

THE WESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN



October 1973, Vol. X, No. 1

1889 NORUMBEGA MEMORIAL TOWER 1973 RESTORATION

(See Story on Page 2)



June 20

July 9

July 30

August 14

ANNUAL MEETING JOSIAH SMITH TAVERN WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 7th 8:00 P.M.

In keeping with tradition, brief reports of committees and officers will precede the recommendations of the Nominating Committee for three directors. The terms of Erlund Field, Edward W. Marshall, and Mrs. Arthur A. Nichols are expiring. Continuing for another year are Mrs. Marshall Dwinnell, Mrs. Stanley G. French, and Donald D. Douglass, and for two more years Brenton H. Dickson, 3rd, Mrs. Dudley B. Dumaine, Grant M. Palmer, Jr., and Harold G. Travis.

At the conclusion of the business meeting, a program of home talent has been arranged that should be of interest to every member. The theme will be:

SHEDDING NEW LIGHT ON WESTON'S PAST

In preparation for the oncoming Bicentennial, a great deal of careful research has been done on Weston during the Revolutionary period. Messrs. Douglass, Gambrill, Lucas, and Travis will each touch briefly on some new facts about that era that have been uncovered. It is hoped that a large attendance will fill the Ball Room for this meeting.

ANOTHER NOTEWORTHY RESTORATION IN WESTON

Pictured on page 1 are four stages of the rebuilding of the famous Norsemen's Tower which overlooks the winding Charles River off Norumbega Road in Weston. When he first took office as Metropolitan District Commissioner for the Commonwealth, we found Hon. John W. Sears most sympathetic to our plea for this restoration, but it took time and patience on the part of both of us while he worked out many problems of administration, priorities, and budget. Finally the good news came that the contract had been let, and we have since followed progress with real gratification and pride.

The wrought iron gates of this memorial tower will be locked to prevent recurrence of vandalism. When it was built in 1889 by Harvard's Professor Eben Norton Horsford, at his expense, it commanded a sweeping view of the Charles River Valley. Now the trees have overshadowed it, and until vistas are restored by careful pruning, the stairway will not be used except when opened for special occasions.

In the Weston Public Library's Justin Gale Memorial Room are the following publications by Professor Horsford:

1888: THE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA BY NORTHMEN

1889: THE DISCOVERY OF THE ANCIENT CITY OF NORUMBEGA

1891: THE DEFENCES OF NORUMBEGA

1892: THE LANDFALL OF LEIF ERIKSON

1893: LEIF'S HOME IN VINELAND

The diggings below the Tower have long been a mystery. Perhaps they are only the remnants of some early raceway that drew power from Stony Brook as it poured into the Charles, or could they perhaps be hiding, as Horsford suspected and as the inscription indicates, the ruins of a city established by Norsemen in the late tenth Century? It is doubtful that any of us will ever know the answer, but at any rate and to his credit, Professor Horsford did a great deal to leave his findings and his reasonings to posterity. In an 1889 address he asserted:

"I set up the Tower in Weston, at the mouth of Stony Brook, where I first found evidences of the work of the Northmen. Over the tablet set in the wall of the Tower, the genius of the architect, Mr. Tryon, has posed the Scandanavian Falcon (the symbol of sovereignty in Iceland) about to alight with a new world in his talons."

The original marble tablet, some ten feet tall, has been left undisturbed, and when you visit the Tower in its attractive, parklike setting, you will find engraved thereon:

A.D. 1000

A.D. 1889

NORUMBEGA

City County Fort River

NORUMBEGA – NOR-MBEGA

Indian utterance of Norbega the ancient form
of NORVEGA Norway to which the
Region of Vineland was subject

CITY

at and near Watertown
Where Remains today
Docks Wharves Walls Dams Basin

COUNTRY

Extending from Rhode Island to the St. Lawrence
first seen by Bjarni Herjulfson 985 A.D.
Landfall of Leif Erikson on Cape Cod 1000 A.D.
Norse Canals Dams Walls Pavements
Fort terraced places of Assembly remain today

FORT

At base of Tower and Region About
Was occupied by the Breton French in the
15th 16th and 17th Centuries

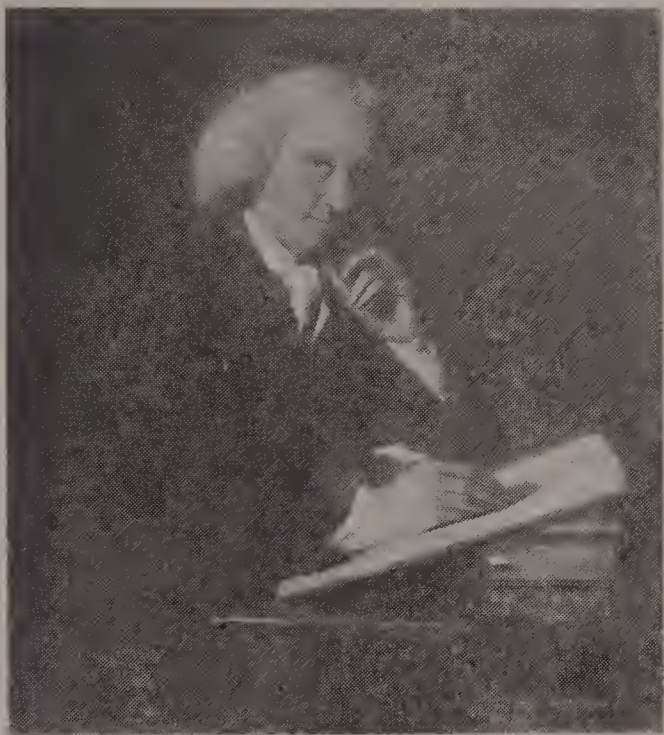
RIVER

The Charles

Discovered by Leif Erikson 1000 A.D.
Explored by Thorwald Leif's Brother 1003 A.D.
Colonized by Thorfinn Karlsefni 1007 A.D.
First Bishop/Erik Gnupson 1121 A.D.
Industries for 350 years
Masur-Wood (Burrs) Fish Furs Agriculture
Latest Norse Ship Returned to Iceland in 1347

THE FAMOUS DIARY OF WESTON'S SAMUEL PHILLIPS SAVAGE

Many of us recall the address of our fellow member, Stephen J. Riley, when we co-hosted with Wayland, the April 19th, 1969 spring meeting of the Bay State Historical League. As director of Massachusetts Historical Society which is America's oldest historical organization, his subject was: THE HONORABLE SAMUEL SAVAGE, A WESTONIAN PROMINENT IN THE REVOLUTION. While hitting the high spots of events that happened just before, during, and after the American Revolution, he stressed many of the vital roles played by Weston's most notable patriot. Some of us, we again aver, must soon dedicate ourselves to the proper and complete presentation of Samuel Phillips Savage's part in American history.



many other sides of this colorful figure's career, especially with its Weston notations extracted from a diary he kept on subjects that attracted his observations. This diary is among the priceless archives to be found in the Historical Society through whose courtesy we were privileged to examine ges.

cold—Mrs. Savage returned with Mr. Hagar in Capt. Baldwin's chaise.
 stalled as President of Harvard College.
 Brown to talk abt. Water Course from Sandy Pond.
 Elliot preached.

Bigelow	Selectmen	Brown
Mirick	for	Russell
B. Smith	Lincoln	dr. Brooks
Jones		Dr. Brooks
Herrington		Abbot
S. Baldwin		

pleasant if had not had the Tooth Ache. (before Night had tooth extracted).
 apple trees.
 sheep (16 produced 45; wool).
 s are busyer than ever.
 ay at Boston tho the Court met at Cambridge. Dr. Chauncey preached an
 rmon and 450 persons dined in the Hall across the Way on the Common
 r concluded with great Joy.
 th Capt. Smith to Cambridge and Boston and returned. Extreme hot.
 t 10 past 8 heard a rumbling noise which I judge to be Earthquake. (I

oeneve mistaken).

- 12 July planted 600 cabbages.
- 27 Aug. The corn on all high ground is curled up.
- 9 Oct. Mr. Hagar went with my Cart to Boston.
- 13 Oct. I have sore eyes.
- 20 Oct. The most terrible storm known for many years.

(At this point Savage explains)

The omission of observations on the weather was occasioned by a most terrible Felon, this remark I make 28 August 1770 and the Finger is still and, I fear ever will be, sore and in great measure useless. From 18 Oct. to this 23 Nov. I have been sorely afflicted with a Felon on my Finger. I kept Chamber 3 weeks.

Thanksgiving 6 Dec. (This was a *Friday!* Ed.)

Mon. 17 Dec. Went with Mr. Pigeon (Newton) to Salem.

Dec. 1770 I began to keep School for my own and Mr. Hagar's children about the 24th or 25th December and already find the advantage of it.

The Crime of Covetousness to me appears the Root of all the Evils we Suffer.

The General Court determined to stay in town and accordingly desired Dr. Chauncey to preach afternoon, which he did from the works of David: "Our fathers trusted in Thee and were delivered" to a full assembly. Mr. Mather prayed. between 400 and 500 then repaired to Fanieul Hall where a very elegant Dinner was provided. 70 Clergymen dined there. An ox was roasted whole on the Common and given to the Poor.

One thing to Remember,—Never to put Hog Dung on Cabbage. I fear I have lost 500 in the lower part of my Garden. Rich ground is best for Cabbage.

18 March 1771 James Adams coming from his Home to Mine this morning was obliged to dig his Horse out of Snow. The road was broke with 6 pr. of Cattle from Lincoln to my House and the Person who Drove went on Rackets. (Snowshoes: Ed.)

May. Reps. for Weston Bigelow had 73. J. Jones had 37 and no more and I hope he never will.

26 Sep. N. cold fair N.E. Mr. Hagar and Mr. Fuller mowed briefly in Hadley Pasture.

3 Oct. Coleridge one of the most excellent men I ever heard.

19 Nov. My horse stole. 20 Nov. I found my Horse.

December 1771. The pleasantest December I believe ever in New England. It is really surprising to what lengths some Men will go to satisfy a spirit of Revenge and to serve the Spirit of Ambition—a Whole Community's Ruin is no Obstacle when in the Way of It.

Editor's Comment: Perhaps this is a good note on which to stop. If you'd like more, there's an abundance of untouched material. Several terse comments above should strike responsive chords in the minds of many members who will readily recognize the men so casually and naturally mentioned by Weston's great Patriot. The Savage house, incidentally, still stands and is cherished by its present owners and occupants, Dr. and Mrs. Gardella at 479 North Avenue, near the Lincoln line. And that, also, will be part of our later stories.

WESTON'S GREAT STORM OF 1787

Oldtimers who still quake at terrors encountered on the afternoon of September 21, 1938 should enjoy reading what we unearthed in Samuel Phillips Savage's original diary at the Massachusetts Historical Society. Quite clearly it indicates "There's Nothing New Under the Sun."

"Wed. the 15th Aug. 1787 most violent Gale great Rain some Thunder. Haying Time. It crossed the Great Road at E. Greenleaf's Esq. where it blew down a low new board fence & carried off a shed adjoining his House. From thence in width of about 60 Rods it passed over some low Grounds & in its way took a cart laden with hay drawn by 2 Oxen & a horse which the Driver is very confident he saw pass over him. After the gust was over it was found a few Rods from where the Wind first took it, broken & both wheels off, & the Oxen & Horse which drew it unyoked & unharnessed. The Driver was raised from the Ground a full Rod and dropped in a meadow without any injury. It then passed through a door of fine oaks & pines belonging to Mr. Jonas Harrington where it blew down every Pine of any big Size & tore up & broke the Chief of the Oaks or Walnut of about 18 inches diameter, from abt. 8 feet from the Ground. It twisted like a withe & left standing as a monument of the power of air when put into violent spiral motion. The last act that we Know of before it ceased was about a mile northeast it there took a Lad at Work in a Meadow & carried him some Rods & Lodged him in a bunch of Alders. While passing from low to high Ground it did little or no injury even to the standing corn.

"Aug. 30, 1787 we learn that on the same day & in the afternoon there was a most terrible hurricane which passed over the Parish in Wethersfield, it arose in the Parish of New Britain in Convent & I believe ended about Lexington N.E. from us abt. 4 miles, as some of the Shingles of Mr. Livermore's malt house in this Town, it was said, were found there."

BAY STATE HISTORICAL LEAGUE FALL MEETING

A special invitation to all members of the Weston Historical Society has been extended to attend the all-day annual fall meeting of the Bay State Historical League which will be held at Sterling, Massachusetts Saturday, October 13th. The beautiful, historic town of Sterling is only an hour's ride away through lovely country. Foliage should be at its best. Take the Massachusetts Turnpike to Route 495 North. Leave 495 at the Berlin-Clinton exit and Sterling Center is just 10 miles west on Route 62.

Registration and meeting headquarters will be in the Parish Hall of the First Church of Sterling. It's in plain sight beside the Library and opposite the Town Hall as you approach the Common. With hundreds of kindred souls, both young and old, you'll enjoy the panel discussions of the morning, the luncheon, and the tour of historic places and homes. Let's have a big turnout from Weston. Reservations including coffee hour, luncheon, meetings, and tour should be *made at \$4 per person*, and checks payable to Sterling Historical Society, should be sent before Monday Oct. 8th to:

Mrs. Bradford Murdock, School Street, Sterling, Mass. 01564.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT WESTON?

Another step forward in our coordination with the schools has been taken during the summer. A new course, inaugurated in the High School, already has more than 100 students enrolled. It aims to apply local, state, and national history to the opportunities, problems, and responsibilities of today. At an early September meeting with school officials it was agreed that the Editor would be the clearing house for information. The schools will keep us posted on oncoming subjects to be studied and discussed, and we in turn will draw from our catalogue of information and talent available to put students directly in touch with those members who we know have pertinent Weston recollections or records thereon.

Although we already have several oldtimers and others who can thus be helpful, we must expand their number and our inventory of available local historic resources, subject by subject from early times through Abolitionists to Zealots, and from the First Settlers to the early half of the current century. Remember that today's high school students have all been born since 1950. We should be anxious to give their teachers all the help we can as they strive to guide our youngsters into becoming good citizens and useful members of society. Please feel the importance of this work and call 899-4515 or Mrs. Ellis at 894-3011 for fuller information.

IN MEMORIAM

Since our last annual meeting, it has been sad to learn that the following charter members of our Society have passed away:

Mr. Lyndall F. Carter
Mrs. Donald D. Douglass
Mr. Paul L. Flynn

Mrs. William K. Howard
Mrs. Dick Simms
Mrs. Ernest L. Wells

We extend our sympathy to their families with whom we and the entire community share a deep sense of loss.



“LARGEST WOODEN HOUSE IN THE COLONIES”

Many of our members are planning to attend the slide lecture at Regis College that is being given by Mrs. George Maurice Morris on October 10th at 2 P.M. She will tell of the trials and thrills of moving an historic, mid-18th Century mansion from Danvers to Washington, and of how she and her husband undertook its restoration and furnishing. Among her slides are views of American Queen Anne and Chippendale antiques, the stenciled and painted floors, the hand-carved 18th Century stairway, and the old scenic French wallpaper. Tickets at \$3.50 may be secured from Mrs. Edward Y. Walker, 53 Ash Street, 891-5298.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

We are glad to record the affiliation of the following as active members and supporters of our worthwhile programs:

Mr. and Mrs. Hazen M. Ackles, 70 North Avenue
Mr. and Mrs. Harry Y. Azadian, 23 Chadwick Road
Mr. and Mrs. John P. Connolly, Jr., 21 Beech Road

Mr. and Mrs. Howard L. Heller, 100 Hickory Rd.
Mrs. Norman W. Kalat, 70 Meadowbrook Road
Mrs. Lawrence A. Murray, 239 Winter Street

“SOMEWHAT IN LIQUOR”

Though as stated in our March issue, Vol. IX, No. 3, the original of Rebecca Baldwin's diary still eludes us, we were delighted to find among the copious notes of the late Mary Frances Pierce in the library of the New England Historic Genealogical Society, a number of fascinating extracts therefrom. Here's a sample:

“1767 March 2. Samuel Brigham of Sudbury was drowned. He left a widow and 10 children. He was somewhat in liquor.”



Annual Dues: \$3.00 per person, \$5 per family

Life Memberships \$200

Gift Memberships are suggested

Contributions to the Society are always welcome.

Checks should be made payable to Weston Historical Society, Inc.
and mailed to P. O. Box 343, Weston, Mass. 02193

President: Mr. Edward W. Marshall 893-7388

Editor of the “Bulletin”: Mr. Harold G. Travis 899-4515

Extra copies are available for 25¢ each. Please contact Mrs. Frederick D. Bonner 893-4346.