Mrs. Frederick D. Bonner, 893-4346.