

THE WESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN



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Land's Sake Executive Director Stephen Cyr bottling Weston's own maple syrup.

MAPLE SUGARING: A CONTINUING TRADITION IN WESTON

Around mid-February, the woods and roadsides of Weston become busy worksites for Land's Sake and Middle School students participating in the annual Maple Sugar Project. They tap trees, haul buckets, stoke the fire in the sugar shack, and boil sap in a tradition that has not changed much, excepting some technological advances, since early settlers arrived in the northeast.

Inevitably the students gain a deeper appreciation for the tree that made an entire industry possible. *Acer saccharum*, the sugar maple, is native only to the northeastern United States and Canada, making maple sugaring a source of pride in the region. It is a hearty, patient tree, often waiting for years in the shade of other trees for a chance of sunlight. Individual trees have been known to grow as tall as 135 feet and up to seven feet in diameter; they often dominate the forest canopy when they reach maturity. They can withstand extreme cold, fierce winds, and even small fires. The sugar maple's durable wood has been coveted for railway cars, carriage spokes, indestructible spools and bobbins in the old-time mills, dance floors, violins, and bowling lanes. The trees managed in sugarbushes have the ability like no other, except perhaps the black maple (*acer nigrum*), to give sap plentifully year after year. Other tapable trees include the red maple (*acer rubrum*), silver maple (*acer saccharinum*), and the Norway maple (*acer plantanoides*), although their sap is not as sweet or bountiful.

Weston's middle schoolers tap the trees with care, aware that they must preserve the tree's health. They start the season with a "tapping out" event in mid-February, when warmer days are followed by freezing nights. It is the positive and negative pressures that build up within the tree due to the temperature changes that allow the sap to "run" when the trees are tapped. Students tap only those trees that are ten inches in diameter or wider and limit the number of taps per tree depending on its size. Using a "brace and bit" similar to what farmers used a hundred years ago, they drill a small hole in the tree at a slightly upward angle, careful to leave at least six inches between old and new holes. Small, neat holes allow the tree to properly heal over once the spout is removed. The hole is plugged with a hooked metal spout, upon which a metal bucket is hung and topped with a pointed or rounded lid to keep debris from tainting the precious sap. Weather permitting, sap is collected almost every day, and when enough is collected for a batch, it is boiled into syrup.

The discovery of the sugar maple's sweet sap is bound up in mythology, native oral traditions, and early settlers' stories. One Canadian story claims that the first-ever harvester was a common red squirrel which with sharp teeth hopped from tree to tree puncturing the wood. The sap quickly hardened on the bark, and the squirrel then returned to nibble the droplets with relish. Despite conflicting stories, it is widely believed that tribes such as the Abenaki, Iroquois, Huron, Ojibway, Micmac and others in the region first taught the settlers how to collect and condense sap into a thicker, sweeter substance. Indians would put a gash in the tree and insert spouts made of birch bark, elderberry or sumac branches to collect the sap into birch bowls placed on the ground. They would collect the sap in a hollowed out log and boil it by submerging hot stones from the fire. They would also let the sap freeze, remove the ice, and collect the condensed syrup underneath.

Around 1800, colonists replaced the gashes with neater holes tapped by augers, believed to be a first sign of their stewardship for the trees. They developed hooked spouts from which they hung wooden buckets and then transported full buckets hung from shoulder yokes. Different sized yokes were constructed for men, women and children. Sap was boiled in open cauldrons hung on poles or tripods over an open fire. The first syrup was dark and

strong, and was used as a sweetener or food preservative in the homes, or sold or bartered for other goods.

Maple syrup became an important symbol of self-reliance around the American Revolution, and colonists were encouraged to shun the more expensive, rare cane sugar bought from England. Evaporators, invented in the 1850s, sped up the sap boiling process significantly and encouraged more production. One of the earliest models was patented by D.M. Cook of Ohio in 1858. Evaporators worked by heating the sap in shallow, closed metal pans. Later models added grooves and ridges to the pan bottoms to increase surface area, and a flue that drained partially concentrated sap into a flat finishing pan. This is essentially the same system that Land's Sake uses in the sugar shack at Weston Middle School today.

Around the turn of the century, sugar shacks began popping up to shelter both the sap and the syrup-maker. "Sugar packers" stored the syrup in bulk, often by transforming it into large sugar cakes that were sold to flavor foods and tobaccos. Maple was, and still is, popular for making canned baked beans, candy, maple-flavored cereals, salad dressing, barbeque sauces, aromatic pipe tobacco, and of course, as a topping for pancakes and French toast. Thomas Jefferson's enthusiastic attempt to start a sugar bush at his estate failed. Virginia was too far south to provide the seasonal freeze-thaw that is critical to sap collection.

American Abbot Augustus was one of the first men to transform the maple sugaring craft into a major business enterprise. He used metal pipes (an early version of tubing systems widely used today) to move sap from 10,000 trees on his farm in eastern New York. At the peak of his business, Augustus was producing 20,000 gallons of syrup annually.

The demand for maple sugar declined further after the civil war, when cane sugar became cheaper to purchase and transport. Therefore, producers shifted their marketing of maple as an all-purpose sweetener and preservative to strictly syrup, where its popularity remains today.

There is growing concern that acid rain is causing irreversible damage to sugar maples; it is believed that the highly acidic rain falling on sugarbushes drastically increases the speed at which potassium, a critical nutrient, leaches out of the soil. Also, compaction and road salt is taking its toll on the trees planted along roads, and many of these older specimens are dying. Weston is seeing effects of these stresses on its own trees. *The Town of Weston Maple Sugar Inventory*, conducted in 1992, made the following recommendations to preserve the trees as much as possible: rely on younger sugarbushes for maple sugaring more heavily than the older roadside trees, restrict development around these sugarbushes, and possibly plant more sugar maples along secondary streets with less traffic and little or no road salt application. Steps will need to be taken across the northeast to assure the survival of the trees as well as the craft of maple sugaring.

Despite some decline in the past fifty years, the sugaring industry is still strong, comprising full- and part-time producers. They put an emphasis on grading to assure customer acceptance. Syrup is graded according to its color: Grade A Light or "Fancy," Grade A Medium, Grade A Dark, and Grade B, which is very dark with a strong, mapley flavor.

In Weston, middle schoolers learn the art of syrup-making. They must get the sap in the evaporator to a temperature of 219 degrees, versus the 212 degrees it takes to boil water. The evaporator will turn forty gallons of sap, with an average 2.5 percent sugar content, to one gallon of syrup with a sugar content of 67 percent, and a net weight of eleven pounds per gallon. Students work hard as long as the sap is running, then bottle the syrup according to grade, and prepare themselves for the Sugaring Off Festival in late March. In true New England tradition, spring-seeking folk come out to the sugar shack to get a hint of the warmth



Land's Sakes sugar shack behind the Middle School.



A wood fire evaporator inside the sugar shack.



Steve Cyr filtering the finished product.



Preparing to bottle the syrup.

to come, see a demonstration of the sugaring process, and purchase the long-awaited syrup. With their first taste of that unique sweetness comes the knowledge of being part of a cherished tradition of local, sustainable business with deep roots in the land.

SOURCES

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Stephen Cyr

Stephen Cyr, Executive Director of Land's Sake, graduated with a Bachelor of Sciences in Forest and Wildlife Management degree from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst in 1993. He has since worked with a number of conservation commissions, town forest boards, and private land owners dealing with a wide range of land management issues. He joined Land's Sake in 1994 and has directed the organization since October 1999. He is married and has a four month old daughter.

THE MAPLE SUGAR PROJECT

A time capsule dated 1974 still remains buried in the stoop of the old sugar shack behind Weston's Middle School. It is here where, since incorporating in 1980, Land's Sake has run the "Maple Sugar Project" each spring. The Maple Sugar Project is an after-school program designed to introduce students to the traditional craft of making syrup from the sap of the sugar maple tree. This hands on, outdoor, educational experience is open to all Weston Middle School students. The students learn to identify and tap sugar maple trees, gather sap, boil and bottle syrup, as well as brush up on all life's sciences. Botanist, chemist, and craftsman are just a few of the hats worn by a sugarmaker. This year's "Tap Out" was scheduled for Saturday, February 8th at 9:00 am. The annual end of the season "Sugaring Off" event is scheduled for Saturday, March 29th from 9:00 am to 12:00 noon. Land's Sake runs the program with financial support from the Weston Conservation Commission.

Land's Sake, Inc. is a non-profit organization with a mission to engage the community in its own working landscape. Programs include all aspects of community agriculture-Maple Sugaring, Logging and Lumbering, Conservation Land Management, Trail Maintenance, Beekeeping, and Organic Vegetable Production. Over 80 percent of program costs are covered by the sale of the products and services themselves, the other 20 percent is covered through membership dues and private donations. A donation to Land's Sake goes a long way. *Land's Sake*: an old expression with new meaning: Let's take care of our land, for *Land's Sake*.

Kerisa Perazella

Kerisa Perazella is Assistant Farm Manager with Land's Sake, Inc. She graduated Summa Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Writing and Communication from Emerson College in May of 1998. She has worked with Land's Sake since April 2001.

Mike Raymond is the Farm Manager. He graduated with a Bachelor of Sciences in Resource Economics from the University of Vermont in 1991. He has both assisted and managed a number of different vegetable farming operations around New England over the past 10 years; he has managed the Land's Sake Farm since April of 2000.

LONG, LONG AGO . . . IN WESTON

Through the kindness of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Mosher, I gained the privilege to look into three interesting scrap books, kept throughout the years by Margaret Mosher, the well known and beloved librarian of the town of Weston for many years. Two of the scrap books are green and measure 11 x 12 inches, the third one is in dark covers and measures 8 x 10 1/2 inches. All three are chock full of information, a treasure trove of Weston history. Unfortunately, like many of similar amateur collections, many entries, consisting of various clippings, do not contain either the date or the name of the source, or both, which - to put it mildly - chagrins the researcher. The dates covered by the scrapbooks are, as far as I could ascertain from initial perusal, 1915 to 1978, 1965 to 1983 and 1921 to 1976, that is overlapping dates, but I could not detect any criterion for the differences; the smaller scrap book perhaps contains mostly wedding announcements and obituaries.

Here are a few samples extracted randomly from the headlines of the clippings, that just might whet your appetite for digging deeper into some of the topics:

From the first larger scrapbook:

“Shame of the Town of Weston,” headlined the Sunday Boston American on February 21, 1915, and offered a brief explanation before a long article, stating among others that “State Orphans. . . are compelled to Walk to School While Other Children Ride at Town’s Expense.” There are lots of possibilities for further research; first of all, what were several (how many?) orphans doing in Weston? Who were they? Who decided that they should reside in Weston? Who paid for them? Who decided that they could not ride to school as the other Weston kids? Where did they live? And how true and accurate were the statements in the article? Was there a political motive? These are just a few questions listed here at random; many more would come up in further research.

Another interesting item was reported, most likely in the Town Crier, judging from the type of the print, with pictures, no less, about a donkey basketball game, I kid you not, where Weston and Wayland high school students battled it out while sitting on donkeys; sorry to report that Weston lost 16 to 12. Was this the fashion in general in those days, in the month of April, 1965? There must be eye witnesses still around who observed that strange variation of a polo match!

There is an extensive article, probably from the Town Crier, from the year of 1966, about a piano shaped back porch, in the Weston home of Arthur McKenzie, the concert pianist and composer. Why not? Liberace had a piano shaped swimming pool, if I recall correctly, so why not a piano shaped porch for a true artist?

In a more serious vein, here are some salaries from the good old days and not so long ago, really: in 1969 the salary of the superintendent of schools was \$25,000; of the high school principal \$22,000; and of the elementary school principal \$19,000; so reported the Town Crier on July 29, 1971.

The Waltham News Tribune on August 23, 1977 reported in great detail the story of the Weston airport, on the corner of Brown and Winter Streets.

These clippings, and there must be several hundreds of them, come from many different sources, mostly contemporary newspapers, especially the Town Crier, but also from local organizations’ announcements. Represented are the Middlesex News, Boston Herald, Boston Globe, News Tribune, and - alas - some are not identified.

The second scrap book also contains some provocative and tempting entries including attractive photographs of old houses in Weston. There is a charming picture of our own secretary Anne Melone Pollock with her husband Bob on their honeymoon in Amsterdam,

memorialized in the Town Crier on June 16, 1966. For some reason this was so important to Miss Mosher that she has a copy in both scrap books. It is also charming to see the young edition of the face of the popular Doug Henderson, most likely just out of his ambassadorial elegance, as a candidate for Weston selectman in 1978.

There are also interesting financial figures that will arise nostalgia in many a reader: reporter Irma Stowbridge stated, probably in the Town Crier, in January, 1966 (no day indicated) that the cost of a new library - a big issue of the day! - would be \$450,000; alas, the clipping is incomplete. I recall a town meeting in those days, when the town was just about split on the issue of a new library, that a resident got up and in a quivering voice prophetically said: "Mind my words, if we do not build this library now, years from now it will cost us twice that amount." Truer words have been seldom spoken. How many millions did the new library cost? Much more than twice the \$450,000.

Would you believe that according to a news item of December, 1980 house sales in Weston averaged \$155,000? Or that as of November 19th, 1981 the tax rate was set at \$17.36?

The smaller scrap book will tell you that in 1952, 38 young scholars were awarded their high school diplomas on June 7th. Another intimate news tidbit, also by reporter Irma Stowbridge, let us in on the secret that "The Golden Ball 'Privy' [is a] Likely Treasure Box," this in the Weston Town Crier on April 8, 1965. There is a flyer announcing the start of METCO, dated simply Summer, 1965. We also read about a suicide of a 14 year old girl and a 17 year old boy from high school, including their names; with this entry there is no date, but it happened during the tenure of police chief Frank Shaw.

All together there are several dozens of items that would deserve further investigation. It is only hoped that some of the readers would be challenged sufficiently to undertake the detective work.

The albums are the property of the Mosher family and are in their possession; you need their permission to work with the scrap books. We at the museum archives of the Weston Historical Society can only hope that when the time comes that the family Mosher would choose to dispose of the scrap books, that they would find their way to our archives.

Vera Laska

MORE ABOUT OUR BICENTENNIAL QUILT

The Weston School News of November, 1976 - courtesy of the Margaret Mosher scrap book - gives us details on its front page about the Bicentennial quilt that serves as a divider in our museum between one of the two exhibit rooms and the work room. Entitled "5th Graders sew Historical Quilt," it states: "A Bicentennial Quilt sewn by Woodland 5th graders has been presented to the Weston Historical Society . . . at the Josiah Smith Tavern. Mrs. Jane Marshall supervised the project in which students designed and sewed 4" x 4" muslin squares . . . with patriotic symbols, which were sewn together with alternating patches of blue and red. Diane Santos made the presentation . . . Mrs. Alice Fraser coordinated the students and mothers who produced the final project."

THE BRITISH SPY UNMASKED

In 1827 the large publishing house of Luther Roby, Printer, of Concord, New Hampshire, publisher of children's books and one of the largest printers of the Bible, released *A Journal kept by Mr. John Howe, while he was employed as a British Spy, during the Revolutionary War; also while he was engaged in the Smuggling Business, during the late War* (War of 1812).

Here is the alleged historical background of the story: British general Thomas Gage wanted to determine the lay of the land and the possibility of an incursion into either Concord or Worcester, in order to destroy military stores held there by the Patriots. He therefore ordered on April 5, 1775 Sgt. John Howe and Col. Smith (who later would command the British forces marching to Concord) to travel in disguise as countrymen with a kerchief around their necks, a small bundle in one hand and a walking stick in the other, to the Concord and Worcester area.

The following is a literal excerpt from the Howe journal, in its original spelling, allegedly the testimony of this british spy, taken from the Roby edition (pp. 6-11):

We got to Watertown [Roby mistakenly printed Worcester!] about six miles; here we called for breakfast at the tavern; while at breakfast, there came in a negro woman to wait on the table; Col. Smith asked her where we two could find employment; she looked Col. Smith in the face, and said, Smith, you will find employment enough for you and all Gen. Gage's men in a few months. This conversation about wound up our breakfast. Smith appeared to be thurnder-struck, and my feelings were of the keenest kind the Landlord then /said/, that she had been living in Boston, and had got acquainted with a great many British officers and soldiers there, and might take you to be some of them. Then we paid our reckoning as soon as possible I told Smith that for us to go on any farther together would be imprudent; Smith said he thought so, and would return back to Boston, if I would pursue the route; he then gave me up the journal book and pencil, and ten guineas, with several letters to tories between Boston and Worcester. Smith said if he came out with his regiment that read, he would kill that wench.

I asked this negro [I met] how far it was to a tavern; he said one mile to a tavern by Weston meeting house, another tavern half a mile above. I asked him which was the best and what their names were; he said the first was kep by Mr. Joel Smith, a good tavern and a good liberty man; the other was kept by Capt. Isaac Jones, a wicked tory, where a great many British officers go from Boston to his house

[I] came to Smith's tavern, where two teamsters were tackling their teams one of them . . . answered, and said he did not know of any body that wanted to hire Englishmen, for they believed I was an Englishman. I asked them what reason they had for thinking so; they said I looked like them rascals they see in Boston, here I wished myself at Capt. Jones', but to start off then I thought it would not do, so I walked into the house, called for some rum and molasses, one of them followed me in and told the landlord he guessed I was a British Spy, The landlord told me he believed Capt. Jones would hire; I asked him where he lived; he said about half a mile above, and kept tavern at the sign of the golden ball I now went on to Capt. Jones', here I handed a letter to Capt. Jones from General Gage Then I made him acquainted with all that had taken place from Boston here, it being fourteen miles. He informed me that it would not do for me to stay over night, for his house would be mobed and I should be taken. Here I got some dinner; then he said he would send his hired man with me to the house of one Wheaton, in a remote part of the town, where I must remain till he sent for me after dinner. . . . I arrived at Mr. Wheaton's

JOURNAL

KEPT BY

MR. JOHN HOWE,

WHILE HE WAS EMPLOYED AS A

BRITISH SPY,

DURING THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR ;

ALSO,

WHILE HE WAS ENGAGED IN THE

SMUGGLING BUSINESS,

DURING THE LATE WAR.

CONCORD, N. H.

LUTHER ROBY, PRINTER.

1827.

Title page of the allegedly spurious journal of John Howe

about sunset. Then the hired man informed Mr. Wheaton of my business, and that I was a British Spy, and Capt. Jones wished him to keep me secure until he sent for me. Then I was conducted into a chamber, with a table furnished with a bottle of brandy, candles, paper, etc. Now I went to work to copy from my head on a journal . . . I remained here all night; the next day being 6th, the good hired man came to see me early in the morning. He informed me that the news of the conversation which took place at Watertown between Col. Smith and a black woman reached Capt. Jones last evening, by the same teamsters you saw at J. Smith's tavern yesterday. They insisted that there were British Spies in the house, the news spread, and by eleven o'clock there were thirty men collected. Capt. Jones gave them leave to search the house, which they did in part; then they went into the kitchen and asked the black woman if there were any strangers or Englishmen in the house; she replied she thought not; By this time their fury was subsided, Capt. Jones set on a bottle of spirit to drink, which they drank, and all retired.— Now the hired man went home, and said he should call again in the evening; after breakfast I went to work upon my journal, here I sat down the number of militia, arms and ammunition of this place sent to me by the hired man from Mr. Jones — after dinner Mr. Wheaton introduced his two daughters to me, stating to them that I was a British Officer in disguise. Here we sat and played cards until tea time. After tea the ladies retired and I lie down, being very tired, and expected company that evening. About eight o'clock the hired man called for me and said he was going with me to Marlborough, but said we could not go by Capt. Jones' for they were lying in wait for me there; so I bid Mr. Wheaton and his family good bye, and off we set on the back road, coming out above Capt. Jones' one mile, on the Worcester road

There are thirty-three additional pages in the pamphlet that is Howe's journal; they deal with events that occurred beyond Weston; of interest is the entry that Howe recommended to Gen. Gage to send 500 mounted troops to Concord during night time in order to achieve victory, but that Gen. Gage did not follow up his recommendation.

The story of John Howe, the "British Spy," was highly popular and often repeated. It was not until 1983, when Greenwood Press published *American Writers Before 1800* that John Howe's figure was considered "elusive." Yet many sources before that repeated the Howe story as authentic, among them Daniel Lamson's *History of the Town of Weston* (1913), Emma Ripley's *Weston, A Puritan Town* (1961) and Brenton H. Dickson & Homer C. Lucas's *One Town in the American Revolution* (1976), and many others. The story was also popular among its contemporaries who subscribed to Revolutionary nostalgia, half a century after the Revolution.

So it went until a literary bombshell hit the British spy story and sent shockwaves through the New England historical community. Daniel E. Williams, a young man who had just received his PhD. and was anxious to become published, was given an opportunity in the *Eighteenth Century* magazine; his article came out in volume 34, no.3, on June 3, 1993.

The article was titled "Spacious Spy: The Narrative Lives - and Lies - of Mr. John Howe." Williams claimed that there never was a John Howe as a spy, that the copy of his journal was imaginatively written by Mr. Roby, the printer of Concord, New Hampshire, the publisher of the Howe pamphlet, and that the journal was a literary hoax.

Williams has done a carefully researched article which leaves no doubt that Sgt. John Howe existed only as a narrator's imagination. Howe's journal told a story that created its own reality. The locations, people and events seemed a match with another journal. It followed closely the report of the activities of one ensign DeBerniere and a captain Brown, who at the end of February, 1775 were ordered by General Gage thus: "You will go through

GENERAL GAGE'S INSTRUCTIONS,

Of 22d February 1775.

To Captain *Brown* and Ensign *D'Berniere*, (of the army under his command) whom he ordered to take a sketch of the roads, passes, heights, &c. from *Boston* to *Worcester*, and to make other observations :

With a curious

NARRATIVE
Of OCCURRENCES during their mission,
Wrote by the *Ensign*.

Together with an ACCOUNT of their doings, in consequence of further Orders and Instructions from General *Gage*, of the 20th *March* following, to proceed to *Concord*, to reconnoitre and find out the state of the provincial magazines ; what number of cannon, &c. they have, and in what condition.

ALSO,
An ACCOUNT of the Transactions of the *British* troops, from the time they marched out of *Boston*, on the evening of the 18th, 'till their confused retreat back, on the ever memorable *Nineteenth* of *April* 1775 ; and a Return of their killed, wounded and missing on that suspicious day, as made to Gen. *Gage*.

[Lost in town by a *British* Officer previous to the evacuation of it by the enemy, and now printed for the information and amusement of the curious.]

BOSTON
Printed, and to be sold, by J. GILL, in Court Street.
1779.

the counties of Suffolk and Worcester, taking a sketch of the country as you pass; . . . mark out the roads and distances from town to town, . . . all passes must be particularly laid down, noticing the length and breaths of them, the entrance in and going out of them, and whether to be avoided by taking other routs. The rivers also to be sketched out” (p. 1 of *General Gage’s Instructions*).

DeBerniere and Brown dressed simply in civilian clothes and claimed to be surveyors; later they claimed to be gentlemen of Boston who were taking a trip to Worcester. They spent the night at the Golden Ball in Weston, then continued to Worcester. On their return to Weston they met mounted men who questioned them closely and then left them. They took a different road from the one that they had been on; at the onset of a severe blizzard they were able to walk through the snow without any interference to reach safety. They returned to the Golden Ball without any problems, then had their man take their finished sketches to Boston. The following morning after breakfast they returned to Boston in very bad weather, which probably kept them from being observed by the Liberty Men. They arrived safely in Boston at about twelve o’clock and met General Gage and General Heldimen with their aid-de-camps, who did not know them until they “discovered” themselves.

The journal of John Howe pretty much followed the events experienced by DeBerniere and Brown.

SOURCES:

A journal kept by Mr. John Howe, while he was employed as a British Spy, During the Revolutionary War; also, While he was engaged in the Smuggling Business, During the Late War. Concord, N.H.: Luther Roby, Printer, 1827.

General Gage’s Instructions of 22nd February, 1775, to Captain Brown and Ensign D’Berniere . . . whom he ordered to take a sketch of the roads, passes, heights, etc. from Boston to Worcester . . . Boston: J. Gill, 1779.

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Minuteman National Historic Park, Concord, MA, Mark Nichipor

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Weston Public Library, Tatanya Flannery

George F. Amadon

Strong circumstantial evidence seems to support Williams’s and Amadon’s conclusion. Ed.

WESTON, NEAR CREWE, CHESHIRE, ENGLAND

Long ago and far away . . . a kind soul by the name of J.A. Paddington, Clerk to the Weston Parish Council in the Weston, Near Crewe, in Cheshire, England, sat down to his typewriter on Easter Sunday, April 14th, 1963, and sent greetings "To Our Friends of the Township of Weston, Massachusetts, U.S.A." The letter is attached to the inside cover of a small photograph album, 6" by 7 1/2" in green covers; on its 38 pages it offers the viewer various vistas of the English Weston and some of the people who live there.

The album is in its own little box, but there is no correspondence antedating the Paddington letter, nor is there any follow up. It can be only surmised from reading in between the lines that somebody from the American Weston wrote to several Westons abroad at the time of the 250th anniversary celebrations in the American Weston, making contact and inviting representatives of the other Westons to come and join us in the jubilee. Representatives of the English Weston would have liked to come and participate in the festivities, but it could not be, as "we are just ordinary folk, the expense would be too great."

Here is the full letter, signed by eight members of the Parish Council:

We have much delight in forwarding you an Album of the interesting sights of the English village of Weston, which borders the great railway centre of Crewe, in the county of Cheshire, where some of the life-line of British railways converge. In the railway workshops here was built the wonderful steam locomotive, 'Royal Scot,' which toured your country in 1933, thirty years ago in April, including your capital city, BOSTON [sic].

In presenting these views of our village, we feel that they will convey to you all a more interesting knowledge of our life and colour than newsprint, or letter, and we sincerely trust they will help to promote a mutual friendship between the two Weston's [sic] so many thousands of miles apart. We have a Friendly Society motto here - 'Friendship, Love and Truth,' similar to your 'Household of Ruth' Societies in the States, and we present this sentiment to you to make closer the bonds of our future friendship.

What follows are photos, starting with the eight dignitaries of the Parish Council, followed by various views of Weston town, All Saints Church, the White Lion Inn, converted from its original farm house of 1652, also a nice snapshot of six residents partaking of liquid refreshments at the same, with the caption "Sunday noon 'At the Bar'" with the names of some of the regulars. Interestingly, their photo of the Village Green shows no green but a paved road, quite a difference from our Green or Common. There are warm informal pictures of guests at the White Lion Inn's presentation of prizes at the Fishing Match, another of the Annual Garden Party & Gala with the new Queen and her retinue, showing a smiling young lady with a crown and five of her attendants. That event also presented Scottish dancers. The last photo in the album shows the team of the Weston Cricket Club, Champions of the local Scot Hay & District in 1932, 1953, 1954, 1956, 1957, 1958; the dozen men in white uniform look quite handsome; no wonder, their Cricket Club has been in existence for over a century, and the team won many a game.

The last two pages are devoted to a typed history of the town and life in it. There is no mention of a date for the founding of the town; however, "At the time of the English Domesday Book (1086), the village of Weston was in the possession of Earl Harold," so it has a history much older than the New World Weston. Life seems to be centered around the church, dedicated to All Saints, erected in 1840 on the Village Green; a Sanctuary was added in 1894 and an organ in 1906. "Community life as it is today, started with the erection of the All Saints Church, and the village has altered little in the past 120 years." What a fortunate statement and fortunate people!

The question now is this: should we pick up the long interrupted connection with the English Weston, or let the matter rest where it is? Do I hear a volunteer who would like to pursue the correspondence for us?

Vera Laska



Cathleen Daley

INTRODUCING: CATHLEEN DALEY

Cathleen Daley was born in Buffalo, New York. She studied at Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts, where she received the degree of Bachelor of Fine Arts from the School of Museum of Fine Arts.

She has functioned successfully as a freelance graphic designer for many years in Boston.

She is married to Frederick Daley, and they have a daughter Margaret. The family resides in Weston.

Cathleen Daley is the newest member of the Weston Historical Society Board of Directors. Welcome aboard!

DID YOU KNOW?

The January 29, 2003, p. B7 Boston Globe published rather intimate financial statistics about the moneys flowing from the Commonwealth to the towns. Here are the figures for Weston for fiscal year 2002; from the total state aid of \$5.1 billion to all cities and towns in Massachusetts, Weston received \$4,338,573, amounting to 8.9% of the town's budget. State funding for the entire Commonwealth averaged 28% of the budgets. Surprised?

On the other hand, local aid cuts for this fiscal year for Weston is \$38,151, corresponding to cuts as a percentage of fiscal year 2002 local budget 0.08%, as per Globe of January 31, 2003, p. B9.

NEWS FROM THE MUSEUM

Come and visit our museum which includes some new displays; there are now informative labels at each major exhibit.

Among future plans is a spring walk through old Jericho Village with the Weston Forest and Trail organization; on the 19th of April perhaps a reenactment of the militia from the Weston Green over Old Road and return for refreshments at the Musuem.

We also need volunteers to identify and catalog many rare items.

WESTON WINTER WONDERLAND

Approximately 45 inches of snow has been plowed this year in Weston, about one third of the roads were treated with salt and sand. About 6 inches of powder fell on Christmas Day, costing the town \$36,000 to clean up; on Friday, 2/7/03 c. 13 inches came our way, costing us \$21,000.

Our winter storm staff of 22 people uses 50 pieces of equipment, of which 17 belong to the town and about twice as many are rented from contractors. The Department of Public Works reported that the \$117,000 projected snow clearing budget has been reached in January.

Source: Weston Town Crier of 2/13/03.

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.

OFFICERS OF THE WESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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BULLETIN Editor

Vera Laska

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.