

# THE WESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN



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Mary Frances Peirce — as she probably looked when she delivered this talk to the Friendly Society — sitting in her room at the family homestead, the “Artemus Ward, Jr.-Benjamin Peirce House” at 543 Boston Post Road. After her death in 1914, the house — which the Peirces called “Lilac Farm” — was set back from the road on its present foundation.

## HAPPENINGS CONCERNING PEOPLE IN WESTON

*Mary Frances Peirce (1831-1914) was seventy-one when she addressed the Friendly Society on March 30, 1903. Excerpts from Miss Peirce's talk appear below. Many of the references in her presentation reach back to the 1840's and 1850's. After her retirement in 1886 from the Cambridge Latin School where she taught for thirty-four years, Miss Peirce lived the remainder of her life in the family home at 543 Boston Post Road, then called “Central Avenue”. Miss Peirce's meticulous editing of four volumes of Weston records is described in the May 1978 Bulletin. Ed.*

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My father, Benjamin Peirce, third of the name in Weston, was an energetic worker. Learning the trade of a baker, he carried on the business for some years and then retired to a farm, but not to rest. Never an idler himself, he had no sympathy and but little patience with a dawdler. He was willing that a man should do nothing — if he could feel happy that way — if the man had enough to live upon and take care of his family, if he had one; but if the man had no visible means of support and took plenty of time for



recreation my father had little regard for him. Not a church *member* my father was a constant *attendant* at church for both morning and afternoon service. So much so that when he was absent one morning, once said to me, "Why, is your father *sick*"? His example bore its fruit; for an older sister and myself agreed that we would not be absent from church for a year, without good and sufficient reason, and we were both quite young at the time.

Benjamin Peirce was very reticent and spoke but little of his own thoughts or feelings; but during his last sickness, he gave me the copy of a prayer that he had written out and said, "This prayer is of my own composition, and I have repeated it every morning for fifteen years". This was printed for the family, and a copy was given to Dr. Field, who said that it was one of the best prayers that he had ever read. With a moderate amount of book learning, my father had excellent common sense, and a working amount of legal knowledge. His fellow citizens recognized this and elected him to nearly every office in town. I have in my possession an Adams' Arithmetic, which he received, when a school boy, for excellence in that department from the afterwards celebrated teacher, the Rev. Cyrus Peirce. This I did not learn from him, but was told it, after his death, by Dea. Samuel Hews.

At a time when drinking was a common habit, my father abstained. Molasses and water was the beverage which he took into the hay field. When total abstinence was the topic of the day, I heard a neighbor say to him, "I have made up my mind to drink no more rum". I think that I never told anyone of this before. My father said nothing, and I felt at the time that there was no need of speech. A cousin of his told me once, that someone in Mendon, where he was then living, and where almost all were in the habit of taking their daily dram, told him in her presence, that he wished that he could let liquor alone as my father could. I presume that he could have done so, if he had made up his mind that he would. So much in justice to his memory.

Going to Boston one day with a load of corn, my oldest brother, Benjamin, was accosted by a colored man and his wife. They were anxious for the corn, which my brother would sell only by the barrel. The old woman asked her husband, if he thought that they could eat the whole barrel full. "Yes", said he, "eat it easy".

Later, two fellows in Boston tried an old game upon my brother; but they did not find him as green as they expected. While he was looking about after having disposed of his marketing, one approached him in an apparently cheery manner, held out his hand and saluted him as "Mr. Jones" and asked after the folks at Harvard. "You are mistaken", said my brother, "I'm Mr. Brown of Shirley". After a little more conversation, the first one withdrew, soon after, number two came up in an equally effusive manner and said, "how do you do Mr. Brown, and how are all the folks at Shirley? I have not been there for some time, but I knew you at once. How it goes?" "First rate", said my brother, and made an appointment to meet him at a certain place. Picking up a policeman, he neared the place; but when the fellows caught sight of the brass buttons, they disappeared.

The Jones brothers, Marshall and John, kept a harness-making shop. In winter, they kept at work until about nine o'clock. This was the place to resort to for news. Col. John was an auctioneer and quite tonguey, as is usual with that craft. When George Bigelow gave up his dry goods store to go to Waltham, his stock was sold at auction. There were two moth-eaten tippetts [scarves]. The Colonel held one of these in his hand, and Mrs. Marshall Hews, the other. One was bid off to her for a trifle, and Col. Jones said "which one will you have"? She hesitated a few seconds, then said, "the one you have got". He tossed it to her and said, "I guess you did not see the holes in it". "No", said she, "but I saw them in this one".

In the attic of Mr. Bigelow's tavern was a dark room so contrived that, when the door was shut, no ray of light could be seen outside. Here card-playing was carried on with money, in other words — gambling. Now, under the name of "whist", card-playing may be carried on in the light of day on the ground floor without offence to anyone. In the Hall, which occupied the whole of the last end of the tavern house, religious services were held, after the pulling down of the old church and during the building of the new, in 1840. In this Hall, was the pulpit taken from the church pulled down in 1840. This was painted white, and the top was covered with red woolen damask more or less torn. It was trimmed around with red fringe made over wooden moulds. The top had previously





This photograph of Miss Peirce's parlor probably was taken at the same time as the picture on page 1.

been covered with silk damask; for two of the girls, putting their hands in the holes, had succeeded in pulling out pieces of the original covering, put on I presume in 1815, when the inside of the church was altered and repaired and a new pulpit was built. I was late on the scene; but, for years, a small piece was in my possession. If I had it now, I would put it in our church scrapbook, materials for which you so persistently forget to bring me. I asked Mr. Theodore Jones, two years ago, what became of the pulpit; but to my astonishment, he could not remember that it had ever been in the house. Probably it was removed, before he went to live there, his father having previously owned and occupied the present Dickson house [on Concord Road], formerly the home of the Rev. Samuel Woodward.

Across the road from the tavern house, was another dry-goods store of more ancient date, near where the store of Cutting and Sons now stands. Within my remembrance, it was kept by George Smith, whose mother owned the estate, joining the church land on the last. In the building, of which the store was a part, lived Benjamin James, physician, town clerk, and school committee man. The larch tree standing on the south side of the sidewalk, until a short time ago was in his garden. The posts of the fence were found in digging the pit where the hay scales now stand. The open well that was behind the house is under the floor of the store, near the door into the passage into the P.O. Department. The doctor was a stout man. He rode in a sulky, carried an ivory headed cane, and wore green glasses with side lenses. At his auction, about 1845, my mother bought the brass knocker on his front door. She went home and slipped it into some screw holes on our East door, from which it had evidently been taken, since. The doctor's sister, Eunice James, had previously owned the house bought by my father in 1836 and he himself had occupied it. The other two members of the school committee were Dr. Field, the Unitarian minister, and Mr. Crane, the Baptist minister. The latter lived, kept a horse, and laid up money on four hundred dollars a year.



George Smith's store had been previously kept by Henry Wellington, and before that time by Charles Merriam, who here laid the foundation of his fortune. So large an assortment of goods did he keep, that people came from other towns to trade here.

Smith had a clerk, William Hastings, who afterwards went to Boston, to the store of Lane and Lamson. Here he became a member of the firm and died a rich man. While a clerk in town, he showed his aptitude for trade. At that time, thread was usually bought and sold in skeins. My mother was ordering a certain number of skeins, when he asked her, why she did not buy it by weight. She agreed to take it that way. The next time she saw him, she told him that she did not get quite so much thread for her money, buying it by weight as when she bought it by the dozen! My sister Caroline Briggs, daughter of a former owner, walked round the west chimney of the house on the roof, when they were girls. My own courage was not quite equal to the effort, but I saw them do it.

Mr. Henry Wellington, was at one time Tax Collector of the town, and in settling with Mr. Benjamin March, who owned the Sohler place, he could not make the change for him into a cent. Mr. Wellington carelessly told him that he would give it to him, sometime. A month or so after, Mr. March went into the store and said, "I'll take tha 'ere cent". This is the man, who went to Dr. James to see about pulling an aching tooth. The doctor was going to charge him a quarter. Mr. March said that in that case he would not have it pulled, as he was going up to Ashby in the spring and he could have it pulled there for a shilling.

An odd experience happened to my brother and myself. When we were in California, on our way from Hotel Del Colorado to Los Angeles. The conductor came and told us that owing to washouts we could not get through and would have to spend the night at Orange, a small town with a small hotel. We accepted the situation and reached the place at suppertime. After this meal was over, we adjourned to the parlor, where we found two strangers, a man and his wife, also delayed. We made ourselves as sociable as we could, and among other things said that we were from Massachusetts from the town of Weston. The lady said, "My father was born in Weston, his name was Fiske". I almost jumped from my chair. "Henry Fiske?" said I— I never knew him, but I had seen his name on the records. He was brother to Alonzo. "Yes," said she. From the name of her husband, Dewing, I think that he too had some connections with Weston as there were Dewings in the S. part of the town. I was struck with the coincidence. Here were four people, stranded in a little town in a faraway state, all hailing from Weston, and Weston, you know, is not a large town.

For years a man picked the grapes growing wild in a wood belonging to a widow and sold them. One did the same with blueberries — picked in our own land — although he knew that the owner had a use for them. These were good Baptists, as well as the man who was driving heifers past our house, which were so unruly, that they did not cease their gambolling, until he swore roundly at them to the great glee of one who had often heard him in prayer meeting.

Things growing in the country, are often considered lawful plunder. My father saw a man driving out of his land with a whole load of ground pine untrailing evergreen which he had gathered for Christmas sale. He let him keep it, but he probably told him that it would be well to ask the next time. It can hardly be found there now. I was watching for the blossoming of some rare flowers that are sometimes to be found on our land and I said to my brother, "When those flowers are in blossom, let me know". "Oh!", said my brother, "\_\_\_\_\_ picked those a fortnight ago." Last summer, I saw a party of girls, under a sweet apple tree, just outside the garden. I went out to see who they were and what they wanted. The oldest girl said that she did not suppose that apples *in the field* belonged to anybody. I asked her, if she came from Boston. She said "yes". This I believe was not true, I told her to keep the apples, but to remember that out in the country everything belonged to somebody. Mr. Case told me, last summer, that he had certain flowers growing in his woods, but he never got any, because somebody else came and picked them. I placed an inconspicuous label on some of my own and wrote on it, "the owner of these would like the privilege of picking a few."

Not long ago, a person sent a man in to a neighbor's land in Weston to dig up twenty-five or more young trees. When detected, he said that he did not suppose that she cared for young pines. The court made him pay a dollar a piece for them — and served him



right. Why should I tell you of the man, who with thirty red peonies blossoming at once in his yard, replied to a strange lady, riding in the stage that stopped at his door, who had asked him for one, "We don't pick those". Or of the one who was seen stealing sods from his neighbor's garden, in the early morning? Or of the woman, who, in the time of the Civil War, went into her neighbor's house, asking her to change a two-dollar bill that she might send to the store for some trifling thing? And when she received it, omitted to say that the reason for asking was that she had just heard that a premium was paid for small change.

We like to claim for our own those who have done well. Among these, few have made a more honorable name for themselves than Brigadier-General Leonard Wood. Although he was not born in this town, his mother was and had her early home here. My sisters tell of her going to the dancing school with them. On one occasion she wore a



Town historian, Miss Mary Frances Peirce (1831-1914), taught Arithmetic, Algebra, Plane and Solid Geometry, Trigonometry, Bookkeeping, English Literature, French, Greek, Latin, History, Political Economy, Rhetoric, and catalogued all books in the school library at the Cambridge Latin School! Further, she collected coins, stamps, butterflies, insects, shells, and minerals! She was 48 when this photograph was taken in 1879.

white dress, and for fear of taking the fresh look out of it, she stood up in the back part of her father's market-wagon and so rode all the way to the dancing hall.

The estate now owned by Mr. Francis B. Sears [on Boston Post Road] was once owned by my great grandfather. After his death, in 1781, the place was bought by the Rev. Samuel Kendal. About ten years later, the house burned down, one night. A market-man going to Bell's Hill, looked back and saw the fire. He said afterwards that when he went by the house, he *thought that it looked as though it was on fire*. He evidently thought that it would be a pity to waken the tired sleepers.

A school boy once wrote a composition in which he said that Weston had three natural curiosities: Devil's Den, Hell's Mouth, and John Cutting's Mill. It used to be said that the notorious Tom Cook once hid some spoons in Devil's Den.



Hell's Mouth (so called) is, I think, too little known. I never went to it but twice. The first time it was with a band of school mates. I do not think that one of us knew what it really was. The second time it was with a party of geological students under Prof. Barton. The Fitchburg Railroad had made a cut on one side, but it still showed a broad and deep depression. He asked us what it was. This time I understood and muttered under my breath, "I know", while one at my side said "this is the largest Kettle-hole that I ever saw". This was made in Glacial Age, ten-thousand years or so ago, and the builders of the Fitchburg Railroad had partly destroyed it, as they have wholly destroyed Adam's Chair, in Waltham, mentioned by Gov. Winthrop.

In Linwood Cemetery is a gravestone marked John Mason, 6 yrs. 7 mos. 1838. My mother used to tell us the tragic story of his death. He lived just beyond the Cherry Brook Station. When the children returned from school, the mother asked where John was. They had not seen him, but supposed him to have stayed at home. Search was made and his body was found in a small pond, which he had stopped on his way to school to slide across. To this day, I never see the pond, nearly opposite Mr. Merriam's gate, without thinking of the poor little boy, "taking just one slide" my mother used to say, and then sinking in the cold water.

It was an older sister of his who stopped at our next neighbor's and said that her mother would like to buy some eggs. "How many does your mother want?" "Well, I don't know, but I think that she would like several, if not more".

Isaac Jones, called Ensign and Captain, son of James, and grandson of Dea. Josiah, built the Golden Ball which stands opposite the present Baptist Church. This was built for a tavern and store. From the Diary of Mrs. Rebecca Baldwin, daughter of Rev. John Cotton of Newton and wife of Capt. Sam Baldwin of Weston, who was town clerk and tavern keeper and who lived in the Squire Fiske house, we learn the date of its erection. According to her record, the cellar was begun, February 27, 1765. Under date of April 16th 1765, she writes "Ensign Jones raised his house". "Being so father'd and so husbanded", her evidence ought to be accepted.

Some years ago, Mr. Andrew Jones, who has recently died, told me that the Golden Ball was built by his grandfather Isaac; two years before his own father, William Pitt Jones was born, which was Nov. 7, 1766 or two years after, he had forgotten which. Both periods seem to be covered by the building, as its owner seems not to have lived in it before 1769, having been taxed for several years previous, as living on the North side of the Great County Road.

The building of the Golden Ball has been, erroneously as I think, attributed to Col. Elisha Jones. The Diary of Rebecca Baldwin and the Testimony of Mr. Andrew Jones would seem to settle that point.

The Golden Ball, as perhaps you know, obtained its name from the tavern sign, a large wooden ball—a little larger than a football—gilded. If you look toward the top of the building, at the north-east corner, you will see the iron hook, from which the iron arm hung, from which the ball was suspended. If our Library Building Committee had given us a room in which to preserve old relics, it might be worth while to attempt to obtain this ball, which is still kept in the old Jones' house. If this should ever be done I hope that no attempt will be made to patch it up or regild it. Restored relics are no more like the original than Little Dutch Gretchens' aunt was like to her mother, although "as like as one pea to another". It is too late to look for the flag with thirteen stars burned in the Emerson house, and which evidently had a history.

At the beginning of the Revolution, the Golden Ball was searched by the patriots for the owner, Mr. Isaac Jones, who was suspected of being a Tory. He was not to be found, having been duly warned, but his son, Wm. Pitt, a Tory of ten or a dozen years, was dragged out from under the bed, where he had taken refuge. Mr. Jones afterwards made his peace with the town.

At the Golden Ball the British Spy stopped on his way westward. You will find the story in the History of Middlesex County under the town of Concord. I do not know whether to believe all of this story or not. The spy mentions a big tree that stood near the road at Stony Brook, capable of obstructing the highway, if felled so as to lie across it, as he said the patriots, or rebels, intended doing, if the British troops came that way with their artillery on that April morning. Mr. Luther Harrington told me that his father had



this cut down later, to somebody's great annoyance. The oldest Mr. Geo. W. Cutting said that a man rode on horseback along the trunk as it lay prostrate.

Wm. Pitt Jones was a Unitarian, a pleasant looking man, with long silvery hair. He was very lame and walked with a cane almost at a snail's pace almost daily to his neighbor's Dea. Abraham Hews, who kept the Post Office. Here he would read the newspapers, the subscribers not always getting the first chance. The letters of the Post Office were kept in the top of a writing desk, which was never full. The school children would stop occasionally to see if there were any letters. It was not often that one was carried away. The Deacon's wife, a pleasant old lady, would take out the pile, rarely exceeding a dozen, and read them over.

Samuel Hews, son of Deacon Abraham Hews, once stopped at a tavern in Watertown, said my mother. Someone sitting there threw a mug of flip over a new blue coat that he was wearing. He walked right along and took no notice of the offender. He was a potter by trade. At one time, he found a spider in the clay that he was working. He picked it out, washed it, and set it up to dry. He would not kill mosquitoes, but brushed them away with his hand, thinking that the Lord would not have made them, if he did not wish them to live. He was always ready to give a lodging in the shop, (which with the kiln stood west of Dr. Field's land), to anyone seeking it, and often added a breakfast in the morning. He started the singing and continued it. There was no instrumental music. Once, I remember, no one joined in, and he sang alone through the whole hymn. There was no music in his voice, but he gave what he had. I felt rather ashamed for the rest of them who could have sung, but did not. I did not dare to.

Easter, at the Normal School, my teacher urged me to sing. If I heard his step behind me, I was sure to be silent. He said that if a School Committee man should come to him for a teacher and should ask if I could sing, he should say "of course". Then when he came later to complain that I could not, he should say, "I said of course". "Of course, she can't."

Yet, when as "Betsey Martin", (a character acted by the writer at one of our Friendly Meetings, called "The Old Fashioned Singing School") I began to practice my fa-so-la, I had got no farther than the second note, when my teacher put up her hand and said not so well as that". So you see what might have been, if confidence had come earlier. *Possunt quia posse videntur* says Virgil. "They can, because they think they can." (They are able because they seem to be able.)

Mary Frances Peirce, 1903

## WOMEN IN THE RESISTANCE

A new book, *Women in the Resistance and in the Holocaust: The Voice of Eyewitnesses* by fellow-member Vera Laska was published in March. Dr. Laska, herself a resister and concentration camp inmate, has brought together the first representative collection of women's memoirs of the resistance, of the Holocaust, and of hiding to save their lives. Vera is Chairperson of the Division of Social Sciences and Professor of History at Regis College, and previously has published books on women of the American Revolution, Benjamin Franklin, Czechs in America, and Nazism. *Women in the Resistance*, with a foreword by Simon Wiesenthal, is available from Greenwood Press for \$29.95, and from the Regis College Bookstore at a discount.

## WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS!

Joseph Benotti of Silver Hill Road; Alan Day and Nancy Vescuso of North Avenue; Mr. and Mrs. Richard Hersum of Aberdeen Road; Mrs. Edward Landy of Jericho Road; Mr. and Mrs. G. Robert Macdonald of Sunset Road; and Mr. and Mrs. Robert L. Seavey of Aberdeen Road.

Several members were listed in incomplete or incorrect fashion in the March 1983 *Bulletin*. They are: Miss Anne C. Coburn; Mrs. Edward S. Coburn of Lincoln; Mr. and Mrs. Edward W. Coburn; Dr. and Mrs. Thomas B. Fitzpatrick; and Mr. and Mrs. Philip W. Trumbull of Robin Road.



## “SLOW BOATS TO CHINA: THE OLD CHINA TRADE, 1784-1840”

This was the title of the most enjoyable lecture — with slides — at the Annual Charter Anniversary Dinner on Thursday, May 17, 1984, at the undercroft of St. Peter's Episcopal Church.

The speaker was Louis L. Tucker, director of the Massachusetts Historical Society, the successor of our president Steve Riley in that position. He is the former State Historian of New York. Most importantly he is a true-blue blooded scholar, and he has a sense of humor. His talk was spiked with witty asides, at times heckling in a most tender way the Society, Steve Riley and the audience. Quoting Robert Benchley, he quipped: “Before I give my speech, I'll say something.” And he did, and his jokes caused hilarity. It was a well warmed-up audience that listened to his fascinating tale of the old China trade.

We heard of the Polo brothers and of Marco Polo, who journeyed to China in the 13th century, stayed twenty years, and gave the European world its first knowledge of that far away land. Missionaries who followed, Henry the Navigator of Portugal, Columbus, and numerous others studied Marco Polo's reports — although it did not do much good to Columbus, who took a wrong route and instead of landing in China, discovered America.

There were some contacts between the British colonies in America and China, but officially, United States trade with China started two hundred years ago, when the ship *The Empress of China*, built in Boston, sailed from New York on Washington's birthday in 1784, and reached China six months later. Her main cargo was ginseng, worth its weight in gold in those days. (I can not refrain from interjecting a note here: when I visited China this spring of 1984, one of my fellow travellers carried a package of American ginseng to Shanghai for a friend's friend, in spite of the fact that China does have ginseng; but American ginseng evidently still has the better reputation. It took quite some diplomatic maneuvering to get the package to its addressee, assuring all involved Chinese that the parcel contained ginseng and not any spy material!) The cargo on the return trips of American ships was tea, silk, and porcelain.

Later trade involved otter skins from the North-West, called “solf gold” by the Russian traders; it was a most popular fur in China around 1785-1825. Still later it was seal skins; seals were killed by the millions, and brought astronomical profits to the traders, who purchased them for trinkets and sold them with handsome mark-ups in China.

After a most informative lecture, our speaker showed slides (on a double screen, no less). They were carefully selected pictures of paintings and drawings of the China trade days; they supported the contents of the lecture and they helped bring home the colorful figures and places that had witnessed the era of the slow boats to China.

Dr. Vera Laska

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We wish to acknowledge the kind contribution of the Rev. David Butler, the new Congregational minister in Weston, who offered the following beautiful prayer at the beginning of our dinner:

*Lord, God of our beginning and God of our end, we bring you our thanks for the gifts of your love that fill our lives. We give you thanks for rich traditions, firmly planted roots, and a heritage from which to grow and build. We ask you to help us carry the wisdom and strength of that heritage into our unsettled future. You, Lord, are a god of history, liberating the oppressed, raising up the downtrodden, upholding the just, proclaiming your nature in the shape of our common life. We ask you to help us read the map of our past, and to see your will in our present and your destiny in our future. Lord, our God, let your blessing be upon us. Amen.*





North Avenue, looking northwest, almost a century ago! This photo, taken probably in the early 1890's, includes the site of the present Mobil station, just to the left center of the picture; and the Cedar Hill Dairy Joy, which occupies the site of the large farmhouse in the far right background. Notice the fences and stone walls to keep the cattle being driven to summer pasture — as far away as Stow — in the dirt road! Nine of the ten houses pictured are still standing.

## NORTH AVENUE: A QUARTER MILE OF CHANGE

Since the early Seventeenth Century, North Avenue has been known by many names, among them "North County Road", "Lancaster Road", "Lancaster Turnpike", "Great Road", "Concord Road", "Conant Road", and "on the road leading to Waltham", listed in deeds and mortgages. The picture above is the section of North Avenue now numbered from 263 to 331, the quarter-mile ending just beyond King's Grant Road. Of the houses in the photograph, only the Alonzo Fiske house at 331 North Avenue, where the Dairy Joy is located, is not still standing.

The land on both sides of the road was once the property of the Fiske family who were said to have owned a square mile from the present Merriam Street and Lincoln Road, to below Viles Street, to the land of Whitney (Whitney Tavern). Thomas Underwood and his wife Magdalen, a sister of Nathan Fiske, sold 220 acres to Nathan for ten pounds! The Fiske names — William, Nathan, Jonathan, Alonzo, Sewall, and the last Nathan who died in 1912, all appear in deeds and transfers of property from 1673 to 1912. A large part of the farm of Alonzo S. Fiske farm was conveyed to his son, Lieutenant Nathan Fiske in 1873. This "Nathan" died a bachelor in 1912 and the property was sold to the Schrafft family — of the candy and restaurant business in Boston. Mrs. Schrafft refused to live "in the country", thus the farm was sold to Charles Cahill who called the farm "Cedar Hill" and produced certified milk. Later the property was sold for development.

Following the photograph on the left hand side, the houses on the south side of the road are:

272 North Avenue. In 1843 this house was deeded to George W. Garfield. A barn with this property is not in the picture but was located to the left. The next building, set back from the road, is a barn built by George W. Garfield. It is located on Stony Brook, had an under cover, undershot water wheel, on the lower level, a balcksmith shop and a cider mill on the first level. The barn was torn down about 1910. This property is now 282 North Avenue.

The next two buildings are barns that were part of the property at what is now 306 North Avenue, the house being built by Ebenezer Tucker in 1838. The Tuckers raised nine children in this house, the last on the south



side of the road in this photograph. One of the Tuckers' sons, George, was killed by a sniper at Petersburg, Virginia, on July 4, 1864. One of the barns was a dairy barn and the other a blacksmith shop where tools were made by hand for the Boston seed company, "Brecks". Both barns were torn down just after the turn of the century.

Following the houses on the north side of the road, we see on the right:

263 North Avenue, the house in the foreground. This house was built about 1875. Town Records of 1877 list "Samuel Patch, Jr. [See May 1983 Bulletin. Ed.] "1 dwg. \$600, ½ acre \$100, part of 5 acres bought in 1867". The barn burned to the ground in the 1930's, but the shop, in the foreground is still in use and the house, with the addition of a porch around the door, is still the same. It was here that Samuel Patch, Jr. was struck by a bolt of lightning and killed when twenty-eight years old, leaving a two-year old son. His widow later married Dan Garfield, a neighbor who lived two houses up North Avenue and adopted the son, Frank.

271 North Avenue is the Hiram Garfield homestead, with ell attached and barn to the rear of the ell. An 1852 Registry of Deeds book indicates "\$300 paid by Hiram Garfield, land with buildings thereon (barn)". In 1885 Hiram Garfield was assessed for "1 dwg., 3 barns, shop, 12 acres, 15 acres". In 1887 Garfield sold to Hiram Bennett and the Bennetts built the ell to house a maiden aunt of Mrs. Bennett. It has been a two-family house since the death of the aunt.

The roof above the Hiram Garfield house is 277 North Avenue. This was the homestead of George W. Garfield, father of Hiram, George and Daniel. It was purchased from Nathan Fiske in 1820, and there is a record of discharge of mortgage in 1831. This house appears on the 1825 map, but not the 1794 map. Mrs. Daniel Garfield, mentioned above, did extensive remodelling, changing the house from a salt box to the present 2½ story building. The barn, to the right of this photograph, blew down in the 1938 hurricane.

293 North Avenue is the John Guthrie house. Land was sold by Alonzo S. Fiske and Nathan Fiske to Guthrie in 1891.

The house behind the Guthrie house is 297 North Avenue, the second house on this one acre lot, sold to George N. Stevens in 1890. The first house was destroyed by a fire and the present building immediately erected. This was sold to Andrew J. Winslow in 1896.

The last building in the picture is that of the Fiske Homestead, described above as 331 North Avenue, since destroyed. Until the Fiskes began to sell some of their extensive acreage, this was probably the only house between Conant Road and Viles Street — with the exception of a dwelling on the west corner of Conant Road and North Avenue listed as owned by Joseph Hickson on the 1794 map.

Elsie Cooke

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