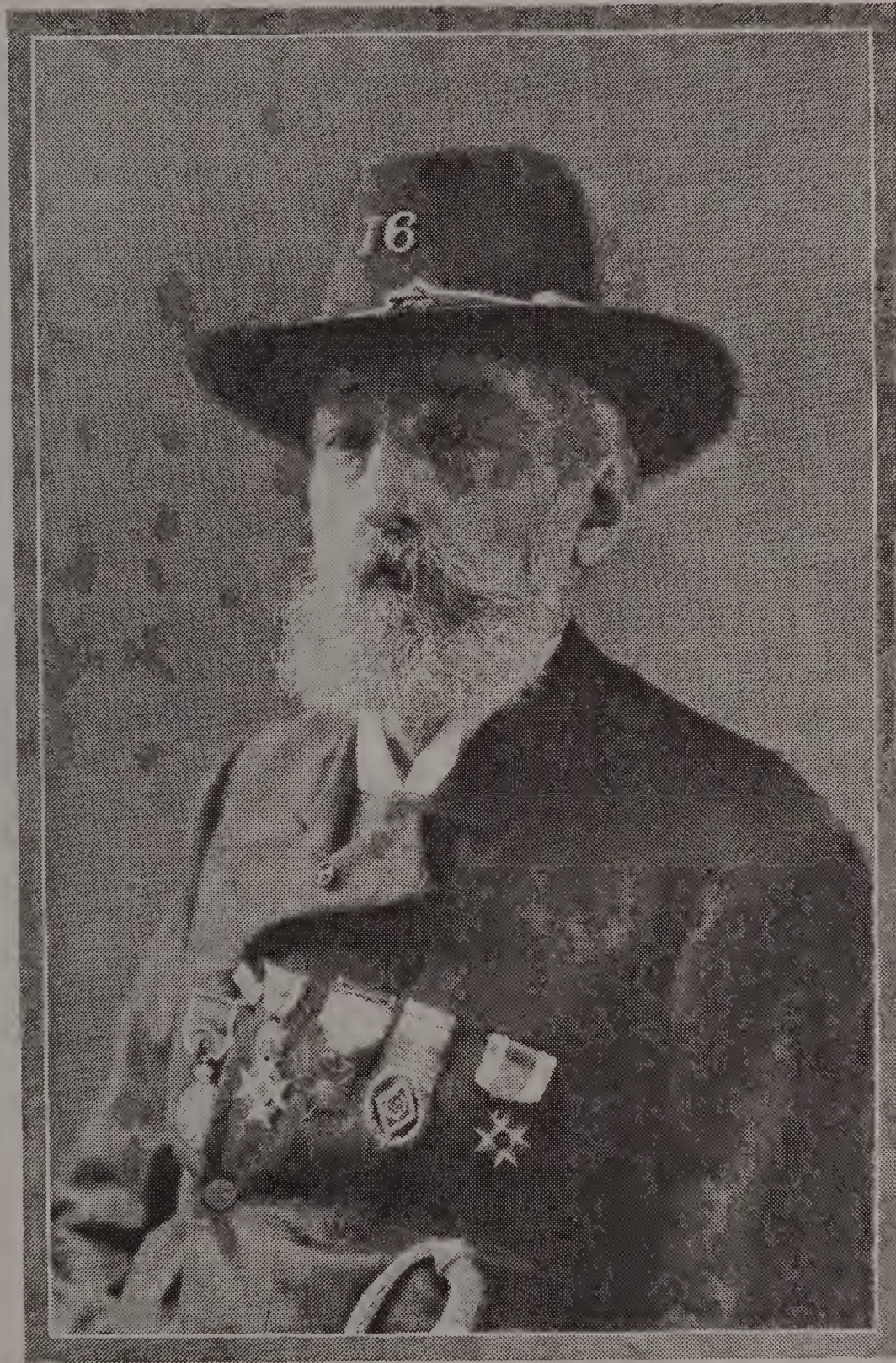


# THE WESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN



Fall, 1997

Volume XXVIII, No. 2



*Daniel S. Lamson*

The Weston Historical Society is proud to present to its members and to all Weston residents and history aficionados the new edition of the classical HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF WESTON by Col. DANIEL S. LAMSON, originally published in 1913. The 1997 edition bears a new frontispiece of the author (above), a new introduction, and has been provided with a much desired 40 page INDEX, compiled during the Weston History Project.



## SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE AND THE SACRED COWS



*One of the two "sacred cow" chairs*

Having come only relatively recently to membership in the Weston Historical Society, and even more recently to my responsibilities as Society archivist, I had no way of knowing the background of many of the Society's eclectic acquisitions. A set of chairs particularly intrigued me. They were obviously out of place, even in the Museum's collection of widely disparate furniture. Two carved oak, high back, rush seat arm chairs just did not fit in. To add to the mystery, these chairs sported a hand written tag "The History of the 'Sacred Cow' — Sir Arthur Conan Doyle."

The task of organizing the Society's files does, however, have its rewards, and one of those rewards reached me the other day when I came across some correspondence which I reproduce here, much compressed, to make the point:

276 Glen Road  
Weston, Mass 02193  
March 2, 1966

Weston Historical Society, Inc.  
Weston, Massachusetts

Gentlemen:

Would you be interested in adding to your historical collection two chairs from the study of the late Sir Arthur Conan Doyle? These carved oak chairs, made before 1750, were presented to Maude Hudnut Chapin in 1923, on the 25th anniversary of her marriage to Robert S. Chapin.

As to their authenticity, I am attaching a copy of an appraisal which my daughter, Barbara Hudnut Boston, has sent me with a note in which she expressed the hope that you will accept them without remuneration. I should appreciate hearing from you in this regard at your early convenience.

Yours sincerely,  
(signed) Harriette Hudnut

The rest of the file contains the exchange of letters that completed the transfer, which, with one exception, have no relevance to this story. The exception follows:

This is not a proper letter but a hasty note to let you know that Mr. Boston and I are delighted that my late aunt's prized chairs will once again have a suitable home. They were treasured remembrances of her friendship of countless years with Sir Conan and Lady Conan Doyle. (Correction: Sir Arthur, I should have written.) Noone [sic] was allowed to sit on them since she had little red satin cords tied across them, and as a child I remember them sitting like thrones on the entrance hall of her apartment at 563 Park Avenue. (My cousin and I used to refer to them as the sacred cows!)

B. H. B.

You may see the "sacred cows" of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in the Weston Historical Society Museum in the Josiah Smith Tavern. The Museum is open every Wednesday morning from ten to twelve. More about the chairs is related in the October, 1966 BULLETIN, p.5.

*Douglas Henderson*



# REGIS COLLEGE: A CELEBRATION OF HERITAGE

As the academic year begins, Regis College rejoices in seventy years of dedication to the education of women in the Catholic, liberal arts tradition. This tradition dates back to seventeenth century France and the founding of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph at Le Puy. In keeping with the practice of celebrating the heritage of the college and its connections to the Sisters of St. Joseph, the following article has been drawn from the text of a presentation given at the college in March of this year.

The village of Le Puy was small, nestled in the area of southeastern France, known as the Velay. Its inhabitants were no strangers to hardship and poverty. Very often the survival of a household depended upon the tiny sum of one to five *sous*, that could be earned daily by a woman making lace. In this environment the foundation of a group of women religious who pledged themselves to respond to the needs of the “dear neighbor” occurred unnoticed by many.

Tradition tells us that the Sisters of St. Joseph came into being, formed by the Jesuit Ignatian exercises and conditioned by real poverty. They drew from the many layers of the society of the time, with the result that when the legal contract of association was presented in December of 1651, only one of the six members could sign her name, since the others were illiterate.

The “Little Design” of Father Jean Pierre Medaille flourished among the lacemakers of the Velay and the silk workers of Lyons. In the pre-revolution days of France the pattern of living in small groups among the people afforded the Sisters security to accomplish their works of mercy. Indeed, not only did they increase the number of their own houses, but they also established “workshops” which allowed unmarried women and widows to learn the art of lace making in order to earn a living.

When in 1789 the Reign of Terror began, the Sisters of St. Joseph were practically destroyed by the havoc wreaked upon the church by the state. Houses were closed. Sisters were sent into hiding. Documents were destroyed, and lives were in turmoil. Six of the Sisters lost their lives at the guillotine for the crimes of religious fanaticism or hiding members of the clergy.

In 1801 Napoleon signed a concord with Pope Pius VII signaling the end of persecution of the church. In Lyons Cardinal Fesch summoned Jeanne Fontbonne, a survivor of the Revolution, from her family farm to re-establish the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph. At the age of fifty Jeanne set out for Lyons to begin anew. Eleven Sisters returned with Jeanne to Lyons, and on the day following her arrival another eight came to join them, bringing the number to twenty.

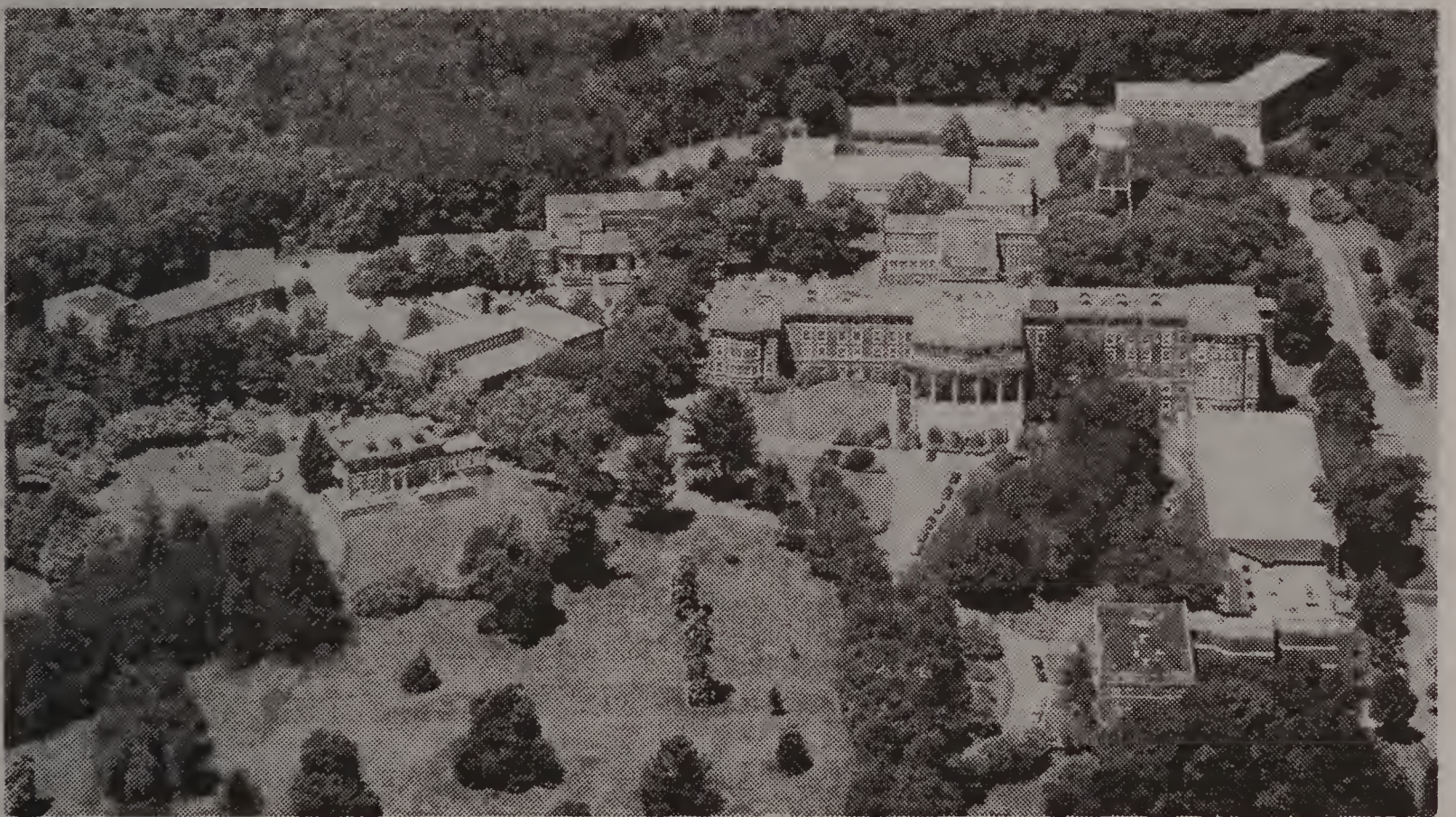
From 1808 until 1836 the group grew both in number and in works. Their reputation for service became well known, and when Bishop Joseph Rosati of St. Louis, Missouri sought Sisters to teach the deaf in his diocese, the Countess of Rochejacquelin intervened, recommending the Sisters of St. Joseph. Jeanne Fontbonne, then known as Mother St. John, asked for volunteers to be missionaries to America. To her surprise the first two who volunteered were her own nieces. Febronie and Delphine Fontbonne left in the company of four Sisters, one of whom had just received the habit. Two other sisters remained in France for an additional year to study techniques in the instruction of the deaf with the Sisters of St.



Charles. These women pioneers were between the ages of twenty-two and thirty-two as they embarked on their mission to the New World.

Their journey aboard the *Heidelberg* required forty-nine days to reach the port of New Orleans where they were warmly welcomed by the Ursuline Sisters and met their mentor, Bishop Rosati. Traveling up the Mississippi, the Sisters were amazed at the vast wilderness of their new country. They settled at Cahokia, Illinois, where life was somewhat tenuous. Poverty and the flooding river brought hazards that the Sisters viewed as challenges to be met in the spirit of trust in God.

From their modest beginnings at St. Louis the Sisters ventured forth not only to establish schools and academies for the education of young women, but also to evangelize the native American nations of the Sioux in the north central area and other nations as far away as Arizona. Turning eastward, they followed a trail which brought them to Philadelphia in 1847, to Brentwood, NY, in 1856, and on to Boston in 1873.



*Overall view of the college in the 1990 s.*

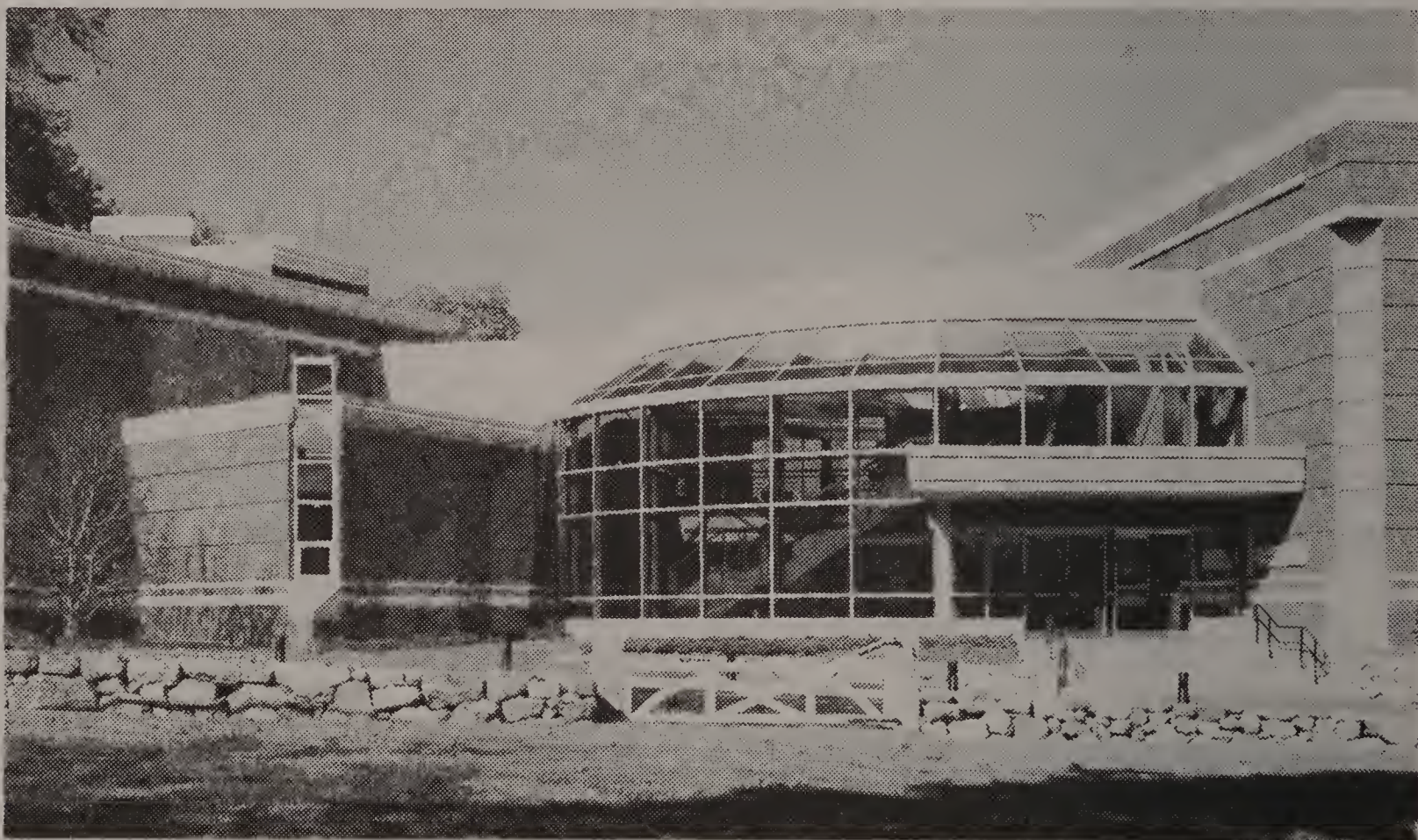
Four sisters traveled by train from New York to Boston at the invitation of Father Magennis of St. Thomas Parish, Jamaica Plain. These were no ordinary women with no ordinary accomplishments. Within four days of their arrival they had established a school for girls in the basement of St. Thomas Church, with two hundred students seeking enrollment on the first day. Mother Mary Regis, the superior of the little group, embodied their trust in the providence of God. Having set her sights upon the church of Boston, there would be no turning back for her, even in times of hardship. Thus it was that, when the church coffers were meager and could supply no salary for the sisters, Mother Regis used her ingenuity to provide. Like the founding Sisters in France, Mother Regis and her little community turned to the works of their hands by sewing church vestments, garments for the dead, and even baseballs.

There is a sacredness in the number three, and three events in 1884 coincided to bring about a unique result. The American Catholic Bishops had issued a call to expand the Catholic



school system. The Sisters of St. Joseph had outgrown their modest novitiate in Jamaica Plain, and a choice piece of property in Cambridge became available for purchase. Mother Regis's careful saving and planning enabled her to realize the dream of a boarding school for young ladies. Thus was begun Mount Saint Joseph Academy. When a few years later the city of Cambridge, by right of eminent domain, purchased the land from the sisters to create a park at the pond, the Academy moved to its present location in Brighton.

Over the years the Mount has remained true to its mission to the City of Boston and its young women. Its traditions are rich and have served to provide its graduates with an education designed to develop the whole person, an education characterized by excellence and the spirit of gentleness, firmness, peace, and joy. And so it was in keeping with this spirit that Honora Buttimer, a graduate of St. Joseph, dared to dream of a Catholic college for women.



*The Fine Arts Center, erected in 1992, to serve art and music lovers of the college, the town of Weston and of surrounding communities.*

In February of 1927 the governor of Massachusetts granted a charter for a college to the Sisters of St. Joseph. The original plan was to build the college at Newton, but that was not to be. In June of that year the Morrison estate in Weston was purchased, and Regis College came into being. On September 21, 1927 forty-seven students, thirty-three of whom were residents, gathered together, the first community of learners.

They met a faculty that included several Sisters who had prepared themselves specifically for the challenge of guiding the intellectual pursuits of these forty-seven women. Recognizing the value of modeling lifelong learning, Mother Domitilla had urged the Sisters to earn academic degrees commensurate with the demands of educating post-secondary students. Sister Finbarr Barry earned her doctor's degree in Latin in 1926 and Sister Mildred Curley was awarded a Ph.D. in history in 1927. Before Regis College celebrated its ninth anniversary, a total of eight Sisters on the faculty had earned doctorates.



The Sisters worked and prayed assiduously that by the time of the first commencement there would be an enrollment of two hundred students. How those early pioneers of the college would be pleased to know that Regis College numbers among her graduates more than eleven thousand, two hundred women, of whom one thousand, one hundred eighty-five have been Sisters of St. Joseph.

Mother Domitilla, who was known to “dare great things,” predicted that the college would experience success in providing young women with access to a quality education rooted in values. Espousing the quest for academic excellence, instilling an appreciation for the Gospel values of social justice and peace, and exhibiting in their lives a respect for all life on earth, became rules for daily living. The result was that the education which a Regis College degree represents is an education not only for personal excellence but also for the betterment of humankind.

This is a year of jubilee, celebrating seven decades of the life of Regis College. Along Regis’s tree-lined path have walked many women who have turned dreams into reality, who have challenged themselves and others to selflessness, and who have left a heritage rich in examples of courage and fulfillment. We find the footprints of over three hundred medical doctors and nurses who have laid the hand of healing on the sick and comfort on the dying. We note too the significant number of lawyers and judges who have pleaded on behalf of the disenfranchised and have meted out both justice and mercy. The path has been trodden by over a thousand educators, teachers, principals, superintendents, professors, who have imparted knowledge, nurtured intellectual curiosity, and sparked enthusiasm for the life-long pursuit of learning. This path has led to political careers for nearly a hundred women who have advocated for the common good and have contributed to the pluralism of this country. Women continue to walk this path to the future, impelled by the desire to achieve personal fulfillment and heartened by the examples of those who have preceded them.

Each year the college community revisits some sacred moments in its heritage, holding up the mirror of its legacy to see reflected therein the origins, the reality, and the challenges of its ongoing history. Regis College draws courage from the daring of the women who have built its dreams. In the work of today the college responds to the world, its people, and its issues, with new means and modes - with technology undreamed of in 1927. And yet the courage of the young women who set out from France, from St. Louis, from New York, the vision of women who dream of a Catholic college for women - that courage and that vision today play a significant role as Regis continues to explore the uncharted paths that lie ahead. The Regis College community sets its sights on moving forward into the new millennium with renewed confidence that the Regis Heritage makes a difference!

S. Judith Costello

*Sister Judith Costello, Associate Professor of Education, is a member of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Boston and has been a faculty member at Regis since 1981.*





*Samuel R. Payson*

## THE SAMUEL TRAINS OF WESTON

Note: Much of this article is based on information supplied by Frances (Polly) Marshall and Betty Amadon from Weston Historical Commission files. A lot comes from a privately printed book John Trayne and Some of His Descendants by Susan Train Hand (New York: By the author, 1933; reprint). My own interest in the Trains comes from the fact that I am a Train descendant. Be it known that my first name "Samuel" comes from another line of descent.

At three hundred and forty-two Winter Street, Weston, stands one of the oldest houses in Town, the Samuel Train House, built by Samuel Train and his father, John, in 1738. Having visited this property a few years ago, as one of a group of Weston Historical Commissioners, I can attest to its fine condition both inside and out. However, it's not the house itself that I wish to write about but its early occupants, the Samuel Trains, their many services to Weston, their military activity, and their part in the organization of the Baptist Church.

Samuel Train I was born in 1711. He and his wife, Rachel (Allen), had nine children, the oldest son being Samuel, Junior, born in 1745, and married to Deborah Savage in 1771. Samuel III was born in 1785, the fourth of five children. He married Harriet Seaverns.

Samuel Train I was very much involved in Weston affairs being Constable, Selectman, Surveyor of Highways, Collector, Fence Viewer, and Thythigman. It has been recorded that his salary as constable amounted to twenty shillings a year, being paid an extra four shillings three times a year to "Warn Town Meeting." He served as Selectman from 1763 to 1765. He was interested in schools and was a member of the School Committee in 1799 and 1800. He died in 1806 having attained the age of ninety-five. He was a much revered man and a patriarch of the Train family.

Samuel Train II also served the Town well. In 1770, he and his father were largely responsible for securing the vote of the Town for sixty pounds a year to have "five reading and wrighting schools" in the winter season. This shows how much need there was in those days for farming and household chores Spring, Summer, and Fall.

Samuel III was born in 1785. He, too, served Weston well. Town records indicate that he was a Hargrieve, Fence Viewer, Surveyor of Wood, and a member of the South West District School Committee.

All three Samuels were entered into military service. Samuel I served as an "Alarum" man in a company organized to protect Weston from Indian raids. As time went on, the danger from Indians lessened, and this group became known as minute men. They were turned into militia men known as "Train Bands," ready to meet any emergency. According to one source, at the battle of Concord, Samuel I, then sixty-five years of age, and his son, Samuel II, were members of the Weston Company under the command of Lieutenant John Fiske pursuing British soldiers retreating to Charlestown. Another source has Samuel I serving under Major Lamson at the battle of Lexington and also in the Canadian campaign.



Samuel II was one of the few men from Weston to join a force sent to Canada to meet the British under General Burgoyne moving from Quebec to Albany. He fought at the battle of Saratoga. His son, Samuel III, was a militia man in the war of 1812, attaining the rank of Captain in 1811, major in 1813, and Lt. Colonel in 1816.

During the lives of all three Samuels, the Society of Baptists came into being, and they all were active in its formation. In 1772, both Samuel II and his wife, Deborah, had “united into full fellowship with the Congregational Church and they were among the few to join the new Society.” Samuel built a tiny meeting house for their use. He and others of his group fought against ‘illegal’ taxation of the Congregational Church. It was not till 1833 that this new law was repealed in Massachusetts. Samuel Train II became clerk of the Society and Deacon in 1823. He died in 1838 at the age of ninety-three. Samuel Train III was one of the incorporators of the Baptist Church in 1823. He died in 1845 at the age of sixty.

Although this article is entitled “The Samuel Trains of Weston,” I would be remis not to mention Charles Train, Samuel III’s older brother who, after graduation from Harvard College in 1805, took charge of the congregation in Weston and later in Framingham.

*Samuel R. Payson*



*“Other men catch bears and wolves, but all you ever get me is these little minks!”*





## MEMORIAL DAY, MAY 26, 1997

*The following is the text of the Hon. Douglas Henderson's address at the 118th Memorial Day Celebration in Weston. He was introduced by George F. Amadon, chairman of the Memorial Day Committee. Ed.*

Friends:

Sometime in 1946 my mother wrote me at my post in Bolivia, to bring me up to date on Weston news. Among other items she reported that my father had attended the funeral of a senior citizen of the town whose forebears had lived in Weston for several generations. Another senior citizen turned to my father, who had not been born here but had lived and worked in Weston for nearly fifty years, and said: "Well, Bill, soon all of us old timers will be gone and you newcomers will be taking over."

So today I, sort of an old timer, am addressing you newcomers. I will try to present a link with Weston's Memorial days of that far off time when I was growing up in Weston.

The Weston Post of the American Legion was a vital link in the chain of Weston's Memorial days. The Post charter was issued in 1919, but was turned in this year, ending nearly eighty years of dedicated service. The Legion members organized many community activities every year. I recall plays given at the Town Hall and strawberry festivals on the common. (My father built the portable dance floor for those occasions.)

Central to the Legion's mission was the Memorial Day observance. Similar in many ways to today's gathering, there were church bells, a band, a parade. A veteran of the war between the states led the parade, in uniform with medals, riding in an open touring car. The Weston schools were fully represented. There were not so many of us then, and attendance was required, the boys in tie and jacket, the girls in their summer dresses. The eighth grade boys carried wooden rifles, but the high school boys marched with real guns, antiquated and heavy.

The memory of the carnage of World War I was still fresh in the minds of many, but we felt sure that the American armed forces had made the world safe for democracy. Memorial Day was as much a celebration as an occasion for somber thoughts. The only real doleful notes were the band's rendition of the Dead March from Saul, played in slow time as we toiled up the hill in Linwood



Cemetery. Otherwise Memorial Day remains for me a time of sunshine and flowers, of talk and laughter.

The years passed, and the American people turned to the crises of the great depression. Memorial Day was still observed, but its meaning was obscured by pressing domestic problems. I was reminded of that post-World War I era when the Weston Post of the American Legion recently turned their flag over to the town, and their records to the Weston Historical Society for safekeeping. It is my fervent hope that someone will write a history of the Weston Post. Its history is an integral part of Weston history.

I looked in vain, in the pages of biographies bound in the Post records, for accounts of battle, although many of the men, including my father, had seen front line duty. Several of the accounts did, however, relate to November 11, 1918, Armistice Day, and these brief notes which I have taken from those pages, set the scene:

"I shall never forget that last night trip after it was all over. Lights on the trucks and cars, fires gleaming on the hillsides and in woods. Cannon silent, no machine gun fire, no crack of rifle. An overpowering silence, even the ground had ceased to tremble."

"The most vivid of my many recollections is of that cold night of November 13, 1918 when the war prisoners came back from Germany, and the joy of giving ourselves over to administer to the wants of those who had known such hardship and such sorrow."

The Legion link is gone now, yet we must not forget. But how to remember in the dailiness of our lives?

Perhaps we should re-discover our monuments and put them in some public place where they may be seen as we go about our daily travels. If every day we had the opportunity to see the words which I have taken from these monuments, our citizens would come to know something of the sacrifice made by those who came before us.

"This Memorial is erected by the town of Weston in grateful remembrance of the brave men who gave their lives in the holy cause of freedom."

"Honor Roll of the citizens of the town of Weston who served in the uniformed forces of the Army and Navy in the World War. This tablet was erected in accordance with the vote of the town of Weston March 28, 1921."

"The town of Weston holds in proud and living memory - there follow 21 names - who gave their lives in World War II."

"Honor Roll of citizens of the town of Weston. This tablet was dedicated December 1, 1949."

You may search out these monuments. I had to push aside a trash barrel to read one of them and climb on a chair to read others. But it will never be enough to search out and read. Memorial Day is not about speeches, and music, and flowers, and parades. It is about war, and the aftermath of war. It is about remembering. We may well again, in our nation's interest, have to commit our armed forces to battle. But Memorial Day is here to remind us that after the battle we will have to be, in Abraham Lincoln's words, "dedicated to the work they nobly advanced."

Memorial Day bids us to remember.



## MEMORIES AT A MILESTONE

As I just graduated from high school, I thought I would take a summer completely off from any sort of academic work before forging ahead into the vaster world of college and, no doubt, having to study much harder. Therefore, I've been working at Land's Sake Organic Farm since graduation, writing only brief, imaginatively spelled e-mails to friends and reading only trashy science fiction. However, a few weeks ago I received an assignment to write this particular article, which I immediately forgot about, was reminded of several times by my conscientious and well-organized mother, and put off until the last minute. My excuse for procrastinating was that I was thinking of what to write about, and to my own surprise, I actually *did* spend some time considering that dilemma.



*Glen Hutcherson*

I entertained several ideas for subjects, including frisbee games on the Green, the renovation of the High School, and Weston Forest and Trail Paths I have Known and Loved, but eventually settled upon writing about the farm. Having come to this decision, I began to look forward to the project somewhat, Land's Sake being a pleasant place to work and to write about. Also, I had plenty of recent experiences and memories to draw upon. Now that I think about it, some memories aren't that recent (for me at a few months under 18, that is).

I commenced farm work six or seven years ago as a lowly Middle School morning laborer, working (if you could call it that) from eight to twelve every morning - well, most mornings, anyway, other than weekends and days when I didn't want to go - for \$2.50 an hour. Back then Land's Sake and Greenpower were two separate farms, Greenpower being located on Merriam Street, with a field on Concord Road as well, and Land's Sake being across from the Case estate where it is today. I worked at Greenpower then and I hated it. Well, maybe not hated... the weeding was horrible, and I did not like picking zucchini because it was prickly, and it was hot and dry and didn't have a bathroom (unless you counted "lavatrees") - but the people were fun, and I was earning a bit of money. I remember playing volleyball during our breaks, which were supposed to be fifteen minutes long but usually ended up lasting somewhat longer. My older brother Andy would play on a team called "The Tippy Transvestite Trio" with Jake Rudnitzky (I'm certain that is misspelled) and Hanon Rosenthal (he thought up the name). No one was tipsy that I recall, nor do I remember any transvestites, but they were a great volleyball team.

Another time we had a huge thunderstorm in the early morning, and the guy in charge at that time, Steve Miller (he wasn't the one with the band), decided to set up a game of eggplant football when it stopped. We gathered in a recently tilled field, which after the storm was all shin-deep, loose, gooey mud. The largest eggplant available was stripped of its stem (they're prickly, too) and we commenced, forgetting about work for the rest of the morning. We had to replace the eggplant a few times.

I continued working for the next few summers, getting a little taller and maybe a little tougher, and beginning to enjoy the farm for the work itself and not merely the money and camaraderie. Weeding beets for four hours straight is not exactly exciting, but it is very peaceful and relaxing. My friends began getting jobs in grocery stores and their parents'



offices and would frequently point out that I could earn significantly more money were I to follow their example, but by that time I could not imagine working inside during the summer. The farm was a tradition.

The summer before my freshman year in high school (I think - I'm horrible with dates; I can barely remember all of my siblings' birthdays) Land's Sake and Greenpower got mooshed, or merged. I was kind of hazy on the details, but as I understood it, I was now working on Land's Sake Farm in the Greenpower Program for Middle School kids, and I had to go to Wellesley Street instead of the Merriam Street fields in the morning. To me it did not make much difference. Throughout these years the management had switched around a bit; I started out with Steve Miller being the guy-in-charge, and then it was Tom Gumbart, and then John Clasby (with Tom as guy-in-charge over John) and so on. I ended up with at least three or four bosses, including Tom. They were all nice.

Once I was in High School, I graduated from working four hours a day to working eight hours a day, a prospect which I greeted with somewhat muted enthusiasm at first, but grew used to; being paid more than \$2.50 an hour helped. In the morning I would try to keep my successors, the next generation of Middle Schoolers, working, a task accomplished by a combination of bribery, threats, shouting, and in some cases physical restraint, and in the afternoon I would work with the rest of the staff on weeding projects or trail work. The high points were weekly field trips with the kids on some of which I was taken along as a chaperone; shipping produce to shelters and food pantries, which still makes me feel good; and conversing and sometimes singing with fellow supervisors and young charges. Oh, and driving the ATV (All Terrain Vehicle); we use it for dragging loads of squash from the field to the stand.

What I did not realize for some time was how much I was learning. I know when and where and why to plant a cover crop, and what plants are good for that; I know how far apart beets and carrots should be so that they grow well; I know what kinds of plants Japanese beetles like, and what to do about them; I know how to sucker tomato plants, and which types to sucker; I even know what an Eastern Kingbird looks like (Tom is an ornithologist). Granted, little of this helped me on the SAT's, but who needs them anyway?

I'm writing this after another eight-hour day of yelling, coaxing, picking, weeding, and having fun. I have another week and a half before I head off to college; one of my friends from the farm is leaving tomorrow, and others are taking a year off from school to go to New Zealand or Hawaii or Australia (or all three!), maybe to work on other organic farms. I'm going to savor the last few days this year, and maybe next summer I'll decide to branch out and stop working at Land's Sake - maybe *I'll* be in New Zealand - but I do not think I'm ever going to regret staying on the farm for these years.

*Glen Hutcheson*

*Glen Hutcheson is a Weston native and son of two Weston natives, now attending Haverford College in Pennsylvania. He enjoys backpacking, classical guitar and ultimate frisbee, among other things; this is how he described himself. Editor's addition: he is also a National Honor Society member, National Merit Scholarship finalist, with awards in Spanish, art and biology. He is also a voracious reader (no TV in his home!) with an inborn intellectual curiosity.*



## A IS FOR AGING

A is for aging that is not enraging  
as seasoned citizens continue saging  
empowered by verses of Mother Ruth's  
in alphabet form like Mother Goose.

This alphabet of tales of gerontology  
will teach about avoiding melancholy  
so you can celebrate your later years  
with cheers and birthdays without tears  
or downing excessive gin and many beers  
gleaned from her solid deep research  
plus her own seventy year old perch.

If you follow Mother Ruth's advice  
your ageing will be rather nice  
because you will become courageous  
wise, witty and maybe outrageous.  
It can be fun to turn the page  
from naive youth to aging sage.

*Dr. Ruth Harriet Jacobs is a sociologist specializing in gerontology, affiliated with Wellesley and Regis College, and frequent contributor to The Senior Times. The above poem is reprinted here with her kind permission.*

## LITTLE TOWN

I like to live in a little town  
Where the trees meet across the street,  
Where you wave your hand and say "hello"  
To everyone you meet.

I like to stand for a moment  
Outside the grocery store  
And listen to the friendly gossip of  
The folks who live next door.

For life is interwoven  
With the friends we learn to know,  
And we hear their joys and sorrows  
As we daily come and go.

So I like to live in Weston,  
I care no more to roam,  
And my house in Merriam Village  
Is more than a house - it is home.

*Adapted by Jo and Ed French  
from anonymous source*



## THE 1997 ANNUAL CHARTER DINNER: OUT TO NORUMBEGA

I am delighted to report, that once again the Weston Historical Society's lecture, this time at the annual charter dinner, was a great success. It took place on Wednesday, May 7, 1997 at the First Parish Church. Over sixty people came to the feast and to listen to a lively speaker about an interesting topic that brought back many fond memories for old timers and opened eyes of the younger folk in the audience.

"Out to Norumbega" was presented with fascinating slides by Bob Pollack, who is most likely the most knowledgeable chronicler these days about the old glory that once was Norumbega. He is quite a raconteur, and his slides could not have been more faithful to the good ol' days on Weston's border. Bob Pollack grew up in Auburndale and as a boy worked at Norumbega Park and also in the Riverside Recreation area. His popular lecture is the fruit of years of research plus his own recollections.

Much of the story we heard is contained in the booklet Historic Auburndale, edited by Bill Saunders and available for \$5 at the Gift Shop at the Riverside Recreation Grounds on the Charles River (the brown house just before you get to the Marriott coming from Weston on Route 30), which is quite a canoe center still.

# CANOE REGATTA



It is too bad that this fabulous entertainment center had to close. It lasted from 1897 to 1963, featuring canoes, merry-go-round, swings, concerts, picnic grounds, restaurant, and the largest zoo in New England. Special trains brought out visitors from Boston, to enjoy the electric fountains, penny arcade and vaudeville theatre. The 15c. round-trip price included admission to the park. The song "Down by the Riverside" was inspired by the recreation area. Among the many sensational offerings was the first and most likely only motion picture drive-in for canoes, where many a local girl received her first kiss!



Luminaries from Buffalo Bill Cody to Olympic swimmer champion Gertrude Ederle were featured at various times. The place was enriched in 1927 when Boston University purchased 24 acres on the Weston side for its Nickerson Field, where football, baseball, soccer, track, and tennis were practiced.

The Totem Pole Ballroom was an additional attraction, with bands like those of Artie Shaw, Harry James, Benny Goodman, Jimmy and Tommy Dorsay. Those were the days!

But times changed, and for various reasons this formerly extraordinary park that had offered entertainment for young and old succumbed to the changing tastes of the times. It closed on Labor Day 1963, and the ballroom the following February. Three fires of suspicious origin destroyed several buildings shortly thereafter.

Sic transit gloria mundi. Yet the history of the Norumbega Park and the Riverside Recreation area will live in the bitter-sweet memories not only of its participants but of those who hear about them only as a part of local history.

\* \* \*

Another event commemorating the 100th anniversary of Norumbega was a canoe regatta on Sunday, June 8th, with picnicking for landlubbers. Our president and some members participated in these festivities.

As we go to press, preparations are being made for Saturday, September 27, 1997 for more fun and games at Riverside Park from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and the following day for local historian Robert Pollack's slide lecture on the history of Riverside at Lasell College in Auburndale, at 6:30 p.m., both to be welcoming the public free of charge. For the record, you can reach Mr. Pollack at 781-762-6557.

Vera Laska

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## JUST FOR THE RECORD

According to the Boston Globe (6/19/97, pp. 1 & 23), the following book holdings were recorded:

New York Public Library	18.3 million
Library of Congress	16.5 million
Boston Public Library	6.5 million

According to their librarians, Weston libraries hold the following number of books:

Weston Public Library	80,932
Weston High School Library	c.12,000
Regis College Library	125,816

\* \* \*





*Joseph P. Sheehan, Jr.*

## INTRODUCING JOSEPH P. SHEEHAN, JR.

Joe Sheehan is a life long Weston resident, who resides in the Sheehan family home at 484 Concord Road. This home, built in 1891, has been in the family since that time. The Sheehans' first home was on Wellesley Street, on land now owned by Regis College. They had a small meat packing business, and their slaughter house is marked on the 1870 map of Weston. They eventually needed more land and they sold that property to the Demmon family and moved to Concord Road. Today there are two homes on the original land, and his parents still live at 490 Concord Road.

Joe was educated in Weston Schools, and one of his favorite teachers was Lee Marsh, today the president of the Weston Historical Society. He graduated from Weston High School in 1973, and Villanova University in 1977. He did graduate work at the Washington Theological Union in preparation for priesthood in the Roman Catholic Church. He was a member of the Order of Saint Augustine for a number of years. He left the Order and was married in 1985 to Ruth Conroy, of Brookline. Today he works as the Coordinator of International Admission at Merrimack College and does extensive travel in the Far East. He has two children, Michael, age 10, and Julia age 6, both of whom attend the Weston schools. Joe ran for School Committee two years ago, losing by one vote in that election. He is active on a number of boards in Weston and at St. Julia Church.

## OPEN HOUSE AND BOAT RIDE

The Museum of the Weston Historical Society held its annual OPEN HOUSE on Saturday, May 17, 1997 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. within the general framework of the Weston "Spring Fling." A large number of visitors dropped in and showed increasing interest in the various exhibits. We thank our docents Mrs. Deborah Ecker and Meredith Lightbown for their generous help.

We were again surrounded by flowers, thanks to the grand sale of flowers by the Country Garden Club of Weston. No wonder that the program was also referred to as "Weston in Bloom!"

METCO also celebrated its 30th anniversary in Weston with the St. Mary's Heavenly Fire steel band performance on the town green. There was food, arts & crafts, music, displays and storytelling, with special participation of many of the town businesses, from Auntie's Green Store to Wilkin's Art Consulting. All in all, a great time was had by all including the visitors to the Scouting exhibit at the Josiah Smith Tavern. Photos are on file in the Museum album!

A most pleasant social activity of the Society was the BOAT RIDE on the Charles, arranged by our president Lee Marsh for Monday evening, June 30th, 1997, that took us into the nooks and crannies of the river from the starting point at the Marriott hotel. About twenty participants enjoyed the sights and each other's company.

*Vera Laska*



## WESTON HISTORY - Think Christmas!

1. Brenton H. Dickson: One Upon a Pung, delightful stories about Weston of yester-year; hardcover, \$7.50.
2. Brenton H. Dickson & Homer C. Lucas: One Town in the American Revolution, Weston, Massachusetts; hardcover, \$7.50.
3. Daniel S. Lamson: History of the Town of Weston, Massachusetts, 1630 -1890; 1997 reprint, with new Introduction and an INDEX; this book should be in every Weston home; hardcover, \$29.95.

All three books available at the Museum of the Weston Historical Society, Wednesdays 10a.m.-12 p.m. or by phone 237-1447. Out of town orders: please add postage & handling \$3.00.

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Membership dues: Individuals \$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.