

THE WESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN



May 1975, Vol. XI, No. 4



NATION'S BICENTENNIAL OPENS IN WESTON

Left: For 5 days preceding the town's opening exercises on April 19th decorations in aisles and classrooms complemented Woodland School's "FREEDOM TRAIL" comprising 34 window displays of which 3 are shown above.

Right: Burned into the 1740-1967 BURGOYNE ELM'S age-rings by Rotary President Bruce Nickerson and son Andrew, are dates revealing how big was its trunk when historic events occurred. Thus will Weston Rotary's Bicentennial Project teach history to oncoming generations.

THE IMPORTANCE OF AN HISTORIC DISTRICT

The Historic District Study Committee that was appointed last year by the Selectmen on request of the Weston Historical Commission, has announced after thorough study and a series of public meetings, its intention to propose at the forthcoming Town Meeting on May 5th, the establishment of a Weston Historical District. It may be timely, then, to quote the following from our March 1968 BULLETIN (Vol. IV, No. 3):

"At its January meeting the Board of Directors voted unanimously to request that the Selectmen insert an article in the warrant of the annual Town meeting March 25th to establish a Weston Historical Commission. All members . . . are urged to attend this meeting and to support the motion that will be presented to establish an Historical Commission as authorized under Section 8D, Chapter 697 of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts."

Headed "The Importance of an Historical Commission", the article pointed out that other towns near us had acted much faster than Weston by voting to establish such a Commission: in some cases, Historic Districts as well. The article to establish the Weston Historical Commission was duly passed, and it set as its first order of business the inventory of old structures and sites that had been contemplated.

Several members of this Society worked diligently on that extensive survey, and by last year the Weston Historical Commission asked the Selectmen to appoint an Historic District Study Committee. Thus after seven busy years we have reached the point where the Study Committee it recommended will propose a motion at the coming Town Meeting to establish an Historic District. It is our hope that this proposal, envisioned by us years ago when we instigated the establishment of our Historical Commission, can and will have the active support of every Society member. Your presence and your vote are vital to the establishment of the Weston Historic District.

IN MEMORIAM: HENRY W. LONGFELLOW

The passing of our charter member, Henry W. Longfellow, is deeply regretted by us all. His 1966 framed oil painting of the Burgoyne Elm hangs on the wall of the Isaac Fiske Law Office and symbolizes his devotion to the town and his dedication to the preservation of its natural beauty and charm. Since the 1967 death of the venerable landmark, "Waddie" counselled with us regularly as to the best means of perpetuating the bole. He had an advisory hand right up to the day of his death in the project that Rotary has now completed. His designs so modestly submitted are being treasured with other historic memorabilia of the Society.

THE JOSIAH SMITH TAVERN

As we go to press it is obvious that at forthcoming Town hearings and meetings, the fate of Weston's oldest downtown landmark will be extensively discussed. It behooves members of this Society particularly to attend such meetings, to learn all the facts and circumstances, and then to form an opinion that will have been measured by careful study and reflection. This is too sacred and serious a subject for jest or jeer; it calls for prayerful thought, and we have faith in the sober judgment of the people, for after all it is they and not a few who will make the final decision.

Those who remember the Jones sisters will recognize the sincerity in the mind of Alice E. Jones who had written in her will that was filed on January 5, 1948 "I desire to have the house held by the said Society (Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities—Ed.) without material alteration as an historic building in said Town, which served for many years as an old Inn, known at the time of the Revolution as 'Joel Smith Tavern' and in which the Parish and Town meetings were for many years held. I do not desire that the barn connected with this house should be preserved, if in the judgment of said Society it is desirable to remodel or remove said barn. If in the judgment of the said Society interior alterations are desirable to reproduce said building as it was when in use as an inn, such changes and alterations may be made After my sister's death I give, devise, bequeath and appoint to the Society . . . all the rest and residue . . . to be held in trust in a separate fund, and the income only to be used for the preservation, maintenance, and display of said house and estate . . . Said premises shall only be mortgaged when deemed desirable by said Society for expenditures of a capital nature only shall never be sold or conveyed by the said Society as long as the house remains . . ."

The above condensed portions extracted from Alice's will are submitted only for basic reflection. Those interested in going more into detail should be able to secure access to all documents from town officials.

REGIONAL PRESERVATION WORKSHOP HELD HERE

Not all of our members realize that Mrs. George F. Amadon ("Betty") is the Executive Director of the Massachusetts Historical Commission. She and her husband, charter members of the Weston Historical Society, reside at 465 South Avenue in what is known as the Isaac Train Tavern, ca. 1799. On March 22nd, Mrs. Amadon presided over an Eastern Regional Preservation Workshop that was held in the Josiah Smith Tavern. During the noon recess, we were honored at our Isaac Fiske Law Office headquarters by visitors from several neighboring communities. All were impressed with the authenticity of the restoration we undertook during the late years of the last decade.

PAINFUL RETURNS

With people moving from one address to another, it perhaps is inevitable that occasionally the mover fails to notify us of the new address. Hence many copies of the BULLETIN and of similar mailings are returned to us and we are frustrated because those parties do not receive our message. With such a large mailing list, we use the economical "non-profit organization" method, so all we ask is that if you move, even from one Weston address to another, please notify us at once, as letters and periodicals other than first class are *not* forwarded.

THE BICENTENNIAL IS HERE!

During the week preceding the Nineteenth of April and the advent of our nation's Bicentennial Commemoration of the American Revolutionary War, downtown Weston was filled with quiet excitement. Adding to expectancy was the knowledge that the annual spring vacation of our schools was to start on the same day.

The Historical Society brought a display case from the Isaac Fiske Law Office, plus pictures, papers, documents, and various other historic relics to the Town's popular public library. Merchants started to tidy up their windows, some providing an historical motif. Town employees cleaned up their own quarters and went out into the highways and byways to spruce up cemeteries, parks, school grounds, and roadsides so that Weston's traditional reputation for neatness and natural charm would be reasserted. Outdated signs came out of Bulletin Boards and from the few shop windows that had allowed such to be placed there. Private citizens in various neighborhoods caught the contagion of clearing up fallen branches, dead limbs, and anything else that spoiled the view from streetside. Even the earliest species of daffodils in the sunken garden of oldfashioned bulbs that border the rear lawn of the Isaac Fiske 1805 Law Office burst into full bloom on the Saturday for which we had expectantly waited.

A last minute check-up showed that the handsome plaque memorializing Captain Lamson's men who marched with him to Lexington was installed and ready for the morrow's unveiling on the 200th anniversary of that event. Weston Post #214, American Legion, were to sponsor the dedication and reported "We are ready." Over the years in many BULLETINS we had expressed the wish and hope that somehow sometime but soon someone would find a way of preserving and immortalizing the venerable Burgoyne Elm that died in 1967 at the age of 225 years. To our delight, Weston Rotarians under the inspired and inspiring leadership of its president, brought this notable preservation project to its climax on the very eve of the 19th.

An unwelcome gale with showers swept over the Town minutes before dedication of the Lamson boulder's plaque was to take place. On the spur of the moment it was decided that while the dedication had to go on as planned, most of the exercises scheduled for the grove at the entrance to Lamson Park would be held in the Town Hall. While most of the large crowd watched under umbrellas from the Town Hall steps, a Boy and Girl Scout unveiled the plaque, and Rev. Paul E. Shanabrook delivered a prayer of dedication. The rest of the dedicatory exercises took place smoothly in the comfortably crowded Town Hall, and the Bicentennial, so long anticipated, was at last under way with a special section of the Weston High School Band under the direction of Scott Tucker leading the audience in our national anthem.

Declaring the Bicentennial now officially opened, Harold G. Travis of the Weston Bicentennial Committee outlined projects sponsored, completed, and planned to date by civic groups. The Weston Tea Party of last year by the Golden Ball Tavernkeepers had warmed up the Town ahead of time. The Community League has started its extensive renovation of the Josiah Smith Tavern's Barn without affecting its exterior. The children of the Junior High School undertook with Town help the planting last year of many young maples leading up to the Sugar House. The Tree Warden is pruning and feeding those Bicentennial Buttonwoods described in our January issue, Vol. XI, No. 2. The garden clubs are most active. The Weston Garden Council with the Community League Garden Club is completing the plantings around the new police station. The Country Garden Club's tree and shrub planting around the Golden Ball Tavern continues. The Weston Garden Club coordinated with the Town in building a cobblestone safety island around the watering trough that traditionally has been appropriately planted for years by that group, three seasons out of four. The same Weston Garden Club in cooperation with Community League Garden Club is planning the placing of many buckets in public places around the town with suitable plantings in each. The Provisional Group of the Weston Garden Club is undertaking the landscaping of the Weston Scout House Grounds. Even as far away as Saturday, June 12, 1976, when through the generosity of Mr. Richard Robinson a plaque will be dedicated on Sanderson Hill to commemorate the WESTON BEACON of Revolutionary War Days, Weston Boosters has agreed to sponsor a townwide

FAMILY DAY when from morning till far into the night, the people of Weston will join in all sorts of activities that will occupy every playground and culminate in an outdoor BEAN SUPPER at Regis College, followed by square dances. Breathless, Mr. Travis then turned the meeting over to Mr. Harry B. Jones, Chairman of the Bicentennial Committee of the Legion's Weston Post. After recognizing descendants of the Weston Revolutionary War heroes in the one person, it turned out, of Representative Edward M. Dickson, Mr. Jones introduced Harold Hestnes, Chairman of the Board of Selectmen who fittingly brought the greetings of the Town. The popular Carondeliers of Regis College sang AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL, and the Honorable Edward Mellen Dickson, Representative of the General Court and former Town official, delivered the oration of the day. At the close of his address he presented a scroll each to the Selectmen and to the Bicentennial Committee, signed by the Governor, the Secretary of State, and himself in honor of the occasion. The Dedication Exercises concluded with the singing of AMERICA by the audience, accompanied by the excellent band.

At this point, Donald D. Douglass, Chairman of the Weston Bicentennial Committee opened the second half of the program by presenting Dr. Vera Laska of the Committee and Mr. Donald Kennedy, Program Director, Weston Public Schools as co-chairmen of the Townwide School and College Competition in four sections of the Literary and the Arts and Crafts divisions. Altogether 245 entries were received from 255 students. Each of 38 winners was called to the front to receive a certificate of award, a handsome prize of permanent value, and the Bicentennial Committee's congratulations. Between awards the CARONDELIERS delighted the throng with medleys of old folksongs. The affair was adjudged to have been an outstanding success and loud applause greeted the announcement that another contest will be arranged for 1976.



EN ROUTE TO POSTERITY

On February 18th, Tree Warden Koelb's sharp saw cut the Burgoyne Elm's bole down to the height desired, and the town's "front loader" conveyed the severed portion to its secret hiding place where, protected with a preservative, it will be kept ready to supply in the 21st century a replacement slab for that shown on page one.

VITAL STATISTICS NOT INFALLIBLE

One must not too hastily jump to conclusions that are based on published statistics, for "There's many a slip." According to Bond's HISTORY OF WATERTOWN, Samuel Barnes and Grace Warren were married July 10, 1775 and their first child Samuel was born on August 26, 1775, the first of eight children. Strangely enough, the last two were born 33 days apart; Rebecca on September 27, 1792 and Lydia October 30, 1792. Errors of all sorts can be found in the best of family records.

A SALUTE TO THE SCHOOLCHILDREN OF WESTON FUTURE LEADERS OF AMERICA

We proudly salute the young people of Weston who have brought to our Bicentennial a renewed perspective for us all. Winston Churchill often reminded us that the farther backward we can look, the farther forward we are likely to see. The 245 entries that were submitted in the Townwide Literary and Arts and Crafts Contest, and the FREEDOM TRAIL that was created by the students of our Woodland School have set a high standard for us all. Illustrated elsewhere is a sampling of the 34 window display that comprised THE FREEDOM TRAIL but no picture can reveal the excellence of the pageants that were portrayed by the pupils themselves. The amount of time and effort that went into the preparation of all the exhibits and costumes plus the extensive training required for the perfection of the three pageant performances reflect great credit upon teachers, pupils, and parents alike. We can be sure that this nation of ours, under God, must now have, as it has needed to have for so long, a new birth of freedom. Our system of government has proved itself the best in the world but it must and will be better because of the new vows our children inspire us to make with them while we take stock of our opportunities and responsibilities as citizens of the United States of America.

WE WELCOME MANY NEW MEMBERS

Since our January BULLETIN, the following new members have united with us to promote and preserve Weston's history as an exceptional New England Town: Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Anderson, Dr. and Mrs. W. Gerald Austen, Dr. and Mrs. Carl C. Bartels, Dr. and Mrs. Glenn E. Behringer, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Billings, Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Bonner, Dr. and Mrs. Harry E. Braconier, Mrs. M. Holt Campbell, Mr. and Mrs. Richard L. Casey, Mrs. Jean Stevenson Clark, Mr. and Mrs. Frederic A. Crafts, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Arnold H. Crowley, Mr. Daniel H. Crowley, Mr. and Mrs. Jacob J. Daitch, Dr. and Mrs. G. Robert DeLong, Mrs. June Rutherford Dussault, Mr. and Mrs. Hoyt Ecker, Dr. and Mrs. Stanley H. Eldred, Mr. and Mrs. Allan B. Ellis, Dr. and Mrs. Edward R. Epp, Mrs. Albert P. Everts, Sr., Mr. and Mrs. Robert L. Fenn, Mr. and Mrs. Laurence Field, Mr. and Mrs. Weston P. Figgins, Dr. and Mrs. John C. Fisher, Mr. and Mrs. Robert S. Flynn, Mr. and Mrs. W. Brownell Freeman, Dr. and Mrs. Joseph F. Gerstein, Mr. and Mrs. Alan Green, Mr. and Mrs. Philip B. Hamilton, Mr. and Mrs. Charles H. Hardie, Mr. and Mrs. Rudolph L. Helgeson, Jr., Mrs. Dexter B. Hill, Mr. and Mrs. D. Brainerd Holmes, Mr. and Mrs. Richard A. Howard, Mr. and Mrs. Herbert S. Howes, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas R. Jackson, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas R. Jackson, Mr. and Mrs. Harold D. Jobes, Mr. and Mrs. Elmer O. Jolley, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Elmer R. Jones, Mr. and Mrs. William E. Katz, Mrs. Janeth L. Knowles, Mr. Frank Batchelder Lamson, Mr. Roger Wright Lamson, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. G. Raymond Lehrer, Mr. and Mrs. Paul D. Littlefield, Mrs. Addison H. Lowell, Mrs. Heinz Mangendantz, Mrs. Edwin P. Mahard, Mr. and Mrs. Bayley F. Mason, Mr. and Mrs. Francis W. Newbury, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Edward F. Newell, Mr. and Mrs. George E. Oppel, Mr. and Mrs. A. Brooks Parker, Mr. and Mrs. Howard C. Perrine, Mr. and Mrs. Camille F. Petri, Mr. and Mrs. David O. Pfaelzer, Mrs. M. Allen Powning, Dr. and Mrs. Douglas N. Riis, Nellie H. Rogers, Mr. and Mrs. Edward J. Rooney, Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Schore, Dr. and Mrs. Harold F. Schuknecht, Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin F. Smith, David K. Smith, Mr. and Mrs. Roger E. Spear, Mr. and Mrs. M. Thomas Stantial, Mrs. Reginald W. Stevens, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph E. Studley, II, Mrs. Joseph L. Supple, Dr. and Mrs. Fred W. Thyng, Mr. Dana E. Vannasse, Mr. and Mrs. William E. Westell, Mr. and Mrs. William R. Whitmore, Mr. and Mrs. W. F. Wiseman, Dr. and Mrs. S. M. Wrenn, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. John J. Yeonopolus, and Dr. and Mrs. Hugh H. Young II.

CHARTER ANNIVERSARY DINNER A GREAT SUCCESS

Dr. Richard Howard's illustrated talk on the Case Sisters of Weston in the cozy candle-lit dining hall of St. Peter's Church on April 24th was immensely enjoyed by the largest turnout in years. Philip Coburn's Hillcrest song of 1912 boyhood days, "We are the Farm Boys of Weston!" sung by some of the oldtimers, closed the meeting on an hilarious note.

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COME ALL

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OTHER COMING EVENTS

To Mark On Your Calendar

May 15: Open House: Isaac Fiske Law Office
November 11: Annual Meeting and Illustrated Knox Trail Lecture.



Annual Dues: \$5.00 per person, \$8 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

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