

THE WESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

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Ivy and Warren Lederhos feed the German Shepherds at Weston Dog Ranch. The ornamental ironwork was made by their father, A.A. Lederhos. The house was located at 248 North Avenue until its demolition in the mid 1990s.

A. A. Lederhos and the Weston Dog Ranch

The following article is based on an interview with Ivy Lederhos Carlson, daughter of A.A. Lederhos. The Weston Historical Society would like to thank Ivy and Roy Carlson and their daughter-in-law Hella for sharing photographs and the catalogue of E. T. Ryan Iron Works, Inc, of Allston.

Born into a German farm family, Adolf Alexander Lederhos (1883 - 1933) was about six years old when his parents died and he went to live with an uncle. He learned ornamental ironwork as an apprentice and, while still in his teens, emigrated to Switzerland and thence to the United

States. Arriving in America in 1914 at age 20, he settled first in Pittsburgh, which was known as a center for the iron industry. He later moved to Boston and there he met his future wife, Susan Chapman, daughter of a Canadian immigrant family.

With several associates, Lederhos (right) established E.T. Ryan Inc. Because of anti-German sentiment during the World War I years, the ornamental ironwork company took the name Ryan rather than using a German-sounding surname. But it was Lederhos and his design ability and craftsmanship that brought success. His dedication to his craft is reflected in this statement from the catalogue preface:

“We are old-fashioned enough to get more satisfaction out of beautiful designs and their execution into Wrought Iron than in the dollars and cents they may bring us.”



E.T. Ryan Inc. operated a workshop in Allston and downtown store on Boylston Street where they sold their own handmade products as well as high quality domestic and imported ironwork. The catalogue illustrates fire screens, fireplace tools, andirons, lamps, candlesticks, lighting fixtures, gates, doorstops, letterboxes, art plaques and many other objects both useful and ornamental.

Lederhos and his wife, Susan (left), had two children, Warren and Ivy. In 1924 the family moved to 248 North Avenue at the corner of Viles Street, where they bought an existing one-story house and jacked it up to create a first floor with a large room for entertaining. Ivy attended the one-room North Avenue School for second and third grade and, beginning in fourth grade, rode the open jitney to the grammar school on School Street. She and her future husband, Roy Carlson, went to Weston High School together, graduating in the Class of 1936.

Sometime after World War I, Lederhos began raising purebred German Shepherds as a hobby. At the time, the breed inspired fear because of their use by police and prison guards. Lederhos brought his first dogs from Germany and set a goal of raising champions. He employed a trainer and shipped fine animals all over the country. He also served as president of the German Shepherd Club of America. His daughter Ivy recalls as many as

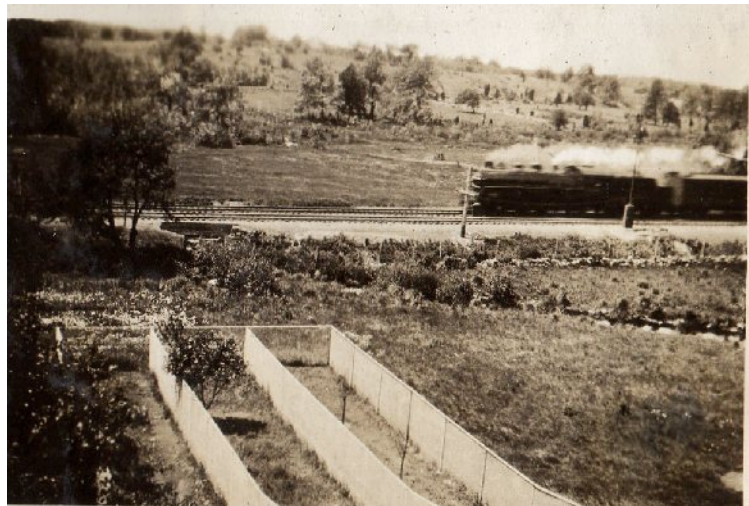


27 dogs, assorted goats and one pig. A hired man lived over the garage and helped take care of the animals. During the Depression, Lederhos began boarding dogs to earn extra income.

Pictures on this page show the house and barn, as well as the dog runs in the rear next to the Boston & Maine railroad tracks. Workers at

E.T. Ryan used a Lederhos design to create an iron archway into the property from North Avenue, with the words *Weston Dog Ranch* and cutouts of dogs and birds. One other similar arch, probably copied from the Weston example, exists in Yarmouth Port on Cape Cod and dates from 1928.

A.A. Lederhos died in 1933. His widow continued to run the Dog Ranch into the 1940s, followed by veterinarian Terrance Burke. He





continued working there after the property was purchased in 1950 by Leonard and Edith Shulmann. Leonard operated a dog training and veterinary facility until his death in 1970, after which his widow kept it going for another two decades. In 1994, Wellesley Homes purchased the 8.6-acre property and subdivided it into 10 lots. The Colonial houses built along the new Hastings Road were criticized as being too large for their lot size and out of keeping with the neighborhood. After more than half a century as the “Weston Dog Ranch,” it is not surprising that many Weston residents still use that name for the subdivision rather than the more genteel “Weston Farms.” The Lederhos arch on North Avenue, pictured at left in 1994, was removed and sold at Skinner auctioneers.

by Pamela W. Fox

The Scrapbooks of Edith May West

The Society would like to thank John Sallay for his gift of three scrapbooks compiled by Edith May West (right) and used as the primary source for this article.

Turning the pages of Edith May West’s three oversize scrapbooks, we enter the world of early 20th century Weston. From her teenage years until 1940, Edith pasted in photographs and memorabilia that provide a window into the life of an ordinary young woman as she graduates from high school, gets a job, marries, loses a first baby, and raises a daughter.

Edith was born in Weston in July, 1895. Her father, Robert West, died when she was only a few years old. Her mother, Nova Scotia-born Hannah Eliza (Morton) West, was remarried in 1901 to





Weston farmer Edward R. Sibley. Hannah was 44 and Edward, who was a widower, was 60. Edith grew up on the Sibley farm, in a Greek Revival house still standing at 761 Boston Post Road (left).

Edith participated enthusiastically in the rich social life of a small country town. Her scrapbook is filled with

tickets, programs, playbills and mementos from events at the American Legion post, Weston Grange, First Baptist Church, and other local groups. She went to band concerts at Canobie Lake Park, banquets at fraternal lodges, ladies nights at Nuttings-on-the-Charles in Waltham, and plays at the Wilbur, Shubert, and Colonial Theaters in Boston.



Edith saved report cards for four years at Weston High School, as well as her 12th grade English home reading list (see page 8) and the words and music for the 1913 Class Song. She pasted in a complete collection of 1913 Bicentennial memorabilia, along with her invitation in 1919 to join the newly-organized Women's Community League. She saved Valentines, Christmas, New Years, and birthday cards, and even one chain letter. Excerpted on page 8 is a letter from a friend in Wellesley that shows how our pace of life and modes of communication have changed, while the preoccupations of adolescence remain the same.

According to newspaper sources, Edith's stepfather sold his farm in September, 1915, and died later that year. By 1916, Edith and her mother (left) had moved to White Lane, now Brook Road, where



they lived in one of the modest cottages built by Francis Henry Hastings for workers at the nearby Hook & Hastings organ factory. Two of her photos on this page show these houses as originally built.

In 1916, Edith pasted in a receipt for tuition and supplies at Mellors

Commercial School in Waltham. She learned shorthand and got a job as a clerk and later bookkeeper at the Boston and Maine Railroad freight office in Waltham, where she made \$1067.81 in the year 1918, as shown on her income tax worksheet. She had an employee railroad pass and a membership card in the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks. Also in the scrapbook is a 1918 typed request for a week's vacation in August, along with her boss's refusal.

The pages from 1919 are filled with cards congratulating Edith on her engagement to Henry Almon Crommett of Lancaster, a foreman in the sales department of C.F. Hathaway Baking Co. in Waltham. According to newspaper reports, Harry and Edith were married at her home in the presence of 25 guests. Rooms were decorated with evergreen ropes, white chrysanthemums, palms, and potted plants. Edith tucked a sample of the white *crepe de chene* dress fabric into a small envelope in her scrapbook.

After a wedding trip to the Berkshire Hills, the couple took up residence on White Lane. In July,



1920, Edith submitted a letter of resignation from her post as Assistant Cashier. She was pregnant. But Edith and Henry lost their infant son, who was born in November but died shortly thereafter at the Waltham Maternity Hospital. In her scrapbook is the funeral bill for \$30.00. In April, 1923, she answered an advertisement in the *Daily Globe*, noting that



she was a Protestant, age 28, with several years of office experience. She took a clerical position at the Hotel Bellevue on Beacon Street in Boston at a salary of \$17.50 a week. In 1924, she and Henry had their first and only child, Phyllis Amy, born at the Cutler House in Waltham. Photos show Phyllis at Bass Rocks on the North Shore, at the Franklin Park Zoo, and at Benson's Wild Animal Farm in New Hampshire.

Edith and Henry later moved to a small house at 663 Boston Post Road directly west of the First Baptist Church. Edith was active in the church, and her scrapbook includes pictures of the new parsonage at 687 Boston Post Road. She was still living on the Boston Post Road in 1932, when the road was dedicated as the George Washington Memorial Highway in ceremonies attended by a costumed Washington on horseback.

In the late 1930s, Edith took a sales job with Maisonette Frocks. In 1938, she became manager of a new branch of the Newton-based Tip-Top Cleaners & Tailors at 478 Boston Post Road. The third scrapbook ends in 1940. From town records we know that she was living with her mother at No. 663 when Hannah died in 1949 at age 91.

by Pamela W. Fox

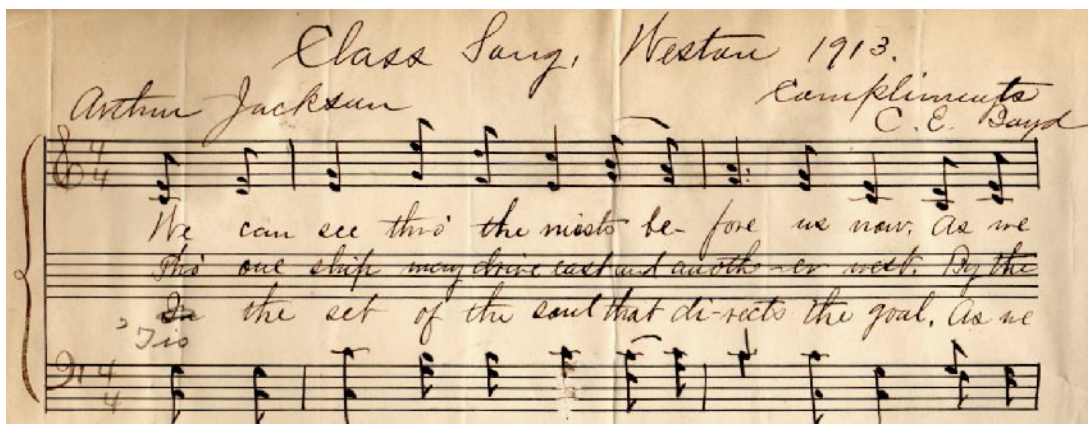


(above) Phyllis Amy Crommett in baby carriage, c.1924

(below) 663 Boston Post Road

Weston High School Books for Home Reading ENGLISH I (Choose Five)

<i>Tom Brown at Oxford</i>	Hughes
<i>Monsieur Beaucaire</i>	Tarkington
<i>Red Rock</i>	Page
<i>Jane Eyre</i>	Bronte
<i>The Newcomes</i>	Thackeray
<i>Hugh Wynne</i>	Mitchell
<i>Pickwick Papers</i>	Dickens
<i>Life of Nelson</i>	Southey
<i>The Aeneid</i> (Williams Translation) Vergil or any one of the American Statesman Series	



Excerpt from a letter to Edith May West from MBI of Wellesley, October 20, 1913

“Dear Edie,

Did you ever in all your life see the heat of this weather? I’m sure I never have. What are you doing to keep out of mischief? I was going to be very, very nice yesterday and answer a stack of letters which I’ve owed for many days but — someone gave me a book and — you can easily guess how many letters were written by M.B. I. yesterday! The name of the book is “The Luck of Rathcoole.” It was very good but I’ve read better ones. Elsie Smith called in the afternoon. She seems to be growing yet, and I think is much better looking than she used to be. She is having her teeth fixed and they make a great difference in her appearance. Good teeth are a blessing . . . I’ve been wearing my hair parted on the left side recently and have been told several times that it is very becoming! (Please don’t think me vain) I like it that way myself for a change. The fire on the hearth is so cheery and bright these gray days and we shall miss it dreadfully when real cold weather comes and we shall have to put the stove up, for we should surely freeze with the open fire. Oh, you will receive McCall’s magazine about the twentieth of November. . . . My subscription ran out this month so when I renewed it I subscribed for you for the next year, too. You will recollect I promised it to you for a Christmas present, Miss West.”

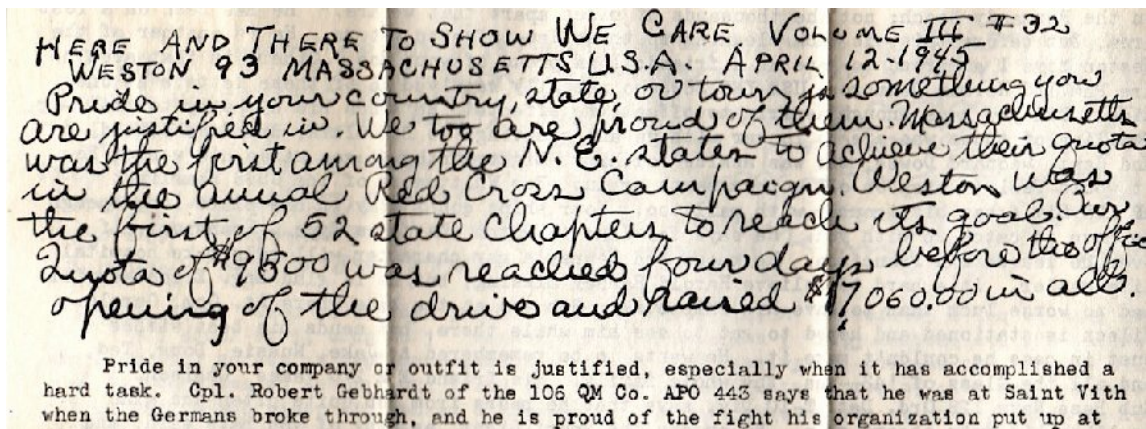
Edith's Story Continues: Phyllis Crommett Wheeler

Editor's note: In preparing the Bulletin, I was looking at materials donated to the society by the estate of Phyllis Wheeler (1924-2005), a life-long resident of Weston. I came across a 1913 Weston High School graduation program with the name "Edith West" handwritten at the top, then a photo of a house on White Lane that was identical to one in Edith's scrapbook (see page 4 - 7 of this Bulletin) I suddenly realized that Phyllis Wheeler was the daughter of Edith May West.



Phyllis Amy Crommett wrote her nickname, "Pete" next to her 1942 Weston High School yearbook picture (left). Also in the class was Allan Thorpe Wheeler Jr. The Class Prophecy correctly predicted that Phyllis and Allan would get married. But first, Allan went into the army, as did others in this war-time class. Included in Phyllis Wheeler's memorabilia are letters to Allan from Weston resident Austin Hale, who sent regular news-laden mimeographed missives to all Weston men in uniform, Hale's letters always began with the phrase "Here and There to Show we Care." Soldiers wrote to Hale from all over the world and he passed on their news (see below)

Phyllis and Allan were married in October, 1946. He is listed on the marriage license as a mechanic and she as a retouch artist. In 1949, they built a small house at 655 Boston Post Road, where Phyllis lived until her death in 2005.



Right: 1999 photo of 225 North Ave.

*Below: 225, 227 and 231 North Avenue,
c. 1900.*



Organ Factory Cottage Destroyed in Explosion

On the morning of September 12, 2005, a massive natural gas explosion and fire destroyed the house at 225 North Avenue. Fortunately, the owners, Habib and Sandra Rahman, and their two daughters were not at home. The accident occurred after a septic contractor struck a gas line. Firemen and police called to the scene narrowly escaped serious injury. The Rahmans lost the house and all its contents. The historical society extends its best wishes to the Rahmans as they work to rebuild.

225 North Avenue was one of three North Avenue cottages built in 1893 by Francis Henry Hastings for workers at the Hook & Hastings organ factory. The factory, which moved from Boston to Weston in 1889, was located nearby in a massive wood frame building on Viles Street just north of the railroad tracks. Hastings was born in the Hastings Homestead at 199 North Avenue and built his own Shingle-style house at No. 190 in 1885. In addition to the three cottages on North Avenue, he built workers' housing on Lexington Street, Viles Street, and White Lane (now Brook Road) and also built Hastings Hall as a community center. His aim was to create a harmonious "community of labor" and a "neighborhood like a family."



Views of North Avenue at the Turn of the 20th Century

Editor's note: The mid-1890s photographs on the next three pages depict a short stretch of North Avenue between No. 260 and No. 306. The photographer has not been identified, but the quality of images and the way they are mounted suggests the work of a professional. The most likely candidate is William Franklin Tucker (1845-1907), son of Ebenezer and Martha Tucker of 306 North Avenue. W. Frank Tucker is listed in the 1893 Weston directory as both an organ finisher with Hook & Hastings and a photographer. At the time of his death he was listed as an organ decorator. His advertisement (below), which appears in the 1893 directory, gives his initials as F.W. but this seems to have been in error, as his listing in the same directory is as W.F. Tucker.

What is remarkable about these images is that they record the "ordinary" streetscape of North Avenue in the immediate vicinity of Tucker's family home, including houses which were then brand new. Many of these images are part of the Lucy Boyd Collection donated to the Weston Historical Society by David and Bobbie Boyd Bradley. Information for some of the captions comes from Pam Fox's interview with long-time local resident Betty Rafuse in December, 1999.

F. W. TUCKER,
~ ~ ~ **Photographer** ~ ~ ~

The Photographs for the Illustrations in this
book were taken by F. W. Tucker.

Residence, North Avenue,
Kendal Green, - - - Weston, Mass.



297 North Avenue (left). George N. Stevens, an organ factory employee, bought this lot from the Fiske family in 1890 and built a house that was destroyed by fire shortly thereafter. He then built the Queen Anne house shown in this photo and sold it in 1896.

306 North Avenue (top right) was built by Ebenezer Tucker in 1838 and is still standing. At some point the house was updated with Italianate double brackets. Tucker was a farmer and blacksmith and his shop (demolished in the early 20th century) can be seen to the left of the house. The shop also appears on the right side of the photo below. Ebenezer Tucker took his handmade tools to Boston and sold them to a seed company which became "Brecks." Tucker's daughter, Mary Elizabeth (Mary Lizzie) married Henry Goddard Russell (see 272 North Avenue, next page) Their daughter, Ethelyn, married Wm. E. Otto, and their daughter, Betty, married Leander Rafuse.

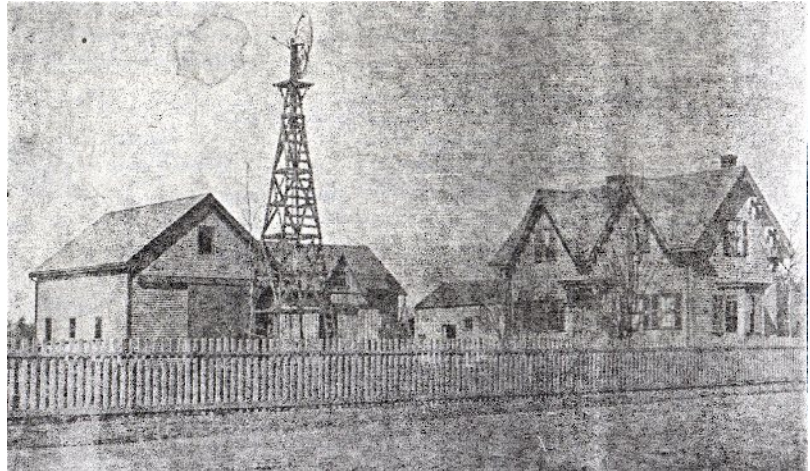


277 North Avenue, visible on the left side of the photo above, was built by George W. Garfield (Sr.) in 1821 and is still standing. The photographer took the photo from a vantage point between the Tucker house and blacksmith shop at 306 North Avenue.



269 North Avenue (left) was probably built about 1860 by Hiram Garfield, son of George W. Garfield (Sr). In 1887, he sold the house to Hiram Bennett, a house painter who built the wing to house his wife's maiden aunt.

272 North Avenue (top right) was built in 1843-44 and altered in the Gothic Revival mode. The location of the original photo is unknown, and this reproduction is from a xerox copy. No. 272 was built by wheelwright George W. Garfield Jr. A later owner, Henry G. Russell, was from New Hampshire, where he made barrels and brought them by horse and wagon to Boston. According to his granddaughter Betty Rafuse, he met his future wife, Mary Lizzie Tucker, on route and came back to marry her. Russell is listed in directories as a farmer. The windmill was used to pump water for the house until town water came to North Avenue in 1922. Behind the barn was a cow yard and bridge across Stoney Brook to fields beyond.



266 North Avenue (lower right) was built in 1891 by organ factory employee Frank Gowell and owned at the turn of the century by Albert Brown, who also worked at the factory. The open piazza was later enclosed. The house is still standing. At right you can see part of the windmill and barn owned by Henry Russell (see above).



The two double houses at 126 and 130 Viles Street (left) were built in 1887 to house organ factory workers. The third house from the right, since demolished, was an existing tenement with four apartments. Hastings Hall is at left. (Photo c. 1892)



263 North Avenue (top left) was probably built in stages beginning about 1875. Owner Samuel Patch Jr. had both a barn and a shop. The shop still remains behind the house.



263 North Avenue (lower left) from another angle, looking north-west. At left is No. 272.

Recent Donations to the Weston Historical Society

From the estate of Phyllis Wheeler, photos and memorabilia (see article on page 9)

From Mrs. Marie J. Valle, 1934 photographs of the H.L. Stone Dairy in Waltham. (Milk from Weston farmers on the north side was picked up and processed by Stone Dairy.)

From Joan Patriquin, contribution in memory of Calvin Patriquin

From John Sallay, three scrapbooks of Edith May West (see article on page 4)

From Vera Laska, bequest of money, videotapes from Weston 2000, and other items

From Ivy and Roy Carlson, photocopy of the E.T. Ryan Inc. Catalogue (undated)

From William Gallagher III, contribution toward purchase of Francis B. Sears Jr. papers

Other acquisitions:

Bills and receipts from the estate of Francis B. Sears, Jr., 1906 to 1920s

Milk bottle from Ferndale Farm Dairy

Drabbington Lodge golf tournament prize plate, 1912

1973 Town of Weston Dog Tag

In Memoriam: Vera Laska (1923 ! 2005)

Vera Laska, long-time Weston Historical Society board member and Bulletin editor, died on December 11, 2005, after a long illness. In 2004, author William Martin, WHS board member and past president, delivered the following tribute in her honor at the society's annual meeting.

“It is often said that Americans who are born here never quite appreciate their history or their freedom as fully as those who adopt this country as their own. Well, nobody embodies that truth more fully than Vera Laska. While most of us, to use her words, came to citizenship through happy coincidence, she made a conscious decision to become an American.



“As a young woman, she knew better than most what freedom meant. She fought for it in the Czech Resistance during World War II. And she can still describe, in vivid detail, the day that she stood on a train platform, looked to her left and looked to her right, and saw the black leather coats of the SS moving toward her from both directions. Fifty years later, the thought of them still makes her angry. She spent the rest of the war in a German concentration camp.

“But then, in 1946, she came to America. She came to study American history —she wanted me to emphasize that — and she earned her PhD. at the University of Chicago. She reminded me, a Harvard gradu-

ate, that Harvard is really the University of Chicago of the east. In 1966, she and her husband, Andy, settled in town and raised two sons here. She became a professor of history at Regis College, enlightening her students on both national history and the history of Weston. She has since written some 350 articles, including her wonderful series on local history in the *Town Crier*. She has also written books on the life of Ben Franklin and the lives of the Founding Mothers and edited the acclaimed *Women in the Resistance and in the Holocaust: The Voices of Eyewitnesses*. She has taught under Fulbright and George Washington Fellowships. And of course, she has been one of the pillars of our historical society.

“I asked her what she would like me to say about her this evening and she said, “Tell them that I loved Weston, and I hope that Weston loved me.”

Message from the Editor:

This issue of the BULLETIN focuses on the neighborhood around the Hook & Hastings organ factory, which was located at Viles Street and North Avenue from 1889 to the mid-1930s. It is the first BULLETIN to be done with a word processing/ publishing program, iPages, and represents an experiment, possibly the first of several, to see how well photographs will scan and print using new technology and equipment. Please contact me if you would like to write an article or memoir, or if you have photographs and memorabilia that you would like to share with other readers. All such materials will be returned.

Please remember the Society when you are looking for a home for your Weston-related photographs, memorabilia, Weston High School yearbooks, theater and concert programs, decorative objects, items related to town institutions and events, and anything else that will give future generations a picture of what life was like in our town.

We would like to thank all those who renewed their membership last fall. If you have not yet paid membership dues for 2005-06, we hope you will do so now.

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Membership dues: Individuals \$15, family \$15, life membership \$250. Contributions and bequests to the Endowment Fund are welcome. Make checks payable to Weston Historical Society, Inc. and mail to the Weston Historical Society, Box 343, Weston MA 02493. Contributions are tax deductible. Additional copies of the BULLETIN may be obtained for \$5 each by mailing payment to the Society. Statements and/or opinions expressed in the articles are not necessarily those of the editor or the Weston Historical Society. ISSN 1083-9712.