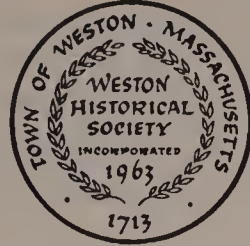


THE WESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN



May 1979

Vol. XV, No. 4



WESTON'S PRESENT TOWN HALL WAS BUILT IN 1917

On October 1, 1917 "the Selectmen at a meeting voted to accept the care and custody of the Town Hall" and at a special town meeting October 18, 1917, the Town voted to accept the final report of the Town Improvement Committee which stated:

"Appended hereto is a statement of all charges in connection with the erection of the Town Hall. This shows an expenditure of \$94,992.75 and thus completes the erection of the building with all bills paid within the original appropriation of \$95,000."

ANNUAL CHARTER ANNIVERSARY DINNER WEDNESDAY, MAY 16 at 7:15 P.M.

Be sure to come early for the social hour at 6:15 which will precede our annual charter anniversary dinner in the charming Undercroft of St. Peter's Episcopal Church. This annual occasion has traditionally been the high point of the Society's activities. The large turnout, sociability everywhere abounding, the sherry hour followed by a luscious dinner arranged by our Hospitality Committee - all set the stage for our guest speaker, Andrew Oliver. The topic of his talk will be "*Travels and Travails of a Loyalist Refugee.*"

A retired New York lawyer, Mr. Oliver lives in Boston and has close Weston ties, for his wife, the former Ruth Blake, was the granddaughter of Mr. Francis Blake. (See "*Keewaydin and The Telephone*", Weston Historical Society BULLETIN, October 1966, Vol. III, No. 1). A graduate of Harvard College in 1928, his activities and affiliations include: officer and trustee of New York Historical Society, Colonial Society of Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston Athenaeum, Essex Institute, and Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London. He is the author of 3 books on the portraits of John Adams, J. Q. Adams, and John Marshall, and editor of the "*Journal of Samuel Curwen, Loyalist.*"

See back page for further details.

IN MEMORIAM

To the families of Margaret (Mrs. Harold) Alcaide and Ruth Nichols (Mrs. Donald) Wyman we express our most heartfelt sympathy. Each of these gracious and wholesome ladies made so many contributions not only to this Society but equally to the Town of Weston through its many civic organizations that we, too, are comforted and strengthened by remembering how much each of them did to make this community better and happier.

FURTHER SIDELIGHTS ON THE LIFE OF JUDGE SAMUEL PHILLIPS SAVAGE

Few Weston people had heard or read very much about the Town's Greatest Patriot until April 19, 1969 when, with Wayland Historical Society, we hosted the 66th annual spring meeting of the Bay State Historical League. The principal address by Mr. Stephen T. Riley, one of our charter members, told of "*The Honorable Samuel Phillips Savage, A Westonian Prominent in the Revolution.*" Subsequently a few of us became habitues of the remarkable library to be found at the Massachusetts Historical Society of which Mr. Riley, currently our president, was until his recent retirement, the Director. There under his guidance we were able to make some new discoveries relating to Weston's history.

Two pages of October 1973's BULLETIN, Vol. X, No. 1, were filled with extracts from "The Famous Diary of Weston's Samuel Phillips Savage," and we were moved to observe: "Some of us must soon dedicate ourselves to the proper and complete presentation of Savage's part in American history." Within 3 years 2 charter members, Brenton H. Dickson and Homer C. Lucas, brought forth a Bicentennial masterpiece: "*One Town in the American Revolution: Weston, Massachusetts.*" By our own count, 33 of its almost 200 fascinating pages of text emphasized the outstanding leadership, liaison and counsel he gave to the cause of Liberty.

But Samuel Phillips Savage was even more than a great Patriot: he was a most versatile man. He came here ten years before the Revolution, and for the remaining 35 years of his life resided steadily on his farm which is now 479 North Avenue. (See picture opposite Page 127 in Lamson's *History of the Town of Weston Massachusetts 1630-1890.*) Recently the BULLETIN issues of March 1978, January and March 1979, have shared with you little extracts from the Massachusetts Historical Society's Collection of Savage papers, and we intend to print more of them, one or two at a time, in this and succeeding issues, hoping to provide further insight into his human side. May such random glimpses into his life as a Weston farmer, retailer of alcoholic beverages, insurance underwriter, justice of the peace, owner and operator of a grist mill, tireless correspondent, and diligent diarist, make enjoyable reading. In addition perhaps it may inspire and assist future researchers and writers.

ANOTHER SPLENDID GIFT

The directors recently voted to place into the Endowment Fund the unrestricted and unsolicited gift of one thousand dollars which was received by the Society from one of our members who prefers to be unmentioned. Such a spirit in voluntary giving is an inspiration to us all, and simply adds to the significance as well as to the value of our ever-growing Endowment Fund which comes from special gifts, bequests, and life memberships. The principal is left to grow unless the directors vote to use any part of the interest that may have accrued "in the past year" for an unusually worthy need or purpose. All contributions to the Society, including dues, are tax deductible.

CONGRATULATIONS

To our life member, Thomas D. Cabot, we offer felicitations in the publication of his 200 page autobiography: "*Beggar On Horseback*" which, we are told, has received widespread recognition by, and accolades from, a great many prominent national figures. This town of ours has produced many writers, the listing of whose works would indeed be impressive.

“WESTON AS IT USED TO BE”

“In the late 1940’s my wife and some friends were in the railroad station at Waterbury Vermont, checking their equipment to go skiing in the Laurentian Mountains. A local bus driver came up to them and asked where they were from. “Massachusetts” was the reply. “What part of Massachusetts?” “Weston.” “Oh-the piggery town” he exclaimed which gave them quite a start. It turned out that he had been a garbage collector in Cambridge and that he had taken many a load out to Weston piggeries of which there were three, one on the north side near the Cambridge Reservoir, one on the Post Road at Dean’s Dairy, and a third on South Avenue at its junction with Winter Street, and they all stunk to high heaven! It’s a wonder the Board of Health didn’t put its foot down. When these piggeries finally ceased operation, Weston had lost its last foothold as an agricultural community and became strictly residential - one of the richest towns in the Commonwealth.

“This tendency toward “residentialism” had been apparent for many years. There were several large farms to be sure, but few where the owner was dependent on the soil for sustenance. Industrial establishments had been in town ever since the early days of saw mills and grist mills, but Weston was never endowed with much water power, and opportunities in real estate far exceeded those of industry as we gradually became a bedroom community.

“The more important industrial establishments were a large tannery on Hobbs Brook at Kendal Green, a factory that made school furniture on Four Mile Brook, Sibley Mills on Stony Brook that made industrial machinery, and finally the Hook and Hastings Organ factory in Kendal Green which didn’t use water power and was the last to go — about 1930. Here quality organs were made and shipped all over the country.

“Besides these attempts at industrialization, the town had early become important as a shopping center — a place for those in the hinterland to do their shopping. Much trading took place in Weston Center at Lamson’s Store. In the early days Boston was a hard place to reach from the west; either you had to go there by boat from Charlestown or take the long devious route via Roxbury Neck. So why put up with this inconvenience? You could do your shopping in Weston at the convergence of several important thoroughfares — the Old Connecticut Path, the Great Country Road (currently Boston Post Road), and the North County Road or today’s North Avenue. The store did such a large business in dry goods that a tailor shop was set up next door where customers could order tailoring done on their newly purchased merchandise. But even more important than the dry goods business was the wet goods business that had long catered to thirsty transients and inebriate citizens. The first tavern in Weston opened about 1675; by the time of the American Revolution we find 8 liquor licenses issued to various dealers in Weston.”

Editor’s Note: The above paragraphs are the opening remarks of Brenton Dickson’s amusing and informative address to some 200 visitors who came to Weston April 21st for the 76th annual spring meeting of the Bay State Historical League. More than 50 of our members helped to make this occasion one of the happiest events in modern Weston history. They worked hard, well, and happily, earning and getting the thanks of the League and of the Town.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

We are happy to introduce as new members of the Weston Historical Society Mr. and Mrs. Ivor Cary Armistead III and their little son Nathaniel - Mrs. E. K. Hunter - and Dr. Donald Wyman. The Armisteads and Mrs. Hunter, as newcomers to Weston, have already made many friends, while Dr. Wyman, as retired horticulturist of the Arnold Arboretum and well-known author of many books, has done much as a longtime resident and for many years a cemetery and park commissioner of the Town, in guiding us through preservation of natural beauty in our four cemeteries and especially Anniversary Parks at the School Street traffic light, Children’s Park, Soldiers’ Park, South Park, and the Town Green.



WESTON'S FIRST TOWN HALL, 1847-1917
HOUSED OUR FIRST HIGH SCHOOL AND OUR FIRST LIBRARY

By margin of 76 to 46, town meeting on June 7, 1847 approved its erection and furnishing. Its total cost was \$4,078.62. Located on the northerly side of "The Town Meetinghouse Common", it was 60 feet long including the Colonnade, 40 feet deep, and 2 stories high. It abutted Lamson's (later Cutting's) Store on the west, a pound and a few horse sheds on the east. Its Doric columns faced the Cutting house across the Great Country Road where our present Library stands.

MISCELLANY FROM THE PAPERS OF
"WESTON'S GREATEST PATRIOT"

Weston 1 March 1768

My dear Sir.

I purposed when I left Boston to have been there again this day but the bad travelling prevents: and thinking that dear Mr. Cooper might be glad to hear from Mrs. C--- I write this to send by the first Traveller that passes along.

I and everyone with me are surprisd at Mrs. C's behavior: a Calmness and Serenity, and I might add, an innocent Cheerfulness runs thro her whole Conduct; after Breakfast she generally retires for an hour or two to her Chamber, the rest of the day she is in the Family, makes no difficultys, and at present gives us as little Trouble as any person of Mrs. C---Character in Life could suppose. There is little at present in her behavior that indicates distress of Mind, and a bystander would rather take her for a model of Innocence Introduced into my Family for a pattern, than a person of whose Character is loaded with so much Infamy, where best known. Mr. Lawrence dined with me yesterday, and would from the tender affection he bears dr. Mr. Cooper, have urged her to a week's stay at his house, but I disliked his doing it at present, but desired him to make us another Visit in a few days, when an Opportunity should be given him for private Conversation with her, which he promised. The last Sabbath she designed for Church, but prevented by the weather. I mentioned one thing to Mr. Lawrence which you will be kind eno to answer me in very particularly--- our Sacrament is near at hand---and I told him she was, as I understand, denyd the participation of that holy Supper, on which he desird me to mention the Same to her, and desire her not to attend Church that day.--- What Mrs. C---'s sentiments may be on that Affair I know not, but would endeavor to act agreeable to them, as I trust they never will run atilt with my Conscience..-Mrs. Cooper is just come Down to Breakfast which prevents my enlarging further than giving my assured Respects to dr. Mr. C-- and believe me to be dr. sr.

Your friend & mt hble Servt

(s) Sam Ph Savage

To Rev. Samuel Cooper

Weston 27th May 1769

“Dear Sir:

“I last night receivd yours of the 22nd Inst. by Mrs. Savage. You begin with observing, the last time you saw me, you suspected I was offended with you, and that since you have been confirmed in that Suspicion; but seem to doubt whther I have any reason, or I have it is not a good one. I will tell my story and leave you to judge.

“You may remember, the morning of the day Mr. Turrell and I were together at your house and since the affair, I cam to your house alone, and told you that I owed several small Debts in Town amounting to about 300 or 350 £ O.T. and that I should be glad you would let me keep so much of the mony I was to pay you, for which I would give you any Satisfaction you desired. I believe I might mention that I had security that was Sufficient for that Sum in Town. Your reply, after a Short pause, was that you did not know how that might be, as you wanted that mony for your Brother Bulfinch, adding in the same breath, and repeating of it almost immediately, that if it was agreeable to Mr. Turell, he might keep the mony and continue the Mortgage, how to reconcile this is beyond me. I make no doubt your diserning Eye discovered the emotion of my Mind, which I am sure was legible in my Countenance, and I venture to say, if that friendship which you always professed towards me, had been in exercise, you must have pitied me: ask yourself, dear Sir, whether any other Construction Can be put on it, than a design of affronting me. If you had that you was unsafe in letting me have the mony, there was not the least need of saying what you did: from a person of less understanding than Mr. Cooper, I should have placed it to a hurry of Spirit or a want of thought.

“It was equally unkind to send privately for Mr. Turell, and complain to him that you thought it hard that you could not receive your whole Debt from me as well as Mr. Erving or Mr. Bowdoin: your design in sending for him was doubtless to know whether the Account I had given you of our bargain was true.---Here I leave you to make your own reflections, only just observing that even heathen judge no affronts so pointed, as a distrust of a man’s Integrity.----this Sir, is the Reason of my Uneasiness: if I have judgd wrong, I am Sorry.----I heartily agree with you of the propriety that all misunderstandings between old friends, should come to an early and soft Explanation. I am thankful my Temper is not implacable: the reverse too oft has been my Error, but yet I have so much Sensibility left as to feel an Injury, and think it my duty at certain times sutibly to resent it: I could have born the same treatment from almost any other man, but it coming from One whom thro life I have been ambitious of serving, and whose Interest in all respects I have ever viewd as a brothers, nay more, my own, wounded me to the very soul, and created a doubt, just or unjust I know not, that all your high pretentions of Friendship for me, from time to time have arisen from no higher a Cause than Interest at the time I was with you.

“I was in Affliction, and you knew it, I told you my heart, I secreted nothing from you, and I then hopd that in Mr. Cooper I had a Friend that was born for Adversity. I hope I am not mistaken.

“I am conscious to myself, in many things, I fall short of my duty to my Friends: I am far from Perfection,- but if ever celestial Spark warmed a human breast for another, it did mine toward you. I was fond of your Friendship and following the advice of a wise man in shewing myself friendly.

“I finish with wishing you many Friends as friendly to you as I have been. You may have thousands that may be of more Advantage but not one that ever lovd you better or wishd you more happiness than your poor, tho honest Freind

(s) S. Ph. Savage

“I would have wrote on better paper if I had had it.----”

NOTE: To the best of our ability and ingenuity we are reprinting these letters verbatim, expressed and spelled exactly as he wrote. Members are invited to make their own conjectures and to draw their own conclusions.

PLEASE MAKE RESERVATIONS PROMPTLY FOR CHARTER ANNIVERSARY DINNER

The May 16th Charter Anniversary Dinner described on Page 1 of this issue will truly be a great affair. The Committee in charge of arrangements needs and asks your cooperation in one important respect: *mail your reservations right away!* The deadline has been set for the preceding Saturday, May 12th. Here is a great opportunity to invite friends. Prospective members are doubly welcome. A self-addressed envelope is enclosed in this issue to expedite prompt mailing.

This same envelope, moreover, can be utilized for other good purposes at the same time. For example, your check may include additional amounts as voluntary contributions, your own dues or new memberships (single-family-life per schedule at the bottom of this page), and Memorial, Special Purpose, or other gifts to the Endowment Fund.

We especially call attention to the opportunity you also have to swell the Endowment Fund by buying for yourself and friends, the following popular books. Thanks to their generous authors and publishers, *all* proceeds come to the Society.

1963 ONCE UPON A PUNG: Paperback only - \$3.95

1976 ONE TOWN IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION: WESTON,
MASSACHUSETTS — Hard cover \$10.00 - Paperback, \$5.50

1978 RANDOM RECOLLECTIONS: Paperback only - \$3.95

NOTE: If the above are to be mailed, add 75¢ for postage and handling.

Finally, don't overlook the easy-to-mail HISTORIC MAP OF WESTON we published in the mid 1960's, and WINDOWS ON WESTON, the attractive tour guide-book which was printed in time for the nation's Bicentennial Commemoration. The price of each is one dollar.

Just enclose a note with your check and proper action will be taken promptly.



WESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

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SCHEDULE OF DUES

Annual: \$5 per person: \$8 per family, including children under 21

Life: \$250 per person

Gift Memberships are suggested

Contributions and Bequests to the Endowment Fund are welcomed

Additional copies of THE BULLETIN may be obtained at \$1 each by phoning Mrs. Paynter at 899-3533 or Harold G. Travis, Editor, 899-4515.