

WESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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WESTON'S PAUL REVERE BELL

Did you know that First Parish in Weston has a Paul Revere bell? Weighing in at 997-pounds, it was purchased in 1800 when the early 18th century church building was being repaired and enlarged with two porches and a steeple. The congregation raised the \$443.12 by subscription.

An earlier bell, which weighed only 164 pounds, was probably brought down from Canada during the French and Indian wars, according to the *History of the Town of Weston*. Author Daniel Lamson speculated that it came from a chapel or convent. Revere paid the congregation \$72.88 for the old bell. The Revere bell was moved to the next church building (1840) and later to the 1888 fieldstone church, where it still rings every hour.

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John Singleton Copley painted this 1768 portrait of Paul Revere, showing the artisan at work, dressed in his shirtsleeves. (Courtesy Wikimedia Commons)

Paul Revere: From Midnight Rider to Industrial Revolutionary *A Zoom lecture by Dr. Robert Martello*

Thursday, April 29, 7:30 pm

"Listen my children and you shall hear of the Midnight Ride of Paul Revere."

Americans rightfully celebrate Paul Revere's patriotic service during the American Revolution; but in this talk, Dr. Robert Martello will explore how his greatest role in building the new nation took place in workshops and manufactories, via a lifetime of groundbreaking metallurgical work.

Dr. Martello is a Professor of the History of Science and Technology at Olin College of Engineering and author of *Midnight Ride, Industrial Dawn: Paul Revere and the Growth of American Enterprise*, a study of how Paul Revere's manufacturing career impacted America's transition into the industrial age.

To attend, watch for the email announcement and link, to be sent the week before, or send your email address to info@westonhistory.org.

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The bell in the First Parish steeple is marked "Revere and Sons Boston 1801." It rings automatically every hour and can be rung by hand by pulling a long rope.

NEW ACQUISITIONS

From Joshua Lombard. Hand drawn map of the Charles Jones Estate on Glen Road, made by his mother, Mary Esther Lombard, in the late 1930s or 1940s.

From Jessica Viles. A treasure trove of documents and memorabilia belonging to organ factory owner Francis Henry Hastings, his wife Anna Coburn Hastings, and her niece Anna Hall. Jessica's grandmother was a friend of Anna Hall, and after Hall died in 1978 at age 101, many Coburn and Hastings documents ended up in the Viles attic at 300 Conant Road.

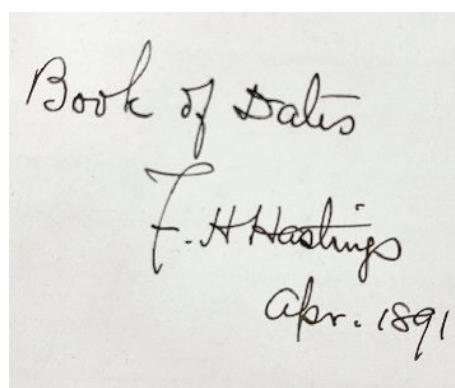
From an historical point of view, the most valuable is F. H. Hastings's "Book of Dates," in which he divided a small lined notebook into years and noted important events of that year. Hastings was born in the family homestead at 190 North Avenue and attended the North Avenue District School. Among the many revelations in the diary is that Hastings was plagued by ill health throughout his life. He mentions health problems beginning in his first entry in 1851, at the age of 15:

I went to school during the winter term ending in March or April before I was 15 . . . Then I worked on the farm until into June or July. I was not well and I was tired of the work—and "rebelled" declaring I would work no longer, and commenced as an apprentice to my Uncle Bingham as a machinist tool maker—worked 3 months doing my best against ill health until in Oct I was obliged to give up and go home.

Among the Coburn items are seven "Line A Day" diaries from 1898 to 1934, belonging to Anna Coburn Hastings, a very conscientious diary keeper. Coburn was the much respected teacher at the North Avenue District School. In 1899, she married Hastings and, as explained on page 4, had to give up teaching. Her papers include a number of word puzzles created for special occasions, for example, the Thanksgiving questions on page 3.



Jessica Viles is pictured here, safely masked, in the historical society's temporary quarters in the basement of St. Julia Church. She is holding the important gift of the diary of organ factory owner Francis Henry Hastings.



From Faith Rand. In addition to the wash stand and china wash set from the Teachers' Lodge (see page 4), Faith Rand has donated many items that once belonged to her parents, Theodore and Lucy Rand, or grandparents, Charles O. and Laura Richardson. These include the Richardsons' leather World War I ration book with food and gas coupons and a War Stamps Victory book. Also a large collection of documents and memorabilia relating to the Fair Committee at First Parish (1886 to 1950), photographs of the Richardson home at 6 Conant Road, music for the singing chorus of the Friendly Society original production of "Personal Service" in 1947, and a history of Horace Sears's textile company "Wellington Sears Company: It's First Hundred Years, 1845-1945" by Faith's great-aunt Mabel Richardson. Also two unusual Martex towels, for which Faith provided this history:



Below: Detail of pileated woodpecker from a Martex towel custom made for company executive Charles O. Richardson. See story at right.

When I was growing up in Weston, Martex towels were the only brand in our family. My grandfather, Charles O. Richardson, worked for Wellington Sears Company and consequently we had piles of Martex towels everywhere. We still have them. In fact, when I was moving my parents into assisted living, we unearthed a pile of monogrammed Martex towels still in their original wrapping, a wedding present to my parents in 1948.

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This "magic lantern" slide shows the "Big House," the Paine family name for the Highland Street mansion of General Charles Jackson Paine. Notice the small child in the driveway. The Big House was demolished in 1972. (Courtesy of Tom Paine)

From Thomas Paine, great-grandson of General Charles Jackson Paine, a collection of 114 glass "magic lantern slides" taken in the mid-1890s by his great uncle, Sumner Paine (1868–1904) or grandfather, John B. Paine (1870–1951), eldest children of Gen. Charles Jackson Paine and Julia Bryant Paine.

The magic lantern was the forerunner of the modern slide projector. A transparent positive image of a photograph in the form of a glass slide could be projected onto a wall or screen using this device. The slides were constructed from a base piece of glass, with the emulsion (photo) on it, then a matte over that, and then a top piece of cover glass. They are then taped all the way around to keep the pieces together and keep the dust out.

Magic lantern slide technology predates the invention of photography. Originally, glass slides made from drawings or paintings were lit up by lantern or candle light and projected on a wall. The resulting projections were often animated and accompanied by music as a form of entertainment. When photography emerged in the mid-1800s, it was a natural fit for the magic lantern technology. By the 1930s and 40s, lantern slides dropped off in use as overhead projectors and slide projectors took their place.

Tom Paine's recent gift also included 14 photographs probably dating from the late 1890s, most showing golfers at the newly established Weston Golf Club. The club, one of the oldest in the nation, got its start when the Rev. Charles Russell, pastor of First Parish returned from England with a set of clubs and began hitting balls into nearby pastures. It was formally established in 1894 and located off Church Street in Kendal Green until 1916. Some of the fairways were also cow pastures, and part of the caddy's job was to drive the cows out of the way.



The golfer in this photo is thought to be either Sumner, John, or Charles Paine, sons of General Charles Jackson Paine. The photo was taken in the early days of the Weston Golf Club, when it was located in Kendal Green. The building in the background was used for storage of golf clubs. (Courtesy of Tom Paine)

QUESTIONS FOR THANKSGIVING DINNER

This quiz was found among the papers of Anna Coburn Hastings recently donated by Jessica Viles. Answers below.

1. What corn is musical?
2. What corn is a symbol of plenty?
3. What corn is a New York college?
4. What corn was a famous English general?
5. What corn grows into a mighty timber?
6. When is corn a good listener?
7. When is corn part of a building?
8. When is corn a part of a room or street?
9. What corn is part of the eye?
10. What corn is sometimes used as jewelry?
11. What corn is a fabulous animal?
12. What corn is explosive?

1. cornet; 2. cornucopia; 3. Cornell; 4. Cornwallis; 5. acorn; 6. when it's in the ear; 7. when it's a cornice; 8. when it's a corner; 9. cornea; 10. cornelian; 11. unicorn; 12. popcorn.

THE TEACHERS' LODGE: UNMARRIED TEACHERS HAD A HOME THANKS TO HORACE SEARS

Faith Rand has given the historical society a wash stand and china set once used in the Teachers' Lodge, an unusual boarding house for unmarried female teachers set up by Horace Sears in the house at 334 Boston Post Road across from his estate mansion.

In the late 19th and early 20th century, custom dictated that female teachers be unmarried. (In fact, "marriage bars" were not banned by law until 1964, when Title VII of the Civil Rights Act prohibited discrimination in employment on the basis of sex.) In a town like Weston, with limited housing options, unmarried female teachers with no local relatives faced serious obstacles in finding suitable boarding arrangements. In 1913, the community-minded Sears solved this problem by setting up a "Teachers' Lodge" described in the 1913 *Town Report*:

Mr. Horace S. Sears placed at the disposal of the Committee a commodious dwelling . . . and not only did he give the building for this purpose, he gave it in perfect repair and completely furnished for living and house-keeping, even to silver and table linen, all without charge whatever to the Town. The house has accommodations for eight teachers besides a housekeeper, and for the first time it has been possible this winter for all to enjoy the pleasures and privileges of home life.

According to the *Town Report*, the teachers were initially concerned about the expense, but organ factory owner Francis Henry Hastings guaranteed them against any personal loss, and "so enabled them to enter upon the experiment of community housekeeping assured of success." Sears assumed responsibility for the exterior and grounds and in 1917 added an extensive ell with space for several more residents.

Faith Rand's grandfather, Charles O. Richardson, worked for Sears at his textile manufacturing company, Wellington Sears. Richardson started out as an office boy and rose to partner and later treasurer. At Sears's death in 1923, Richardson was one of the three trustees of his estate. In 1949, he purchased No. 334 and the adjoining land from another one of the trustees and gave about 1.8 acres to St. Peter's Church, then located in the Town Center, with the provision that the church build on the new site within ten years. Richardson maintained the Teachers' Lodge into the 1950s, when it was no longer needed.

His daughter Lucy and her husband Ted Rand, parents of Faith Rand, moved to No. 334 in 1955 with their daughter Lucy Amelia (5) and son Jonathan on the way. Faith was

born five years later. She recalled that the house was filled with furnishings left from its former life, including the wash stand and china set:

Though we never used it as such, it stayed in the children's bathroom and miraculously survived our childhood. I was always struck by how beautiful it was and imagined all the teachers using it over the years. I never knew how many women the house held, but even the attic rooms were wallpapered so there must have been bedrooms up on that chilly 3rd floor in addition to the six bedrooms on the second floor. When I was a child,

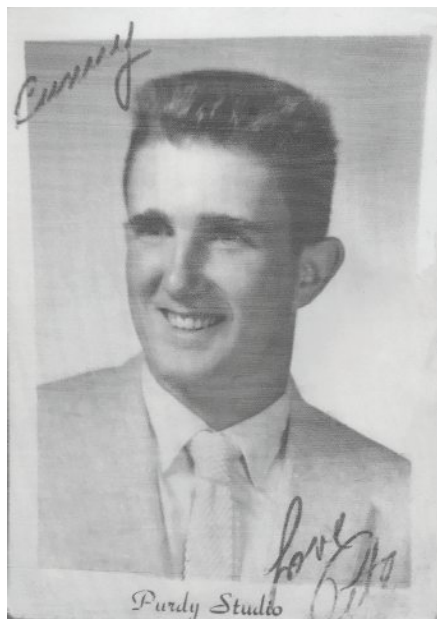


Faith Rand is pictured here with the wash stand and antique china wash set from the Teachers' Lodge that she has donated to the Weston Historical Society. Wash stands were used in the days before indoor plumbing.

we were visited several times by different women who had lived there as teachers. One of them reminisced about getting married in our front parlor, where we were serving her tea at the time. Of course she had to stop teaching after that.

Later, in 1982, Brian Donahue and I were married in the living room at 334, by my uncle, Charles O. Richardson Jr., a Unitarian minister. After that, I started my teaching career. I always thought it fitting that both my parents were teachers. My brother, my sister and I all became teachers as well.

"WESTON WILDCATS" NAME CHOSEN IN CONTEST



Weston teams were nameless prior to the 1957-58 school year, when a contest was announced to choose a mascot. Peter Lawson, Class of 1958, came up with the Wildcat name and quickly sketched a snarling cat. His high school girlfriend, Bunny Kehoe '58 (formerly Bunny Rizzo), has donated this original sketch (reproduced at top right) to Weston Historical Society.

In a recent interview, Bunny described Peter this way:

He was very artistic. He loved cars and did a lot of 'pinstriping' on cars, using a thin brush and lots of swirls. He was one of those guys who filled the room. He had a fun, pleasant personality. He played football and also played the guitar.

After graduation, Lawson attended Dean College in Franklin for about a year and then joined the Navy. Sadly, he died in his 30s from the lingering effects of a terrible car accident.

If you know more about the contest and what other names were submitted, please contact the editor at info@westonhistory.org



(Clockwise from left) 1958 class photo of Peter Lawson; Lawson's original sketch; later version of the wildcat image; Madolyn Rizzo Wilson, Weston High School cheerleader, with the wildcat, 1962 or '63 photo. (Courtesy of Madolyn's sister Bunny Rizzo Kehoe)

BEACH PEBBLES— FROM NAHANT TO WESTON

The Reverend Charles Russell was pastor of First Parish Church in the 1880s, when the congregation decided to replace the 1840 church with a new fieldstone building designed by noted Boston architect Robert Peabody. In 1963, his only daughter, Mary Russell Adams, wrote a letter now in the WHS collection, recalling his enthusiasm:

I remember vividly his interest in the plans for building the new church in 1888. He made it a project for the whole Parish. They collected from their fields stones for the building.

He obtained the cooperation of General and Mrs. Charles J. Paine, who invited the whole congregation, children and grownups, to a picnic at their [summer] home in Nahant. Each person was given a gunny-sack and instructed to pick up on the beach pebbles of one certain color only. These may be seen arranged in an attractive design at the entrance of the two main doors. A reminder of the loving care of those who helped build the church you see today.



Pebbles from the beach in Nahant were collected and used to create the decorative floors in the two entrance vestibules at First Parish Church.



Weston's commercial center is located between rocky ledge to the north and a peat bog to the south. The Triple-A Market, which opened in 1967, was constructed in wetlands. This was allowed before passage of the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act in 1972.

TOWN CENTER PARKING LOT BUILT ON "FLOATING FOUNDATION"

This article in New England Construction, April 10, 1967, describes how, for the first time in the country, in Weston, layers of sawdust and cinders placed on a deep soft peat bog formed a foundation for parking pavement.

"For many years, the parcel of land stood there, with a stand of trees rooted in black, fibrous peat that ran to 45 feet in depth. The land, zoned for business had a promising high value because of its location between Route 20 and the Old Post Road in the Weston Mass. commercial area.

"An ideal area for development, the deep peat bog prevented building action of any sort—until Dr. Harl P. Aldrich, Jr., of Haley & Aldrich, Inc. of Cambridge, Mass. took a long, studied look at the situation. Remembering that Canadians had built a portion of a highway on mats of sawdust, Dr. Aldrich carried the reasoning a little further.

"Why fight the compressible peat with a 120-pound earth fill? It would go only one way—down. Why not a 30-pound material, such as sawdust, and 70-pound material such as compacted cinders, which would form a floating foundation for the pavement slab?

"The owner of the property, John W. Boyd, and his development manager, David H. Bradley, of L. Davenport Boyd Inc., realtor, were anxious to develop the land, and agreed to the type of construction Dr. Aldrich proposed, even though it would be the first job of its kind in the United States. Economics can be the mother of invention.

"... The first step... called for cutting down the heavy stand of elm and ... maple trees into the length of logs ... [that were] distributed over the site to serve as a reinforcing mat. Since

the water table stood close to the top of the bog, the logs would remain wet all of the time.

"Next, from the pulp mills at Fitchburg, Mass came truck-loads of old sawdust. A constant layer of the sawdust, 30 inches deep and graded for drainage, was spread over the 1 ½ acre site.

"The sawdust mat then allowed the Franki Foundation Co. to walk a pile-driving rig, on a plank platform, out to the area where the structure for the supermarket was to be erected. . . . 90-ton piles were driven down into a firm sand foundation, with all of the loads of the structure transmitted to the pile system—and none of the building loads on the peat bog. Comeau Construction Co. of Weston, Mass. was the prime contractor for the supermarket structure.

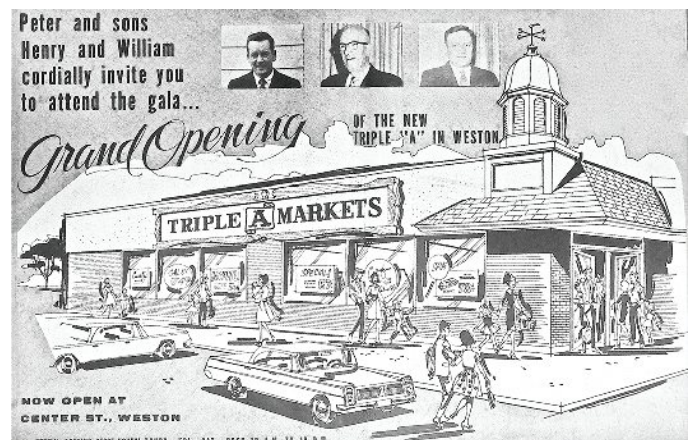
"To keep the building loads off the deep layer of peat, the Franki piles were driven in straight, parallel lines. Reinforced concrete grade beams were then placed over each line of piles, and precast floor slabs then set down.

"The next step called for the placing of a 10-inch thick base course of cinders, trucked down from Danvers, Mass. A Caterpillar dozer spread and compacted the cinders with a Caterpillar grader bringing the level of the parking area to final grade. A steel-wheeled tandem roller made the area ready for pavement.

"Late last Fall [1966], a 1 ½ -inch binder course of bituminous concrete was placed, with masonry nails driven in strategic places, to provide settlement check points against a permanent bench mark established on the supermarket structure.

"The surface of the parking area was checked the middle of January and an anticipated settlement of 2 to 3 inches had taken place, with no evidence of cracking in the bituminous concrete surface, much to the delight of the property owner. It is now evident that the combined layers of logs, sawdust, cinders and pavement are serving as a floating platform on the deep layer of dark-brown and black fibrous peat."

This article was provided to Weston Historical Society some years ago by Peter and Linda Perrin.





DRABBINGTON LODGE AWAITS NEXT CHAPTER

For more than a century, the picturesque Shingle-style building at 135 North Avenue has hosted summer guests, senior citizens, and for a five-year period, young women studying to be physical education teachers. The story begins in 1897, when George and Sarah Thurston purchased an existing property on North Avenue and opened a boarding house for about a dozen guests. After two seasons, they made plans to enlarge and remodel it to accommodate 40; but before work began, a major fire destroyed both the house and adjacent large barn.

The Thurstons quickly rebuilt. Their new hostelry was christened Drabbington Lodge after Sarah's birthplace in England. The fashionable new building was the work of Boston architect Frank Weston. A newspaper article at the time of the opening in 1899 called it "one of the best of suburban hotels." For city dwellers who could not afford their own place, the lodge offered the perfect summer escape. Guests could lounge in the large reception hall, parlor, billiard room, or smoking room. The dining room seated 60. The 32 sleeping rooms on the second and third floors were "beautifully furnished," and guests enjoyed the luxury of two bathrooms per floor. Thanks to the recent availability of electrical service, there was even "artificial light at night." On the 27-acre grounds, there was a tennis court, seven-hole golf course, Mrs. Thurston's much-lauded garden, and a landscaped footpath to a nearby rocky knoll, where "The Cottage," now 153 North Avenue was built in 1901. In 1904, a log "bungalow," now 147 North Avenue, was built behind the Cottage. At the height of the season, all three buildings were "constantly filled to overflowing."

Newspaper clippings from the turn of the century give the names of families arriving each week from as far away as Indiana, Ohio, Kansas, and Minnesota with children, governesses, nurses, and chauffeurs, for indefinite stays. Many guests returned season after season. Some years the lodge was open in the winter, with sledding, snowshoeing, and sleigh rides as popular activities.

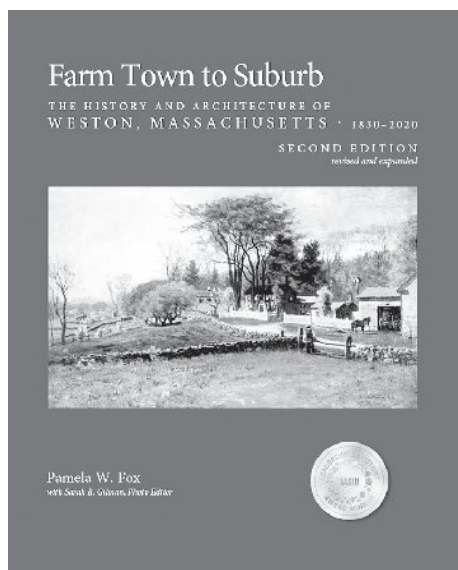
Sarah Thurston died in 1910. George and his second wife, Lenore, operated the lodge until 1920, when it was leased to a "well known hotel man." Lenore was still involved after her husband's death in 1923, and for a time the name was changed to Drabbington Inn. In 1935, the property was leased to the Posse-Nissen School, also called the Posse Institute. This women's college of physical education added a portable wooden gymnasium. About 75 students lived here until 1940. Some years later it was leased to the Sargent College of Physical Education at Boston University for use as a dormitory; and in the mid-1950s, it operated as the Weston Inn. The building was readapted as the Westonian retirement home in 1996 and later as Sunrise Senior Living, which closed in mid-November, 2020.



(Clockwise, from upper left): Drabbington Lodge postcard 1913; Sarah and George Thurston; "The Cottage" at 153 North Ave; Thurston Bungalow postcard c. 1912; Drabbington Inn direction sign; and photo of young women at Posse-Nissen School, from the 1936 yearbook. All items are in the collection of the Weston Historical Society.



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*Lecture by Dr. Robert Martello, continued
from page 1*

Revere's artisan training in the silversmith trade positioned him for a series of postwar shifts into new fields such as iron casting, bronze bell and cannon making, and eventually he became the first American to roll copper into sheets for the young United States Navy. Throughout these endeavors Revere pioneered a series of innovative technical and entrepreneurial practices that enabled America to close the technological gap with England, advance its economic strength, and transition into the industrial age.

At Olin, Professor Martello teaches innovative interdisciplinary courses such as "Six Microbes that Changed the World," and shares his research via educational workshops for teachers and administrators. A graduate of MIT's program in the History and Social Study of Science and Technology, Professor Martello is currently researching Benjamin Franklin's printing and business endeavors, and he regularly lectures on Revere and Franklin, our "Founding Makers," for audiences of all ages and backgrounds.

Weston's Paul Revere Bell, continued from page 1

Revere has been called "one of the few competent bell makers in the United States." He got into the business in 1792 when the bell at his own church cracked. Revere offered to recast it, though he knew nothing about molding and casting bells. His first attempt was not a success — producing a pleasant-sounding bell is not easy! Revere and his sons Paul, Jr., and Joseph Warren went on to cast 398 bells between 1792 and 1828, first at their North End foundry and after 1804 in Canton, Mass.

Researchers Edward and Evelyn Stickney located 134 Revere bells as of 1976, most in Massachusetts and elsewhere in New England, but also in Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, and Virginia.

Martex towels: Faith Rand's recollections, continued from page 2

The story of these particular Martex towels comes from my grandfather and his time working with Harry Bailey at Wellington Sears. Apparently every year on their birthdays, Harry and my grandfather would each, in turn, have a company loom threaded to make a special towel for the occasion. These woodpecker towels were a birthday gift one year from Harry to Charles. I can't speak to the significance of the image. That part of the tale was lost in the telling.

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