

THE WESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN



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Madame Marian R. Case

MADAME MARIAN AND "STONE WALLS OF WESTON"

Memory — not necessarily history.

A two and one half dollar gold piece. Have you ever seen one? I doubt it. Gold coins went out of circulation in the United States in 1933. I still have one, and it is linked in my memory with the Case sisters, specifically with Madame Marian, and with stone walls.

My parents moved to Weston from Newton in 1908, and rented a house, still standing on Ash Street, from the Case estates. I remember that my mother always referred to the Case sisters as Madame Louise and Madame Marian. The Case estate needed the Ash Street house in 1914 for a chauffeur's residence. My father acquired the land at 78 Chestnut Street and built the house where I now live from the Barker farm which at that time occupied a good stretch of land along the south side of the street.

Large estates were common in Weston in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The Weston Historical Society Museum has a framed page from the Boston Sunday Herald of May 1, 1902, headlined "Weston — The Lennox of Eastern Massachusetts," with pictures of ten Weston "mansions," of which three, including the Case house, are still standing.

The Case family bought land facing Wellesley, School and Newton Streets in 1863, and the home which they built there is now used by the Weston public schools as an administration center.

The two Case daughters, Louise and Marian, inherited the estate. Madame Louise, as I remember her, received the mansion, barns and adjoining property, on the east side of the intersection of Wellesley and Newton Streets. Madame Marian received the land and buildings along Wellesley Street south of the intersection.

The sisters also inherited from their parents a love of the land and a pride in well tended fields and woods.

Madame Louise used large areas of her property for work with various horticultural institutions, principally Harvard University's Arnold Arboretum. Madame Marian was personally involved with all aspects of the management of her property. She added several parcels to her own holdings, and in 1909 Hillcrest Farm was established for experiments in scientific agriculture and also "to employ the boys of the town through their long summer vacation."¹

It is not my purpose here to write a history, either of the Case estate, the Case sisters, or Hillcrest Farm. In any case, the Weston Historical Society Museum has a fairly complete set of pamphlets about the "Hillcrest Farm Boys" and their summer activities between 1909 and 1943.

Furthermore, there are still a few people living in Weston who worked on Hillcrest Farm, and whose memories of the farm are more valid than mine, since I never worked there.²

I don't know when Madame Marian started the Case Essay Prize Competition, but I was a freshman in Weston High School for the last one in 1929. Entries were limited to the four high school grades, and each grade competed for three prizes — a ten dollar gold piece, a five dollar gold piece, and a two and one half dollar gold piece.

Madame Marian set the theme each year, and that year "Stone Walls of Weston" was chosen. Since the Case estate has many examples of stone walls, which were always kept in good repair (most of them are still standing, if you care to look), it was obvious, to me at least, that the Case stone walls should be included in my manuscript.

Moreover, the competition was always held in the fall, against the wishes of the teachers, for academic reasons, but, in a way, this was lucky for me. Weston High School had had a football team early in the century, but had not fielded a team since 1917. Football was taken up again in my freshman year, and since the squad was small, and I was large for my age, I made the team, and promptly sprained my right wrist.

I took my problem to the chairman of the essay committee and was allowed to draft an amanuensis. I chose Harry Jones, the one person in the entire high school with perfect penmanship. To this day his handwriting is copy book perfect.

Whether it was my choice of the Case farm stone walls, or my choice of stand-in copier, I have no way of knowing. I still have the prize and I am still fascinated by Weston's stone walls. I owe you, Harry!

Douglas Henderson

Former diplomat Douglas Henderson is a long time resident of Weston.

¹Marian Roby Case. "The Second Summer at Hillcrest Farm, Weston, Mass," Weston: By the Author, 1911, p.4.

²If so, please share your memories with our readers. V.L.

THE POCKETBOOK ISSUE THAT ATTRACTED WEALTHY BOSTON TAXPAYERS TO WESTON IN THE LATE 19TH CENTURY

Weston's high property values are generally attributed to its good schools, its location at the intersection of the Mass Turnpike and Route 128, and its large amount of green space. While good zoning and conservation policies initiated in the 1950s (earlier than in most neighboring towns) can be credited for the town's pleasing aesthetics, one of the reasons Weston had large tracts of land that could be preserved was that land had been held in the estates of wealthy families. These families had acquired the land in the last quarter of the 19th century and the first dozen years in the 20th. We will never know all of the reasons for their locating in Weston but there is evidence that pocketbook considerations, and not just the desire for rural surroundings, could have been significant factors.

The relocation of wealthy residents to suburban towns began in the late 1860s and by 1916 was described as having been "a veritable hegira under which the attractive suburbs of Boston were rapidly built up at the expense of the city's tax rolls."¹ The population shift could also have been described as "tax flight," because blame for the city's loss of tax base, and the betterment of the suburbs', was placed on the property tax imposed on intangible property. By the late 1800s this principally meant cash and the stocks and bonds of out-of-state corporations. For centuries the property tax imposed on highly visible farm land and domestic animals had been a successful source of government revenues, but by the mid-1800s many states struggled with the problems of imposing this same tax on the easily concealed wealth of corporations and their shareholders. For an industrial state like Massachusetts it was particularly difficult.

Until the mid-19th century Massachusetts had faced few financial problems. The state's tax system, brought from England by the Bay Colonists, had been maintained continuously through Massachusetts' early statehood. Even in the years following the revolution, when wealth from maritime commerce had led to sizeable fortunes in intangible personal property, there were still no serious issues, thanks to "an easy-going administration of the tax laws."² The imposition of property taxes on this class of property had led simply to increasing government assets.

The state's circumstances were changed by the mid-1800s. There were steep increases in both state taxes and expenditures: the state helped finance the Civil War through the issuance of bonds; immigration surged, almost doubling the population of the cities between 1880 and 1910; and citizens' needs were matched with a willingness to provide social services.³ The philosophy behind the expansion of the role of government in these years is attributed to the "tradition of government leadership and social responsibility that was rooted far back in the Commonwealth's history."⁴ Between 1861 and 1874 state and local taxes increased from \$8.3 million to \$33.7 million, and the per capita tax burden tripled.

The legislature attempted to increase revenues and remove administrative tax problems by adopting a corporation franchise and state taxes on banks, but revenues proved insufficient, and tremendous pressure on local property taxes remained. Boston tackled the problem with the appointment in 1865 of a vigorous and efficient assessor, Mr. Thomas Hills. Mr. Hills produced revenues but with results that were not those intended. His approach to increasing revenues was tax law enforcement, greatly increasing the

value of Boston's property assessments. The unintended result was that within the first five years \$14 million in taxable personal property was transferred, by relocation of the owners, from Boston to eight suburban towns.⁵

In 1875 Boston's aggressive approach to revenue caused the first of ten tax commissions to study the property tax problem. Its conclusion: "From every quarter there are demands of change."⁶ A principal complaint was that wealthy taxpayers were changing residence to where tax rates were low, and administration of the tax casual. The commission blamed not only the law but the dishonest behavior of tax assessors and wealthy property owners:

It is currently stated that persons of means, before taking their domicile in some towns, come to an understanding with the assessors as to the amount for which they shall be taxed... The truth is that the present system offers great temptations. A rich man, coming into a small town and building a handsome house there, adds in any case so much to its taxable resources. The assessors have everything to gain and nothing to lose by attracting such men as residents.⁷

The report of subsequent tax commissions presented further evidence substantiating the relocation of wealthy taxpayers to "favored" towns, among them Weston. Besides Weston, the other towns cited were: Brookline, Cohasset, Dalton, Dover, Falmouth, Groton, Hamilton, Hopedale, Lancaster, Lincoln, Manchester, Milton, Nahant, Wellesley, Wenham and Westwood.⁸

Between 1871 and 1891 not less than \$75 million of personal estates assessed in Boston through the diligence of Mr. Hills were removed to fifteen favorite towns. In the former year these towns had assessed \$26,750,000 of personal property; in the latter their personal assessments had advanced to \$52,558,000....[but] it would appear that the local assessors had taxed but one-third of these estates. In 1882, one town received an estate assessed in Boston at \$800,000, and in the following year increased its assessment of personal property by no more than \$281,000, but was able nevertheless to reduce its tax rate from \$11 to \$7 per \$1000.⁹

A 1908 commission reported that by 1904, 17 towns, again Weston among them, had personal property valued at \$66.9 million, 14 towns had \$13 million, while the 300 and some other towns shared \$41.9 million.¹⁰ The per capita tax revenue from this personal property was an average of \$13.11 for the 17 towns, \$5.60 for the 14, and only \$2.24 per capita for all the remaining.

Causing fiscal disparities among the cities and towns to be even worse was the manner in which the corporation franchise was distributed. In the mid-1800s, when the tax on Massachusetts corporations became a state tax, the revenue representing the former tax on shareholders was distributed to the towns in which shareholders were domiciled. This meant that when wealthy shareholders moved out of high tax cities and into suburban towns, they took with them not only their taxable intangible properties but their municipality's entitlement to state revenues from the corporate franchise. In 1905 the same wealthy towns, including Weston, had average per capita receipts from corporation taxes of \$9.50 compared with \$2.83 for Boston and \$1.37 for all other cities. The result was notable fiscal disparities between the few favored towns and the rest of the state, a situation which worsened over the years.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Per Capita Local Revenue, 1865, 1885 and 1905
From Personal Property and State Corporate Excise Distributions

| <u>Personal Property</u> | <u>1865</u> | <u>1885</u> | <u>1905</u> |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 14 Suburban Towns | \$4.82 | \$9.24 | \$13.65 |
| Rest of State | \$5.00 | \$3.33 | \$ 3.73 |
| <u>Corporate Excise Distribution</u> | | | |
| 14 Suburban Towns | \$2.05 | \$5.04 | \$10.36 |
| Rest of State | \$0.81 | \$1.15 | \$ 1.62 |

Source: *Massachusetts House No. 1150*, Report of Tax Commission, January 1908.

As serious as the problems were, Mr. Hills and the 1000-member assessors association which he headed strenuously fought proposals to change the way intangible property was taxed and instead supported state-wide enforcement of full taxation. In 1908 two changes in state law made this almost feasible. The state adopted a direct inheritance tax, and during the same year, but in a separate context, the tax commissioner was given authority to supervise the performance of local assessors. The new inheritance tax meant that for the first time an inventory of a deceased taxpayer's estate was filed with the state tax commissioner. With his new authorization both to supervise assessors and to provide them with information that would assist them in the performance of their duties, the commissioner began the practice of distributing to local assessors the inventories the state gained from the inheritance tax records, inventories of detailed listings of previously concealed and undeclared personal holdings in taxable corporate stocks and bonds. The commissioner followed this with pressure for assessors to pursue taxpayers for their full tax liabilities.

Once again the effect of improved tax administration was not as expected. One unhappy result was evidence of residents' shifting property not only from cities to towns but outside of the state. At the same time, stepped-up city tax assessments further stimulated the migration to suburbs:

Whenever the assessors in the ordinary city or town, acting upon the information furnished by the supervisors, increased materially the assessment of personal property, some favored town immediately acquired new inhabitants. The average rate of taxation in the state was gradually increasing from about \$17 per \$1000...but in the wealthy residential towns tax rates were often less than \$10 per \$1000 and valuations were low. ¹¹

By the time of the 1908 commission report, the problems of administering a property tax on intangible property had become so widely recognized that there was support even from Mr. Hills that a new tax approach be required; improved administration would not be the answer. The commission concluded that the fiscal advantages to the "favored towns" were so serious that "Unless a radical reform can be secured, a few communities are certain to grow richer, while the rest of the State, so far as the taxation of personal property was concerned, is bound to grow steadily poorer." ¹²

Per Capita Assessment on Personal Property , Massachusetts, 1861 and 1905

| | <u>1861</u> | <u>1905</u> |
|-------------------|-------------|-------------|
| 14 Suburban Towns | \$432.36 | \$1,194.00 |
| Rest of State | \$247.55 | \$ 219.05 |

Source: *Massachusetts House No. 1150*, Report of Tax Commission, January 1908.

Although solutions had been sought for many years, none were satisfactory. The exemption of intangible property from all taxes was too transparently inequitable, and because of the revenues that would be lost too impractical, and the Supreme Judicial Court rejected a proposed local 3-mill excise as unconstitutional. Other states struggled with the same issues, and finally Wisconsin solved the problem in 1911 by adopting a personal income tax. The income tax solution, which in retrospect appears so obvious, was not initially congenial with the state's politically conservative politicians. In 1911 the General Court rejected ratification of the income tax amendment to the U.S. Constitution, only voting for it in 1912 when the required number of states had already brought it into effect. But by 1915, with other options no longer available, and the evidence of tax evasion, inequitable impact, and the above discussed fiscal municipal disparities growing ever larger, there was widespread support and virtually no controversy.

In Massachusetts the adoption of an income tax required an amendment to the state's constitution. The day before the vote (November 2, 1915) *The Boston Evening Transcript* carried a front page ad featuring support for the amendment by "114 presidents or vice presidents of banks and insurance companies, 7 labor unions, 2 universities, 18 tax commissioners, 4 manufacturers, Mayor Curley and 3 judges." The vote was 73.4% in favor, with approval by every county in the state.

Although adoption of the state income tax, and the consequent exclusion of intangible property from the property tax, drew to a close the need for wealthy taxpayers to reduce their taxes on intangible properties by locating their homes in low tax suburbs, the towns chosen for this purpose during the previous 50 years have favored financial conditions that remain to this day. The state's local aid distributions are now designed with the intention of sending more state money to the cities and towns with the poorest local tax bases and less to the wealthiest. Weston and the other suburban towns no longer have the double benefit of proportional state distribution and their own strong tax bases. Still the essence of the observation of the 1908 tax commission continues to hold true:

It is too clear for dispute that a low tax rate and a nominal assessment upon one's personal property are desirable and even indispensable adjuncts to the natural advantages which a town can offer prospective residents; and it is certain that a rigorous assessment...and a tax rate of \$20 in the thousand will destroy the charm of the finest scenery in the Commonwealth.¹³

¹ Charles J. Bullock, "The Taxation of Property and Income in Massachusetts," The Quarterly Journal of Economics, November 1916, p.16.

² *Ibid.*, p.5.

³ Massachusetts was the first to adopt a system to assure state financial support for the poor and mentally ill and the first to change the name of the agency providing this service from the State

Board of Charity to the Department of Public Welfare. Massachusetts initiated “aid for dependent children,” to keep families intact 20 years before the federal program.

⁴ Richard M. Abrams, A Conservatism in a Progressive Era, Massachusetts Politics, 1900-1912, Cambridge, MA; Harvard University Press, 1964.

⁵ Bullock, p.16.

⁶ *Report of the Commission appointed to inquire into the expediency of revising and amending the laws of the Commonwealth relating to taxation*, October, 1875.

⁷ *Report of Commission*, pp.65-66.

⁸ The reporter noted that “In Dalton and Hopedale the concentration of personal property is due to the presence of large industries, and has come about in a perfectly legitimate way. In all the others large industries are conspicuous for their absence, and the concentration of personal property has come about in the manner described.”

⁹ Bullock, p.27.

¹⁰ *House No. 1150, Report of Tax Commission*, January 1908, p.40.

¹¹ Bullock, p.36.

¹² House No. 1150.

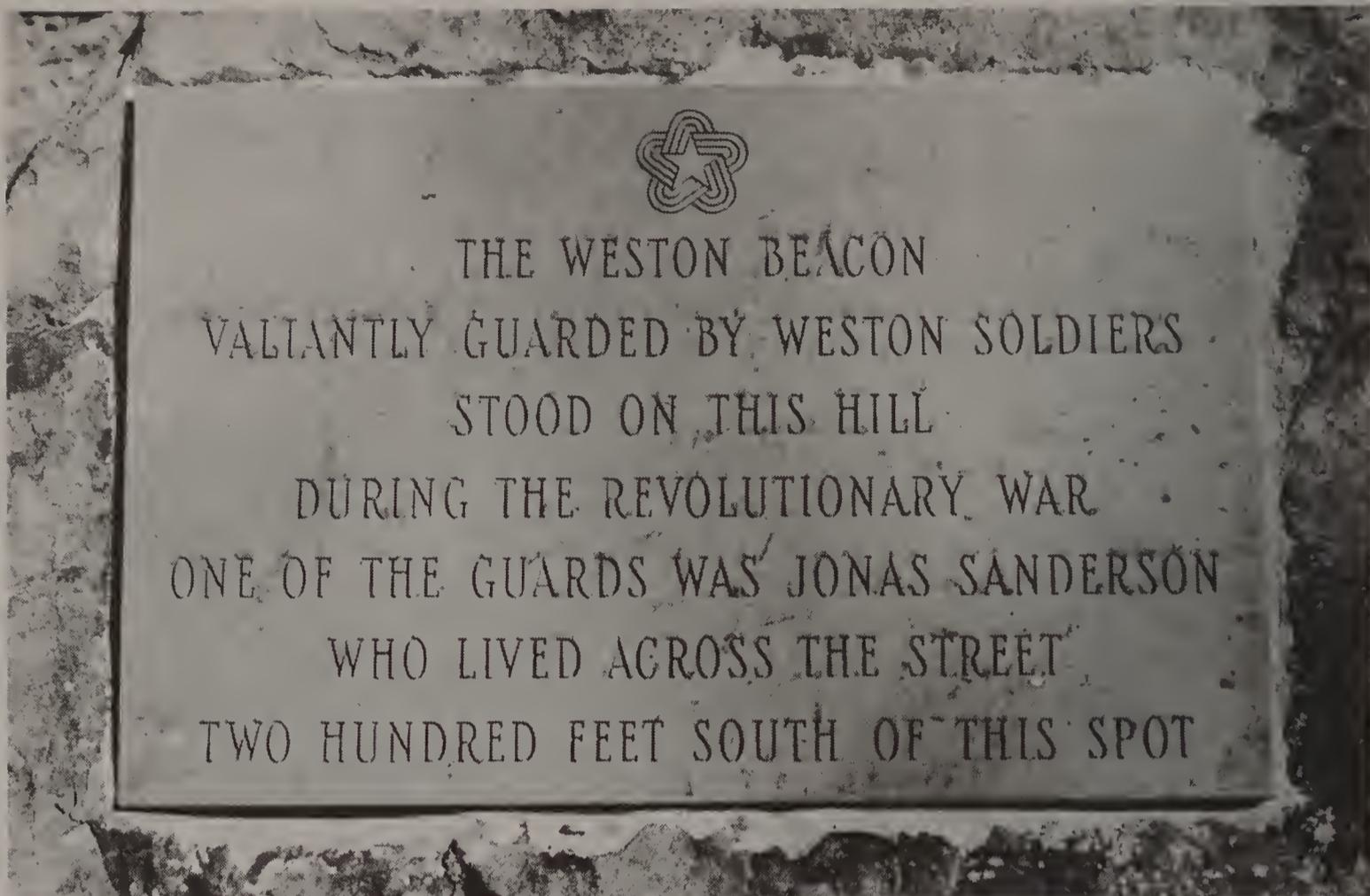
¹³ *Ibid.*

Weston resident Deborah Stark Ecker's work on Massachusetts state and local fiscal policy issues has been with the League of Women Voters, as an official in the Department of Revenue, as a staff member of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means, and as a member of the Weston Finance Committee.

ANNUAL MEETING OF 1995

The 32nd Annual Meeting of the Weston Historical Society took place at the Barn of the Josiah Smith Tavern on Wednesday, November 8, 1995. First on the agenda was the election of officers for the following year (see listing on the last page of this BULLETIN). The following directors were elected to three year terms: Ned Downing, Pamela Fox, Martha Katz and William Martin.

Prior to the meeting, the directors of the Society and their spouses had entertained the speaker of the evening at a dinner at the Weston Golf Club. After the business meeting at the Barn, George Amadon introduced the speaker, Mr. Leonard Tucker, Director of the Massachusetts Historical Society, to a full house. The distinguished speaker delivered a fascinating lecture about the history and present status of the Massachusetts Historical Society, the first state historical society in the country, with the appropriate respected reputation, with its seat in Boston. Slides illustrated his narrative. We heard of the purpose and history of this institution and viewed slides of various items in the collection: manuscripts, books, furniture, paintings and other items accumulated throughout the two centuries of the Society. Among the illustration was an 18th century mahogany highboy, donated a few years ago to the Society by our late director, Brenton H. Dickson.



The Weston Beacon Marker

WESTON BEACON TOWER

In the last part of August, 1778, a battle damaged French fleet sailed into Boston Harbor. During a naval engagement with the British off Newport, Rhode Island, the combined fleets were lashed by a monstrous hurricane which further injured the ships that had suffered battle damage. His Christian Majesty's 90 gun ship LANGUEDOC, a flagship of Admiral of the Fleet Count Charles Henri Theodat d'Estaing, had been dismasted and had lost her rudder. The CESAR was severely damaged, her captain losing his right arm, and carried 60 dead and 100 wounded among her crew.

On April 13, 1778, the French king ordered that a fleet of twelve ships of the line and five frigates set sail for America, there to engage in battle with any British forces there under the command of Count d'Estaing.

Due to the poor condition of the fleet his first attempt at combat failed as his ships drew too much water to cross over the bar at the New York Harbor, in which the British fleet was anchored. His planned assistance in the American attack upon Newport was interrupted by the arrival of the British fleet from New York; the battle between them followed his arrival to Boston for repairs.

Major General William Heath of the Continental Army, responsible for the defense of Boston, and Count d'Estaing became concerned for the safety of the French fleet, should a British squadron enter the harbor and attack. A defensive plan was established with the serviceable French warships to be anchored in the channel, Natasket Roads, and with cannon taken off some of the French ships, to be mounted on various islands which bordered the main channel into Boston. This potential firepower was thought to discourage any English attack upon the French fleet. In addition to the above, the militia of the surrounding towns were ordered to be prepared to march upon Boston, should an emergency occur.

To put the above plan in place, a series of signals were to be flown from the entrance of the channel at Hull, identifying any hostile ships entering the bay. Any signal of danger would notify the militia to march. Major General Heath, expanding this notification arrangement, developed a system of beacons that could be fired in case of attack by the British, calling out the militia.

The beacons were to be constructed on the Blue Hills, Malden and on a hill in Weston, on land formally called Coolidge's. This is just east of Highland Street, near Love Lane. There is a bronze plaque marking the nearby location of the beacon site. It is one of several markers in Weston referring to American history. The beacons were to be fired upon a signal from Beacon Hill.

I have found at the Massachusetts Historical Society among the Heath papers an order issued by the General as follows: "To Major Samuel Lampson, Weston, Massachusetts: You are hereby ordered and directed to detach from the militia of Weston a capable sergeant and men for the purpose of attending to the beacon in that town and to follow such orders as they shall receive from Major General Heath for that purpose." The only British attack stopped at Boston Light, leaving the French to set sail for the battle of Savannah in their restocked and refitted fleet.

George F. Amadon

George F. Amadon of Weston is a naval historian. The above article is part of the book he is writing, entitled The Fleurs de Lis in America.

POST SCRIPTUM I. TO THE FLAGPOLE

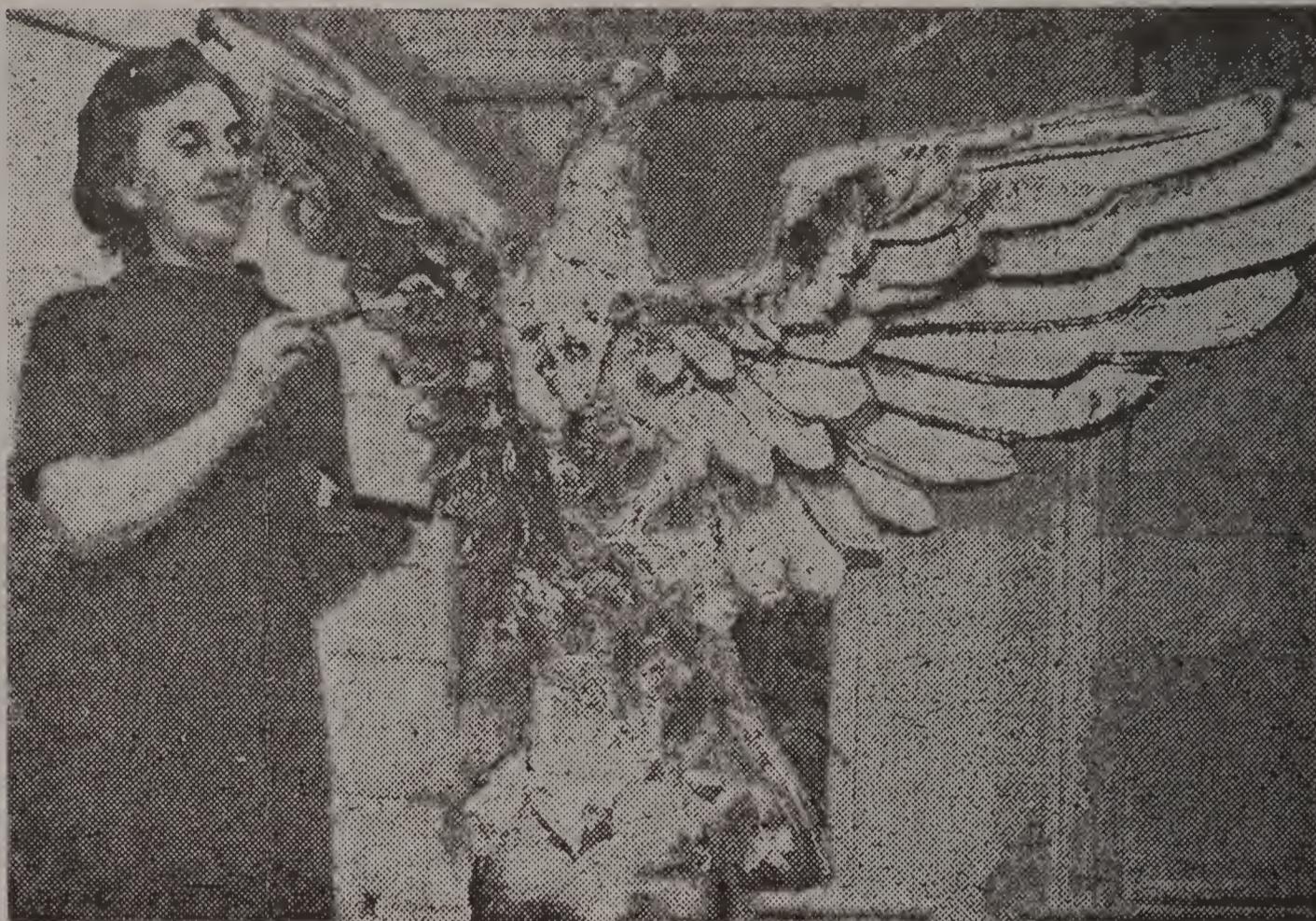
Mrs. Mary J. Gilligan of Waltham memorialized the new Weston flagpole of 1968 in verse:

A flagpole to some may be just a spar
Of seasoned timber; not so this premise.
A flagpole's spirit touches the stars
And its heart is host to hope and promise.

For craftsmen with art shape, taper its height,
Citizens dedicate it on the mall,
The colors are raised - a glorious sight,
Honoring veterans who heard country's call.

From deep in the forest the fir tree came;
Strong, resilient to serve liberty.
What greater gift than to be the frame
That hallows the standard of man's dignity.

A flagpole is watchguard to history,
For its staffs the flag of democracy.



Mrs. Theresa Raynard of West Peabody gold leafs the eagle atop new flagpole in Weston in 1968.

POST SCRIPTUM II. TO THE FLAGPOLE

When lightning struck the old flagpole on June 25, 1968, the eagle perching on its top literally flew off and landed on the soft turf, sustaining only minor injuries. Weston mythology has it that before hitting the ground, the eagle bounced off the late police lieutenant Larry Cugini's patrol car.

The E.B. Washburn Company of Danvers restored the eagle, and Theresa Raynard of West Peabody restored the gold leaf on it, in 23 carat gold, no less. That comes in three inch squares, at that time \$50 for a box of 25. Weston's eagle has been "fluffed up" by almost 700 squares. Think of your tax money up there upon the high, when you next lift your eyes to our eagle.

Sam Payson

THANKS TO SABRA JONES

After three years of faithful and inspired service, Weston Historical Society President Sabra Jones stepped down from her office. Ms. Jones deserves the highest praise for her dedicated labors on behalf of the Weston Historical Society. Under her able leadership the Society flourished, the BULLETIN was revived, an active Museum Committee established. Sabra Jones acted as the energetic person she is, whether taking care of legal matters or getting down to the business of cleaning house at the Fiske Law Office. Her cheerful optimism was contagious and spurred on the rest of the directors and the membership. We are all grateful for her time, talents and energy, and wish her well both in her on-going law office in Weston and in her new home in Hopkinton, Massachusetts.

WESTON'S HISTORICAL ORGANIZATIONS

To dispell any possible confusion between the historical organizations in Weston, here are their statements of purposes: the Weston Historical Society's from its incorporation and two descriptions of purpose supplied by Pamela Fox for the two others. One essential difference is that the Weston Historical Commission is a town organ appointed by the selectmen, while the Weston Historical Society and the Golden Ball Tavern Museum are private organizations.

PURPOSE OF THE WESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC. AS STATED IN ITS ARTICLES OF ORGANIZATION FILED WITH THE MASSACHUSETTS SECRETARY OF STATE UPON ITS INCORPORATION IN DECEMBER OF 1963

To gather, study, preserve, house and make available for use the records, relics and memorabilia relating to the history of the Town of Weston and its people, including current items which may become of historical interest in the future; and to disseminate information, particularly to the inhabitants of Weston in cooperation with its schools and otherwise, intended to promote greater understanding and appreciation of the history and traditions, both past and in the making, of the Town of Weston and its neighboring communities.

To receive donations and bequests to be used only to carry out the foregoing purposes of the corporation and to do all things along or in cooperation with other persons, associations, corporations or governmental agencies necessary or advisable to carry out any or all of the foregoing purposes and objects.

Provided, however, that no part of the net earnings or assets of the corporation shall be used except in the furtherance of the purposes for which it is formed and that no substantial part of the activities of this corporation shall be carrying on propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation and no part of the net earnings or assets of this corporation shall inure, upon dissolution or at any other time or under any other circumstances, to the benefit of the incorporators or any member or director of this corporation or any other person except at reasonable compensation for services actually rendered in furtherance of its purpose, and provided further, that this corporation shall not participate in or intervene in (including the publishing or dissemination of statements), any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

THE GOLDEN BALL TAVERN MUSEUM

The Golden Ball Tavern Museum at 662 Boston Post Road in Weston, is operated as a non-profit historic trust. The 1768 Golden Ball Tavern, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is one of the town's most important historic resources. The museum "peels back the layers" to show architectural, decorative and social change which occurred over the 200 years that the Jones family occupied the house. The museum is operated as an educational institution which gives regularly-scheduled guided tours of the house and also sponsors lectures, workshops, and educational programs for Weston and other school groups, organizes training seminars, trips and special days such as "Tools and Trades," "Tavern Days," a "Harvest Festival" and an annual outdoor antique show.

THE WESTON HISTORICAL COMMISSION

The Weston Historical Commission, established in 1968, is an agent of local government. Its most important goal is the preservation of Weston's historic places. The purpose of the Weston Historical Commission is to work toward this goal by planning for and implementing programs for the identification, evaluation, and protection of Weston's historic resources. For example, in 1993-94, the Weston Historical Commission conducted a comprehensive survey of Weston's historic buildings and neighborhoods.

Planning is the essential first step in developing an effective local preservation program. The historical commission works in cooperation with other municipal agencies to insure that the goals of historic preservation are considered in planning for future development of the community. The historical commission has been an active participant in local planning efforts of the Open Space Planning and Recreation Commission. It works with the Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, Conservation Commission and other municipal and private bodies whose work impacts the town's historic resources.

The Weston Historical Commission also coordinates with other local groups—such as the Weston Historical Society, the Golden Ball Tavern Museum, the Weston Public Library, and the Lyceum—whose interests also involve history or historic preservation. The commission is involved in the “Access to History” project which is working to improve access to research materials in Weston. The commission has co-sponsored lectures along with the Weston Historical Society and Golden Ball Tavern Museum. In many cases, these activities have the common goal of fostering pride in community identity.

It is the local commission's mandate to be the municipal guardian for state and federal preservation agencies, alerting them to local preservation issues.



INTRODUCING: LEE C. MARSH

Our new president, Lee C. Marsh, first became interested in the history of Massachusetts when she visited Boston during Hurricane Carol in 1954 and retrieved a shingle from the original cupola on the Old North Church which had blown down during the storm. Her eighth grade history teacher in Indianapolis encouraged Lee to present the details of her travels on the Freedom Trail to her class, and a career in the teaching of history was begun.

Lee majored in history and minored in political science and economics at Vassar College; the “Vassar method” required long hours of research in primary source materials and the development of personal interpretations of history. In turn, Lee has encouraged her students in Longmeadow, North Reading, and Weston High Schools to pursue this approach which increases their appreciation of the study of history. Lee completed a master’s degree in history at Boston College, taking several courses from Professor Thomas O’Connor who has contributed a great deal to the study of Boston history; Dr. O’Connor’s lectures frequently combine national issues with examples from local history, thereby giving his students an understanding of the history of the Greater Boston area.

Red Travis, a founder of the Historical Society, was one of the first Weston residents she met when she began teaching in Weston in 1969. Red invited her to become involved in the Society and took her on a tour of the major historical spots in town. Since this excellent introduction, Lee has studied the Hastings Organ Factory, the economic status of Patriots and Tories in revolutionary Weston, the records available for autobiographical studies by her students, and the nineteenth century news reports of Weston in the Waltham newspapers. She has been Editor of the Weston Historical Society BULLETIN, a member of the Society’s Board, and a member of the town committee which planned the celebration of the 275th Anniversary of Weston. She has served as President of the New England History Teachers Association and given three presentations at New England Council for the Social Studies Conferences. Lee received an MBA degree with a specialization in the management of nonprofit organizations from Northeastern University. She looks forward to cooperation between the Historical Society and the schools in the community.

SAVE THE DATE!

The annual dinner of the Weston Historical Society will take place on Thursday, May 9, 1996 at the Student Union Upper Lounge of Regis College. Wine and cheese at 6 p.m., dinner at 6:45 p.m., lecture at 8:15 p.m. The speaker for the evening is the well known architect and critic Jonathan Hale, author of several books, his recent one being The Old Way of Seeing (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1995, \$24.95; paperback \$14.95). The lecture will address the topic "The Old Way of Seeing: How Architecture Lost Its Magic and How to get it Back." Harvard's design expert John Stilgoe said about Hale: "Architectural magic intrigues Hale, not the mere sleight-of-hand effort that disgraces so many American cities today. Every client, every citizen determined to improve design, every architecture student ought to know this book."

See enclosed reservation slip.

THE WESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

President: Lee C. Marsh

Vice President: Vera Laska

Secretary: J. Kenneth Bennett

Treasurer: Harold A. Downing

Assistant Treasurer: Alice Douglas

Corresponding Sec.: Joseph Sheehan, Jr.

SPEAKERS COMMITTEE

George Amadon

Peter Bacot

William Martin

PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Sabra L. Jones

Martha Katz

Lee Marsh

FINANCE COMMITTEE

J. Kenneth Bennett

Alice Douglas

Harold Downing

MUSEUM COMMITTEE

George Amadon

Douglas Henderson

Vera Laska, Curator

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Joseph Sheehan, Jr.

EDITORIAL BOARD

Mary Maynard

Samuel Payson

Ned Rossiter

Joseph A. Verovsek

Editor of BULLETIN: Vera Laska

Membership dues: Individual \$10, family \$15, life \$250. Contributions and bequests to the Endowment and Memorial Fund are welcome. Make checks payable to the Weston Historical Society, Inc. and mail them to the Weston Historical Society, Box 343, Weston, Massachusetts 02193. Contributions are tax deductible. Additional copies of the BULLETIN may be obtained at \$2 each by mailing payment to the Society. Statements and/or opinions expressed in the articles are not necessarily those of the editor, the Editorial Board or the Weston Historical Society. ISSN 1083-9712.