

THE WESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN



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Photographs by Joan Warren

WESTON CENTER'S OLDEST BUILDING THE 1757 JOSIAH SMITH TAVERN

Shown above, left, are its barn and shed which for over two centuries have been attached to the Tavern, right. See story on page 6.

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Our most ambitious undertaking of this past year was hosting the spring meeting of the Bay State Historical League. About 200 members of various historical societies in Massachusetts gathered at Regis College on April 21 to hear papers on the collecting and preserving of American paintings and prints given by Charles D. Childs, Georgia B. Bumgardner, and David and Faith Regamey. After hearing the papers and enjoying an excellent lunch, our visitors were guided to such places of local historic importance as the Fiske Law Office, the Golden Ball Tavern, the Cardinal Spellman Philatelic Museum, and the Weston Observatory. Perhaps the greatest attraction of the day was the exhibition of antique and modern quilts in the barn of the Josiah Smith Tavern. The day ended with the serving of refreshments in the ballroom of this tavern. It was a memorable occasion, and we are most grateful to all our members and friends who helped make it such an outstanding success.

The annual meeting of the Weston Historical Society on November 15, 1979, marked the end of a very busy year. The reports of the officers indicated that we are a lively, prosperous organization ready to embark on what we hope will be another successful season. Aware of the drawing power of Brenton H. Dickson, our speaker, we expected a good attendance at the meeting but hardly the overflow audience which came to hear him tell us about "Weston's Three Railroads." His witty, delightful talk captivated his listeners. Our Editor, Harold G. Travis, plans to perpetuate his remarks in THE BULLETIN, beginning on Page 3 of this issue.

Continued on page 2

At the previous annual meeting we had a rewarding evening with Richard C. Kugler, Director of the New Bedford Whaling Museum, who talked about his Society's activities and showed us a rollicking film on whaling, complete with music. In February Kathryn C. Buhler, an expert on American silver, gave us an illustrated lecture on her subject which was enthusiastically received. Maintaining our high standards, we persuaded Andrew Oliver, President of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts, to be our annual Charter Anniversary dinner speaker on May 16. His brilliant paper on Samuel Curwen, the Salem Loyalist, entitled "The Travels and Travails of a Refugee Loyalist" fascinated his audience, especially Dr. Vera Laska who wrote a glowing report of his talk for the *Wayland-Weston Town Crier* of July 12, 1979. In her article Dr. Laska chided those who had not attended: "Yet I missed dozens of people who would have enjoyed the evening. Where were all [of] you professionals and trueblood and pseudo intellectuals of our fair towns? . . . and where were you young folk, why are you cheating yourselves of these pleasures of the soul? Look for next year's annual dinner of the Weston Historical Society." I might reinforce Dr. Laska's remarks by adding that it is very much our job to persuade our neighbours of all ages to become members of the Society. Many of them are waiting to be asked. Do give us the names of prospective members. In fact it would be a friendly gesture on your part to offer to send in their membership check and bring them with you to our next meeting.

We are now planning this year's program. On Thursday evening, February 28th we shall visit the Cardinal Spellman Philatelic Museum at 235 Wellesley Street. There we shall hear a paper on Weston's postal history by Dr. Guy R. Dillaway. We hope that a group of Weston High School history students will present a program before the Weston Historical Society in March or April. Details and dates of these meetings will be announced later. Please make every effort to attend all of these worthwhile meetings.

S. T. R.

IN MEMORIAM

With real sadness we note the passing of four loyal members: Mr. John W. Boyd, Mrs. Francis G. Goodale, Mrs. David I. Hudnut, all charter members, and Mr. Albert B. Joy. The latter, who lived altogether in Weston for 38 years, returned with Mrs. Joy in 1974 and immediately joined our Society. We are told that at one time an ancestor owned a large part of Beacon Hill, Boston, and that Joy Street derived its name from his family.

In the Society's earliest days, it was Mrs. Hudnut who donated to us two hand-carved cathedral chairs (ca 1850) which had been a wedding present to Sir Arthur and Lady Conan Doyle in 1907 and after flanking their fireplace for 20 years, were their silver wedding anniversary present to Mrs. Hudnut's sister and husband. (Weston Historical Society BULLETIN October 1966, Vol. III, No. 1).

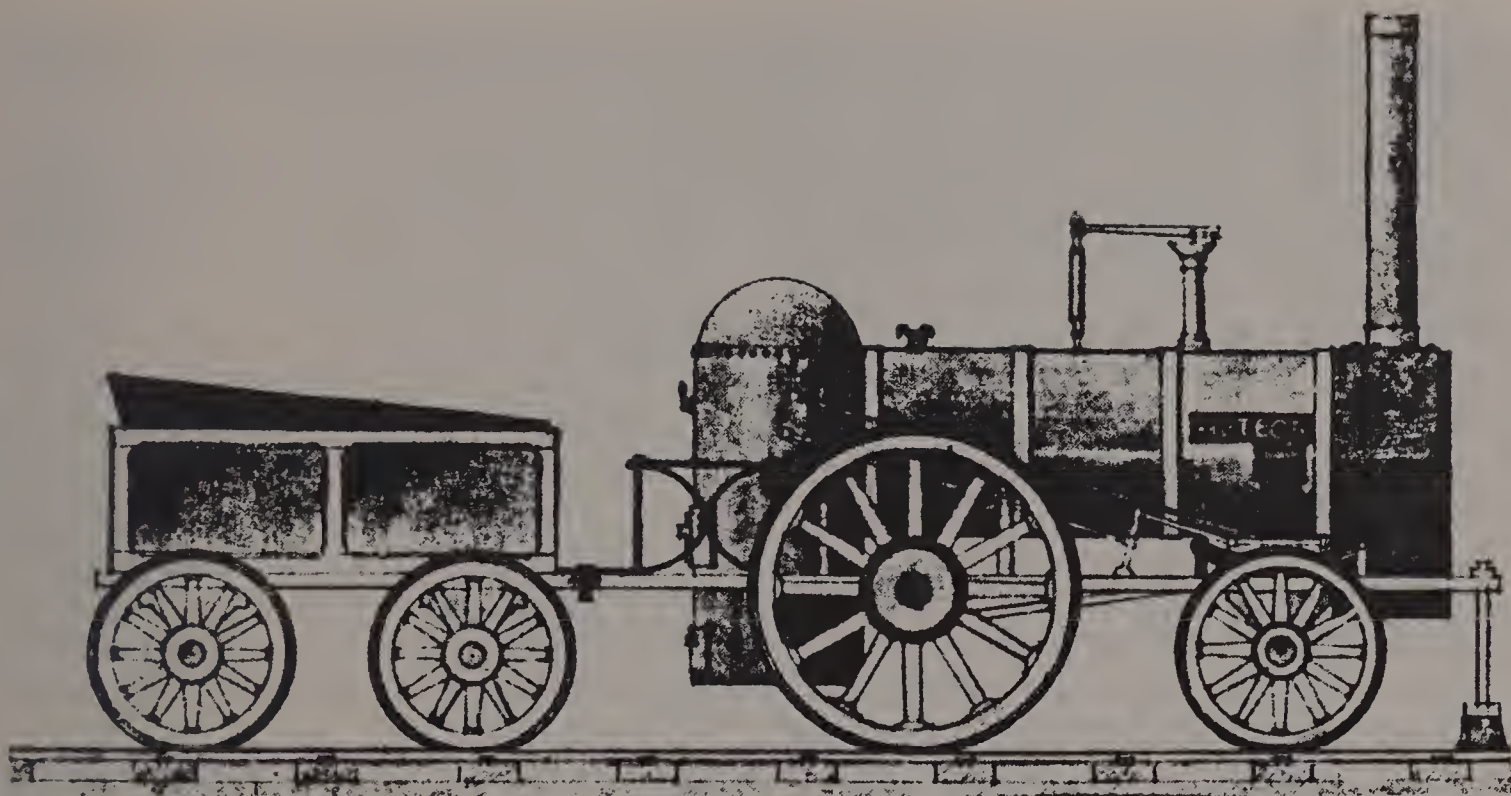
Margaret Goodale, widow of the late Francis G. Goodale, and mother of Carol G. Hayes, — all charter members too — belied her age of 93, for her warm and youthful spirit constantly endeared her to all who knew her.

Mr. Boyd, intimately known to all of us as "Jack", died in his sleep Monday morning, December 10th, after an active and unusually happy Sunday with family, business associates, and other friends. For the past half century, he was one of Weston's most prominent citizens both in business and countless civic organizations where his dedication and loyalty were outstanding.

To the families of all these good citizens and real friends of Weston, we extend not only our sympathy but also, our appreciation for all each of them did to preserve our heritage, so rare and so rich to so many of us.

AROUND THE TOWN GREEN

The recent renovation of Weston's Town Hall, including outside pruning and painting, further enhances the setting surrounding our Town Green. Whether from Town House Road, Church Street, or The Great Country Road (Boston Post Road to us now), we catch unmatched vistas of historic buildings and fields, and of natural charm, cherished by citizens and visitors alike.



“METEOR”

One of the first Boston and Worcester engines

Below we are printing “Part I” of our Society Historian’s informal talk at our “Standing Room Only” annual meeting on November 15th in the Josiah Smith Tavern ballroom. Most of our large membership missed this interesting talk which was a real treat, so we have decided to print it in its entirety. This installment deals only with the first of the 3 railroads he described. Subsequent issues will carry the other two. — Editor

WESTON’S THREE RAILROADS

Brenton H. Dickson III

PART 1: — BOSTON AND WORCESTER

The first railroad service in New England was on a 9 mile stretch of the Boston and Worcester between Boston and Newton. This began in the spring of 1834. Two months later, service had been extended to Wellesley (Needham in those days) and this section passed through Weston for about a mile. There were never any stations in Weston on this line. About the only thing that happened regularly was when the engineer on the morning train threw the daily paper out the cab window for Mr. Blake when passing his estate.

I am going to dwell on the Boston and Worcester for a while because its growing pains were typical of other New England railroads. Trial and error were the order of the day. The first locomotives were imported from England, as well as some of the engineers to drive them:— stuffy individuals who wore top hats and kid gloves and constantly made unnecessary mechanical adjustments to impress any onlookers.

The original rails were much lighter than they should have been and had the inconvenient habit of curling if trains went over them too rapidly, thereby forming “snake heads” which could come up through the floor and injure passengers. When the tracks were first laid there was a question of grading between them so that horses could haul the train with greater ease. In fact, one of the officers felt that haulage by steam would prove impractical and horses would have to be used anyway!

“The vicissitudes of early railroading,” — quoting from A. F. Harlow’s *‘Steelways of New England’*, can be only faintly appreciated by a study of the record book of the Boston & Worcester’s engine performances during the first three years history of the road . . . *“In winter the commonest trouble was the freezing of the hose by which water passed from tank to boiler; . . . Derailings were common. There was a stiff broom fastened to the pilot over each rail to sweep the snow off, but it was of no avail when the snow was deep, and sometimes when it wasn’t deep.”* A February 7 [ca] 1836 note says *Snow on rails, wheels revolve, but do not go ahead. When an axle or journal broke on a car, they just derailed that car and went on,*

picking it up later. Once when a wheel under the tender broke, they took a pair of wheels from under a passenger car — perhaps jamming that car's passengers into other cars — and went ahead.

"The poor devils who traveled then suffered untold harassments. (Hose froze, and passengers went on by horses. . . Crank shaft broke, passengers brought in by horses. . . Even crippled locomotives were ignominiously brought in by horses.)

"Night running was avoided whenever possible, but trains were frequently stalled overnight by accident or snowstorm. Once in 1836 a belated train ran into some cattle at 9:00 p.m. and killed two of them. It was so dark, could not see, and of course there was no headlight. Neither were there any bumpers at the ends of the tracks in the Boston station, and trains coming in too rapidly and badly braked sometimes just went right on, perhaps through the wall of the depot." [Other] characteristic bits from this book are: "Engine would not steam. . . Opposite the poor house at Newton, derailed by ice on track. . . Ashpan came off at Hopkinton. . . Found bridge burned down over Charles River, and took the passenger train back to Worcester. . . .

"Febr. 17. (Meteor.) On eastward trip, about 300 yards from Westborough, broom scraper standard caught on rail, broke standard and derailed engine and tender down a 6-foot embankment and bent forward shaft of engine. Five pairs of oxen got the engine on the rails again, and the down trip was made the day following.

"Same day. (Comet.) Snowing, could not go fast for wheels sliding on the snow. At Natick, ran out of wood; went to Needham and took wood; backed to the ledge and took water. Passengers sent on by horses. About 2½ miles from Framingham, hose froze, and at Framingham the hose and pipes were thawed out. About ¼ mile beyond Framingham, tubes burst in the boiler, and engine was hauled back to Framingham by horses."

But the most astounding performance, as the book records it, was this: "April 17. (Meteor.) On return trip to Boston, about ½ mile below Westborough, the engine and tender were derailed. One of the Air spring drawbars on the Whitmore Car was broken, and engineman went one mile before he found that he had left his cars. [Query: Had the engine and tender been put back on the track before they lost their train, or were they just cutting across country?] . . .

"The public accepting the inescapable, and optimistic as to the future, continued to patronize the roads and to build up their business beyond expectations. It is true that the Worcester freight business for some time was nothing to boast of; that town, somewhat alienated commercially from Boston, still clung to its Blackstone Canal and New York connections [until] after a few incidents like that of the Worcester manufacturer who ordered from Philadelphia in late summer a cargo of coal which was to be shipped by Blackstone Canal, but which, upon reaching Providence, found the canal too nearly dry to carry it there. . . . He then ordered another cargo of coal to be shipped via Boston and the railroad, and it was delivered at his door within 10 hours after reaching wharf at Boston."

The Boston and Worcester eventually became the Boston and Albany and in 1900 was leased to the New York Central. It was an important line with trains to New York as well as to Chicago and St. Louis, some of them entirely composed of Pullman cars, and everything — even the commuter trains, operated in a most formal manner.

It was a thrilling sight, watching one of those enormous locomotives laboring up the grade out of Newton and past Riverside Station, gaining speed all the while and spewing steam and billows of black smoke into the air, — a modern environmentalist's nightmare.

The Boston and Albany burnt the dirtiest coal imaginable, and the cinders that sifted through the windows of the commuter trains were so thick that you could write your name on the window sill after traveling a few miles. Many Weston commuters used Riverside Station which stood just across the town line in Newton just east of the Charles River. Service to Boston was excellent with trains running frequently, and during rush hours some of them made the trip non-stop.



Painting by J. J. Enneking 1884 of North Avenue, Weston showing the Hastings Homestead and the Northeast District Schoolhouse. Gift to the Weston Historical Society by Harrison B. Hall.

NINTH SUCCESSIVE GENERATION OF WILLIAM AND MARY SMITH'S FAMILY STILL LIVES IN WESTON

Under the photograph of Weston's oldest downtown building, the 1757 Josiah Smith Tavern, in our last issue, we announced that we are working on a series of articles telling what we can find out about William and Mary Smith and the descendants of their seven children, — Bradyl, 1715; Mary, 1717; William Jr., 1721; Josiah, 1722; James, 1724; Sarah, 1726; and Abigail, 1730. With great cooperation not only from the Smith family but especially from Dorothy Ellis and Homer Lucas, present and former chairmen of the Weston Historical Commission, we have developed information so vast that putting it into focus in proper relation to Town history, will involve further continuous study. Capable and dedicated volunteers can be put to work on some fascinating quests. In this issue we present the first of that series: a review of the nine successive generations that have lived in Weston.

It's a record hard to equal for continuous living in the same town by so many generations as represented today by the descendants of Josiah Smith's younger brother, James Smith, 5th child, 4th son of William and Mary. James was born December 21, 1724 and served the town as Surveyor and Collector of Highways in 1754, Preserver of Deer in 1756, Constable and Fence Viewer in 1767, Constable only from 1768 through 1771, and Field Driver in 1775.

He married Lucy Stearns of Lexington on February 28, 1748. Their youngest of 4 children was Samuel Smith, born April 18, 1764. His first wife, Patience Gregory, died soon after their marriage. In 1789 he married the widow, Olive Pepper, nee Marshal, a native of Canada. Samuel Smith, Jr. was born a year later. This 4th generation Smith married Martha Stratton on May 27, 1819, and their son Nahum Smith, was born about six years later in the original homestead, 111 Sudbury Road.

Nahum Smith grew up to become a diligent member of the School Committee and served in that capacity for many years. At age 22, he married Susan M. Daggett on February 11, 1845. His reports on each district school appeared regularly in our annual town reports. The one he wrote in 1882 on "Schoolhouse #3" whose overgrown, unmarked foundation can be found with difficulty on Concord Road about 1,000 yards beyond its junction with Merriam Street, still is a challenge to us, because of the following:

Referring to "North (west) District School, Miss Ida A. Gould, Teacher," he remarked, "In the coming years it may be that some of our ambitious boys may become men to whom the world will look up, and whom the world will delight to honor; what has been, may again be, — for out of the little North-West Schoolhouse, many years ago went a poor boy who, before life's close, had attained to some of the highest honors in the land."

On Page 4 of our January 1972, Vol. VIII, No. 2 issue, we appealed to the membership "Won't all of you readers and members share the challenge with us? — TO WHOM DID NAHUM SMITH REFER IN THIS 1882 REPORT? After eight years, mystery persists, for no one has correctly identified the man of whom he spoke so glowingly.

The son of Nahum and Susan Smith was Charles Edward Smith, born August 23, 1849 and married Anna Terry Harlow. It is their son, Lincoln Harlow Smith, born February 12, 1908 who still lives happily with his wife, the former Anne Lucille Sanders, at 101 Sudbury Road. His younger sister, Sylvia Harlow Smith and her husband, John Akers, live in Natick and their younger brother, Carl Daggett Smith and his wife, Florence Coburn Smith, live "just over the line" in Lincoln which, though part of Weston until 1754, disbars them from this article which confines itself to present-day residents of Weston only.

The Lincoln H. Smiths of today's 7th generation are the parents of Edwin Lincoln Smith who, like his forbear, James Smith, is a skilled surveyor by profession. Born, of course in Weston, August 22, 1935, he married Claire Foss on December 16, 1961, and lives "just down the road a piece" at No. 136, while his younger sister, Susan Ellen Smith Merrill lives almost across the road from their parents, at 128.

Edwin and Claire Smith have three 9th generation children, Ellen Diane Smith, born on March 9, 1963, Linda Jane Smith, January 16, 1966, and David Edwin Smith, October 8, 1967. Edwin's sister, Susan, married Herbert Wyers Merrill on October 20, 1962, and they have 4 sons of the 9th generation, — Herbert Lincoln Merrill, born July 15, 1964, Scott Alan Merrill, January 11, 1967, and twins Andrew Sanders Merrill and Gary Smith Merrill, born on September 13, 1976.

We suspect that a few, if not many, other residents can also trace their lineage back nine straight generations in Weston too, and if so, we'd welcome their documentary chart and family story. We have all the above Smith genealogy in charted form, but to us, there is more to genealogy than just names and dates. Each name has been, or is, a person. After all, it's *people* who count more to us than mere dates. We intend, nevertheless, to see how far, with help from members young and old, we can trace and record, step by step, the descendants of not only our more famous Bradyl and Josiah Smith of the second generation, but of their three sisters and other brother William Smith, Jr. also, of whom so little is relatively known.

It should be fun to see what more can be found by many of us lending a hand to the project. Moreover we know that the Weston Historical Commission, appointed from our membership by the Selectmen thus far, can use lots of help, as has been true up to now, in gathering information on old houses and families. Already a most helpful file has been accumulated through our joint efforts.

H. G. T.

Robin Hood Played Part in Naming KENDAL GREEN

It may be timely and of interest to Weston newcomers and even to some oldtimers who may have forgotten, to read the following extracts from our January 1966 BULLETIN, Vol. II, No. 2 — Editor

In 1885, a new Post Office was to be set up to serve the northern part of Weston . . . Miss Anna Hall, a member of our Society, has . . . a letter written by General James B. Marshall, grandson of Rev. Samuel Kendal, defending his . . . suggesting the name "Kendal Green".

The following is quoted verbatim: "Mr. Editor 'How couldst thou know these men in Kendal Green, when 'twas so dark thou couldst not see thy hands? (King Henry VI, Act II, Scene IV.)'

" . . . the name of KENDAL GREEN was . . . commemorative of a good man, Rev. Samuel Kendal, D.D., or 'Good Parson Kendal' . . . last of the colonial pastors . . . identified with the early history of the town . . . Kendal Green, immortalized by Shakespeare, of pleasant sound and significance, was finally fixed upon. There is no post office of the name in the U.S.

"The family name from which Parson Kendal was descended . . . originated with a forester of Queen Elizabeth whose name was John . . . lived in the valley of the river Ken (now called Kent) and who was called . . . John of Ken Dale, which by easy transition became John Kendal.

"The town of Kendal in the same valley of Westmoreland County is noted for the ruins of the castle of Catharine Parr, one of the wives of Henry VIII, and for its manufacture of green cloth called *Kendal Green* . . . adopted by Robert, Earl of Huntington, when he was outlawed and took the name of Robin Hood, as uniform for himself and followers. The Kendal factory is still in operation and the green cloth formerly worn by Robin Hood and his merrie men is now put to more peaceful use as the uniform of the Kendal Fire Department.

"The Shakespearean quotation . . . was Prince Hal's reply to Falstaff when that doughty warrior boasted of having slain seven of the eleven misbegotten knaves in Kendal Green. We trust we have no knaves in our Kendal Green though it must be confessed that not long ago we had one who got away for the same reason given by Falstaff for allowing his other four assistants to escape. He was the hen thief, one of those vagrant men whom the valiant and vigilant Dogberry advised that we let steal out of our company and thank God we are rid of the knave - - we let him steal . . ."

The above letter was dated — Weston, Dec. 14, 1885, and was signed "J. F. B. Marshall". For approximately the next half century the Kendal Green Post Office was part of Broderick's Store, which about the time of World War II was converted into a residence, now No. 109 North Avenue, a little west of the picturesque and historic junction of Church Street and North Avenue on Route 117.

NEW MEMBERS

A hearty welcome is extended to Miss Lucy J. Boyd and to the following family members who are joining in our fellowship of working to preserve the heritage of Weston: Mr. and Mrs. William H. Hatch, Mr. and Mrs. Lewis W. Mustard 3rd, Mr. and Mrs. Wendell E. Ryerson, and Mr. and Mrs. Thomas B. Wheeler.

ELMER CAPPERS ELECTED TO THE BOARD

At our annual meeting, the Nominating Committee, chaired by John G. Brooks, proposed the name of Elmer O. Cappers for a 3-year term to succeed Mrs. M. Kirkbride Patterson, who to everyone's regret asked not to be re-nominated. Mr. Cappers was unanimously elected. With his wife, he moved here from Brookline on his retirement from business a few years ago. As a seasoned writer on historical subjects - largely researched by himself - the retired president of a large suburban bank, and perennially noted for his active loyalty to Harvard's Class of 1923, he brings experience, strength, and talent to the board. Re-elected with him for 3-year terms were former president Edward W. Marshall and Mrs. John A. Paine, Jr. A list of our full board of directors, and of the officers who were re-elected, is to be found on the last page of this issue. Give them your support.



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

(Currently our youngest life member is 3 - our oldest in his 80's)

Contributions and Bequests to the Endowment and Memorial Fund are welcomed. (It has now grown into respectable five figures, due to contributions, bequests, life memberships, and interest.)

Make all checks payable to Weston Historical Society, Inc., and mail them to its Post Office address: Box 343, Weston, Massachusetts 02193.

Additional copies of THE BULLETIN may be obtained at \$1.00 each by phoning Mrs. Raymond Paynter at 899-3533, or Harold G. Travis, Editor, at 899-4515. If you have any old copies of the 1960's, and are not saving them, please be sure to give them to our Curator, Mrs. J. E. Fraser, 894-2872.