

WESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Volume LIV No. 2 — Fall 2023



ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORIAN BRIAN DONAHUE TO SPEAK AT ANNUAL MEETING



Members of the Martin family cultivate Loring estate land. (1898 photo)

Weston Historical Society is pleased to announce that environmental historian and Land's Sake co-founder Brian Donahue will be our guest speaker at the 2023 WHS Annual Meeting.

For his lecture "Weston Agriculture 101: Adaptation and Change," Brian will look at farming in Weston beginning in the late 1600s, when Watertown residents grazed their cattle here, to land divisions and the first farms, the impact of railroads, growth of market gardening, Marian Case's Hillcrest "model farm," post-World War II suburban growth, and today's Land's Sake community farm. Brian will conclude with an introduction to the New England Food Vision and the role of suburban and urban farming.

Continued on page 8

Weston Agriculture 101: Adaptation and Change

a lecture by Brian Donahue

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 1

7:00 pm Annual Meeting

7:15 pm Refreshments

7:30 pm Lecture

Weston Public Library Community Room

All are Welcome

Coming Events

Saturday, October 14, "History Under One Roof" JST exhibit open during Pumpkin Festival, 11 to 2 (See page 8)

Sunday, October 29, Walking tour of Farmers' Burial Ground and Central Cemetery, co-sponsored by WHS and Golden Ball, 2 pm. (See page 2)

Wednesday, November 1, Annual Meeting and Lecture, 7 pm. (see page 1)

Sunday, November 5, LAST CHANCE to see "History Under One Roof" at the JST, Open House 11 to 2 (See page 8)

PAM FOX WILL LEAD CEMETERY TOUR



On Sunday afternoon, October 29, Pam Fox will lead a walking tour of Farmers' Burial Ground and Central Cemetery, co-sponsored by Weston Historical Society and the Golden Ball Tavern Museum (GBT). The program will begin with refreshments and open house at the Golden Ball at 2 pm, followed by the tour at 2:15.

Fox is the creator of informational brochures about each cemetery, designed by Gabriella Nunes at Conventures Inc. and printed by Weston Historical Commission for the 2023 Celebrate Weston! Copies of the brochures are available at Weston Public Library and Weston Town Hall assessor's office.

COMING SOON: WESTON STREET NAMES

WHS would like to thank high school intern Kaitlyn Cappillo, who worked diligently this summer researching the origin of Weston street names. When completed, her results will be posted online and gathered into a publication. Kaitlyn is a Wellesley resident and senior at Milton Academy. Here is her entry for Bay State Road:

"Bay State" is a historical nickname for Massachusetts, as reflected in its colonial name Massachusetts Bay Colony. Bay State Road is one of several roads named after historical places or figures in a development by Weston Land Company, which purchased much of the surrounding land in 1958. (See also Bradford, Hancock, Indian Hill, King's Grant, Myles Standish, and Plymouth Roads; and Winthrop Circle)



TWO HENRY DAVENPORT PAINTINGS GIFTED TO WHS

Weston Historical Society is deeply grateful to John Tyler of Readfield, Maine, for the generous gift of two oil paintings by his grandfather, Henry Davenport, depicting Davenport's home at 695 Boston Post Road (1945) and a Weston skating pond, probably off Warren Avenue, with skaters (1958).

Henry Davenport was a well-respected Boston artist and art educator. Born in Brookline, he graduated from Harvard in 1904 and traveled to Paris to study architecture at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, where he received a diploma in 1913. Returning to Boston in 1914, he continued his studies at the Cape Cod School of Art in Provincetown, which had been founded by Charles W. Hawthorne in 1900 and was considered one of the nation's leading art schools. In 1916, Davenport established the Clouet School of Art in Paris, where he taught for ten years. He continued his teaching career at Yale School of Fine Arts and Harvard University. In 1918, he had his first one-man show at the Copley Gallery in Boston.

Professor Davenport, as he was often called, moved to Weston in 1936. He captured the town's local scenes in numerous paintings and shared his enthusiasm for art by offering adult art classes in

his home at 695 Boston Post Road. The Weston Historical Society owns three images of the Josiah Smith tavern by the artist, along with a 1943 winter landscape that demonstrates how streets of Weston were once "rolled" after a snowstorm to pack down the snow and allow passage of vehicles on runners. [Information from the 2016 WHS publication *Artists Look at Weston*.]



Top of page: John Tyler with Weston paintings by his grandfather, Henry Davenport, donated to WHS (2023 Photo by Pam Fox). Below: Henry Davenport, c. early 1950s. (Courtesy of Faith Rand)

WHS RECEIVES GIFT OF HECTOR OSMOND WORLD WAR II PHOTOS

By Kitty Smith

WHS would like to thank Kristine Osmond for donating a collection of World War II photographs belonging to her grandfather, Hector J. Osmond (1915–1998). Known as “Ossie” by his war buddies, Osmond served in Hawaii and Japan as a carpenter with the U.S. Navy Seabees, military units that constructed critical infrastructure for the war effort. The photographs include scenes of camp life and building projects as well as charming images of the soldiers with Hawaiian children.

Stationed in Hawaii from 1944–45, his 125th Battalion built two naval radio stations critical for communication in the Pacific, where fighting took place across thousands of miles of oceans and scattered atolls. His service as a chief petty officer ended in Okinawa where, a few months before the peace treaty was signed, his battalion helped build an airfield.

In 1947, Osmond, a Watertown native, moved to Weston and founded the Hector J. Osmond building company. He spent the rest of his life here, building many houses in the area, particularly in Weston’s Pinecroft neighborhood. Hector and his wife May “Irene” (McCollem) raised two sons: Wayne (1948–2021) and Gary.

Osmond was an active member of the Rotary Club of Weston and Wayland. After his death in 1998, the scholarship program was renamed in his honor, with this dedication:

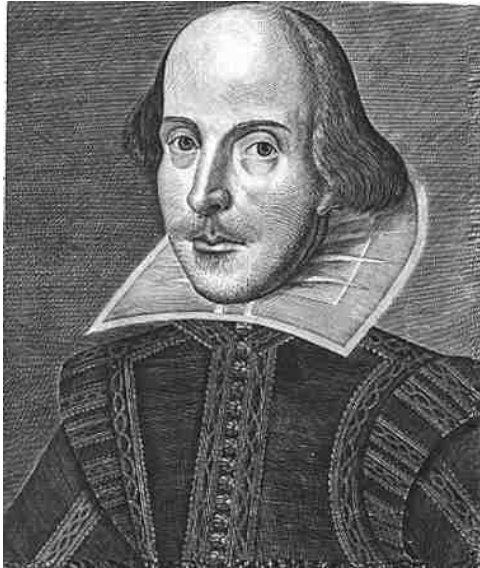
Osmond was an exemplary living model of the Rotary motto “Service above Self,” striving to help educate the young, support the elderly when needed, and inspire those down on their luck. He represented the best in citizenship found in the communities of Weston and Wayland.



Clockwise from left: 1) Postcard from Kau-Kau Corner, Honolulu, Oahu. 2) Incinerator built at Wahiawa, Oahu, April 1945. 3) Foster Gardens, Honolulu, June 11, 1944, Hector Osmond second from left, with “Our Family.” 4) Tent camp, January 1945, Oahu.



“THE PLAY’S THE THING:” SHAKESPEARE CLUB CONTINUES TRADITION



The Shakespeare Club of Weston and Wayland has been quietly meeting for more than a century to read the works of William Shakespeare and other playwrights. Presently, the club has some 20 members who meet monthly at different houses to have lunch and read a complete play, with each member playing a part. About half are the daughters or granddaughters of earlier thespians who passed on this fond tradition. Some customs have changed (the three-course luncheon is now bring-your-own sandwich) but the spirit of the group lives on. In the following history of the group, written in the 1980s by Zella Dewey, all the married women are referred to by their husband’s names, as was the custom. Many thanks to Weston resident Julie Hyde, life-long member and granddaughter of founding member Evelyn Wellington, for her help with this article.

History and Anecdotes

By Zella Dewey

“The written records of this wonderful association, as far as we can discover, can be traced back to February of 1920, when Mrs. Walter Trumbull mentioned going to a meeting by sleigh to Mrs. Sears’ home, in her personal diary. But we feel it all began long before that famous snowstorm.

“As classmates and friends at Radcliffe, a group from the years ’06, ’08, ’10 were all inspired by the dramatic teachings of Shakespeare Professor George Lyman Kittredge. It is easy to imagine these well-educated young brides, moved to the ‘hinterlands’ of Weston and Wayland, chatting over tea about his exciting and challenging class. For them, these were the days of babies and nurseries with responsibilities directed to running their new households — little time left for intellec-

tual pursuits. Nevertheless, they did have each other and this common interest that had been ignited while in college. Soon there was ‘a War on’ (World War I) and socializing became directed toward supporting that effort. . . .

“With Armistice Day celebrated in November 1919, it did not take these energetic, fascinating ladies long to organize themselves and get on with the challenge at hand. With beautiful homes and staffs to assist them, our founders started their get togethers aimed at making the writings of Shakespeare come alive, first with a three-course luncheon, served to please Royalty!!

“Who were the founders of this special club? At this time, we think some of them were: [names in brackets inserted by the editor]

Mrs. Richard Ames
Mrs. Robert Ames
Mrs. Charles Brewer
Mrs. Thomas Cabot [Virginia Wellington Cabot]
Mrs. Richard Fisher [Georgina Paine Fisher]
Mrs. Francis Goodale
Mrs. Merrill Hunt
Mrs. Owen Howe
Mrs. Austin Mason
Mrs. ____ Merriam
Mrs. F. Robins Mitchell
Mrs. Arthur Morse
Mrs. John B. Paine [Louise Frazer Paine]
Mrs. Robert Parker
Miss Charlotte Perkins
Mrs. Francis B. Sears [Marian Buckingham Sears]
Mrs. ____ Stone
Mrs. Nathaniel Tenney
Mrs. Walter Trumbull
Mrs. ____ Wellington [Louise Wellington, Mrs. Louis]
Mrs. ____ Wellington [Evelyn Wellington, Mrs. Arthur]

“There does not seem to be any formal ‘founding’ recorded of the Shakespeare Club. Instead, in the notebook which contains the plays that have been read and members’ lists there is one short section from which we would like to quote:

“1920 – Feb 6—Hope Hunt: by snowshoes to Marion Sears—MPT (sic) Mrs. Sears postponed lunch and Shakespeare Club came off—Everyone arrived by sleigh, feet or snowshoes. We had a good stand-up luncheon & then read ‘As You Like It’ in parts. I read Rosalind as Mrs. Stone was not there.

“Feb 19—Mrs. Mitchell, Mrs. Seabury & I sleighed to Mrs. Merriam’s lunch for the Shakespeare Club. We had the swellest meal & then read ‘Macbeth’. Mrs. Frank Sears was Macbeth & they all liked it.

"March 18—I walked to Mrs. Fisher's to lunch with The Shakespeare Club. We all ate a great deal as usual & then read 'Henry IV, Part I.' It was not as interesting a play as the others have been, but I enjoyed reading Hotspur.

"April 1—I walked with Mrs. Mitchell & Mrs. Tenney to Gerda's Shakespeare lunch. We had fresh asparagus & fresh pears & our table disgraced itself eating. We read 'Part II of Henry IV'—not very interesting and quite long.

"May 13—I had the Shakespeare party which went off well. "We read 'The Merry Wives of Windsor' which was rather coarse but very amusing. 34 ladies there, much the largest class so far.

"By reading these few selections we learn that luncheon was grand and the afternoon was dedicated to careful reading and learning. A lovely glimpse of times past.

. . . . AND, NOW TODAY

"We, the Shakespeare Club of the 1980s, are mostly the daughters and granddaughters of those Wayland and Weston ladies bound by tradition to do the best we can to continue the wonderful model they set for us. There have been several wars and the position of women as well as the way our homes are run have changed dramatically; nevertheless, the basic premises of keeping the plays of Shakespeare alive and of setting aside time to enjoy each other and good English is still foremost in our minds.

"Yes, Shakespeare and sociability are still our goals; however, to achieve these aims today, at the end of the twentieth century, we have had to set a few rules and make some changes.

". . . These days [the 1980s] we meet the third Thursday of October, November, January, February, March, April, and May . . . The selection of the play to be read is up to the hostesses; however, it is hoped that a Shakespeare work will be used every other month.

"Perhaps one of our biggest changes is the elimination of the three-course luncheon. These days we gather as close to noon as possible, bringing a sandwich or salad from home. We sit down and eat together around 12:30 pm with our gracious hostesses pouring coffee or tea. Then, we are served a special dessert before starting the reading at about 1:30 pm.

"Time has added another constraint to our association [and] cuts which shorten the plays to about two and a half hours of reading are now available.

"At the time of this writing we are considering an addition or change which might prove helpful to coming generations who

will want to carry on The Shakespeare Club. Most of the plays written by 'The Bard' require at least thirty readers and with busy schedules, working members and traveling families, we feel a process for increasing membership should be discussed. Even in the 1930s, fifty years ago, certain relatives continued to decline the invitation to join us, so that even then non-descendant members were added to the rolls. . . .

"As we look toward the twenty-first century, we feel our intentions still reflect those of our post-World War I ladies who, inspired by Prof. Kittredge, would spend an afternoon together enjoying each other and reading Shakespeare. After all these years, we agree: 'The play's the thing.' Hamlet II, 2"



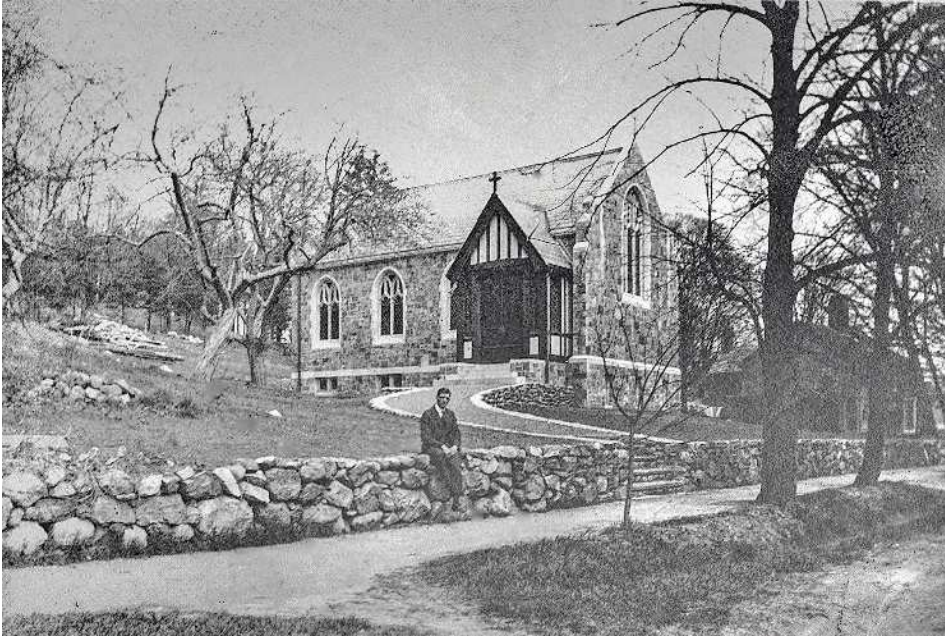
Page 4. Copperplate portrait of Wm. Shakespeare from the First Folio, used to illustrate Zella Dewey's club history. Page 5. (l-r) Evelyn Wellington, _____, Sophie Sears, _____, _____. (1952 photo courtesy of Julie Hyde)

Follow us on our Socials
Don't miss Kara Fleming's awesome posts

Instagram: @westonhistory

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HISTORIC ST. PETER'S CHURCH FINDS NEW USE



The 1917 Gothic Revival church in the heart of Weston's commercial district has a new owner. In May 2021, the Society of St. Pius X (FSSPX) purchased the property and established St. Catherine of Siena Chapel, a Mass Center. The Tridentine Mass (traditional Latin Mass) is now held there every Saturday and Sunday, celebrated by priests from the priory in Ridgefield, Connecticut.

From 1958 and 2019, the building was owned by First Church of Christ, Scientist, Weston, which began holding services in Weston in 1950. When the congregation disbanded, ownership was transferred to First Church, Boston, which took care of the sale.

The handsome stone building was originally constructed for St. Peter's Episcopal Church, which had its origins in Weston in the late 19th century. The moving force behind the first services was Mary Gilman Lamson (Mrs. Daniel Lamson), who was born in England and confirmed in the Anglican Church. For a time, informal prayer services were held at the Schoolhouse on the Rock, formerly District Schoolhouse #4 on Boston Post Road, which was leased from the town. After the schoolhouse was sold in 1901, services were held in private homes including Laxfield, the home of Mrs. George Fiske on Concord Road.

By 1905, the congregation had grown and services were being held in the 1847 town hall, once a month in winter and twice over the summer. The idea of a church building gained momentum in the 1910s, as the town made plans to demolish the old town hall. The Lamson family conveyed a portion of land just west of their homestead. The new building was designed by Brigham, Coveney and Bisbee to meet the congregation's desire for something "perpendicular Gothic in style, of the type of smaller English parish churches of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries." The cornerstone was laid on November 1917, and services were first held in the still incomplete building in September 1918.

Continued on Page 8



Clockwise from left. 1) St. Peter's Church, c. 1920, courtesy Weston Historical Society. 2) Early interior photo before installation of the altar, c. late 1910s, courtesy Weston Historical Society. 3) Altar moved from 1917 St. Peter's Church building. Does not appear in early interior photo so must be later. 4) Present St. Peter's chapel, located off the nave of the 1958 sanctuary. (Photos by Pam Fox)

EAGLE SCOUTS MAKE HISTORY

Weston is fortunate to have yet another Eagle Scout project centered around a long-abandoned historic site. Two years ago, scouts cleared the foundation of the Merriam Barn and, with assistance from Weston Historical Commission (WHC), erected a handsome information sign. This year, Xaverian Brothers High School senior Ciaran Gavin focused his Eagle Scout project on the site of a school furniture factory once located close to his Crescent Street home. The foundation was completely overgrown, giving few clues to the size of the mill, which operated here from 1854 to 1917. Ciaran secured the approval of the WHC, assembled a crew of scouts to clear the site, and worked with commission members on a sign, designed by Ford Curran and dedicated to the memory of Anna Melone Pollock. It will be erected this fall. A second sign will show how water flowed from a mill pond behind 29 Crescent Street through mill races to the water wheel. Assisting with the project was Cindy Bates, author of a forthcoming history of the area and nearby Melone Homestead. The text for the information sign is as follows:

In 1854, William G. Shattuck established a mill here to produce school furniture, powered by water from Three Mile Brook. Four to eight men produced wooden chairs and desk parts sent to Boston for finishing, assembly, and sale. Upon Shattuck's death in 1875, ownership of the business passed to the Kenney family. In 1917, they moved the operation to a larger site in Central Massachusetts. The building was demolished in 1925 and the materials used to build the house at 29 Crescent Street.

This 28-foot-diameter waterwheel powered the mill from 1905 to 1916 and remained until about 1940, having become something of a tourist attraction.



Scouts take a break (l-r) Thomas Crutchfield, Scott Crutchfield, Ciaran Gavin, Timothy Gavin, Tim Fitzgibbons, Avo Bell, Curtis Keene, Max Coisman, Yohan Coisman, Alex Coisman. (Photo by Meghan Gavin) Project leader Ciaran Gavin is pictured at upper left. (Photo by Timothy Gavin). "Before" and "after" photos of the site by Ciaran Gavin.



Site of School Furniture Factory



This 28-foot-diameter waterwheel powered the mill from 1905 to 1916 and remained until about 1940, having become something of a tourist attraction. Photograph courtesy of Historic New England

In 1854, William G. Shattuck established a mill here to produce school furniture, powered by water from Three Mile Brook. Four to eight men produced wooden chairs and desk parts sent to Boston for finishing, assembly, and sale. Upon Shattuck's death in 1875, ownership of the business passed to the Kenney family. In 1917, they moved the operation to a larger site in Central Massachusetts. The building was dismantled in 1925 and the materials were used to build the house at 29 Crescent Street.



WILLIAM G. SHATTUCK, Manufacturer of GRAMMAR SCHOOL CHAIRS & DESKS, & THE BOSTON PRIMARY SCHOOL CHAIRS, No. 110 COMMERCIAL ST., BOSTON.



Advertisement, 1852 Boston Directory
Shattuck Chair
Weston Historical Society

2023 Eagle Scout Project of Ciaran Gavin to clear this site and erect this sign. Scan QR code for more information.

In memory of Anna Melone Pollock

St. Peter's Church, continued from Page 6

In 1949, church member Charles O. Richardson gave St. Peter's a parcel of land on Boston Post Road near the intersection of the by-pass, to be used for a new and larger church. The land had once been part of the Horace Sears estate "Haleiwa." In the early 1920s, Sears had offered the land to First Baptist Church, which instead decided to build a new church building in its existing location (see WHS newsletter, Fall 2022). When Sears died in 1923, this part of his estate was bequeathed to Charles O. Richardson, one of his business associates. Decades later, Richardson fulfilled Sears's wish that a church be built at this important town focal point.

St. Peter's initially favored a modern design but settled on a traditional Georgian Colonial style designed by architects Hoyle, Doran & Berry and built in 1957-59. To please those who preferred the Gothic style of the earlier church, contractors removed interior architectural features before the sale and reinstalled them in the new chapel, which is open to the nave on the north side. In contrast to the simple classical detailing of the new sanctuary, the chapel contains the original stained-glass window; baptismal font; carved oak pews, pulpit, and bible stand; and high-style Gothic altar.

Brian Donahue, continued from Page 1

Brian is Professor Emeritus of American Environmental Studies at Brandeis University and Environmental Historian at Harvard Forest. On his retirement in 2022, he moved from Weston to Gill, Massachusetts, where he and his wife Faith own a farm that produces beef cattle, pigs, pumpkins and squash, and timber. Brian holds a BA, MA, and PhD from Brandeis, where he taught courses on environmental history and sustainable farming and forestry. He co-founded and for 12 years directed Land's Sake, Weston's much-loved community farm, and is a board member of the Thoreau Farm Trust and The Land Institute.

Brian's 1999 book *Reclaiming the Commons: Community Farms and Forests in a New England Town* is a must-read for the unique way it combines Weston history, personal accounts of the joys and sorrows of farming in the suburbs, and a call for all places to protect common land and establish community farms. He is also author of the award winning 2004 book *The Great Meadow: Farmers and the Land in Colonial Concord* and co-author of *Wildlands and Woodlands* and *A New England Food Vision*, initiatives working towards conserving 85% of the New England Landscape (wildlandsandwoodlands.org).

LAST CHANCE TO SEE JST EXHIBIT "HISTORY UNDER ONE ROOF"



For some time now, WHS has offered "last chance" times to visit our acclaimed exhibit "History Under One Roof: The Evolution of the Josiah Smith Tavern." This fall we will be moving our reading room and office to the rooms where the exhibit is now located. Community Open Houses have been scheduled from 11-2 on Saturday, October 14 and Sunday, November 5.

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Membership dues: Individual \$35, Family \$50, Sponsor \$75, Supporting \$100+, Life membership \$500. Tax deductible contributions and bequests to the Endowment Fund are welcome.

Please visit our website: www.westonhistory.org.