

# THE WESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN



May 1976, Vol. XII, No. 4



## THE HOUSE THAT ISAAC FISKE BUILT

This picture of the 1805 FISKE-FIELD HOUSE was taken prior to the 1900 Fire. Read "*An Unusual Centennial*", Pages 2, 3, 4, and 5.

## A NEW BOOK ON WESTON HISTORY "ONE TOWN IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION: WESTON, MASSACHUSETTS"

The Society is pleased to announce that through the generosity of the co-authors, Brenton H. Dickson 3rd and Homer C. Lucas, we have acquired the copyright and exclusive sales rights to their new book, "*ONE TOWN IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION: WESTON, MASSACHUSETTS.*" After more than two years of extensive research, this book is the most definitive history of Weston's role in the Revolution that has ever been published. Its more than two hundred and twenty pages are enhanced by an informative appendix of thirty pages. An elaborate index for cross reference runs into ten more and is an added feature.

Members of Weston Historical Society are being given special opportunity to purchase this book at attractive pre-publication rates between now and May 25th when higher prices will be announced. Until that date, orders will be taken for the paperback edition at five dollars per copy. Also a more limited number of autographed hard cloth covered copies are available at a price of nine dollars each.

Check payable to "SOCIETY BOOK FUND" should be sent promptly to Weston Historical Society, Box 343, Weston, Massachusetts 02193. Publication date is set for the beginning of June.

## AN UNUSUAL CENTENNIAL

Over three score years ago, on the 20th day of December 1915, seven descendants of Rev. Joseph Field, Jr. and two dozen of Isaac Fiske's, gathered in the house that Isaac had built in 1805 and sold by him 10 years later to the new minister of the First Parish Church, Reverend Joseph Field, Jr. The 31 Fiske-Field descendants were commemorating the one hundredth anniversary of the signing of that deed. Simultaneously they rejoiced in a century of uninterrupted occupancy by the Field family, as the following testimonial attests:

### 1815 - 1915

*In token of 100 years of uninterrupted friendship between the Field and the Fiske families, begun by Isaac Fiske and Joseph Field at the time of the Napoleonic Wars and continued ever since by their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren unto this year of the Great War, we their grateful descendants hereto set our hands, as guests of Edward B. Field at a celebration held in the house in Weston that Isaac Fiske conveyed to Joseph Field, to record our own gratification and as an inspiration to those who shall follow us.*

Weston, Massachusetts, December 20<sup>th</sup> 1915.

<p>Charles H. Fiske          Caroline W. Field          Brenton H. Fiske          Chandler Robbins          Marian D. B. Robbins          William Field          May Field          Charles H. Fiske 2<sup>nd</sup>          Mary Fiske          Olsen Field          Theodore Dickson          Chandler Robbins 2<sup>nd</sup>          Brenton H. Dickson 3<sup>rd</sup>          Rosanna Fiske          Anna H. Dickson          Sarah Rydby Robbins          Edlund Field</p>	<p>Augustus H. Fiske          Laura Foster Robbins          Hannah Bradford Fiske          Amelia Robbins Fiske          Charles H. Fiske Jr.          Joseph B. Fiske Field          Gardiner H. Fiske          R. H. Fiske          Mary D. Fiske          Frank C. Fiske          Edward B. Dickson          CHANDLER ROBBINS JR          Edward B. Field</p>
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## AN UNUSUAL CENTENNIAL

(Continued from previous page)

To clarify and identify the signatures, we have reproduced them below, inserting an asterisk to designate the eight signers who are still living.

CHARLES H. FISKE	AUGUSTUS H. FISKE
Grandson of Isaac Fiske	Isaac's great grandson
CAROLINE I. FIELD	LAURA FOSTER ROBBINS, Wife of
Joseph's granddaughter	Chandler Robbins, Isaac's great grandson
BRENTON H. DICKSON, JR.	HANNAH BRADFORD FISKE
Isaac's great grandson	Isaac's great granddaughter
CHANDLER ROBBINS	*CORNELIA ROBBINS FISKE
Isaac's great grandson	Isaac's great, great granddaughter
MARIAN S. B. ROBBINS	CHARLES H. FISKE, JR.
wife of William Robbins,	Isaac's great grandson
Isaac's great grandson	*JOSEPH BLAKE FIELD
ANDREW FISKE	Joseph's great grandson
Isaac's grandson	GARDINER H. FISKE
MARY FIELD	Isaac's great grandson
Joseph's granddaughter	ROBERT FIELD
CHARLES H. FISKE, 3RD	Joseph's grandson
Isaac's great, great grandson	MARY D. FISKE, wife of Charles H. Fiske, Jr.
MARY DICKSON	Isaac's great grandson
Isaac's great, great granddaughter	MARY C. FISKE, widow of George Fiske,
*OLSEN FIELD	Isaac's grandson
Joseph's great grandson	GERTRUDE H. FISKE
THEODORE DICKSON	Isaac's great granddaughter
Isaac's great, great grandson	RUTH B. DICKSON, wife of Brenton H.
CHANDLER ROBBINS, 2ND	Dickson, Jr.,
Isaac's great, great grandson	Isaac's great grandson
*BRENTON H. DICKSON 3RD	*CHANDLER ROBBINS, JR.
Isaac's great, great grandson	Isaac's great, great grandson
ROSANNA FISKE	EDWARD B. FIELD
Isaac's great, great granddaughter	Joseph's grandson
*ANNA + DICKSON her mark	
Isaac's great, great granddaughter	
*SARAH RIPLEY ROBBINS	
Isaac's great, great granddaughter	
*ERLUND FIELD	
Joseph's great grandson	

The framed original of this testimonial has been presented to us by our fellow charter member and secretary, Mr. Olsen Field.\* It has been hung in the law office of Isaac Fiske, headquarters of our Society, on the wall above the guestbook table in the waiting room, but to protect the signatures from further fading, its face has been turned toward the wall. The other side which will first meet your eye therefore, is of equal historic interest, and it, too, has been reproduced herein.

It is believed that the author of *OUR OLD HOME* as shown on Page 5 was Andrew Fiske, grandfather of two more of our fellow charter members, Harold B. Willis, Jr. and Andrew F. Willis whose homes adjoin each other on nearby Concord Road. Beneath the Centennial Ode of 1915, placed side by side, are pictures of the house before 1900 as shown on Page One and circa 1909 as found on Page Five.

\*Olsen Field's older brother, Erlund, has been a director of Weston Historical Society since its beginning in 1963, and is unsurpassed in his zeal for all its activities, and in promoting the preservation of the Town's historical assets. —Ed.

When he sold his house to Field in 1815, Fiske moved one door to the east as his great, great grandson Brent Dickson recalled in our March 1973, Vol. IX No. 3 issue and again in Vol. X No. 3 a year later. The Baldwin Tavern dated back to 1736 and "Isaac Fiske made the house his Weston headquarters from 1815 until his death in 1861." The Waltham *FREE PRESS* of August 22, 1890 carried the sad headline FIRE DESTROYS ISAAC FISKE HOUSE (BALDWIN TAVERN)." Fortunately the light breeze from the west prevented sparks from reaching the subject of our current story.

After fifty faithful years of ministry in Weston and of living in this beautiful house, Rev. Field retired in 1865 and died three years later. He is buried in Central Cemetery across the street not far from his longtime friend, Isaac Fiske. On the front page of the March 1969 BULLETIN, Vol. V, No. 3, these two patriarchs are shown seated together before the east entrance. Pages 3 and 4 of the same issue contain the fascinating story of the 1967 restoration that Jean Nichols wrote for us.

After 129 years the famous residence finally passed from the Field family in 1944. The new owners, Major and Mrs. George K. Saurwein, conveyed it to Mr. and Mrs. Samuel D. Bush, Jr. in 1964, who in turn sold it to Mr. and Mrs. Horace S. Nichols in 1967 whose ownership, we trust, will through their descendants one day rival the Field record!

Heartwarming to all of us is the thought that descendants of both Rev. Joseph Field, Jr. and of Isaac Fiske still carry out the tradition of good citizenship and friendliness that their forefathers established here more than a century and a half ago. On your next visit to our headquarters, the Fiske 1805 Law Office at No. 626 Boston Post Road, be sure to note the framed testimonial above described. Then step into Isaac's office, pause beside his portrait, and look out to the west where in Central Cemetery his monument stands (BULLETIN for May 1970, Vol. VI No. 4). It and the house diagonally across the street stand as sentinels in tribute to a friendship that has continuously endured for 171 years. —H.G.T.

## ANNUAL CHARTER ANNIVERSARY DINNER MAY 12, 1976

Advance reservations for the traditionally high point of the Society's year, — the Charter Anniversary Dinner, — are arriving daily and members are reminded to mail their checks before May 8th for the big event that will again fill the hall of St. Peter's Episcopal Church on Wednesday evening, *May 12th* at 7 o'clock.

In keeping with tradition, also, our speaker, Howard Jefferson, is of the highest caliber and charm: — his topic *ISAIAH THOMAS AND THE ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY* is appropriate and timely in this Bicentennial Year of the American Revolution. We are fortunate to have Dr. Jefferson, recipient of nine honorary degrees from various colleges and universities as the one who will so authoritatively tell us of the colorful Thomas, fearless publisher of this nation's most parlous era.

An opportunity to join the Society prior to the dinner is extended to any friends and neighbors you may wish to bring as your guests. Be sure to make your reservations by May 8th, using the blank that came with our special mailing last month.

## OUR OLDFASHIONED GARDEN AT THE LAW OFFICE —NATURAL CHARM AT ITS BEST—

The early daffodils, stately in glorious gold, were again resplendent at Easter, and now it's lilac time! Later varieties of daffodils are not far behind. In June the peonies will pop out, and all through Weston's summertime we'll have day lilies. In its sequestered, picturesque, and peaceful setting, the little oldfashioned garden nestles quietly just two dozen short steps below the Burgoyne Elm Bole, a hallmark of Weston history.

Out of our thousand and one members, can we perchance find just a few, ten would be too many, who stay in Weston summers, who are not too "involved," who have a few minutes once a week to render a simple service dependably, who *care enough to care for* our little gem by pulling a few weeds before they get tough, and who, when the dry spells come, could spend a few minutes tending to the sprinkler?

"If such there breathe," call 899-4515 and you will find yourself helping through this Bicentennial summer to treat Weston's visitors with a charming sight as they pause for a moment at this historic spot.



### THE 1805 FISKE-FIELD HOUSE

After the 1900 Fire, a northeast wing was added plus a third story replete with dormer windows and an ornamental railing. In the foreground may be seen Mrs. Edward B. Field (died March 9, 1910) and two of her three sons.

1815

1915

### Our Old Home

Old house, sedate, serene and dignified ;  
 Stanch rock of refuge, amid life's rushing tide.  
 Built by the hand of men whose honest stroke  
 Bears evidence today, for still your sturdy oak  
 Remains unchanged ; Time gives you little fears,  
 Nor moved are you by storm, or joys or tears.  
 Each room and hall a thousand memories hold,  
 Eloquent of those departed, long years beneath the mould  
 Have lain the dear ones that grim old Reaper Death  
 Stole by your guard and stopped their labored breath,  
 And yet as if to make amends, and him to mock.  
 Full many a time you secreted the stork.  
 Beneath your roofs where first we saw the light  
 And learned our prayers, by mother's knee at night ;  
 'Twas in your shadow that our love first came,  
 You shared our many hopes, or secret shame.  
 All ties that bind, all links of love that trend  
 To keep united, hold us to you, dear friend.  
 'Today we pay you homage, both Fiske and Field,  
 From East and West and North and South, to share our weal  
 With you, old house, just for a little stay  
 To celebrate your christening, one hundred years today.  
 You still were old, when we were young and fair,  
 Unchanged, dear place, are you, yet in our hair  
 The silver takes the place of gold ; we have not learned  
 The lesson you would teach us, but have spurned  
 The wisdom of your years, your safe abode,  
 And left your shelter for Life's tempestuous road,  
 Faring afield, amid all the eternal strife,  
 Seeking for gold, which might bring comfort into life.  
 And you, old home, could it be done, would smile,  
 For 'twas not wealth, but you, held comfort all the while.  
 Our span of years, too short at best, soon pass,  
 And we are gathered in, to form that mass  
 Gone on before, the gateway of the sod  
 Leads to those dear departed, and to God.  
 But you, fair earthly home, will still remain ;  
 Standing erect a hundred years is all the same  
 To such great hardihood as yours ; let tempests come,  
 The biting blasts of winter, or scorching sun  
 Temper your calm reserve, and all will cease  
 Their petty worries, for in you is peace.

Weston, Dec. 20, 1915.

“FINDERS---KEEPERS” DIDN’T APPLY IN “BACK THEN” DAYS

In the basement vault of the Town Hall, the Weston Historical Commission comprised of active members of our Society, has uncovered a most fascinating volume entitled “WESTON’S BOOK OF RECORD FOR STRAYS AND LOST GOODS, ETC. 1717-1779” with many 19th Century documents concerning Lost and Found properties.

The earliest record is of Dec. 4, 1717 and reports: “Taken up by John Warrin as Strays,—Two Small young Swine of Most part of both being White and one of them a Barrow, with a piece of its Tail Cut Off. The other a Sow with a Sandy Spot Upon the back.”

Apparently the procedure was to advertise and/or report to the Town Clerk such properties;—he would appoint such appraisers of unclaimed items, auction them off and pay “finder’s expenses.” Thus, in 1874 Esra Fiske, yeoman, and Washington Pierce, yeoman, were addressed “By virtue of the Power and authority to me given in and by a law of the Commonwealth entitled ‘an act respecting lost goods and stray beasts’, I do hereby appoint you to appraise upon oath at the true value thereof in money, according to your best skill and judgment, a certain red colored cow with a white stripe on the back, and wen or hunch on the neck, found and taken as a stray by Luther Harrington of the same Weston. Gentlemen: Having performed this service you are to make return of the warrant into Town Clerk’s office of said Weston with your doings, herein, within seven days from the date hereof.’ ” (The cow was appraised at \$26).

Many other items were so handled, including cloth, wallets, “a piece of iron about a hundred odd weight”, sows, mares, steers, heifers, oxen, (most often) rams. Typically in 1845, one account itemized:

“Isaac R. Lovewell paid to Henry Brackett for horsekeeping	4.00
to William Greenwood for prising	.25
to George Bigelow for prising	.25
to John Jones for selling	.25
to Isaac R. Lovewell fees	.50
for advertising	.50
for advertising geting prised	.50
for attendance auction	.50
to Benjamin Jones	.40
	<hr/>
	7.15
(notation undecipherable)	.85
	<hr/>
	8.00

The particular horse involved was “prised” for 6 dollars and 25 cents. If that’s all it brought at auction, was the Town or Mr. Lovewell the loser as well as the erstwhile owner?

E. W. M.

WE WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Since the beginning of the year we have been proud to have the following new members affiliate with our work: Messrs. John H. Porter, M.D. of 45 Sunset Road, Jeremy Scott Ward of 10 Pigeon Hill Road, and Donald S. Smith Jr. of 8 LeMay Street, West Hartford, Connecticut.

WHAT “FAMILY DAY JUNE 12TH” CAN MEAN TO WESTON!

In a nutshell, the great spirit of Weston’s past, present, and future can come to fruition when the whole Weston family from the oldest resident to the youngest babe in arms gather for a moment or two on the town green or in one of our churches, parks, or playgrounds to record the fact that when all of us join hands and hearts, the power with which we have been endowed is unconquerable as Weston faces the centuries ahead.

## TWO MORE BICENTENNIAL TREES REPORTED

Since our issue of January 1975: Vol. VI No. 2: — two more venerable trees that were standing during the American Revolution have been reported by members. One is the symmetrical old oak that is still flourishing in the back yard of the residence at 101 Wellesley Street owned by the Case Estates of the Arboretum. Added to the two venerable oaks on the Skating Pond Road estate of Mr. and Mrs. John J. Doyle, Jr., we thus have three Bicentennial Oaks in Weston.

In addition to the eight Bicentennial Buttonwoods described in our January 1975 issue, Mrs. Robert Ellis brought promptly to our attention one that can easily be spotted only as one approaches the westbound toll gate entrance to the Massachusetts Turnpike after entering from the Loring Road ramp. Though almost directly across the street from No. 71 South Avenue, the tree is set back some hundred feet and is obscured by a rather dense thicket of wild growth.

We now have located nine Buttonwood trees and three oaks for a total of twelve that were living 200 years ago. Visiting each would be an interesting and informative project for some of our scout troops and school classes.

Weston is noted for the beauty of its trees, and while only a dozen have lived for two centuries, there are many whose ages obviously are over the halfway point. Contrary to what one might suppose, the buttonwoods are reseeding themselves to some extent. The twins that face the Isaac Fiske Law Office and its adjoining Burgoyne Elm bole on the Boston Post Road are rather proud of the healthy scion a few feet to the east of them that came into the world at, it is estimated, the turn of the century. Farther east on the Post Road across the street from St. Peter's Episcopal Church and Children's Park, one can find two more about 1,000 feet apart, both battleworn and scarred.

Other buttonwoods varying in age from 50 to 175 years may be observed at the following sites: two along Conant Road's eastern edge a hundred feet or so north of No. 70; one in excellent condition at No. 82 Brook Road; another just south of the brook at No. 240 South Avenue; one beside the driveway at No. 20 Newton Street, and a good-sized one opposite No. 21 Chestnut Street.

The emphasis being placed above on this one somewhat ungainly, time-worn buttonwood type of tree is justified, we feel, by its record for longevity. It is hoped, therefore, that our rugged buttonwoods will be accorded special consideration by planners and voters when proposing and promoting,—approving or opposing,—the inevitable changes that lie ahead.

### SPECIAL NOTICE SANDERSON HILL'S "BEACON STONE" DEDICATION TO BE BY INVITATION ONLY

Because of its location at the junction of two narrow roads, the site of the "BEACON STONE" on Sanderson Hill cannot accommodate more than 250 persons. Consequently for the dedication exercises on June 12th which mark the unveiling of a plaque to memorialize the men of Weston who guarded the beacon in the dark days of the Revolution, the corner of Love Lane and Highland Street will be closed off for a short while, and admission by bus will be controlled by special passes secured beforehand. Members of the Weston Historical Society are specially invited to join visiting dignitaries and town officials to the extent of capacity. Arrangements must be made in advance by calling 899-4515.

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REMINDER: See you at the *Charter Anniversary Dinner May 12th*. The deadline for reservations is May 8th.

## COMING EVENTS

Wednesday May 12: 7 P.M. Parish Hall of St. Peter's Episcopal Church

ANNUAL CHARTER ANNIVERSARY DINNER: Dr. Howard Jefferson, Speaker.  
Details are to be found on Page 4.

Monday May 31: 10 A.M. Weston Town Hall: MEMORIAL DAY EXERCISES.

Weston High School Band will lead procession to Farmers' Burying Ground, Soldiers' Park Monument, Central and Linwood Cemeteries. Open House at the Weston Historical Society's Josiah Smith Tavern rooms and the Isaac Fiske Law Office 11:30 until 2.

Saturday June 12: BICENTENNIAL FAMILY DAY from morn till night.

Program of townwide events will be sent to every Weston resident. Church bells will ring and the *Declaration of Independence* will be read. Parade will feature many bands and colorful floats. SANDERSON HILL "BEACON STONE" will be dedicated in the afternoon with visiting dignitaries and representatives of all town organizations specially invited. A play reenacting a typical TOWN MEETING of Colonial Times will highlight the evening events. Residents of the Town will receive a full program of the day's activities within the next few days.

Saturday June 19: BAY STATE HISTORICAL LEAGUE meeting, Easton Historical Society host. For details call 893-7388, 899-4515, or League Headquarters at the State House: 742-7978.



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

President: Mr. Edward W. Marshall 893-7388

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

## SPECIAL BULLETIN NOTICE

Due to advanced costs of printing and postage, the price for additional copies is now 50 cents each, obtainable by phoning Mrs. Bonner at 893-4346.