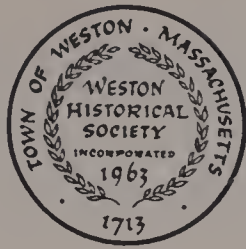


THE WESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN



March 1978 Vol. XIV, No. 3



THE ISAAC FISKE LAW OFFICE

6 days after the great 1978 Blizzard, this picture of our 173 year old headquarters was taken on Abraham Lincoln's 169th birthday.

CHARTER ANNIVERSARY DINNER TUESDAY APRIL 25TH

The traditional annual Charter Anniversary Dinner will be held on Tuesday evening, April 25th, in the attractive Undercroft of St. Peter's Episcopal Church. A social hour at 6:30 will precede the dinner which Mrs. Reginald Wells and her hospitality committee promise us will be "the best ever."

A special mailing will be sent to you prior to the event, but be sure to mark your calendar now and, if you desire, phone your reservations to Mrs. Wells at 899-1616 or Mr. Payson, Treasurer at 899-1802. Here's a chance for you to bring new members and have them meet so many of Weston's outstanding citizens who have done so much to make and preserve our town through one of the Commonwealth's most outstanding historical societies. The Charter Anniversary Dinner has always been the high spot of the year when everybody enjoys a good time, a good meal and stimulating lecture of "just the right length." For many of us it will be the fifteenth consecutive occasion of its kind and we remember well our previous guest speakers who, chronologically were, Gilbert L. Beane, Roland Robbins, Robert Pike, Roger Webb, Col. E. P. Hamilton, Brenton H. Dickson, David Little, Edward Snow, Earle Shuttleworth, Dean Fales, Stephen T. Riley, Dr. Richard Howard, Dr. Howard Jefferson, and Louis Tucker.

COME WITH US TO WORCESTER AND LONGMEADOW

Much has been said in previous issues of the privileges and pleasures that are open to all of our members through the Society's membership in the Bay State Historical League which, this year, is celebrating its Diamond Anniversary. More than 350 local historical societies throughout Massachusetts support this great organization which was founded in 1903. It maintains an office year round in Room 27 of the State House and acts as a clearing house for all types of services along historical lines through its affiliation with similar state and national organizations. Four meetings are held annually throughout the state, and several of us have enjoyed those in all parts of the Commonwealth from Nantucket to Stockbridge, Newburyport to Uxbridge, Fitchburg to Falmouth, etc. Despite the storm on January 14th, the meeting at Quincy was one of the best ever held. Much is to be learned about the host community and what it is doing. Even more, the inspiration of hearing stimulating speakers, attending panel discussion groups, viewing special exhibits, visiting local historic shrines, and exchanging ideas with our contemporaries send us home keener than ever to help keep our own Town outstanding and in the van. Individual memberships at nominal figures are available, and Weston has more than a dozen of such, including a former vice president and two directors. You nevertheless as a Weston Historical Society member are entitled and urged anyway to come with us Saturday April 15th at Worcester and June 17th at Longmeadow. For details and transportation advice, phone our Liaison Chairman, Mrs. Dumaine at 899-1098.

IN MEMORIAM

Since our last issue three of our distinguished members have died: Alice Cooper Bailey, Coline Ingersoll Woodworth, and Richard H. Field. Two were longtime residents of Weston, and each contributed a great deal to the well being of our community, active in its organizations and ever supportive of the best for Weston. Mrs. Bailey was an author of note, and Mr. Field a former Selectman and Moderator of the Town, an able and respected member of the Harvard Law School faculty. Mrs. Woodworth came to Weston five years ago, joined our Society, and immediately proved to be one of our most co-operative helpers in many ways.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT: "THE SOUTH BURYING GROUND"

For safe keeping in the archives of the Town of Weston, THE BULLETIN has presented to the Weston Historical Commission, the original map, duly attested,—the preliminary chart,—and voluminous working papers that had involved months of research and culminated in the four-page story of "*THE SOUTH BURYING GROUND*" which was a major feature of our last issue. This material supplements similar data given to the Commission in 1974 on Weston's two oldest cemeteries, THE FARMERS' BURYING GROUND and THE CENTRE BURIAL GROUND, both on the Boston Post Road.

At our well-attended winter meeting preceding Mr. Charles Childs' outstanding lecture last January 21st, President Stephen T. Riley called attention to the enlargement, 16 inches high and 24 inches wide which has been made on acid-free, durable, and high quality paper. A limited number of exact replicas are available at \$3 each. One such copy, protected by glare-proof glass, is being set in a walnut frame, ½ inch wide, to be hung in our rooms at the Josiah Smith Tavern. Copies will be presented to the Town Library and to the Cemetery and Park Department of the Town.

If any of our members would be interested in acquiring copies for themselves or as gifts to friends, schools, other organizations or societies, you may phone either the Editor at 899-4515 or the Curator at 894-2872. Already one member has purchased copies for presentation to two of New England's most renowned historical organizations, and we suspect there are many descendants of oldtime Weston residents named on the chart whose future generations would cherish such an heirloom. As only a limited number are available, we suggest prompt ordering if you are interested.

“GLORIOUS INTELLIGENCE”

Today,—195 years later when instant communication is commonplace,—it may be hard to appreciate the sensation created on the cobblestone streets of Boston Tuesday the 1st of April, 1783 by the appearance of “*GLORIOUS INTELLIGENCE*.” Printed and sold by JOHN GILL, Court Street, it brought the news that only 71 days before, on Monday the 20th of January, “the PRELIMINARIES to a GENERAL PEACE” had been signed in far off Paris by the Commissioners of Great Britain, France, Spain, Holland, and the United States of America! Hostilities were to cease in Europe a month later, “Thursday the 20th of February” and “in America,” after still another month, “on Thursday the 20th of March in the present year . . .”

A French sloop of war embarked from Cadiz February 19th and “after a passage of 32 days” arrived in Philadelphia on Sunday, March 23rd. By express rider, one Lewis Morris, New York heard the news 2 days later. Within a week thereafter John Gill’s “*GLORIOUS INTELLIGENCE*” spread the word throughout Boston and surrounding communities, including Weston. For those days, how fast the news had traveled! The Massachusetts Historical Society has in its archives an original copy of that historic publication, and our president, Stephen T. Riley, its former director, has favored us with a photostatic copy whose thrill-packed details may be examined in our rooms at the Josiah Smith Tavern Wednesday afternoons, or at other times by appointment.

Especially precious to us is the note in his own handwriting that Weston’s greatest Patriot, Samuel Phillips Savage, appended as follows:

“This is kept for future Generations, tho it cannot by any means convey to them, the Joy so happy an Event gave us, who heard the first guns fired, at Lexington & Concord, and saw Charlestown in Flames, and who have endured and supported a Struggle of near 20 years and an actual cruel and bloody war from 19 April 1775 until the arrival of a French Cutter called the Triumph, commanded by the Chevalier Duquesne on the 25th (sic) March 1783 at Chester in the River Delawar from Cadiz — for which happy Event may America be properly thankfull —

(s) Sam Phps Savage then 65 years old”

“WE ARE YOUR ANCESTORS”

We are your ancestors.

We are forgotten — but ever present.

We are unknown — but inescapable.

We are spurned — but still with and within you.

We are the men and women who long ago

Put ourselves into the bloodstream of the world.

At long and laborious labor we shaped the civilization of our time — not even aware we were also shaping yours.

Those of your day who make your laws must first study ours.

The architects who build your houses must first begin mastering our knowledge of line and form.

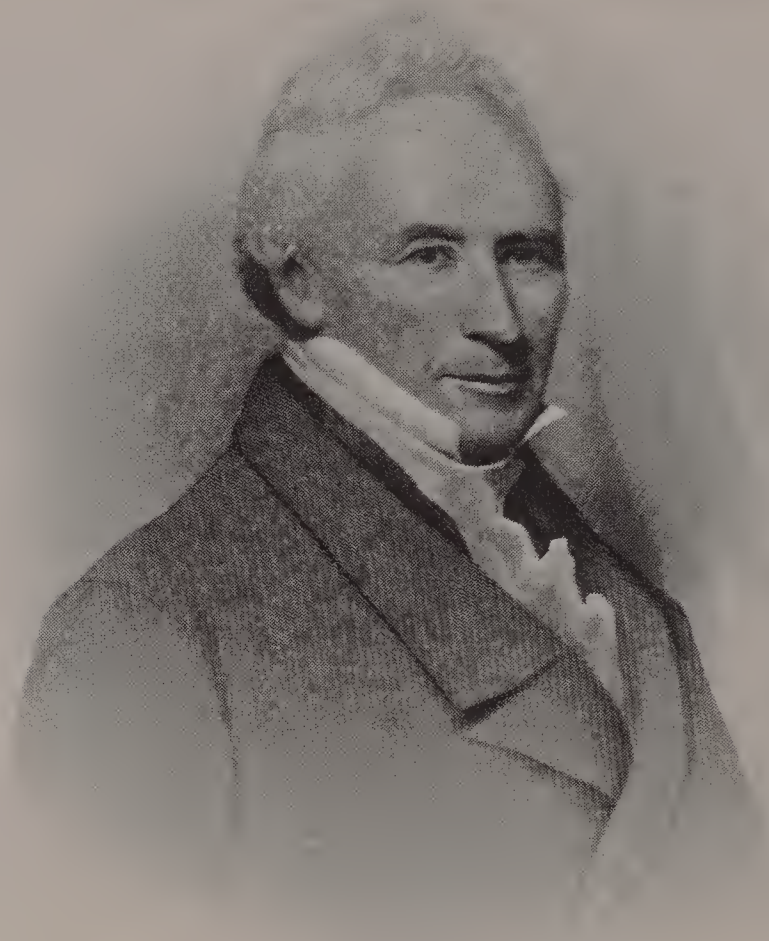
Those who fight your wars first plot on maps the way we fought ours.

That which you learn by patient work and thought you often find we have discovered ahead of you.

By a multitude of invisible but potent hands we reach out and change you.

We are your ancestors.”

A classmate sent us the above by one P. R. Hayward.



LETTER FROM ARTEMAS WARD TO ISAAC FISKE

Boston Septm^r 27th 1817

Dear Sir

I intended to have some conversation with you, upon the subject of your acceptance of the office of the Register of Probate and your arrangements with relation to it, before I left Concord, but my departure was earlier than I contemplated, until the court dispose of the petition of Prebble and others, without argument.

It is not at all surprising to me that you should find some difficulty in deciding whether or not to leave Weston and take the office of Register, as a permanent arrangement — to reside at Weston for a reasonable period and hold on upon your professional business, and exercise the office of Register of P I should think would be acquiesced in; but I should doubt whether it would be acceptable to the county as a lasting state of things.

It is my wish and expectation that you will pursue that career which your own interest requires. This is one of the rights of man. But when you have done the best which you can for yourself, it is my wish that your influence may be used for Samuel B. Barrell. In any event which may happen, I think his interest can be served without prejudice to your own.

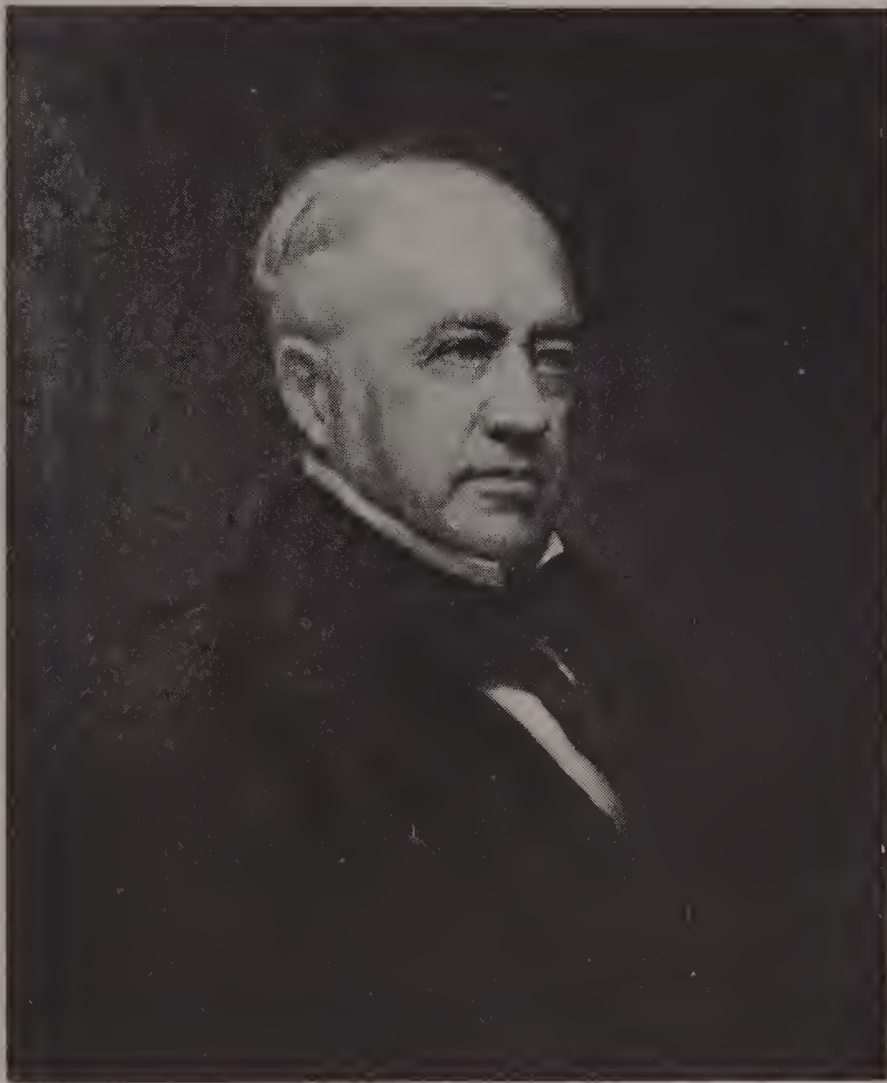
Should you soon quit Weston, and take up your residence in Cambridge or Charlestown, and abandon the local business in Weston, he will consider it a favor, if you afford him that patronage, which you can extend to a resident there, without injury to your business at Cambridge. Should you think it doubtful whether you should continue to hold the office of Register and should not move from Weston, you will probably want a confidential, faithful and capable clerk in the office at Cambridge. This Barrell would accept with the following views, i.e., if you finally conclude to come to Cambridge he will take your office in Weston; if you abandon the Registers office, after making a full experiment, he will endeavor to give such evidence of his competency to discharge the duties of the office as to entitle him to the recommendation as your successor. He is a native of Middlesex and has for the most part resided in that county and now has his domicile in Charlestown. He writes a very handsome fair hand, is very industrious and has

a knowledge of principles which renders him competent to the office. Though at present he is not sufficiently known to compete with some of the late candidates for the office, he thinks he can give the necessary evidence of his competency before you would abandon it.

I am respectfully yours
Artemas Ward

Isaac Fiske, Esq.

The above was transcribed from the original by our Society's historian, Brenton H. Dickson. It might be appropriate to add a few words about writer and recipient, for both were longtime servants in important capacities. We don't know what became of young Mr. Barrell. It is sufficient to say that he came not to Weston.



ISAAC FISKE

Isaac Fiske, whose 1805 law office was restored by us a dozen years ago and is our official headquarters at 626 Boston Post Road, was born in Weston in 1778 and died here 82 years later in 1861. Graduating from Harvard in 1798, he studied law in Ward's office and was admitted to the bar in 1802. He married Sukey Hobbs of Hobbs Corner in the Kendal Green section on Nov. 7, 1802, and by 1805 had built the beautiful house which is now owned by the Horace Nichols family and is located diagonally across the street from his law office which was built about the same time. He was probably Weston's most prominent citizen in his era, being Register of Probate, Middlesex County, from 1817 to 1851, living part of the time in Cambridge but never ceasing to play a leading part in town affairs. He was Selectman in 1808, 1810, 1811, 1812, 1813, and 1814, — representative to the General Court in 1808, 1812, 1813, and 1814, — and Town Clerk from 1804 to 1808, 1810 to 1812, 1819 to 1821, and 1824 to 1827. As a money lender and real estate trader he was known as a rich and benevolent gentleman. Four of his great, great grandsons are charter members of our Society and all are seventh generation residents of the Town: — Brenton H. and Edward M. Dickson, — Andrew J. and Harold B. Willis, Jr.

ARTEMAS WARD IN WESTON

Artemas Ward, Jr., son of the famous Revolutionary War general, was born in Shrewsbury January 9, 1762 and died in Boston Oct. 7, 1847. Graduating from Harvard in 1783, he began the practise of law and came to Weston in late 1788 where for the next dozen years he served prominently in many capacities, being Selectman in 1792, 1796, 1797, 1798, and 1800, our Representative to the General Court from 1796 to 1800 inclusive, and Town Treasurer in both 1798 and 1800. He was commander of the Weston Light Infantry from 1789 until his resignation on March 31, 1793. As an active lawyer, he represented the town in numerous other ways.

WARD'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE DEXTER FAMILY

On December 14th, 1788 he married Catherine Maria Dexter, daughter of Samuel Dexter, also listed as "then a resident of Weston". It is appropriate here to interpose some long overdue recognition to the Dexter family which to date, Homer Lucas reminds us, has been mentioned but seldom in local history. Samuel Dexter was born 1726 in Dedham and died 1810 in Mendon. A wellknown biography describes him as a merchant and Revolutionary War Patriot. He had a son who bore his name, Samuel Dexter, born 1761 in Boston and died 1816 in Athens, New York, a graduate of Harvard in the class of 1781, two years before his brother-in-law, Artemas Ward. Almost instantly young Dexter rose to eminence in the legal profession with residence in Charlestown and his public service comprised "Federalist Congressman from Massachusetts 1793-1795, — U.S. Senator 1799-1800, — Secretary of War 1800, — and Secretary of the Treasury from January 1801 to January 1802." Small wonder that he, "Hon. Samuel Dexter", so closely identified with the John Adams administration, should have represented Weston in welcoming President Adams to our town in mid-August 1798 when, as related on Pages 116 and 117 of Lamson's History of Weston, his paper was "signed by the following prominent persons among many: Samuel Dexter (Ward's father-in-law, no doubt), Thomas Marshall, Samuel Kendall, Isaac Jones, Artemas Ward, Amos Bancroft, and Caleb Haywood."

In Town records, Samuel Dexter appears regularly from 1789 through 1800 as a heavy taxpayer on "Personal Estate" but never on real estate, giving some slight grounds for suspecting that he might have lived with his daughter and her husband in the "elegant yet homelike mansion" (mentioned in Ripley's "Weston a Puritan Town") at 543 Boston Post Road. Now owned by the W. Donald Campbells, it was built in 1785 by the Eaton brothers from whom Ward bought it shortly after his marriage in 1788.

ARTEMAS WARD IN BOSTON

When his brother-in-law became so involved in Washington, Ward moved from Weston to Charlestown to take his place. Young Fiske, 16 years his junior, presumably picked up most of his local business. One of the last acts by Ward as a Weston official might well have been the signing as "Principal Assessor" of a condensed paper under "THE DIRECT TAX OF 1798", levied by the U.S. Government, which listed Samuel Dexter of Charlestown in the "non-resident" section, as the owner of 7 acres of Weston land valued at \$310. While in Charlestown, Ward was a member of the Executive Council in 1803, 1804, 1805, 1808, and 1809. In 1810 he became a citizen of Boston for the remaining 37 years of his life. From that point he served in the General Court in 1811, and represented Boston in the 13th and 14th Congress, 1813-1817. In 1819 he became judge of the Court of Common Pleas in Boston, and in 1821 was appointed Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas for the Commonwealth. From 1810 to 1844 he was a member of the Board of Overseers of Harvard College, and was awarded its honorary LLD degree.

Note: In addition to local publications mentioned, some of the information used in the above article was derived in "THE DICTIONARY OF NATIONAL BIOGRAPHY, VOL. V.", and "THE HISTORY OF MIDDLESEX COUNTY, MASSACHUSETTS, VOL. 1."

H. G. T.

A SINISTER ULTIMATUM TO THE INHABITANTS OF THE TOWN OF WESTON

“WE COMMAND YOU TO TAKE THE BODYYS . . .
AND THEM COMMIT UNTO OUR GAOL”

BECAUSE *The Inhabitants of the Town of Weston* in our County of *Middlesex* on the *Nineteenth* Day of *November* in the Year of our LORD 1787 before me *William Fisk* Esq. one of the Justices of the Peace for the County of *Middlesex* acknowledged by non-appearance that they were indebted to *Samuel Emerson* of *Groton* in the County of *Middlesex*, *Gentleman*, in the Sum of *Six pounds three Shillings & eleven pence* which they ought to have paid on the *Nineteenth* Day of *October* last and there now appears to be due *Six pounds three Shillings and eleven pence*, —

WE command you therefore, that of the Goods, Chattles, or Real Estate of said *Inhabitants* within your Precinct, you cause to be paid and satisfied unto the said *Emerson* at the Value thereof in Money, the aforesaid Sum of *Six pounds three Shillings & eleven pence*, together with *Twenty-three Shillings & two pence* Costs of Process, and *two Shillings* for this Writ & Duty and thereof also satisfy yourself your own lawful Fees. And, for the want of Goods, Chattels, or Real Estate of the said *Inhabitants* within your Precinct, to satisfy the Sums aforesaid, and your said Fees, We command you to take the bodyys of the said *Inhabitants*, and *them* commit unto our Gaol in our County of *Middlesex* aforesaid, there to be detained in the said Gaol until they pay the full Sums above-said, with your said Fees, or that the said *Inhabitants* be discharged by the said *Emerson* the Creditor, or otherwise by Order of Law. Hereof fail not, and make return of this Writ, with your Doings thereon, unto the above-said *William Fisk* within Ninety Days from the Date hereof. Witness the said *William Fisk* at *Waltham*, the *Seventeenth* Day of *January*, in the Year of our LORD, 1788.

(s) *William Fisk*

N.B. The Debtors have a right to discharge the above Execution by tender of Real & personal Estate to be received by the Creditor at an apprized Value agreeable to Law.

The threatened incarceration of the entire Weston populace was averted, of course, as attested below:

Middlesex . . Jan.^y 21st, 1788

Received of Colonel Samuel Lamson Treasurer for the Town of Weston by the hand of Mr. Nathan Fiske three pounds twelve shillings in part discharge of the within Execution.

Artemas Ward Jun. Atty. for Emerson

Feb. 29, 1788

Rec.^d the Balance due on this Execution and gave a Receipt.

Artemas Ward Jun. Atty. for Emerson

Nov. 7th 1788

Rec'd the Damage in the within Execution

Samuel Emerson Creditor

RAMBLING THROUGH FILES OF YORE

Little tidbits from random papers in the library of the Massachusetts Historical Society lend themselves to various conjectures. Witness the following from our own Captain Baldwin in the summer of 1767 wherein he ordered a musical instrument for the entertainment perhaps of guests at his tavern, from the versatile Samuel Phillips Savage, "Weston's most prominent patriot."

Previous Weston Historical Society BULLETINS have made many references to these two prominent gentlemen, especially our issues of October 1973, March 1974, and January 1975.

Mr. Savage

Sir

Pleas Let the Barrer
have one Voial or Fidle & Charge

it to your Humble Sevt Saml Baldwin
Weston July 21 1767

to Mr. Saml Ph Savage

A REMINDER

ENSURE YOUR RECEIPT OF "THE BULLETIN" AND OTHER SOCIETY COMMUNICATIONS BY:

1. KEEPING YOUR DUES PAID UP
2. NOTIFYING US IN WRITING OF ANY CHANGE IN YOUR ADDRESS, LOCAL AS WELL AS OUT OF TOWN.



WESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

President: Stephen T. Riley

Vice President: Mrs. Reginald B. Elwell

Secretary: Mrs. David V. Harmon

Treasurer: Samuel W. Payson

Editor of THE BULLETIN: Harold G. Travis 899-4515

SCHEDULE OF DUES

Annual: Individual \$5 Family \$8 (includes children under 21)

Life: \$250 per person

Gift memberships are suggested.

Make checks payable and mail to

Weston Historical Society, Box 343, Weston, Massachusetts 02193

Additional copies of *THE BULLETIN* at 50c each, plus postage, may be obtained by phoning Mrs. Paynter at 899-3533. Relatives and friends might find them interesting too.