

THE WESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN



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WESTON FIRE DEPARTMENT CHIEF JOHN E. THORBURN

Weston Fire Department Chief Thorburn retires from his post on July 1, 2002. He grew up and went to school in Wayland and joined the Weston Fire Department in 1961 as a fire fighter, rising to Chief in 1976. He lives in Southboro with his wife June, who was born and raised in Weston. The town formally said farewell to its popular Chief at a retirement party at the new Community Center on Sunday, January 27, 2002.

MERRIAM VILLAGE

In 1975 the Board of Selectmen, acknowledging the escalating prices of housing in Weston and the difficulty senior citizens were experiencing in remaining in the Town, appointed The Housing Action Committee, giving it the responsibility of working with the Planning Board in “investigating the possibility of development of housing for the elderly in the town.” The Committee was ably led by Laura Clausen. Not surprisingly, the Committee found an urgent need for affordable housing for Weston residents who wanted to stay in Weston but who no longer wanted to live in their large houses after their children had moved away. Weston’s clergy became active supporters of affordable housing for senior citizens, with Monsignor Francis S. Rossiter of St. Julia Church and the Rev. Judy Hoehler of First Parish Church playing important and influential roles.

The Committee rejected as politically unacceptable the establishment of a public housing authority. So what to do? Along came Victor Harnish, a longtime Weston resident and a Waltham lawyer, who offered to form a non-profit corporation to build and operate housing for citizens 60 years or older. Victor had his eye on a portion of the land on Merriam Street that the Town had purchased from Weston College in 1972 for a municipal purpose, such as a fire station or a school, but which in 1976-77 was not planned for any municipal use. Victor convinced the then Board of Selectmen and later Town Meeting to convey 15 plus acres of municipal land to the non-profit corporation for a consideration of \$100.

Weston Community Housing, Inc. was formed as a non-profit corporation in December of 1976 under Chapter 180 of the General Laws of the Commonwealth. It is classified by the Internal Revenue Service as a Section 501 C(3) Corporation. Howard M. Forbes, Lyman Stone Hayes, Elizabeth D. Nichols, Laura B. Clausen, Judith L. Hoehler and Victor C. Harnish, were the incorporators. The original officers were Victor C. Harnish, President; Kenneth Fish, Treasurer; and Alice Fraser, Secretary. The original Board of Directors was composed of Harnish, Fish, Fraser, Welton D. Brown, Howard M. Forbes, Leon H. Cohen and Elizabeth Colt.

At a special town meeting in January of 1977 the Town voted to authorize the Selectmen to present a petition to the General Court of the Commonwealth requesting the General Court to adopt a Special Act authorizing the Town “to sell for an inadequate consideration to a non-profit corporation of the Commonwealth to be used for elderly housing” certain land on Merriam Street. The General Court enacted the Special Act, and with the wholehearted support of the Board of Selectmen and the Planning Board and the unchallenged presentation of Victor Harnish, Town Meeting in May of 1977 voted to authorize the Selectmen to convey the land to the non-profit corporation “for the construction and operation of housing for elderly persons of low and moderate income” and subject to “such terms and conditions as the Board of Selectmen in their sole discretion shall determine.” According to the Town Report for the year 1977, Harold Hestnes, who was then serving as Chairman of the Board of Selectmen, at the Town Meeting “tendered deed to the property to Mr. Harnish in exchange for a certified check in the amount of \$100.” At the same Town Meeting the Town voted to amend the zoning by-law of the Town to change the zone in which the property was situated from “Single Family Residence District A to Multiple Dwelling District.”

The Board of Selectmen and the non-profit corporation entered into an agreement under which Weston Community Housing, Inc. agreed to build on the property up to 30, but no less than 20, “one and two bedroom apartments especially designed for elderly persons,” at least 20 of which would be commenced to be built within two years. The Selectmen re-

served the right to approve the architectural design features of the buildings containing the apartments. The Agreement also provided that the monthly rents “will be the minimum necessary to cover mortgage interest, heat, utilities, reasonable management expense, maintenance costs and insurance, taxes and/or payment in lieu of taxes.”

The non-profit corporation lost no time in getting started. It raised “seed” money from interested townspeople and was able with the gift of land to raise a construction loan of \$900,000 from the Waltham Savings Bank, later the Sterling Bank. It hired the well-respected Waltham architectural firm of Keyes Associates to design and plan the project and in November 1977 entered into a construction contract with Merrit Homes, Inc. and Leonard Rittenberg of Weston to construct five buildings containing 30 apartments and a community center building. Construction began in November, and most of the apartments were ready for occupancy in the fall of 1978.

To help pay for the project Weston Community Housing, Inc. required the initial tenants to put down deposits of \$12,500 for a single bedroom apartment and \$14,500 for a two bedroom apartment. The deposits would be amortized over an eight-year period, and if any tenant vacated an apartment before eight years had expired, the tenant would receive a portion of the deposit back. Without the gift of land and the deposits of tenants the project could not have been built. It was through such imaginative financing that the project, now called Merriam Village, was completed in 1978. The total cost was \$1,000,000.

Applications for residence in Merriam Village required that a tenant had to be at least 60 years of age, with preferences for those 65 years or older, and could not have an annual income greater than \$24,000. The age limitation still applies but the maximum income level in 2002 is \$38,000 for an individual and \$44,000 for a couple.

Tenants began moving into Merriam Village in late 1978. The rent for a single bedroom apartment was \$225 per month and \$260 for a two-bedroom apartment, making Merriam Village the best value for rental housing in Weston and indeed in the Greater Boston west suburban area. In 2002 the rent for any apartment that may become available can run from \$585 to \$685; still the best bargain in the area.

Jean Jones, a long time resident of the Town, was hired as Manager, and her knowledge of the Town and her friendly and sensitive manner was of material aid in developing the policies and rules that brought structure and fairness to the way Merriam Village was managed. The tenants of the Village over the years had lived in homes of their own and were not accustomed to living in apartments with others so close by. Jean and later managers, especially Connie Davis, made the Village run smoothly and happily for the tenants. Judith Sennett of Sudbury served for several years as Manager, and Randy Barkman is currently serving as Manager. Each has served in that role as a friend and counselor to the residents and in many situations as a “handy” person assisting residents in fixing minor problems.

Merriam Village proved to be so successful that the waiting list for apartments grew to more than 65 applicants, with some applicants waiting as long as 5 years to rent an apartment. Consideration was given in 1989 to expanding the Village to the maximum number of units permitted under the zoning by-law. The Board of Directors appointed a committee under the initial leadership of Susanne Haber followed by Stephen Hassell to look into the matter of enlarging the Village. Tony Nolan, Bill Rousseau, Connie Davis, George F. Amadon, Linda Walden and Ken Fish were other members of the Committee. Peter Morton and Edward Frothingham participated in the Committee’s deliberations as interested citizens.

The Committee worked hard and diligently in formulating plans to finance and construct additional housing on the site. The Board of Selectmen were receptive to the idea of ex-



Victor Harnish, one of the founders of Merriam Village; in the background is Connie Davis, former manager of Merriam Village.



Building 2 in the Village.



Victor Harnish with the "silver shovel" at the second phase ground breaking of Merriam Village.



A quiet evening at the Harnish House, the Community House of the Village.

panding the village by adding 32 additional apartments and agreed to amend the Agreement between the Town and the non-profit corporation to allow such expansion. In addition, the Selectmen permitted the non-profit to use the payment-in-lieu of taxes that otherwise would have gone to the Town to pay for the preliminary plans necessary to assure the expansions feasibility and to develop preliminary architectural plans. Mass Housing Partnership made a modest loan to help pay for the preliminary plans. An Early Project Assistance Loan of \$2,559,000 was made by the Massachusetts Housing Investment Corporation in the spring of 1993. Sterling Bank agreed to “take out” the construction loan once the project was completed. (The Citizens Bank is the current mortgagee.) Tise Architects, Inc. was hired as architects to develop plans and specifications for the new apartment buildings. After the plans had been approved by all appropriate Town officials, The February Corporation d/b/a Charlesgate Construction Company was engaged to construct the additional houses and to rebuild The Harnish House which serves as the Village community house. The expansion was completed in 1995, and the new apartments were soon all occupied. All 62 apartments in the Village have provided needed, safe and comfortable housing for many of the area’s senior citizens since 1978.

Weston Community Housing, Inc. is composed of Members of the corporation known as Public Members, who are residents of Weston interested in elderly affordable housing and Resident Members who are the residents of the Village. The Public Members elect annually 5 Directors to serve on the Board of Directors, and the residents elect annually 3 Directors. All Directors have an equal vote on all matters, receive no remuneration for their services and all act on a volunteer basis. Stephen Hassell and Kenneth Fish are currently serving as Honorary Directors but do not vote. Most of the legal work and construction expertise have been provided on a pro bono basis, with the recent legal services in connection with the expansion being generously provided by the Boston law firm of Foley, Hoag & Eliot, LLP.

Included among the residents who have served as Directors elected by the Public Members, in addition to those previously named, have been Katherine Helgeson, Carol Norquist, Susanne Haber, Stephen Hassell, Gene Miller, Valerie Kirshy and Edward Rossiter. Pamela Wood is currently serving as a Director and Vice President. Valerie Kirshy is President, a position she has ably filled for the past several years. Former Presidents include Victor Harnish, Kenneth Fish, Katherine Helgeson, Tony Nolan, and William Rousseau. Over 20 residents have served as Resident Directors. The current Resident Directors are George Amadon, Jean Osborn and Olive Harris. In addition, Harry Jones, for years Weston’s Town Clerk, donated his time and talent and acted as the accountant for the non-profit corporation. Albert Pearson succeeded Harry, and George Wilson followed Al in that role and currently serves as Treasurer.

Over the years, the corporation has had two capital campaigns which raised funds used to landscape the Village. Weston Community Housing, Inc. and the residents are deeply appreciative of those who gave so generously so that trees, bushes and plants could be added to the beauty of the Village.

Ken Fish

Ken Fish is a lawyer, a Weston resident since 1960 and has been giving generously of his time and talents to various community affairs in Weston, including Merriam Village. Ed.

One of Weston's most successful and popular cultural units is the Military History Group, which in conjunction with the Weston Public Library presents well attended lectures several times during the year. On Thursday, December 6, 2001 the topic of the lecture series was "The Home Front." Two of the presenters, both Weston residents, talked about the home front in the United States, and we are proud to offer their remarks here to our membership. We would also like to encourage our readers to send us their memories of the home front - or of service years - during World War II. Ed.

THE HOME FRONT IN AMERICA 1941-1945

**Introduction by William Saunders presented at the Weston Public Library on
December 6, 2001 before the Weston Military History Group.**

Sixty years ago this week the United States was plunged into the Second World War. When it emerged four years later, people returning to their former lives looked in amazement at the changes in American society and at the deeds of those who served at home.

Tonight we attempt to capture a sense of what life was like for those who lived on the home front in WWII and to enumerate their amazing accomplishments. The civilians of all of the combatants pitched in and gave their utmost for the national cause. Their dedication, their sacrifices, and their achievements amaze us today.

To appreciate what the war meant to American life, let me bring some statistics to your attention. But first let me qualify this by saying that every historical source gives a different set of numbers, so we must make our own choices.

Economy: The war absorbed 40% of America's GNP. This compares with some 4% today. If you imagine that the military burden we bear today were expanded tenfold, then you can understand the load carried by the taxpayers of the 1940s.

The Armed Forces: At the beginning of 1940 the American Army was rated 18th in the world. The fall of the Netherlands later that year raised it to 17th. In terms of manpower it grew from fewer than 250,000 in 1940 to 8 million by 1944. That is to say it expanded over thirty times in only four and one half years.

Manufacturing: The war effort required an enormous increase in war production from industries that were short of workers and material. When the war began in Europe, President Roosevelt called for 50,000 planes. People thought he was crazy. By war's end, they had built nearly 300,000. In addition they built nearly 80,000 tanks, 370,000 artillery pieces and over 3,000 merchant ships starting from nearly zero in 1940. By the end of 1942 America was producing more weapons than all three Axis powers combined. Industry had to both expand, retrain, and retool on a gigantic scale. Makers of coffee pots and baby carriages were now making machine guns and lifeboats. The loss of labor to the military was made good by the recruitment of women into the industrial labor force. Some six million women entered the workforce between 1940 - 1945. It is hard to grasp today the vehement resistance to this in those times. In the 1930s a poll showed that over 80% of Americans felt that a married woman should not work if her husband had a job. Most large manufacturers were unwilling to hire women for factory work. Even the exhortations by the government failed to move them. Only when the draft created a disastrous labor shortage did they give in. As it turned out, the women succeeded brilliantly and changed the American workplace forever. When Eleanor Roosevelt went to the Kaiser Shipyard in Portland, Oregon, she found that 60% of the work force was female. The opening of war industry jobs caused an estimated 20 million Americans to move to new communities. War industries created ram-

pant growth. Mobile, Alabama, for example, a major shipbuilding city, grew by 67% in less than two years. Housing in these boomtowns was so scarce that the federal government got into the construction business, mass producing low cost temporary homes for war workers.

Food production was vital to the war effort. America needed to feed a huge army and sent enormous amounts of food to Great Britain and the Soviet Union. The farm labor force was decreased due to the draft. Equipment, parts, fuel, and chemicals were in short supply. Yet food production actually increased during the war. This increase was mainly achieved through manual labor. People created Victory Gardens in yards, on rooftops, in public parks, athletic fields, wherever there was land. Arlington Race Track in Chicago, Portland Zoo held Victory Gardens. Those planted in the Fenway in Boston are still operative today. Altogether some 20 million gardens produced almost one half of the nation's produce – eight million tons of produce per year from 4 million acres. In addition volunteers by the hundred thousand went to the farm to help – office workers, housewives, school children, boy scouts, girl scouts, retired people. Some 4-5 million people volunteered.

The railroads were the main agent of transportation in those days. They too had to contend with shortages of labor, equipment and fuel. Yet they doubled the ton miles of freight carried by rail. In addition to normal traffic they had to carry 16 million military personnel, take on the burden of hauling 2/3 of Texas gulf oil to the East and transport some of the 20 million Americans who moved during the war in search of defense jobs. Old equipment was pressed into service – even engines dating from 1900 and ancient wooden coaches. It was said that anything that looked, sounded or smelled like an engine was put to work. People learned to service equipment more quickly. Women were hired to do heavy men's work, and retired men and boys were employed maintaining machines and track. Special trains called "P" trains (preference) pulled by fast passenger engines were run to move critical war shipments on tracks cleared for them throughout their runs. A "P" train could pick up a fifty car block of tanks in Detroit at sundown and put them on a Hoboken dock the next day at noon.

The spirit of the times is recaptured by the writings of those who were there: the willingness to work and sacrifice, the shortages, the rationing, the constant worry about friends and loved ones at the battlefronts. Gen. George Marshall's wife was at a football game in Washington D.C. on November 8, 1942, when the PA system announced the American landings in North Africa. This was the long awaited first offensive since the humiliating defeat at Pearl Harbor. Her memoir captures the emotion of the moment as well as any I have ever read. She wrote that the crowd of 25,000 went wild: "Like waves of an ocean the cheers rose and fell, then rose again in a long sustained emotional cry. Football players turned somersaults and handsprings down the middle of the field."

Bill Saunders was born in Boston in 1940 and grew up in Newton. He graduated from the Browne and Nichols School and Pomona College and received an MBA from Northeastern University. By profession he is a computer programmer. He moved to Weston in 1974.

MEMORIES OF THE WORLD WAR II HOME FRONT

Everybody of my generation remembers where he/she was on December 7, 1941. I certainly do – by pure accidents of family and fate, at 1:05 PM, EST, on December 7, 1941, I was standing at the top of the underwater escape tower at the New London, CT submarine base. My uncle, Eliot Marshall, called “Steam” by his family and friends, was a Lt. Commander in the Navy and was doing his biannual Monsen Lung escape training. As Uncle Steam got to the top of the tower where my dad and I were standing, sirens went off all over the base. A CPO went to Uncle Steam, and they talked quietly. Following this, my uncle told dad the news, and we were hustled quickly off the base. I was very excited and kept asking my father, “What happened?” He finally turned and said, “Bobby, shut up.” I figured it had to be serious. Soon this Day of Infamy was imprinted forever in our minds, and for our country and my family WWII has started.

As with virtually every U.S. family, after Pearl Harbor everything had changed. My dad was working with the Army Quartermaster Corps. Uncle Jack was a lieutenant in the Army. Uncle Richard and grandpa Leach were working at the Iron Works in Bath, ME, building destroyers. Uncle Clayton was a major in the Army Air Force, and Uncle Steam was commanding the submarine, Cuttlefish, based at Pearl Harbor. Our men were leaving the small town of Sanford, ME.

Sanford, then population about 8000, is a small textile town in SW Maine, 11 miles from the ocean. Its textile industry was originally built on making blankets for both men and horses of the Union Army during the Civil War. Perhaps the blankets for horses were different than those for men, but knowing the ruling families of Sanford, I rather doubt it. During WWII the mills made poplin for tents and pile fabrics for cold climate wear. They ran 3 shifts a day, 7 days a week for 4 years – earning the coveted E for excellence award from the Army and Navy. It was not only the mill’s work that made Sanford interesting during the war but other aspects of life such as gas rationing with A, B, and C cards. All the adults argued whether doctors and shipyard workers, such as my uncle, should get the coveted C’s, because there was little gas to go around. Old bicycles became valued. Ration cards for meat and butter were needed, but living on the edge of town with farms adjacent made those commodities a non problem for our family. We did not worry about meat



Lt. Commander Elliot “Steam” Marshall, U.S.N. Uncle of Robert Leach, April 1943.

points. Our major ration card problem was getting shoe coupons for me, because my feet kept growing while the rest of me, distinctly to my chagrin, did not. War bond drives were always being held, and my paper route money went to buy \$25 bonds, which I bought for \$18.75. I thought that was a heck of a bargain. My father then taught me about interest, but it took Jimmy Carter in 1979 to teach me about inflation.

As kids, we collected scrap metal and rubber, made huge tinfoil balls, and we practiced commando self defense tactics guaranteed to maim any invader and to provide bloody noses for our practice partners. During the summer, we got to pick green beans and blueberries as our war effort contribution. With blueberries, I worked on the theory of one for me and one for the war effort. With the beans, the war effort got them all. We were told we were lucky picking beans, because up north in Aroostook County they had the hard work of picking potatoes, plus they had POWs working there. To a kid that sounded cool. In the fall, kids helped mothers canning everything from rhubarb to beans, while the dads were in the basement turning apple cider into applejack and, given the kick it had, wondering if it could be used as a substitute for gasoline.

More fun were the periodic Civilian Defense air raid drills during which I was a boy scout messenger, complete with arm band and a tiny bicycle lamp covered with black tape to emit a pinpoint of light. I went with Mr. Mellor, our local head air raid warden, who wore his WWI steel helmet, as we checked blackout curtains and warned the transgressors. Air raid precautions may seem strange to you given the 3500 miles between us and the Germans, but you did not know that Sanford had a huge airfield strategically located. The town started with an average field, which was used by company people such as my dad, but in February, 1942, the USAAF came and built several very long runways. Then the Naval Air Force moved in and from June 1942 through most of 1944, Sanford saw hundreds of B17s, B24s and B25s which landed there, refueled and went on to Gander, Iceland and thence to Europe. Virtually every day we saw planes overhead, and many of the adults were making book on the day one of the planes would hit the big smokestacks of the mills.

As a consequence of all this air activity, the USAAF established an Aircraft Warning Service post in Sanford at the highest point in town, Mt. Hope, elevation about 250 feet. This overlooked Sanford. People signed up to man the post, and my mother and I took every 6th weekend. It was great, like camping out, but with this enormous responsibility of protecting Sanford from sneak attack. Most of the men who went up there drank and played cards. The women tended the big victory garden and yelled at the kids who were running around the big field or getting in the vegetables. Any airplane we detected, we were to call in to the Air Force Control, giving the estimated elevation (a guess for us all), the direction of flight (a guess for my mother), and the type of plane (not a guess for me). As a kid I studied plane identification cards and can still recognize a B17, B25, etc. Not only could I identify our planes, but I could identify a German Heinkel, Junkers or even a Messerschmidt 109, whose range probably precluded coming to Sanford, since they barely made England and back. Some of you may wonder about the need and effectiveness of the aircraft warning system, but I would point out that there was never a successful bombing of Sanford, ME, during all of WWII. I was never rewarded for my herculean efforts, but my mother received an award certificate for her Aircraft Warning Service from the USAAF.

In many ways, being a kid during WWII, while safely living in Sanford, was exciting, as we followed the war from afar on National Geographic maps taped to the bedroom walls. I know where Tobruk and Bataan were much better than where South Dakota was located. Reality did intrude though. On my paper route I would see the little window banners with blue stars signifying a person in the service from that house, and sometimes there would be



Mrs. Estella Leach, mother of Robert Leach, 1942, Sanford, Maine.



Lt. Commander Robert Leach, U.S.N.R., M.C., 1963.

a new gold star signifying a death. Then I would hear the adults discussing that.

This was sadly brought to a climax for me in December 1943. Uncle Steam Marshall in 1942 had taken part in the great battle of Midway as the commander of the USS Cuttlefish, which served as a picket submarine and which actually had first contact with the Japanese armada. For that and other missions, he was awarded the Navy Cross. He then returned to Kittery, ME, where he took over a newly commissioned submarine, the Capelin. He went back to the Pacific in June of 1943, where he completed several successful patrols. In late December 1943, my aunt, my mother's twin sister, who was staying at our house, received a call from the Navy, telling her that her husband was MIA. In March, that was changed to "presumed dead."

The excitement of being a boy scout messenger, the furor over ration coupons, and the identification of non-hostile aircraft was replaced by the reality of Uncle Steam's death. In later years at the beginning of the Viet Nam War, when I was on active duty with the U.S. Navy, I visited Pearl Harbor. Along with many others, I visited the Arizona Memorial, but I was far more interested in the Pearl Harbor Submariners Chapel which is dedicated to the 51 United States submarine crews who were lost in WWII, among whom was my Uncle Steam, Commander Eliot Marshall.

Dr. Robert Leach and his wife, Laurie, have lived in Weston since 1965. Dr. Leach is presently editor of the American Journal of Sports Medicine and Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery at Boston University Medical School. He graduated from Princeton University in 1953 and received his medical degree from Columbia University. He served as a Lt. Commander in the U.S. Navy from 1962 to 1964. Professionally much of his work has been in the field of sports medicine, and he served as the Chairman of the U.S. Olympic Sport Medicine/ Sports Science Committee for 9 years. He, his wife and 6 children are all active athletes, and members of the family have won National Championships in tennis, wrestling, and yacht racing.

THE RUSSIAN PRINCESS

The Linwood Cemetery is a reflection in stone of the changing demographics of Weston. The older sections are exclusively European, mostly English names. There is also a “pot-
ters field” for the graduates of the “Poor Farm”.

Starting about 1920, a few Italian family names appear. Now these are joined by Asian names.

In between there is a section in which Scots and English are side by side with Swedish and some German names. There, in their midst, is a flat grey stone, about three feet by five feet, set into the ground, rather than standing upright.

It bears the legend:

Zoe Alexis Bakeev
b. Princess Obolensky
in Mogilev, Russia
Dec. 25, 1895 – March 20, 1956
Andre Alexis Bakeev
b. in Kursk, Russia
April 18, 1885 – Aug. 7, 1960

How did a Russian princess come to live and die in Weston?

My mother told me that the princess was working in a Red Cross hospital in Italy in the years at the end of World War I. A doctor from Weston, Dr. Fresinius F. VanNuys, was also working there. When he returned to Weston, he prevailed upon a wealthy landowner in Weston to invite the princess and her husband to come as guest.

After some time, the Westonian had a pre-fabricated house placed on his land at the corner of Chestnut Street and Highland Street. Here the Russian couple and their two children, a girl, Zekia, and a boy whose name I never knew, lived.

Mr. Bakeev had built up a small business restoring antique furniture in a shed on the property. He hired me as an apprentice for a few weeks one summer when I was about fourteen. It was at the height of the Great Depression, and my brothers and I took any work we could get. Mr. Bakeev spoke good English, but was not very communicative, speaking only to direct my work. Most of the time he was out in his little station wagon, taking finished pieces to customers, or picking up more work.

He was a small, slight man, but the few times I glimpsed the princess as she worked in her garden, I got the impression of a large blonde woman, with a sad face.

I did not know the daughter and son, but my youngest brother was in the same class as the girl. He said she was very smart and very attractive. He paid less attention to her brother, of course, but remembered him as a good student and athlete.

There were other stories, current at that time, about Cossack raids and flights in the night. I have no way of knowing the real story of their life in pre-war Russia or their flight to Italy.

I only know of their final resting place, far from home.

Douglas Henderson

ANY HORSE THIEVES IN WESTON?

Mysterious are the ways of God and of historians! We receive numerous queries from near and far, on subjects practical and esoteric. We could not answer a recent one from an assistant professor of political science at the University of Oklahoma in Norman, asking whether we know of 18th and 19th century anti-thief societies in and around our neighborhood. The professor shared with us a list of 20 such societies in Massachusetts: we found them so fascinating that we are sharing the list with you. If you happen to know of even a trace of such society that is not on the list, by all means let us know (781-237-1447) or contact directly Dr. Ann-Marie Szymanski, Political Science Department, University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK 73019. Below the list of the known societies:

1. Ashburnham Mutual Society for Detecting Thieves
2. Society in Dedham for Apprehending Horse Thieves
3. Society in Dedham for Apprehending and Prosecuting Thieves
4. Dorchester Association for the Detection and Prosecution of Trespassers on Gardens, Fields, and Orchards
5. Framingham Thief Detecting Society
6. Haverhill Fire Club (not clear when it assumed anti-thief activities)
7. Holden Thief Detecting Society
8. Kingston Society for the Detection of Thieves
9. Society for Detecting Horse Thieves in the Towns of Mendon, Bellingham, and Milford
10. Society for Mutual Aid in Detecting Thieves of Millbury
11. Society in Milton for Apprehending Horse Thieves
12. Newton, Needham and Natick Society for Apprehending Horse Thieves
13. Norfolk and Bristol [Counties] Horse Thief Detecting Society, also known as Society for Detecting Horse-Thieves, and Recovering Stolen Horses belonging to Wrentham, Franklin, Medway, Medfield, Walpole, Foxborough, Mansfield, and Attleborough
14. Northampton Society for the Detection of Thieves and Robbers
15. Norton Detecting Society Formed for the Purpose of Detecting Horse Thieves and Recovering Horses
16. Rehoboth Detecting Society, later known as the Rehoboth, Seekonk, Pawtucket, and East Providence Detecting Society
17. Society in Roxbury, Brookline, and Brighton for Apprehending Horse Thieves
18. Warren Thief Detecting Society
19. Worcester Association of Mutual Aid in Detecting Thieves
20. Worcester Association for the Protection [sic]

HOPE OF SPRING

The earth tips towards the warming sun
The flight of geese had just begun
With strength and determination
Tiny buds began a generation
Poking their heads above the earth,
Laughing with considerable mirth
The warm sun brings the light of day
And buds pop with color gay
Bursts of color cover the ground
With leaves and butterflies all around.
I feel the sense of grace take over
And the need to search for a lover
And I'm young again today
Drunk on flowers and new mown hay
The spring so long awaited is here,
With hopes of glorious summer near.

George Frazee Amadon

WESTON MAPLE SUGAR PROJECT 2002

The Maple Sugar Project is an after-school program to introduce students to the traditional New England craft of making syrup from the sap of the Sugar Maple tree. Land's Sake runs the program with support from the Weston Conservation Commission, and it is open to all Weston Middle School Students. Starting in Mid-February, students help identify and tap trees, haul buckets of sap, stack firewood, boil and bottle syrup and conduct other sugar shack chores. The Project ends the last Saturday in March with the annual "Sugaring Off" event where students sell syrup and demonstrate all that they have learned.

JUST FOR THE RECORD

College students nowadays equip their dormitory rooms with numerous conveniences: refrigerators (98%), microwaves, computers, televisions, VCR's, stereos, printers, answering machines, and videos (52%).

Where do teenagers get their spending money? Part time work (52%), own credit cards (10%); they expect to spend between \$75 and over \$200 for holiday shopping; they prefer stores to shopping online.

Complaining about Massachusetts taxes? The highest state plus local taxes are in New York (15.1%), Maine (14.7%), Wisconsin (13.3%). Massachusetts, in spite of the Taxachusetts moniker, is not among the first ten highest tax paying states.

Gray power in Weston: population over 60 according to the 2000 census: 1980: 1,754; 1990: 2,129; 2000: 2,387; 2010 (est.): 2,707. The decade 1990-2000 showed a growth of 12.1%, the two decades 1990-2010 (est.) shows a growth of 27.2%.



Sam Payson

INTRODUCING: SAMUEL R. PAYSON

Sam Payson was born in Brookline, Massachusetts, in 1915. Following graduation from Milton Academy and Harvard College in 1938, he embarked on a career of an insurance broker servicing both personal and commercial lines of insurance. With the exception of World War II years, he continued in this capacity until the late seventies when he sold his business to another broker.

In World War II, he served in a field artillery unit of the 26th Infantry Division, attached to General Patton's Third Army, seeing action in Northern France, the Bulge and Central Europe, ending up in Czechoslovakia.

January 1951 saw Sam departing Brookline, settling in Weston and marrying Ruth McWain of Sherburn, Massachusetts. In June 1955 a son, Timothy, was born. An illness which Ruth suffered from in the war years re-occurred, and she died in March 1965. Three years later Sam married Laura Richardson, born and brought up in Weston.

Sam has been involved in varied Weston activities. In 1956, as its chairman, he led the annual Community Fund Drive to a successful conclusion. During the time his son Tim was at Meadowbrook School, he became its trustee and later its treasurer. He was Clerk of the vestry of St. Peter's Episcopal Church during the time it was being planned and built. For a few years, he was a member of the Republican Town Committee. On the frivolous side, he was in dancing choruses of three original Friendly Society musicals.

In the past, he has served as treasurer, then Secretary of the Weston Historical Society, and at the time of this writing, remains a member of the Board. For over fourteen years, he has served as a member of the Weston Historic Commission whose mission is to preserve Weston's historic buildings, roads and land. On occasion, Sam shows up at the Society's museum and helps catalogue old Weston photographs. He has also written articles for the Society's Bulletin.

CORRECTION

In the Fall, 2001 BULLETIN, on page 16, a printer's imp rechristened George F. Amadon and listed him as George F. Anderson. The Memorial Day 2001 article was written by George F. Amadon.

WESTON HISTORY

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.
4. Lee Marsh, comp.: Weston, photographs from the Museum of the Weston Historical Society, paper, \$15.00.

All 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 02493. 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.