THE WESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

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This photograph of Horace Scudder Sears probably was taken a few years prior to his penning of the letter below. Born in Wayland where his father, Edmund Hamilton Sears, was minister of the First Parish Church, Horace moved to Weston with his family at the age of ten, and graduated from Weston High School in a class of seven students in 1871. His father died five years after his graduation.

A LETTER FROM HOME — 1883

Horace S. Sears (1855-1923) was twenty-eight years old when he wrote the following letter to his good friend Andrew Fiske (1854-1930), a Boston attorney who was traveling in Europe with his family. Sears, the bookkeeper of a textile firm with headquarters in Boston, N. Boynton Company, was living with his widowed mother, Ellen Bacon Sears, in the house which now is located at 338 Boston Post Road. In 1883, when this letter was written, the house was located on the north side of the street. As the letter indicates, Sears already had begun to take an active interest in politics and the affairs of Weston. He had served a three-year term on the School Committee

and, for one year, as Sealer of Weights and Measures. Fiske lived in Boston in the winter, in Weston during the spring and fall, and at Cataumet in the summer. "His house on Concord Road stood well back from the street and his driveway started off with a series of sharp curves which were necessary in order to avoid crossing the family baseball field. The Harold Willis, Jr. house today occupies the site of the original building [39 Concord Road]" wrote Fiske's great-nephew, Brent Dickson. Fiske later was to be a Registrar of Voters in Weston from 1890-1925, Town Moderator in 1926-28, and Registrar of Voters again in 1928 and 1929. Fiske was a Democrat. The footnotes—which follow the letter so as not in interrupt the text—were prepared by the Editor with assistance from Brent Dickson.

* * *

Boston — November 13, 1883
Tuesday

My Dear Andrew:

Of course you know the result. It's nothing to brag of. All is we are saved the mortification and disgrace of another year of Butlerism, but the humiliating fact remains that 150,000 men in Massachusetts voted for such a reckless unprincipled demagogue.[1] Weston threw 185 Robinson and 42 Butler against 170 to 36 last year — an absolute gain but a relative loss. When the two Mayberry brothers marched up to the polls and voted for Butler I admit I felt sick.[2] I sympathized with Gen. Paine when he said that it seemed to him that a man must be either a fool or a knave to vote for Butler.[3] You have no idea how high the excitement has run here. The papers have been full of it and in the street, at the stores and in the [railroad] cars the conversation has been Butler vs. anti-Bulter.[4] I attended two noon-day meetings (Republican) in Fanueil Hall. They were rousers. Excellent speaking and much enthusiasm. Just look at the size of the vote to see how the whole state was aroused as never before.

As for ourselves our ante-election meeting of the Reform Club was not a great success. We just succeeded in getting a quorum (11) and talked for about two hours & then went home. I struggled manfully but unsuccessfully to get the club to declare against Ames & then against our candidate for councillor — a man named Bennett of Lowell who is a fair sample of a machine political wirepuller who virtually bought his nomination and tried to buy his election but I am happy to say was defeated by a good gentlemanly democrat. The fact is you and Oliver Robbins and myself constitute the true independent party of Weston with occasional help from Mr. Gale, Will Coburn & a few others whose hearts are in the right place but whose judgments are somewhat swayed by party ties.[5] It is rather uphill work attempting to do anything while you are absent but I will try to keep the pot boiling until you return when you must do double duty. Gen. Paine scratched Ames — so did Oliver and I — yet he got one more vote than Robinson! Our work didn't show at all. Mr. Henry J. White & I were delegates to the state convention in Music Hall. I faithfully worked with the independents — distributed ballots — & voted for Chas. Francis Adams, Jr. for Governor & Codman for Lieut. Governor.[6] But we only held what Matthew Arnold calls in his new lecture "the saving framer of the remnant!" & I am free to acknowledge in the light of subsequent events that Robinson was the very best nomination which could have been made. He has made an exceptionally able canvass, making two & three speeches a day which were strong sensible manly arguments & containing a wonderful amount of fresh matter every day. People say there has been nothing like it since Lincoln stumped Illinois against Douglas. He surprised everyone — even his best friends — by his vigor & ability. I hope for a strong administration this winter.

But enough of politics. It is all but a weak rehash of what is an old story to you by this time — or will be by the time you receive this. I hope you are pleasantly settled — wherever you are. I have not heard from you for some little time — the last news being that you were all half-sick with colds at Berlin I think. I should not suppose the climate in Germany would be much of an improvement on that of N.E. but I know nothing about it. We have had a pleasant summer with the exception of the worst drought we have had for years during July, August & September. Although we had copious rains in October, our well is about dry even now & I don't know what we should have done without Mrs. Robbins' trough where we watered our horse & cows. Her well fortunately withstood the drought.[7]

At the time of this letter, Robert Winsor (1859-1930), left, had just moved to Weston and met Horace Sears. He was to become one of Sears' closest friends. Winsor, whose sister later founded the Winsor School, eventually became wealthy and purchased a large farm on Meadowbrook Road, converting its barn into the clubhouse of the Weston Golf Club. William H. Coburn (1857-1909), right, was a boyhood friend of Horace who graduated from Weston High School two years following Sears. Coburn, who worked in Boston at the Shawmut Bank, remained a close friend of Sears until Coburn's death of typhoid fever at the age of 51.

We have three new houses nearly completed. Fred. Fuller's, which is really a double house — opposite the Baptist parsonnage, Geo. Perry's — quite a handsome & commodious house opposite the old Derby house & a Mr. Winsor's of Winchester — just this side of the Beal's on a knoll in the Davis pasture.[8] Fred. I do not consider a great acquisition. He is over-bearing — aggressive & narrow — just the style of man that sets people by the ears & creates antagonism. He has been a most intolerant Butler man. Geo. Perry was married about a month ago to a very pleasing girl who comes from Jamaica Plain. They are to board in Boston this winter & will not move into their new house until next spring. Mr. Winsor is a great gain. He is a young fellow about my age who is in Kidder Peabody & Co.'s employ & whose connections are of the very best. (His mother was a daughter of Henry Ware, Jr.). He has not much money I judge & has built a little box of a house but that makes no difference. I am sure you will like him & I am rejoiced that he came to Weston, being attracted there thro' Mr. Russell who is an old friend of the family. Winsor was married about two weeks ago to a very charming girl & only came to his new house last week. He could not find a lot upon which to build at any reasonable price & we were so anxious to secure him that Mother bought all the Davis pasture containing about 20 acres next to our land & sold him a lot there. Now I am running a road up over the crest of the hill & while I do not intend to run opposition to Col. Lamson yet, I shall open up some very desirable lots & hope in time to build up a pleasant neighborhood there.[9]

The unfortunate Central remains in a quiescent state. It has just been reorganized under the name of Central Massachusetts.[10] There have been more rumours that it was to open than you could shake a stick at, but I have placed no credence in any of them. If it opened this fall it must inevitably lose money I think, but I look to see it opened early in the spring & pushed thro to Northampton without much further delay. After sinking $5,000,000 those who now take hold of it ought to make it pay. Poor old road. It will seem real pleasant & sociable to have it resume its jolting and whisking round curves.

I made a flying trip to N.Y. & Phila. recently, was only gone a day & a half. I wanted to call upon Gorham but did not have time. Mrs. David Bacon & Edw. (who has just

entered Harvard) spent a Sunday with us two weeks ago & we rather hope Bessie will give us a few days soon. I wish you & Mrs. Fiske could be at Weston then.

Mr. Russell wears as well as ever. He varies a good deal in his preaching but has given us some brilliant sermons & is just as nice outside the pulpit as can be. The Literary Club has been resumed & he conducts it with much skill & tact. Our subject for this winter is the origin & development of the English novel & we have already had some very interesting papers. Mr. Gale's, being easily the best.[11]

But I have wearied you enough for one day I am sure. It seems a long time since you left us. I don't like to think that it will be a much longer time probably before you return. We missed you both at our fair this year — which by the way was remarkably successful netting above expenses $600 — and in many ways I should really rather have you here than not![12] If in a lucid interval you have nothing better to do, write me & let me know how it is with you all. Please give my kindest regards to Mrs. Fiske — & believe me

Yours cordially,
Horace S. Sears

P.S. Gen. Marshall has bought Mrs. Hobbs old place & will remodel it & settle down there next summer when he will give up his work at Hampton owing to failing eye sight. Henry Milton has hired a house at Waltham & will remove there this week. He says he intends to build some time before very long & then he *may* come back to Weston. I have dined with the Reform Club once this fall & intend to go when I can. We had Lyman up to lecture in our course this fall. He spent the night with your brother.[13]

H.S.S.

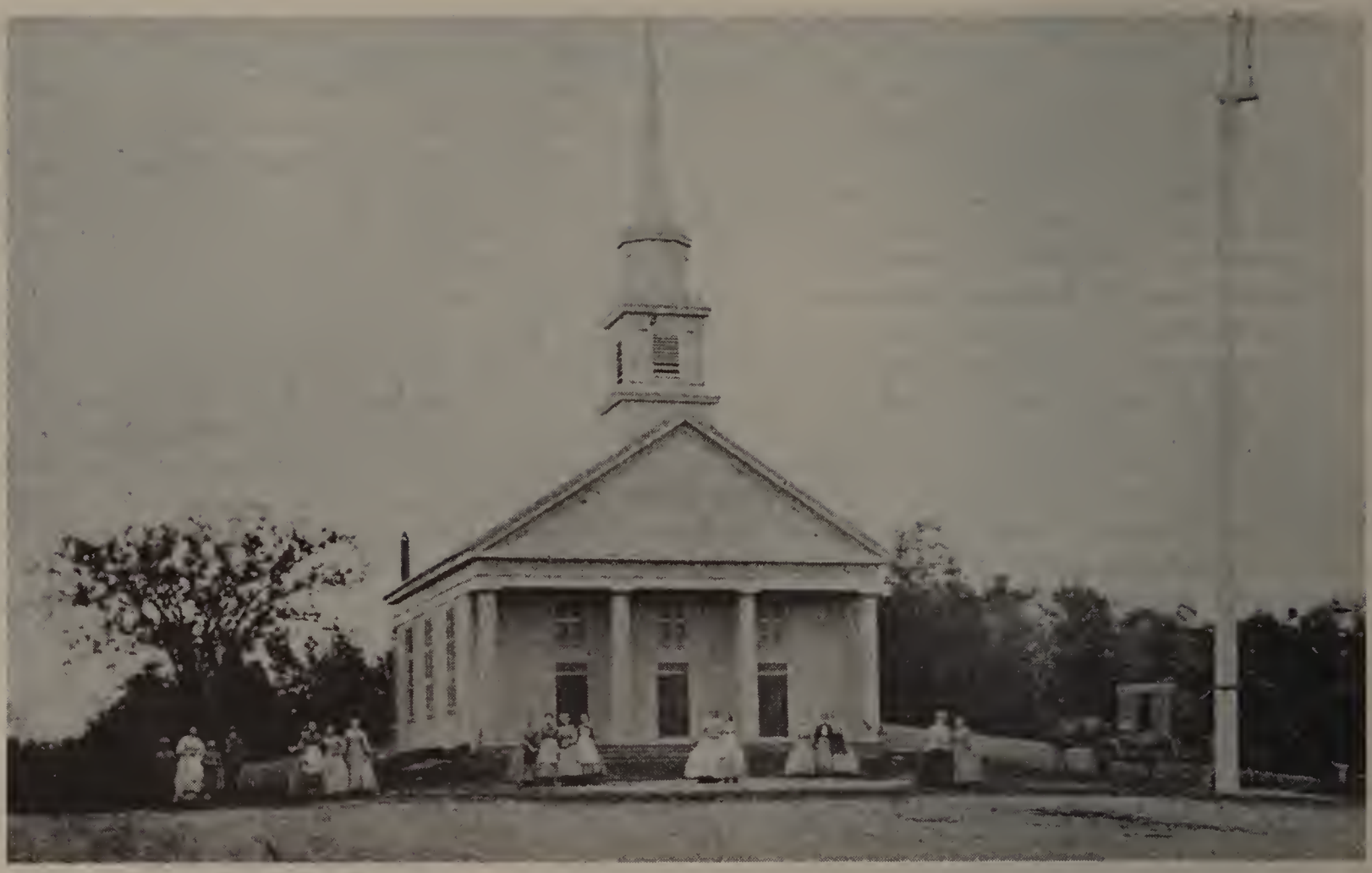
NOTES

1. Benjamin Franklin Butler (1818-93) of Lowell, the governor of Massachusetts in 1882-83, had just lost his bid for re-election. Butler, formerly a Republican, had been elected governor as the nominee of the Democratic and Greenback parties. With this defeat, Butler ceased to be an important factor in Massachusetts politics, although in 1884 he became the presidential nominee of the Greenback and Antimonopoly parties!
2. It was not until 1888 that the "Australian" or secret ballot system was signed into law by Massachusetts Governor Oliver Ames. Thus at the time of Sears' letter voting was done orally. Voters moved in a line toward a table of local election officials at which the voter "declared" for whom he was voting. As this letter indicates, only men were permitted to vote for Governor in Massachusetts, although in 1881 — two years before this letter was written — women in Massachusetts had been granted the right to vote for school committee only! It is not certain who were "the Mayberry brothers". Lamson's *History of Weston* refers to a Dr. Mayberry who practiced in Weston from 1878-1885, then left for Weymouth. Dr. Frederick W. Jackson succeeded Dr. Mayberry.
3. General Charles J. Paine (1833-1916) of Highland Street achieved great wealth in railroads and finance, and was the owner of two defenders of the America's Cup and a member of the syndicate which owned a third yacht that was a successful cup defender. Paine was described by the *Boston Herald* as "the modern day discoverer of Weston" due to his extensive landholdings obtained in Weston shortly after the Civil War. He was the father of Sumner and John Paine, medal winners in the 1896 Olympics described in the January 1982 *Bulletin.* General Paine served for a time under General Butler during the Civil War!
4. Republican George D. Robinson of Chicopee beat Butler by 10,000 votes. Butler's positive nature and belligerent disposition which aroused animosity, caused the public to develop a love-hate relationship with this politician. A newspaper account of the 1850's regarding a speech in Lowell, described "Ben Butler . . . this notorious demagogue and political scoundrel, having swilled three or four extra glasses of liquor, spread himself at whole length in the City Hall last night . . . the only wonder is that a character so groveling and obscene, can for a moment be admitted into decent society anywhere out of the pale of prostitutes." Butler sued for slander but lost when Judge E. Rockwood Hoar of Concord ruled that he could not determine beyond a shadow of a doubt which "Ben Butler" the newspaper reporter had in mind! A believer in the political dictum "don't get mad, get even," Butler later blocked Judge Hoar's nomination to the U.S. Supreme Court during the Grant administration! In 1860, Butler voted at the Democratic Convention for Jefferson Davis as President. Reversing his position, Butler later walked out of the Democratic Convention in Charleston because "the African Slave Law is approvingly advocated." Then, in a second shift in 1861, Butler argued that "slaves of persons engaged in rebellion against the United States are contrabands of war . . . therefore use them [put them to work]." Ever the opportunist, Butler, in an 1866 convention of anti-Johnson soldiers, switched again advocating hanging Jefferson Davis and Robert E. Lee! During much of the Civil War, no man in America except President Abraham Lincoln gathered more newspaper headlines than the colorful General Benjamin Franklin

Butler of Massachusetts — who hoped for the presidential nomination of the Unionist Party in 1864. Butler's high-handed, yet effective, military governorship of New Orleans in 1862 was the most controversial phase of his career. He ordered hung a man who hauled down a U.S. flag . . . seized $800,000 in gold bullion belonging to the U.S. Treasury which had been placed for safekeeping in the hands of the French consul, then turned over to the U.S. Government only a portion of the bullion until the shortage became an issue in the national press . . . ignored the U.S. Government by collecting and expending tax monies . . . issued an official order stating "When any female shall by word, or gesture, or movement, insult or show contempt for any officer or soldier of the United States, she shall be regarded and held liable to be treated as a woman of the town plying her avocation" . . . allegedly stole silver spoons from the house in which he was staying! After the War, Butler was elected as a Republican Congressman from Massachusetts in every year except two from 1866 to 1879. In 1871 he lost the Republican nomination for Governor, but was elected Governor as a Democrat in 1882! During his term as Governor — to which Horace Sears' letter alludes — Butler advocated better civil service laws; a constitutional amendment to allow women to vote; radical labor legislation; and improving conditions at the Tewksbury Alms House — making charges which never were proven.

5. Oliver Robbins of Wellesley Street served Weston as a selectman, library trustee, and member of the Board of Health between 1874 and 1890. Justin E. Gale, a Democrat, was a Registrar of Voters, the Principal of Weston High School from 1891 to 1895, then went into the textile business. From 1903 to 1917 he served as a Library Trustee. William H. Coburn of 119 Church Street graduated from Weston High School in 1873, and was the father of Phil Coburn.
6. "Deacon" Henry J. White of Maple Road was Weston's representative in the General Court in 1883, a selectman from 1881 to 1889, Town Treasurer from 1890 to 1913, a member of the Burial Ground Committee from 1879 to 1887, and a Weston Assessor from 1882 to 1889. Charles Francis Adams, Jr. was Chairman of the Board of Railroad Commissioners. "Codman" might be Robert or James Codman, both of Boston and Lincoln.
7. Mrs. Chandler Robbins' house — later "the Endicott House" — was demolished in 1967 when the First Parish Church built its addition and parking lot on the north side of the Boston Post Road. Thus, Sarah Robbins was the next-door neighbor of the Sears family to the westward.
8. Fred Fuller lived in the house which now is numbered 676 Boston Post Road; George Perry lived at 223 Boston Post Road; and Robert Winsor at 309 Boston Post Road. Until 1927 the road was called "Central Avenue."
9. Robert Winsor's maternal grandfather, Henry Ware, Jr., DD (1794-1843) was co-pastor with Ralph Waldo Emerson of the Second Unitarian Church in Boston. Later Ware became a well-known professor at Harvard Divinity School and president of the Cambridge Anti-Slavery Society. After Ware's death, Chandler Robbins edited Ware's papers for publication. Rev. Charles F. Russell had served the First Parish Church in Weston for exactly a year when this letter was written. Sears had been instrumental in bringing Rev. Russell to Weston. Russell served as minister from 1882-1916, as a Library Trustee from 1884-1887 and as a member of the School Committee from 1889-1897. Colonel Daniel S. Lamson lived in the center of town on the north side of the Boston Post Road, in a house which was demolished when Town House Road was built. It was located adjacent to the present Weston Pharmacy. The phrase "I do not intend to run opposition to Colonel Lamson yet" probably means that Sears had a long-range plan to purchase land and build homes to the north and east of the First Parish Church, but was not yet ready to move forward.
10. Even today the tracks of the Central Massachusetts Railroad run close to Weston Center, crossing Church Street, Old Road — there was no Church Street overpass at the time of this letter — Conant Road, Concord Road, etc. Affectionately known as the "Boston to Nowhere" line, the tracks were extended to Hudson two years after the date of this letter, and to Northampton in 1887. For three years during the 1890's, two important trains ran through Weston daily on these tracks, one from Boston to Harrisburg and the other from Boston to Washington, D.C. The line offered three morning commuter trains to Boston irreverently known to the local populace as the "Worker" (7:03 a.m.), the "Clerker" (8:02 a.m.), and the "Shirker" (8:43 a.m.).
11. The Literary Club was the forerunner of the First Parish Friendly Society. The Friendly Society was organized — with Horace Sears as its first President — in the parlor of his mother's home on January 12, 1885.
12. "Our Fair" refers to the annual fair of the First Parish Church.
13. General James F. B Marshall was the Treasurer of Hampton Institute in Virginia, where Horace Sears had been Marshall's assistant and secretary to the founder, General Armstrong, in 1879-1880. "Mrs. Hobbs old place" is 87 North Avenue. Marshall's aunt, Abigail Kendal Hobbs, was the daughter of Rev. Samuel Kendal, D.D., the Minister of the First Parish Church from 1783 until his death in 1814. Upon moving into his aunt's house, General Marshall named the property "Kendal Green," a name which later was applied to the entire neighborhood. "Lyman" was Theodore Lyman of Waltham (1833-1897), elected as a U.S. Congressman in 1882. Lyman was an Overseer of Harvard and founder of the statewide Reform Club. Lyman's father, Theodore, served as Mayor of Boston.

Donald G. Kennedy and Brenton H. Dickson, III



"This little story is in connection with the old church which was taken down just before the present one was built . . ." The 1840 First Parish in Weston, looking northeast. Church Street is on the left, and Central Avenue (Boston Post Road) on the right. The flagpole, erected by the Town, occupies the spot on which the present watering trough is located. This photo is undated; the church was taken down in 1887.

"REMINISCENCES" OF ANNA C. HASTINGS

The Friendly Society asked Anna Coburn Hastings (1853-1950) to tell the reminiscences she had heard of life in early Weston. Mrs. Hastings' notes are in the collection of the Weston Historical Society. Her talk, delivered on January 14, 1908, contains anecdotes which reach back to the opening decades of the Nineteenth Century. The presentation is interesting both for its vignettes and for insight into the Friendly Society's activities in the early years of this century. A brief biography of Mrs. Hastings appeared in the January 1984 Bulletin. Notes by the Editor.

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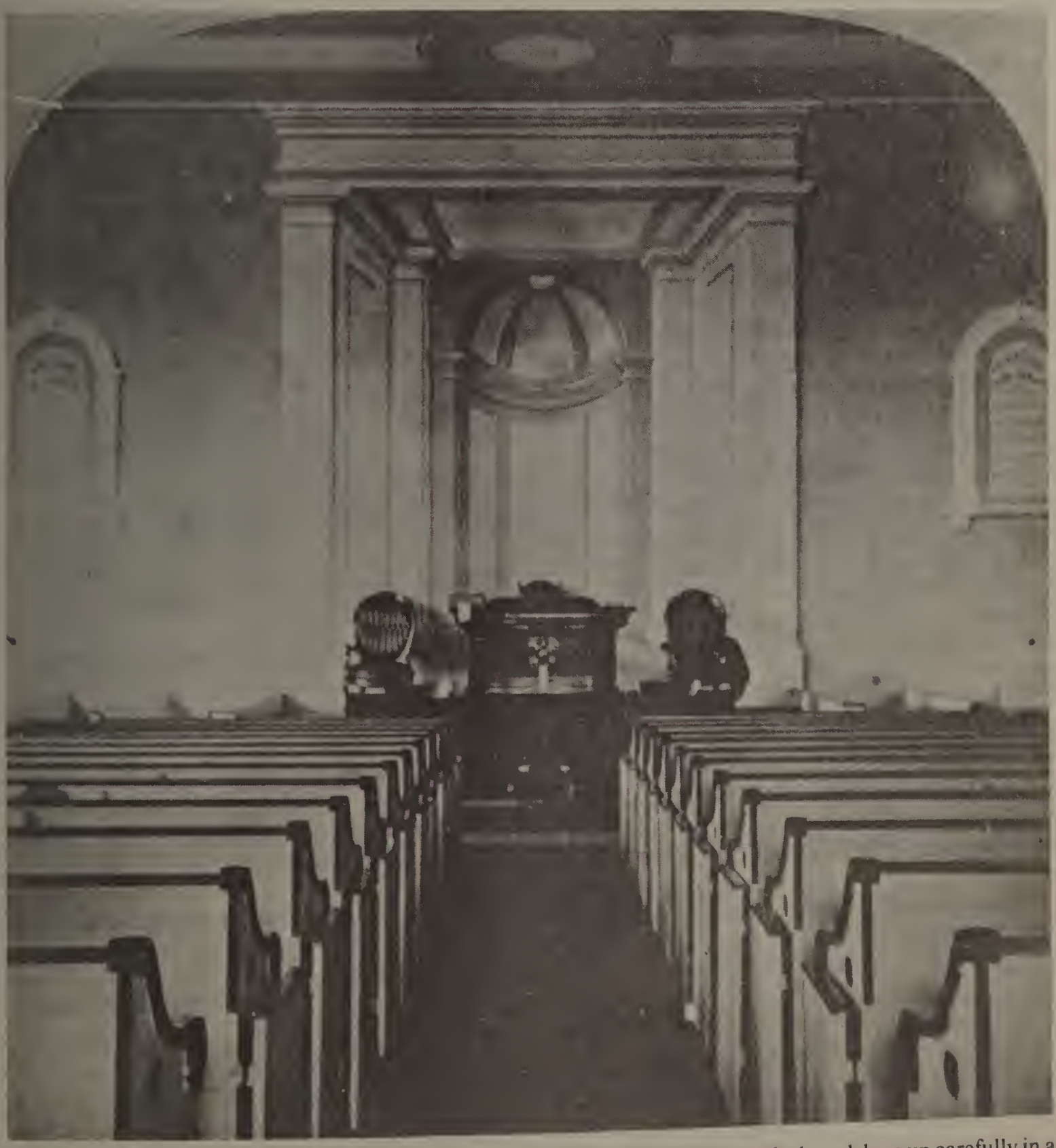
A short time since I read in the old Church Records published in one of the Town Reports, an account of the "One Cent Society" founded in 1814, the women belonging to it promising to pay one cent per week for missionary purposes. This was afterwards called "The Female Charitable Society of Weston" [1814-1835]. These Societies were formed in various New England towns in the early part of that century. The thought followed that this was probably the foundation of the old time Sewing Circle which later developed into our Benevolent Society, [1841]. In looking over the names of the members, I found that of my own Grandmother, and some others of whom I had heard her speak, also the names of several whom I well remember to have seen. Among them were Mrs. Caroline James, Mrs. Field, Miss Hannah Gowen [1775-1870], Miss Sarah Woodward, Mrs. Sallie Viles, and Miss A. W. Kendal [Abigail "Nabby" Kendal, 1793-1883], who afterwards became Mrs. Samuel Hobbs [in 1834].

In this connection I was reminded of stories and incidents related to me long ago by dear old Mrs. Hobbs, who was a very interesting woman, and we younger people enjoyed her society as much as if she had been one of our own age. She was speaking to me one day about the early meetings of the Sewing Circle, which at that time met at the different houses. It was then the fashion for all women over 35 or 40 years of age, to wear capes made of lace and muslin, and of course these capes had to be "done up" as they called it, that is, starched and ironed, and the young matrons looked very sweet and

bewitching in them, just as they did in their large bonnets. The occasion of which she spoke was in summer, and we all know there were no wire screens for windows in those days. The ladies had assembled and commenced their sewing, but one poor woman was in great trouble. The flies gathered around her, and forsaking every one else stayed constantly by her, and she could not drive them away. The other ladies looked and wondered. At last she explained that not having any starch that morning when doing up her cape, she had dipped it in sugar and water, before ironing to make it stiff. She was no doubt the *sweetest* lady there, but the poor persecuted woman soon bade "Goodbye" to the Circle, and putting on her calash [hood], went home.

This little story is in connection with the old [1840] church which was taken down just before the present one was built [in 1888]. A lady, who like the other shall, be nameless, once brought a loaf of brown bread to church, and not many people were the wiser. She had promised a young friend who had lately gone to housekeeping, a loaf of brown bread to go with her Sunday dinner. She did not know just how to carry it at first,



"She tied on her black apron, put on her bonnet, and the long cape, and having the bread done up carefully in a napkin, she put it in her apron . . . arriving at church, she took her seat . . ." The interior of the 1840 First Parish. This is the church in which Edmund Hamilton Sears preached to the soldiers returning to Weston from the Civil War (see May 1983 *Bulletin*).

but as she wore a very long full black cape over her black dress, she began to see her way clearer. At that period the ladies wore black aprons of silk or alpaca, but I never before heard of one being worn to church. She tied on her black apron, put on her bonnet, and the long cape, and having the bread done up carefully in a napkin, she put it in her apron, gathering the latter up by the corners. Arriving at church, she took her seat — her pew was on the centre aisle. She thought she would place the parcel on the cushion beside her, then she turned to face the singers, as was the custom, she arose bravely and stood with one hand grasping the corners of the apron, her hymn book in the other, not hearing a word of the hymn. During the sermon, when the minister spoke of the "Bread of Life" she gave a little start, and thought of the bread in her apron. When the services were over, she slyly transferred to her young friend the loaf, which she at once put beneath her shawl, and walked away thankfully, but not any more so than the generous lady who had so gladly disposed of her burden.

It was Mrs. Hobbs who told me of the connection of *Old Town Folks* [an 1869 book by Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1896), published 16 years after *Uncle Tom's Cabin*] with this and neighboring towns. Soon after the book was published I called upon her. I had just finished reading it, and it so chanced she had been reading it also, and naturally our talk drifted in that direction. She had recently attended the Golden Wedding of Mr. and Mrs. Alpheres Bigelow — parents of the late Mr. Frank Bigelow — where she met Prof. and Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe. Mrs. Stowe then told her, her husband, Prof. Stowe when a boy lived at the "Joe Russell Tavern" which was situated on what is now North Avenue in Weston. He worked for his board and went to school, and while employed about the place heard stories and incidents which he afterwards repeated to her, and she made them the basis of her book. Some of the principal characters were taken from persons who lived in Weston — others from Natick and Newton. "Deacon and Mrs. Badger" whose real name was Bigelow lived here in what is known as "the Poutas Place" [on Concord Road]. There is an old gentleman still living in this town, who remembers the originals of "Aunt Lois" and "Aunt Keqiah."

I have heard an old gentleman tell of his first visit to Boston with his father. They rode in a horse cart — a sort of box with only two wheels and a board for a seat. The boy had just had a new suit. There was no ready-made clothing or shoes to be bought at that time, and the village tailoress went from house to house, fitting and making suits for the sons as well as the fathers — so, too, the shoemaker went on his regular rounds from one family to another. I was speaking of the boy's new suit. There was sufficient cloth left to make him a cap, and this was the first time he had ever had clothes with *"boughten buttons,"* for before they had always been of home manufacture. We can imagine the boy and his father as they went bumping and jolting along. They took a load to dispose of in the city, and were to carry home supplies for the house. When they reached Boston, this boy of mine, though wide awake to the novel sights in the streets and windows, imagined like Whittier on *his* first visit to Boston, that everyone he met was admiring his new suit. Time passed. At length he missed his father and began anxiously to look around, when a familiar noise met his ear. His father had one of those resonant noses which when blown sounded somewhat like a fog horn. He started in the direction of the welcome sound and soon found his father, who was vigorously wiping his nose with a red bandanna handerchief. To the boy, that well-known sound was like "heavenly music."

Schools in those days must have been of a very primitive character and we children were amused to hear the ways and methods used in our parents' school days and much more, in those of our grandparents'. Comparing them with our own we felt we were highly favored, but how would ours compare with the schools of today? I had one teacher whom I shall always hold in loving memory. She had the faculty of interesting us in everything. She drilled the boys in their "pieces" and I always listened with admiration when they spoke "On Linden when the sun was low," or "There was a sound of reveling by night." The girls did not speak, but we *all wrote compositions* and *such* compositiions — some in poetry, some in *blank verse* and it was *very* blank indeed. One boy took as his subject "The Natural Curiosities of Weston" among which were Hell's Mouth, The Devil's Den, Cat Rock, and Cutting's Cider Mill, which, he added "goes very fast on Sunday."

We had for our School Committee, Parson Field, Dr. James, and Mr. Ogden Crane, who was then minister of the Baptist Church. They held this office for many years. We thought Mr. Crane very formidable — we liked Dr. James, but Parson Field [minister of First Parish 1815-1865] we *loved.* We used to drive over in his chaise to call on my Grandfather, and I have often seen them seated in their armchairs before the blazing wood fire in the sitting room, talking over the affairs of the Town or Parish.

We had a small district library but not the generous supply of books we have at the present day, nor did we have a High School provided by the town. Our High School was a private one, yet we profited by it, and enjoyed it. No doubt there are some here tonight who remember it as I do, with pleasure, yet compared with the High Schools of today it was but "as the beginning of things", and he would tell us about a family of three boys who had only one reading book, and one arithmetic in common and of another case where one New England Primer did for the whole family.

Parson Field told us many quaint stories — among them was one about Parson Kendal [minister of First Parish 1783-1814]. At that time people were expected to attend church regularly, and if they were absent for several Sundays either the minister, or a Committee chosen by him, called upon the delinquents, and expostulated with them. It was also considered very wrong and sinful to travel the highways on the Sabbath, unless to attend church or some similar errand. Parson Kendal once stopped a man who was approaching on horseback, and told him it was "against law and order" to travel on the Lord's Day. Whereupon the man replied that his father lay dead in Bedford, and it was imperative that he should proceed on his journey — which the Parson allowed, under the circumstances. When the man had gone a short distance he met an acquaintance whom he told of his encounter with the Parson, adding, "I told him no falsehood. My father *is* dead in Bedford, and *has been dead* for five years."

Another anecdote was about two men whose farms were adjoining. One was a very illiterate man, who liked to use big words. He came to his neighbor one day saying "Mr. Brown, your cows *de*quent my cornfield far too often, and you must stop it." "*De*quent" replied Mr. Brown, "you mean *fre*quent, don't you?" "Well", says the other angrily, "I don't care which — *de*quent, *fre*quent and *elo*quent, it's all the same to me. Won't you please to keep your cows at home!"

Here is one about a half-witted fellow named Reuben who worked for Deacon Isaac Hobbs [1735-1813]. At this same time the Deacon's wife had a maid, named Patience. Reuben was very fond of Patience. Once he was quite ill with influenza and was under a doctor's care for some time. One day Reuben thought he was getting on too slowly, and the doctor when leaving told him "he must have patience." "Oh! yes! yes!" replied Reuben, brightening up — "I *want* her, I'd *have her in a minute,* but Patience *won't have me!*"

I was asked to write something "light" for this occasion — I could not possibly have written anything "solid," for

> "Why should I strive with him and her, —
> I cannot do what they do.
> I am my own interpreter,
> And must do what I may do."
>
> Anna Coburn Hastings, 1908

FROM THE EDITOR

The stories about the Hook-Hastings organ factory in the October 1983 and January 1984 issues of the *Bulletin* evoked an enthusiastic response. One of the most interesting letters came from Elizabeth D. Castner, reference librarian at the Waltham Public Library — a wonderful friend of the researcher for the Society. We have paraphrased from two of Betty's letters: "My father, Ervin S. Castner, worked at the factory from 1927 . . . to 1933. My father was one of the

last men let go when the Depression came, and felt very badly about it, as he liked the company and his co-workers about the best of any place he ever worked, both before or after. Apparently it was like one big family there. . . . He used to walk from our home on Trapelo Road at Woburn Street about 1½ miles through the woods to Prescott Shedd's house, and then ride up to Kendal Green with Mr. Shedd. In the wintertime he used to snowshoe over, and I still have the snowshoes up in the attic. He was a good worker, always there, and not stopping work until closing time which I think was 5 o'clock. . . . I think we had supper at 6:00. I don't remember his ever staying home sick. . . . I have a vague remembrance that my father's work had something to do with "stops". I know he brought wood from home and "turned" some tool and knife handles during his lunch hour. At noon he and several of the "Swedes" used to play cards, but not for money. My father used to carry his lunch and thermos of coffee in a "Boston bag". His four sandwiches — always peanut butter on four slices of homemade oatmeal or Shredded Wheat raisin bread — and two pieces of white cake with chocolate frosting, were packed in a yellow Edgeworth tobacco pound tin. I still have one of those in my attic; my father was an inveterate pipe smoker. My mother used to get so sick of packing the same lunch day after day!"

Occasionally mistakes creep into the record. The stories about the organ factory in the October 1983 and January 1984 *Bulletins* contain three errors. First, the houses at 17-29 Lexington Street were described as being built by Frank Hastings in 1897 (Oct. 1983, p. 3; Jan. 1984, p. 3). In fact, these houses were pictured in the July 13, 1890 *Boston Herald* story about the factory, thus they were in existence by the earlier. date. Second, "Hastings Hall" was described as "demolished in 1944" (Oct. 1983, p. 9; Jan. 1984, p. 5). Jinny Wheeler Schofield and Doug Schofield — both of whom grew up in Weston — remember that the hall was gone in their youth, and point out that most men were at war in 1944, making that an unlikely date. Margery Viles Washburn recalls that "Hastings Hall" was demolished *before* the organ factory was taken down, an act we know was accomplished in July and early August of 1936! Third, the October 1983 *Bulletin* correctly states that Frank Hastings was 62 years old when he married Anna Coburn; page 7 of the January 1984 issue incorrectly lists Hastings as 63.