

# WESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

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*In 1892 a committee recommended buying both the Cutting House (see page 3) and Josiah Smith Tavern to create a site for a new library. The town adopted a more conservative approach and purchased only the Cutting House. (Photo c. 1900, courtesy Weston Historical Society)*

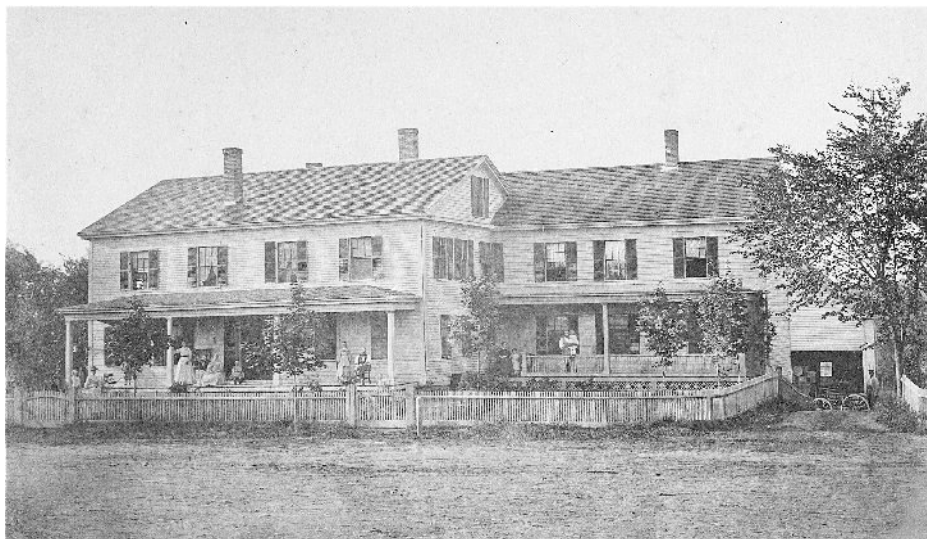
## **The Weston Public Library: Symbol of a Cultured Citizenry**

*Editor's note: The following article is excerpted from a February 2010 report prepared by the Weston Historical Commission at the request of the Board of Selectmen. The commission was asked to comment on the significance of the Old Library following the November 2009 Town Meeting vote to discontinue work on a plan to reuse the Josiah Smith Tavern as a restaurant and the Old Library as a home for the Women's Community League (upper level) and Weston History Center and Town Archives (lower level).*

# Why is the Old Library Significant?

The 1899 Weston Public Library is significant because of its history, architecture, and location facing the Town Green.

- It plays a vital role in framing the Town Green and serving as a gateway to the Town Center.
- Together with the Josiah Smith Tavern and First Parish Church, it forms an architectural ensemble of remarkable quality.
- It is located within the Boston Post Road Historic District, which has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places since 1983 and is considered “the best preserved section of the state’s major 18<sup>th</sup> century east-west connector.”
- It was the town’s first library building and served the community for nearly a century.
- Along with the construction of the 1888 fieldstone First Parish Church across the street, the library marked the transition of Weston from a rural backwater to a “country town of residences of the first class.”
- The library was a source of great civic pride and symbolized a growing emphasis on education, literacy, and culture.
- The architect, Alexander S. Jenney, was well-known in Boston architectural circles. He began his career in the office of the great 19<sup>th</sup> century architect H.H. Richardson and worked with another celebrated firm, McKim, Mead, and White, on the Boston Public Library before moving to Weston and taking on this commission.
- The design is an important example of the Jacobethan style, inspired by English late medieval architecture. It has its roots in the English Arts and Crafts tradition, which emphasized the importance of good design and quality craftsmanship.
- The library is one of only a few examples in Weston of the Jacobethan style.
- The library is a rare example in Massachusetts of a public library constructed in the Jacobethan or English Revival style. Of public libraries built in Massachusetts at the turn of the century, less than 10% were in this style.
- The building is solidly constructed and remains remarkably unchanged, particularly on the exterior, retaining its handsome detailing.



*The George W. Cutting House at the corner of School Street and Central Avenue (now Boston Post Road) was moved in the late 19th century after the town purchased the property as a site for a library, Charles H. Fiske Jr. arranged the move to 36 Church Street, where the house stands today. (Courtesy Weston Historical Society)*

## History

What we now call the Old Library was Weston's first library building. The library itself was established in 1857 and originally occupied one room of the 1847 Town Hall across the street. After the Civil War, the Town Hall was expanded to provide additional library space and a memorial hall. But by the late 1880s, despite one more expansion, it was clear that the library was outgrowing its quarters.

In early 1894, the town purchased the George W. Cutting house as a library site, but plans for a new library were delayed by the need for a new high school. Rev. Charles Russell, minister at First Parish Church, was an eloquent advocate for a new library building separate from the Town Hall, writing as follows:

And yet the need is imminent. Already the present accommodations are crowded . . . But whatever happens, let us hope that the library will not be tucked into the rear of a new town hall. . . At any cost make it the great centre of intellectual life, the university of our town---free, accessible, beautiful.

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, prominent libraries were the sign of a cultured citizenry. Weston was growing to be a desirable town in the late 19<sup>th</sup> cen-

ture, and more and more wealthy and influential Boston businessmen and professionals were moving here. These men played a role in urging the Town to proceed despite concerns about cost. The following is one of many appeals to residents:

Finally, it seems impossible that the Town of Weston with all its culture, intelligence, and wealth, should remain longer content with the present crowded and unsatisfactory quarters for the Library. We urge that the time has come when the Town should erect a simple, dignified building that will rebound to its credit, and make the Library, as it should be, one of the leading features and most potent attractions of its civic life.

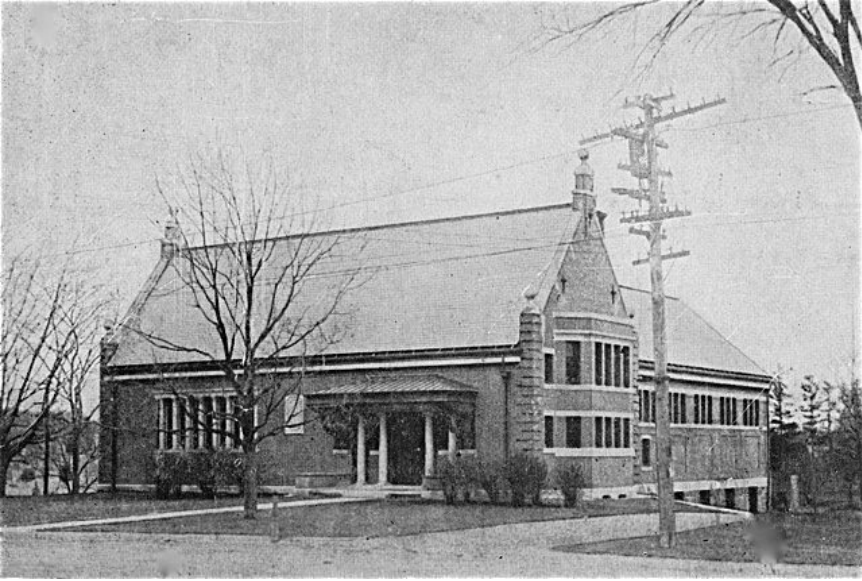
Finally, in 1899, the town voted to proceed and allocated \$40,000 for construction. The building committee hired the Boston firm of Fox, Jenney, and Gale, in part because two of the three young principals, Thomas A. Fox and Alexander S. Jenney, had been associated with Charles McKim in the construction of the Boston Public Library. Work began in November 1899 and was completed exactly one year later.

The pride of the town is evident in the ornamental stone plaque next to the door, reading “Weston Public Library, founded AD 1857, This building was built by the TOWN, 1899” The all-capital letters in the word Town emphasize the fact that all residents had contributed. A 1908 history of Middlesex County called it “a splendid monument to the culture and refinement of the citizens of Weston.”

On the first floor, the large reading room was lighted on three sides by mullioned windows and featured exposed oak beams and walls tinted green with bands of white and red. The original children’s alcove was to the right of the main entrance. Above the children’s room was a small office for the trustees. Basement space was allocated for future book storage and a fireproof storage room for town records. Weston has one of the earliest libraries to be fully electrified. The librarian could turn on and off almost all the lights from a single switch at her desk. The new library had a modern open stack system, and the Dewey decimal system was adopted to help patrons locate their own books.

The building of the library had an impact on literacy and cultural awareness. The librarian, Elizabeth S. White, noted a marked increase in circulation and increased use of books by the schools. In 1900, the library came a member of the Massachusetts Library Art Club, which circulated collections of pictures for exhibition at intervals during the year. Thus the cultural mission of the library was broadened.

The children’s alcove became so popular that in 1912 the trustees called for its enlargement. Space in the lower level became available when the town clerk moved to the new Town Hall. Encouraged by a gift of \$5,000 from library trustee Miss Louisa Case, the space was remodeled in 1922 into a children’s room named for her niece, Rosamond Freeman. A handsome Tudor porch was added to mark the entrance to the children’s area.



*This photograph was taken between the time of the library opening in 1900 and the addition of the Tudor style entrance to the children's room in the early 1920s. (Courtesy Weston Historical Society)*

The 1899 Library served the town for nearly a century, until 1996, when the present building was constructed. Since that time, the Old Library has been used sporadically, for town offices when Town Hall was renovated, for recreation offices and programs, and even for Halloween haunted houses, all the while awaiting a new use.

## **The Architect**

Alexander S. Jenney received his architectural training at M.I.T. and began his professional career in the office of America's great 19<sup>th</sup> century architect, H. H. Richardson. It was in Richardson's office that he met Stanford White, who also worked there in his early professional life. When the prestigious New York firm of McKim, Mead, and White was hired to design the new Boston Public Library in the 1880's, Alexander Jenney and another young Boston architect, Thomas A. Fox, joined the firm's Boston office. For eight years they helped to oversee and implement the design and maintain the high standards of craftsmanship for one of Boston's greatest buildings. Jenney even traveled in 1891 to Europe with Charles Follen McKim and Samuel A.B. Abbott, president of the Library Trustees, to further the design and craftsmen connections for the BPL. This trip to study architectural details and artistry may have been the basis of his predominantly English style for Weston's library.



*Early photograph of the Weston Public Library reading room, c. 1900  
(Courtesy Weston Historical Society)*

After the Boston Public Library opened in 1895, Fox and Jenney continued on as architects for the Library Trustees. Their fledgling firm got the job designing the Weston library based in part on the recommendation from Herbert Putnam, former librarian of the BPL, who strongly commended the Boston firm:

The very remarkable experience which as Librarian of the Boston Public Library I had with Messrs Fox, Jenney & Gale interests me, however, very considerably in the promotion of opportunities for them. They are a firm of young men. Both Jenney and Fox were associated with Mr. McKim in the construction of the Boston Public Library, and during the past four years they were the architects of the Trustees; they designed and superintended the alterations in the Old West Church for our branch public library, and they were in entire control of the alterations at the Central Library building upon which \$100,000 has been spent during the past year. They are men of excellent taste, ample education, of extreme integrity and of sincerity and devotion.

In the late 1890s, Jenney purchased a lot in Horace Sears's new subdivision on Pigeon Hill. He built a house at 44 Hilltop Road and became an active participant in town affairs, including serving as Inspector of Buildings. In 1911, he was appointed to the Committee on Improvement of the Center of the Town of Weston, which hired landscape architect Arthur Shurtleff (later Shurcliff) and set in motion the Village Improvement Plan creating the present Town Green. Jenney him-

self designed the 1913 central fire station that was part of the plan, using what was by then the prevailing Georgian/ Colonial Revival style. He built another house on Pigeon Hill, at No. 46 Hilltop Road, before moving to Brookline.

Jenney spent much of his career teaching architecture, first at Harvard, in the early 1910s, and from about 1914 until 1929 at M.I.T. When he died in 1930, his obituary in the *Boston Evening Transcript* noted that he was “widely known in the architectural field.”

## Architectural Style

The design for the 1899 Weston Public Library was born of the English Arts & Crafts tradition. The Arts & Crafts movement believed in architecture of good design based on traditional principles, respectful of the past while avoiding slavish imitation. Buildings were to be constructed using local materials and designed to fit into the landscape. The Arts and Crafts reformers emphasized the importance of the individual craftsman in the production of items both beautiful and useful.



*The St. Savior's vicarage in England, designed by William Butterfield and built in 1844-45, is an example of how Elizabethan and Jacobean architectural features reappeared in the 19th century, first in England and then in the United States. The kinship with Weston's 1899 library is clear, particularly in the use of brick with limestone trim to set off window groupings and door openings.*

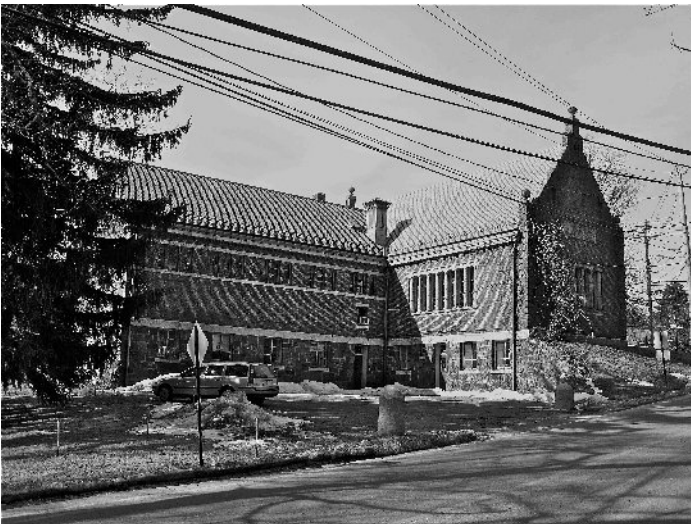
The design vocabulary is drawn from English buildings constructed during the reigns of Elizabeth I (1558-1603) and James I (1603-25), the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras of English history. These styles were revived in late 19<sup>th</sup> century artistic and academic circles. Architectural historians coined the term “Jacobethan” to describe this English Revival style in America. The style can also be described as “Tudor,” a more general term used for buildings inspired by a variety of early English vernacular traditions.

The First Parish Church by architect Robert Peabody also traces its roots to English vernacular architecture. It was standard practice for late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century architects to roam the English countryside looking for inspiration to bring back to their towns to connect New England to Old England. This “Olde England” Arts & Crafts style became synonymous with wealth, education, and culture.

While the design of the library is predominantly Jacobethan, the entrance and entry hall is curiously classical in the use of classical columns and demi-lune arches. This appears to be a nod to the front entrance of the Boston Public Library, which also has these features, albeit in a much more elaborate form.

## Exterior Design Analysis

- Because of the sloping site, the lower level is below ground in the front and above ground at the rear. The fieldstone foundation is visible at the rear. The fieldstones are laid in a pattern called “random ashlar,” meaning that the stones



*This photo of the Old Library from School Street shows the fieldstone foundation, limestone water table and horizontal banding, window groupings, and copper chimney vent at the intersection of the main block and ell. (Photo by Pamela W. Fox, 2010)*



can be square or rectangular and the sizes vary. The color of the stones ranges from gray to brown.

- Above the foundation, the building is constructed of water-struck brick, manufactured using a technique that produces a subtle color and texture that mimics Colonial period bricks in its hand-made quality.

- The brick is laid in Flemish bond, a pattern that alternates headers (the short side of the brick) with stretchers (the long side). Brick is used for “dentils” along the cornice line. Raised brick is used for the decorative “quoins” which rise up as blocks at the corners.

- Craftsmanship is particularly notable in the brick ends. Each of the upper gable ends contains decorative brickwork consisting of stretcher bond patterns laid on diagonals. A corbelled brick pattern at the upper center forms a base for a recessed rectangular brick panel near the top. This is part of a



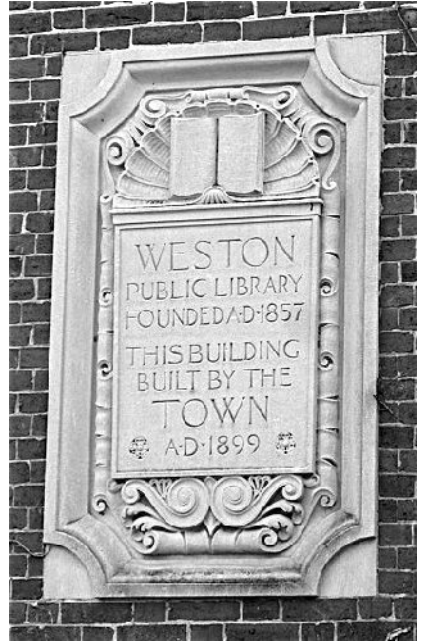
*The Arts and Crafts movement emphasized the importance of materials and craftsmanship. The brickwork is particularly notable in the gable ends. (Photo by Pamela W. Fox, 2010)*

two-tiered brick and stone-capped terminal that steps up above the gables themselves. Note also the symmetrical metal fleur-de-lis decorations.

- Sheltering the front door is a hood with a copper roof, supported by pairs of large carved wooden brackets.
- The red brick contrasts with the light-colored Indiana limestone trim, which sets off the windows and doors. Horizontal limestone banding is used at the base of the building, at the cornice line, and above and below the windows in the ell. The band along the base is called the “water table” because it protects the foundation from water running down the wall. Limestone is used for the round ball finials, three at each gable end. Limestone is also used for the paired Ionic columns that frame the front door. These are among the classical features that the architect has integrated into the design. The original front door has been replaced. This is one of the few exterior changes.
- Copper is used for gutters, downspouts, and collection boxes. The copper has oxidized to a soft blue-green color. A decorated copper covered chimney vent is

located on the east side near the intersection of the front and back portions of the ell. Copper is also used for the ridge caps.

- Jacobethan and Tudor buildings have steeply pitched roofs, which means that the roof material is very visible. The slate is a soft gray-green color. The shape of the gable at each end is called a “parapeted gable.”
- As is typical of the Jacobethan style, windows are grouped together. The front and back facades each feature a group of seven tall leaded glass windows separated by banded limestone columns, capped by a continuous stone lintel, and seated on a continuous stone sill. At the east end is a group of five such windows.



*Plaque on the front facade of the Weston Public Library (Photo by Pamela W. Fox, 2010)*

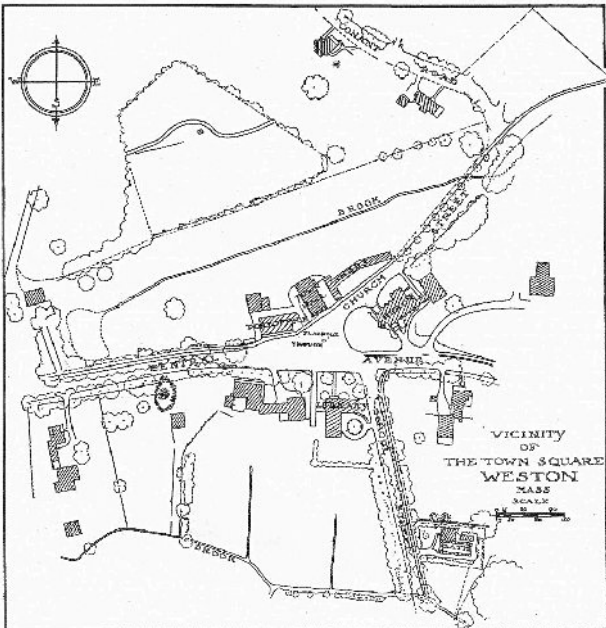
- At the back of the building (the south side) on the gable end, three tall leaded glass windows gridded in a diamond pattern are located in the center on the lower level. These are the centerpiece of a low window seat at the end of the former children’s room inside.
- Above the windows on the east side is an embedded stone plaque that reads, “THE PUBLIC LIBRARY OF THE TOWN OF WESTON”. A more elaborate stone wall plaque embedded to the left of the main entry gives a brief history: “WESTON PUBLIC LIBRARY, FOUNDED AD 1857. THIS BUILDING WAS BUILT BY THE TOWN, 1899”.
- The side entrance was added in the 1920s when the lower level was converted into a children’s room. It is protected by an open timbered gable structure resting on heavy timber posts. This canopy has a slate roof, and beneath it is a concrete bench on the north side and a short “child-sized” wooden door. Engraved in the stone lintel above the entry are the words “IN MEMORY OF ROSAMOND FREEMAN 1893- 1902”.

# The Town Green District

The intersection of Boston Post Road, Church Street, and School Street has been the religious and governmental heart of Weston for more than three centuries. In the days when Cutting's general store stood on what is now the Town Green, it was the commercial heart as well. Today, we can "read" the town's history in the architectural landmarks that remain here in this one compact district. In the handful of buildings that frame our Town Green, we see the architectural manifestation of Weston's increasing prominence and prosperity over three centuries.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when Weston was one of the first stagecoach stops on the Boston Post Road going west, Josiah Smith operated a popular tavern. In singling out what he calls the "Town Green District" in his 2010 book *Metropolitan Boston*, architectural historian Keith Morgan writes: "The principal document of colonial commerce on the Town Green is the clapboard gambrel-roofed Josiah Smith Tavern."

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the town's transformation from a rural farm town to the "Lenox of the East" is symbolized by two new buildings in the Town Square, the fieldstone First Parish Church (1888) and the red brick Weston Public Library (1899). In these two buildings, the inspiration came from England, in the form of English Revival, a style used in academic and other learned settings. These two buildings were a source of great pride and represented an increased cultural sophistication.



The next step in the evolution of the "Town Square" was the actual redesign of the town center and creation of the Town Green in the 1910s. This time, the goal was nothing less than to create "a village common or green, always found in the best types of old New England villages." While only a decade or so later, the inspira-

*Left: Town fathers sent out this plan of the "Town Square" about 1911 to solicit ideas for an improved town center. (Courtesy Weston Historical Society)*

tion was not England but rather American Colonial Revival. The landscape architect, Arthur Shurtleff (later Shurcliff), wrote in the 1912 *Town Report*:

In my opinion, the execution of this scheme would give Weston a Town Common of remarkable individuality and in many respects the finest open space of its kind in the Common-wealth.

The Town Improvement Plan also included construction of a new fire station (1913) and monumental Town Hall (1917), both designed in the Georgian/Colonial Revival style, as appropriate to the new colonial-style town common. The fire station was designed by Alexander S. Jenney, who had designed the nearby library fifteen years earlier. In 1919, the Gothic Revival St. Julia Church took its place facing the Town Green. Weston gained regional and even national attention for its new “civic center.”

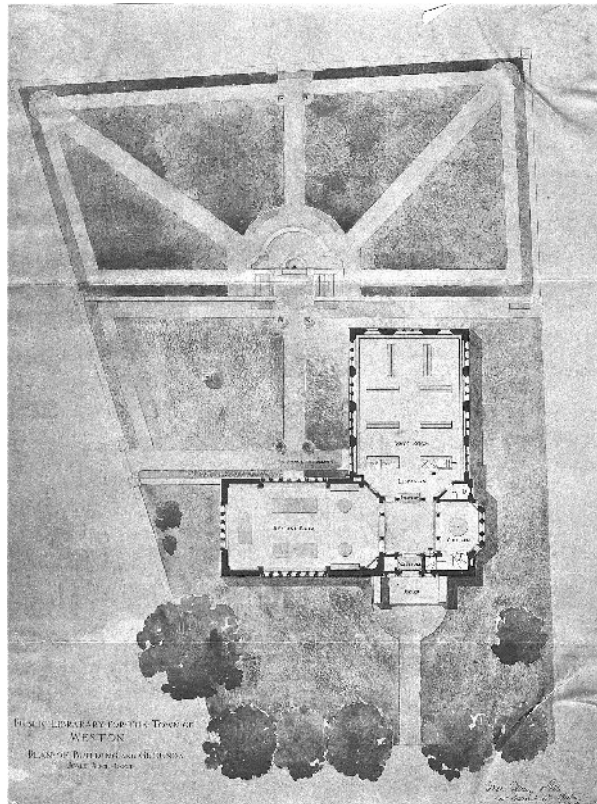
Surrounding this early 20<sup>th</sup> century Town Green is an ensemble of important buildings representing each of these phases in the town’s growth and development. Each is more ambitious than the example from the previous century, as Weston attracted more and more well-to-do residents. But the common thread is the pride of the citizenry in their town center and the institutions—the church, library, and town hall, standing along with the colonial tavern.

Since the creation of the Town Green a century ago, town leaders have carefully protected this centerpiece of the town. Lamson Park was taken by eminent domain to protect the visual integrity of the Green and Town Hall. A recent addition to the Town Hall was carefully designed to preserve the character of the building. The exterior of the Josiah Smith Tavern was restored in 2006 with Community Preservation Act funds. First Parish Church has carefully guarded the integrity of its handsome stone building, which has several additions in compatible style. Constraints on the library site meant that the 1899 building was never expanded and it maintains its architectural integrity. As a result, the Town Green area looks much like it did a century ago, when town leaders completed their visionary Town Improvement Plan. Now, it is up to us to preserve this legacy.



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*Left: View of the Old Library and Josiah Smith Tavern from the Town Green (Photo by Carol Snow, c. 2007) Right: This rather grand Beaux Arts landscape plan was never executed. (Courtesy Weston Historical Society)*



*Farm Manager Carol LaLiberte makes pressed apple cider with members of the Roxbury-Weston pre-school. Pictured: Mildred Canady and four-year-old Justin Houston, October 9, 1991. (Courtesy Weston Historical Society)*

## Land's Sake Turns 30

*Editor's note: Much of the information in this article is taken from Brian Donahue's 1999 book Reclaiming the Commons: Community Farms & Forests in a New England Town. Donahue is an environmental historian, Associate Professor of American Environmental Studies at Brandeis University, and a co-founder of Land's Sake in 1980. In Reclaiming the Commons, he skillfully interweaves autobiography, social and environmental history, philosophy, and ecology with the history of agriculture and community farming in Weston and New England.*

Land's Sake evolved out of 1960s social and environmental activism. Bill McElwain, a Harvard-educated one-time carrot farmer and affordable housing advocate, began Green Power Farm in 1970 as a way to enlist volunteer labor to grow healthy food on unused Weston land, to be donated or sold cheaply to inner city residents. About the same time, the town established the Youth Commission to tackle teen drug abuse and disaffection. McElwain was hired as project director, and Green Power became a town-run program enlisting young people to plant, weed, and harvest during their summer vacations.

Also in the early 1970s, Weston purchased hundreds of acres of conservation land as part of an ambitious land acquisition plan. To determine how to manage all that land, the Conservation Commission formed a study committee consisting of Julie Hyde, a Weston native raised on a farm; Brian Donahue, McElwain's assistant at Green Power; and Doug Henderson, a retired diplomat who had returned to his boyhood home. Because the Town did not wish to add to its payroll, the committee regrouped and eventually settled on the idea of an independent non-profit membership organization that could contract to manage the conservation land.

Another co-founder, Martha Gogel, found a lawyer to help with the incorporation. The organization was christened "Land's Sake" after a favorite expression of Doug Henderson's mother. In *Reclaiming the Commons*, Brian Donahue explains the group's three central principles: to "provide ecologically sound care of land in Weston, involve the community and particularly young people with the land, and make the program pay its own way as far as possible through the sale of products and services." The fledgling organization had little capital and no commitment from the Conservation Commission.

The Case Farm "was born more or less by accident," according to Donahue. Peter Ashton, newly appointed director of the Arnold Arboretum's Case Estates, was looking for a way to avoid selling the "Forty Acre Field" at Wellesley and Newton Streets. Ashton felt that actively farming the land might generate income and lessen pressure to sell, and the Arboretum agreed to allow Land's Sake to give it a try. In the spring of 1981, head farmer Brian Donahue and a small group of high school students planted a few acres with strawberries, raspberries, butternut squash, and even a few hybrid cantaloupes. To earn income for the organization, Gogel and Henderson tilled gardens for new members. Over the next four

*Right: James "Bear" Burnes, long-time president of Land's Sake, making cider, October 1991 (Courtesy Weston Historical Society)*





*Left: Laurie DiMartino and her babysitter, Jane McCarney, picking strawberries at Land's Sake, July 1991. Right page: Steve Miller and John Potter with the draft horses, collecting winter squash. (Courtesy Weston Historical Society).*

years the total acreage under cultivation gradually increased to ten, about half in raspberries and strawberries.

Despite much hard work, the farm failed to turn a profit. Land's Sake declined to use chemical herbicides and pesticides. Gradually the fields were cleaned of perennial weeds by cultivation, but until then, forgoing pesticides hurt the berry crops. The Arboretum initially refused permission to erect a farm stand but finally allowed a small stand in the fall of 1984. Marketing was a challenge. One year, Martha Gogel persuaded Harvard's dining service to buy quantities of butternut squash, which Land's Sake had to deliver peeled. One evening a week, a group would gather in someone's kitchen for an evening of peeling, cubing, and bagging, but even this was not profitable. According to Donahue, they began to feel that "Maybe it really wasn't possible to be ecologically responsible, educational, and profitable all at once."

In the spring of 1985, after four years and with no profit in sight, the Arboretum decided to lease the land to a commercial grower. Knowing how important the farm had become to Land's Sake, Donahue was able to retain use of one acre along the road to grow flowers and specialty crops that would not compete directly with the farmer. Later that spring, the Arboretum announced that it would be putting the property up for sale.

In the spring and summer of 1985, the commercial grower, Tom Hansen opened a larger farm stand and sold produce grown on the Case land and on his farm in Framingham. Reduced to one acre, Land's Sake grew flowers and "odd ball vegetables" which Donahue describes this way:

[we grew] "yellow tomatoes, white eggplants, apple cucumbers, and bottle gourds, tiny Jack-Be-Little pumpkins and huge Atlantic Giant squumkins. If it was guaranteed to come up the wrong size or color, we planted it.



Having a colorful flower garden right next to the road made it all the more upsetting to townspeople when Harvard began conducting perc tests to see how many lots could be developed. The flowers were also a financial success. That year, Land's Sake earned \$25,000 from one acre, compared to \$20,000 the previous year on ten acres.

Harvard agreed to give the Town a right of first refusal and set the price at \$3.5 million for thirty-five acres. At a special Town Meeting in the fall of 1985, the bond issue to purchase the land passed easily despite the financial conservatism of the times. Weston residents voted to tax themselves \$100 per year for 20 years to save the farm they had come to appreciate.

In 1991, Green Power Farm was merged with Land's Sake, which now runs the Green Power program on about 15 acres of land on Merriam Street. Each sum-



mer, middle schoolers pay for the privilege of working from one to eight weeks in the fields, growing crops that are donated to a nearby food pantry. In 2009, Green Power produced 2,955 pounds of produce ranging from arugula to zucchini and including popcorn and soybeans, with a total estimated value of approximately \$8,151.

The "Forty Acre Field" was purchased for municipal purposes and could be used for a school or other town purpose other than farming or conservation. Land's Sake leases the land and contracts with the Conservation Commission to farm it. While not an official town farm, Land's Sake has become a town institution that presently cultivates about 25 acres. Since 1986, the farm has been completely

organic—although no longer legally certified as such. The soil is improved, not with chemical fertilizers but with compost, approved organic fertilizers, and “green manure” crops that are plowed back into the soil to improve its nutrient content.

During his tenure as Land’s Sake director, from 1981 to 1992, Brian Donahue and his wife, Faith Rand, formed a “neighborhood sheep partnership.” Owners of pasture land donated money to Land’s Sake for the purchase of ewes and portable electric fencing. Donahue and Rand moved the flock from pasture to pasture and, in winter, to a barn on Ripley Lane owned by Ralph and Shirley Earle. Rand

kept the wool in exchange for her labor, and sales of freezer lamb and tanned sheepskins paid for the expenses. In *Reclaiming the Commons*, Donahue observed that “Nothing brings rural character back to life like putting a few sheep in an old field.”

In the early 1990s, Land’s Sake experimented with using a team of Suffolk draft



*Above: Glen Hutchinson taping maple trees, February 1992. (Courtesy Weston Historical Society) At left, Faith Rand feeding Land’s Sake sheep (Courtesy Land’s Sake, c. 1980s)*



*Unidentified shoppers buying asparagus, May 1987 (Courtesy Weston Historical Society)*

horses to supplement its tractor. But after about a decade raising sheep and a few years keeping horses, Land's Sake decided to eliminate livestock. In addition to the cost and extra staff time needed, the lack of a barn was a major handicap.

Since the early 1980s, the Weston Forest & Trail Association has contracted with Land's Sake to maintain Weston's 65 miles of trails. The Conservation Commission also contracts with Land's Sake to manage parts of the town forest. From 1989 to 1992, the forestry program was headed by John Potter, who was splitting

wood with Land's Sake at age sixteen and returned after graduating from Yale with a progressive forestry education. As part of Potter's master's thesis, he inventoried the town's forest, identifying 1440 accessible acres. Potter prepared a long-term management plan emphasizing diversity of tree species and ages. Today, about five to ten acres are harvested each year, not by clear cutting but rather by a series of thinnings spaced over several decades. Land's Sake typically produces about fifty cords of firewood a year, which covers the cost of thinning and increases the value of the remaining timber. For several years, Land's Sake experimented with milling lumber, which was sold to local woodworkers or used for building the farm stand and other construction projects. The staff also plants Christmas trees that members can chop down themselves, for a fee.

Maple sugaring began in the 1970s as part of Green Power. Middle school students tap trees in February and for the next few weeks help boil down the sap in a small sugarhouse built by Bill McElwain in 1973 next to the middle school parking lot. The supply of pure Weston-made syrup sells out quickly at the late March "Sugaring Off" party.

In its first decade, Land's Sake took up the challenge of restoring an old orchard on the newly purchased Weston College land. Volunteers and staff pruned and fertilized existing trees and planted new ones, of old varieties. The goal was to have sufficient apples to produce cider using a 19<sup>th</sup> century cider press originally

acquired by Green Power. But apples have proven difficult to grow organically, and today the orchard bears only intermittently. Recently a few new fruit trees have been planted under the direction of Eagle Scout Will Jacobs.

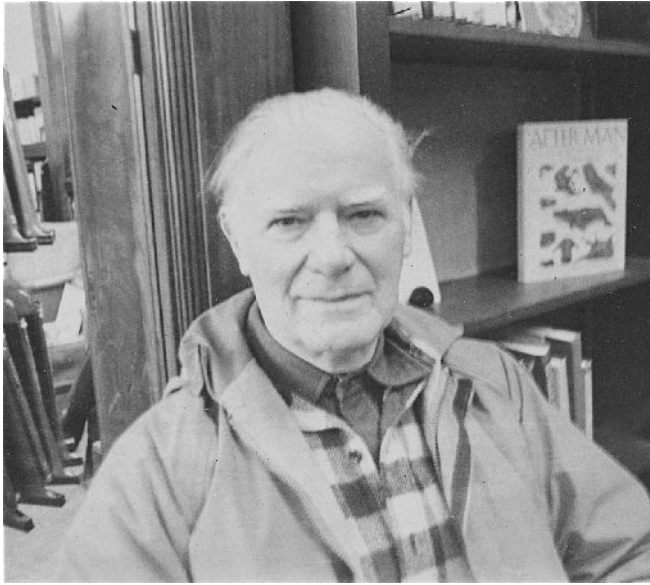
As mentioned earlier, Land's Sake has been handicapped over the years by the absence of a barn and the fact that its operations are spread all over town. In addition to the Merriam Street and Case Fields, the group has leased the Melone Homestead at 27 Crescent Street from the Conservation Commission since 1990. This small 19<sup>th</sup> century house came with the Sears Conservation Land purchased by the town in the mid-1970s. Land's Sake uses the space for an office and housing for one or two staff. They operate a nearby greenhouse used to start seedlings that are later transplanted to the Case Field. The house was recently restored using Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds. In the late 1990s, Land's Sake assisted the Mosher family in renovating their old barn adjacent to Case Field in return for using the space for vehicle and equipment storage.

In 2006, Land's Sake began a Community Sustainable Agriculture (CSA) program, where residents purchase a share of whatever is grown.. The CSA provides predictable income and also shares the risks inherent in farming, particularly from too much or too little rain. It now enrolls 110 participants each season.

Through its Sugaring Off party in March, Strawberry Festival in June, and Harvest Festival in October, Land's Sake celebrates the seasonal rhythms and brings the community together. Thirty years have brought growth and many changes along the way, but Land's Sake is still doing much of what it set out to do. As one of the pioneering community farms, it has played a part in strengthening the local food movement and helped inspire many similar operations across New England.

*Brian Donahue (right) and Kate Rossiter press apples into cider, September 1990 (Courtesy Weston Historical Society)*





*In Memoriam*  
**Douglas Henderson (1914-July 14, 2010)**

When I was researching my book on Weston, I spent many Wednesday mornings at Weston Historical Society, where Doug Henderson was often hard at work organizing the archives. Because he had grown up in Weston and because of his work at the society, Doug was an invaluable resource.

His contribution to Land's Sake is related more fully in the previous article. He passed away on the 30th anniversary of the organization he helped to establish and which he guided with a steady hand. Land's Sake co-founder Brian Donahue recalls how Doug, then in his late 60s, was willing to take on any job, including the tilling of member gardens to help the young organization earn cash.

All this was accomplished in Doug's retirement years, when he returned to his boyhood home on Chestnut Street after a successful 33-year career in the Foreign Service. The son of a carpenter-builder, he attended Boston University and won a scholarship to the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, where he earned a masters degree in 1941. As a diplomat, he served in Mexico, Chile, Peru, and Bolivia, working his way up to the position of Ambassador to Bolivia from 1963 to 1968. His biggest challenge was the tumult surrounding the guerilla uprising and death of revolutionary Ernesto "Che" Guevara in Bolivia in 1967. Doug retired from the Foreign Service in 1975 as the U.S. Representative to the Inter-American Committee of the Alliance for Progress.

*by Pamela W. Fox*

# Wightman Tennis Center Celebrates 40 Years

Four decades ago, on May 24, 1970, Wightman Tennis Center formally dedicated its new Modern-style clubhouse at 100 Brown Street with a ceremony honoring champion player Hazel Hotchkiss Wightman, for whom the club is named. To put this event into historical context, consider that in those days even serious players were practicing tennis in their garages during the winter.

The new center was the culmination of more than seven years of work by a dedicated group of players to build a facility for year-round tennis that would be available to everyone, regardless of race, religion, or family ancestry— provided, of course, that they could pay the dues. At the time, such a facility was essentially unavailable in the Boston area.

The founders were avid tennis players. Some were champions. At their first organizational meeting in June 1962, they agreed to look for property with a minimum of 10 acres within a 25- minute drive for potential members, most of whom lived in Newton. In December 1963, The Garden City Family Recreation Center,

Inc. was incorporated as a non-profit, non-sectarian club, owned by its members, for the purpose “of constructing and maintaining an athletic and recreation center for swimming, tennis, squash, and other forms of athletics; for the promotion of physical fitness and wholesome social contacts and relationships and for the purpose of good citizenship.”

The original incorporators were Harrison F. “Rosie”



*Left: Internationally renowned tennis champion Hazel Wightman and club president Harrison Rowbotham Sr. wield symbolic shovels at ground-breaking ceremonies on February 19, 1969, for the \$1,250,000 Hazel Hotchkiss Wightman Tennis Center. (Courtesy Wightman Tennis Center)*



*To break up the vast roof surfaces, the building was divided into three staggered sections. Note the low silhouette and sweeping lines. (Photo c.1969 courtesy Wightman Tennis Center)*

Rowbotham Sr., President; Sidney L. Cohen, Treasurer; and Bernard “Bill” J. Pearson, Clerk; also Irving Karg, Way-Dong Woo, Anthony J. Minichiello, and Sumner “Sonny” Rodman, whose brother Bert was also an important founding member. Rowbotham had taken his first tennis lesson at age 9 with Hazel Wightman. He became a nationally ranked player, winner of 168 sanctioned tournaments, and New England’s Number One in Men’s Singles in 1945. He also developed a winning doubles game with Sumner Rodman, and the pair was ranked Number One in New England for seven years and Number Five nationally in 1941. As a long-time president of the New England Lawn Tennis Association and later vice-president at the national level, Rowbotham worked tirelessly to build tennis throughout New England. Beginning in 1960 he headed the Youth Tennis Foundation, dedicated to training promising young players and making tennis available as a healthy sport in urban areas.

Two years were expended on an unsuccessful effort to procure a 99-year lease of Metropolitan District Commission land in Newton bordering the Charles River. Next, the Center sought to obtain a variance on land on the Newton-Boston line adjacent to the Commonwealth Country Club. Because of strong opposition by abutters, the club decided to drop the purchase option.

The present land in Weston was optioned in 1967, subject to obtaining a special permit. The founders sensed that there was opposition in Weston, in part because the group was mainly from Newton. To counter this perception, they enlisted the help of Weston residents Bill Brown, H. Kenneth Fish, and Jerome Rosen and

*Mortgage signing, February 1969: Top row l-r, Bernard "Bill" Pearson, Sidney Cohen, and Henry Gesmer, attorney for City Bank. Bottom row: Harrison Rowbotham, Hazel Wightman, and Rubin Epstein, president of City Bank. (Courtesy Wightman Tennis Center)*



sweetened the deal by promising to make at least 50% of the memberships available to Westonites. The Zoning Board granted the special permit on February 29, 1968, with additional conditions including a limit of 300 Family and 100 Youth memberships, a ban on liquor and on food other than a snack bar, and a limit of eight lighted outdoor courts

On December 1, 1967, the original corporate name was changed to The Hazel Hotchkiss Wightman Tennis Center Inc. in honor of Hazel Wightman (1886-1974), the widely admired "First Lady of Tennis" or "Queen Mother of American Tennis," depending on the sports writer's preferred analogy. Wightman agreed to lend her name at the request of Rowbotham, who had first met her years earlier at his first tennis lesson.

Hazel Wightman won more national tennis titles, a total of 45, than any other player in the history of the sport, according to a 1974 obituary in the *Boston Herald American*. She began her reign at the 1909 U.S. Women's Championships by winning every event she entered: women's singles, women's double, and mixed doubles, a grand slam repeated the following two years. In 1923, she donated a silver cup, known as the Wightman Cup, to the U.S. Lawn Tennis Association for a women's tennis tournament between the United States and Great Britain similar to the men's Davis Cup. She won the Olympic doubles and mixed doubles in 1924 and was also a national singles squash champion, Massachusetts state table tennis champion, and national mixed badminton finalist. Remarkably, she never took a cent of payment for her play or instruction.



The 16.5 acres on Brown and Winter Streets was acquired on April 2, 1968 from Krist E. Apog, et.al for \$110,000. The firm of Sasaki, Dawson, DeMay Associates, Architects was hired to design and supervise construction, with Kenneth DeMay as principal architect in charge.

### *Gypsies, Biplanes, Rhododendrons: What was there before WTC?*



The property purchased by Wightman founders in 1968 has a unique history. At the corner of Brown and Winter Streets, adjacent to the tennis club, is one of Weston's six district schoolhouses, constructed in 1853. The nearby pine forests were once a favorite camping ground for gypsies. Estate owner Charles Jones purchased the schoolhouse and 95 acres of land in 1908 and converted the school into a two-family house for his herdsman and horse trainers. Around 1919-20, part of this land was leased for a "flying field" or "airdrome." Runways were cut through the forest and a U-shaped airplane hanger was created by connecting the Jones cow and horse barns. In 1923, Latvian immigrant Peter John Mezitt purchased the property, including the schoolhouse and flying fields. He founded Weston Nurseries, which would become internationally known for developing new plant varieties. Mezitt allowed the pilots to stay, and family members recall stories of him chasing planes down the runway with his truck, preventing takeoff until the pilots had paid their rent. The airport operated until June 1926, when a spectacular fire destroyed the hanger and 18 aircraft. Weston Nurseries began relocating to Hopkinton after World War II; and by 1950, all propagation and shipping facilities had been moved there. The family maintained a sales outlet in Weston for several more years. When the club bought the property in 1968, the barn in the photo above was part of the purchase. (Courtesy Wightman Tennis Center)

The next challenge was financing. The organizers were turned down by bank after bank wary of lending to the project because the property was permitted for only one use. In February 1969, a mortgage loan commitment was obtained from the small City Bank and Trust Company for \$800,000. As a condition, each intended member had to personally guarantee the bank against loss, up to \$3000 per member. The Charles Logue Building Company commenced construction in March 1969.

The \$1.25 million dollar center opened on July 1, 1969 with four indoor courts, 10 outdoor courts, two squash courts, indoor and outdoor swimming pools, a sauna, lockers and shower rooms for men and women, a pro shop, and a central lounge area providing picture window viewing of the indoor tennis, squash, and swimming activities.

In the early years, the club was used mainly by its male members. Long waits for courts were not unusual. The original women's locker room was small and inadequate, and use by women increased after these facilities were expanded and improved. Two courts were added in 1975; and in 2001-02, the squash courts were removed and the space remodeled to create a large exercise room.

The original founders envisioned a Youth Program offering low cost memberships or scholarships to promising players under 21. In the early years, the club had a number of excellent youth members who went on to become championship players. Because the courts were in such demand, the youth memberships were largely discontinued by the mid-1970s. Wightman also hosted the Wightman Invitational junior tournament for boys and girls from age 11 to 18, but this in-

BUD COLLINS

*A private club — for all*

Weston never did get the Greater Boston stadium that John Volpe sought to build there two years ago. This disappointed one of the settlers named Tom Scott, who figured that the Red Sox dug-out would have been located in his living room. Mrs. Scott was not as enthusiastic: "I don't know that I would have cared for Jim Nance and Jim Whalen running through our petunias."

With eight outdoor courts and four indoor courts, outdoor and indoor pools, and squash courts framed by the stunning architecture of Sasaki, Dawson, DeMay & Associates, the Wightman Center will become one of the country's finest tennis clubs.

I hope that its pioneering policies in regard to membership will not be lost on other clubs. Tennis and golf have been considerably less than enlightened in this area.



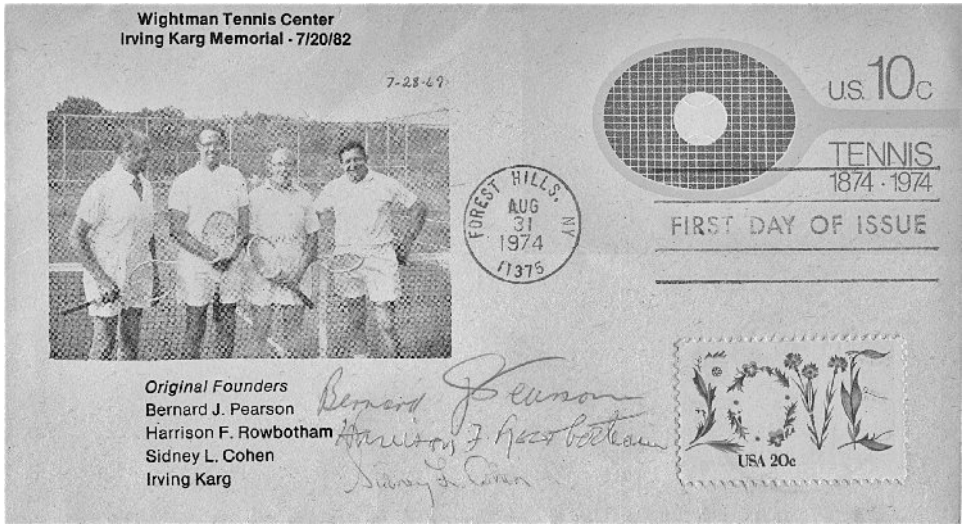
*This photo, taken shortly after the opening of the clubhouse in 1970, shows the original design for the stair railings leading up to the main entrance. (Photo courtesy Wightman Tennis Center).*

involved closing the facility for four days in June and was discontinued. From about 1974 to 1988, Wightman had an age-group swimming team.

In a 1969 article entitled “A private club—for all,” *Boston Globe* journalist and tennis commentator Bud Collins hailed the new club as “an athletic club for all peoples,” adding “Color, race, religion, politics have nothing to do with entrance requirements.” He explained then-customary policies as follows:

As centers of sportsmanship, most of New England and America’s private athletic clubs are a fraud. Sportsmanship, to be genuine, has to go beyond games, and extend to life outside the toy department. Almost without exception, these clubs—the pillars of tennis, golf, swimming, boating, riding—are bigoted and restrictive in their admission policies.

The people raising the handsome Wightman Center in Weston will not go that way. Among the 300 family memberships are Negroes, Jews, people of all faiths and convictions. ”It is a private club,” says a prime mover, the president, Harrison Rowbotham, “but not in the usual sense. We are taking people on the basis of their being acceptable citizens—and, of course, for their ability to pay the bills.”



*The Irving Karg Memorial Trophy was established in 1982 honoring Karg's work as founder, secretary, member of the board, and long-time friend of the club. (Courtesy Wightman Tennis Center)*

While Wightman membership has always been open to all, only a few African-Americans have ever been members. The club has traditionally had a large Jewish membership. Of the original 300 members, 19 are still members today.

Wightman has two staff members who have worked at the club almost from the beginning. Phyllis Simm has served as office manager since the fall of 1972. Bill Grimes joined the staff in June 1973 and has managed the club since the mid-1970s. Grimes reflected on changes he has seen over the years:

In the beginning, it was tennis, tennis, and more tennis. The original members cared about tennis. There were long waits for courts. Now we have an exercise room, and some members prefer swimming. Also, the club is no longer a novelty. Tennis has passed its peak years of popularity. In our more affluent times, many people play golf and have summer or winter houses. People have other things to do.

H. Kenneth Fish, an original Weston member, looked back on the early years and made this observation about how his family used the club:

In addition to tennis, squash and swimming, it was a great place for families to get together. When our three daughters were young, I would meet them and [my wife] Imogene after work during the summer at the Center. I would swim with the girls or play tennis with Imogene while the girls played or watched us play tennis. After a little exercise, we would have a

picnic on the grounds or near the outdoor pool. It was a wonderful place for families to be together.

by Pamela W. Fox

*The author would like to thank Bill Grimes, Phyllis Simm, H. Kenneth Fish, and Jerome Rosen for their help with this article.*

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(1) Rosen, Jerome, "The Early History of the Hazel Hotchkiss Wightman Tennis Center—A Test of Memory." (undated typescript); (2) *Boston Globe*, "Hazel Wightman dead at 88; won 45 US tennis tourneys," December 6, 1974; (3) *Boston Globe*, "A second look. . ." March 15, 1976.(4) *Boston Sunday Globe*, "Hazel Hotchkiss Wightman, 1886-1974: Mark left by 'grand dame of tennis' may never be erased." December 8, 1974;(5) *Boston Herald American*, "Hazel H. Wightman, 'First Lady of Tennis,'"December 6, 1974; (6) Collins, Bud, "A private club—for all," *Boston Globe*, June 18, 1969; (7) Dorman, William E., "Recreation Center Wins Recognition," *Sunday Herald Traveler* Real Estate section, January 3, 1971; (8) Klaw, Barbara, "Queen Mother of Tennis: An Interview with Hazel Hotchkiss Wightman" c. 1974, ? publication, files of Wightman Tennis Center; (9) Matson, Barbara, "She was queen of court: Wightman had regal reign in women's tennis" *Boston Globe*, Oct 8, 1999; (10) "The Hazel Hotchkiss Wightman Tennis Center History," printed in the October 1971 Member Directory; (11) *The Town Crier*, Letter to the Editor, with the original architect's drawing and photo of the building as constructed, March 5, 1970.



*Color postcard with aerial view of The Hazel Hotchkiss Wightman Tennis Center around the time of its opening in 1970. (Courtesy Wightman Tennis Center)*

# Elisha Jones, Weston Loyalist

*Editor's note: The following article by Rivers School history teacher David Burzillo was inspired by a 1990s international trade dispute involving the United States, Cuba, and Canada and the issue of properties confiscated in war—properties such as The Rivers School campus in Weston.*

The Rivers School sits on land that was once part of the vast and disparate land-holdings of Elisha Jones (1710-1776). By the start of the American Revolution Jones owned 274 acres of land in various parts of Weston, including property on both the Natick and Weston sides of Nonesuch Pond. In addition, he also owned 60 acres of land in Princeton, and almost 9000 acres of land in the western Massachusetts towns of East Hoosac, Pittsfield, and Partridgefield.

Jones was a prominent member of the Weston community, making his home on Highland Street near the center of town and taking an active role in local affairs. He did a little bit of everything. In Weston he served as treasurer and selectman; at the county level he served as a justice of the peace and deputy sheriff; and on the colonial level he was a representative to the General Court. His interests were not confined to politics and real estate; he ran a store in Weston and acted as a banker as well. Jones married Mary Allen of Weston, and together they raised twelve children, eleven boys and one girl. (1)

Elisha Jones has the distinction of being the only Weston loyalist whose property was seized and sold during the Revolution and its aftermath. Jones's support of King George was clear from the earliest stages of the struggle. Weston historians Brenton H. Dickson III and Homer Lucas report that Jones saw the writing on the wall and began recruiting locals for an army to defend the king as early as the summer of 1774.(2) His sons Elisha, Jonah, and Stephen are listed as members of the Third Company of Associators, which was formed in Boston on July 5, 1775, one of at least five loyalist units formed in the Boston area to defend the king in the early stages of the conflict. A number of certificates of loyalty, signed by Generals Howe, Gage, and Burgoyne were referred to in the compensation claims filed after the war by Elisha's descendants as evidence of their unwavering dedication to the Crown. In 1787, Commissioner Pemberton, then evaluating compensation claims by the sons of Elisha Jones, referred to them as "a very meritorious Family."

By the end of 1774, with the political situation in Weston and its environs becoming more and more dangerous, and after a large and threatening crowd surrounded Jones's house one evening, Elisha Jones left Weston for Boston, seeking the company of the many loyalists gathering there as well as the protection of the



*Elisha Jones's 1755 mansion on Highland Street (at left in the above drawing) was one of the finest in pre-Revolutionary-War Weston. Because Elisha was a Tory sympathizer who fled to Boston in 1774, his property was confiscated and sold at auction after the war. The house was purchased by General Thomas Marshall, from whom it passed to other notable owners before being acquired by General Charles Jackson Paine in 1868. Above is a conjectural drawing of what it may have looked like between about 1870 and 1882, with Paine's addition at right. When General Paine wanted to replace the Jones house with something new, his friend Charles H. Fiske Sr. moved it to Boston Post Road in 1883. In 1888, to give it a more advantageous setting, Fiske moved the house again to newly purchased land at 22 Church Street, where it remains today. (Drawing courtesy Tom Paine)*

British troops. He died on February 13, 1776, at the age of 66. Shortly thereafter, in March, many loyalists left Boston for Nova Scotia in conjunction with the evacuation of British troops from Boston at that time.

Once the focus of the war moved out of New England, the General Court turned its attention to the issue of loyalists. In September 1778 the *Banishment Act of the State of Massachusetts* was passed, enjoining local authorities to jail any of the people named in the act, should they choose to return to Massachusetts. It furthermore said that such people should then be transported to British territory and called for the execution of anyone who voluntarily returned after having been removed. The act listed 308 people including three of Elisha's sons: Ephraim, Jonas, and Elisha. On April 30, 1779 the General Court passed *An act for confiscating the estates of certain persons called absentees*, which authorized the seizure of property of any person who had taken up arms against the colonies, aided the king in any way, withdrawn for safety to areas under the king's control, or fled to Boston after the start of the war to seek the protection of British troops. Clearly many members of the Jones family qualified under a number of these categories. Elisha himself had fled to Boston in late 1774; at least six of his sons fought with or aided British forces during the course of the war; and at least six of his sons, with their families, left Boston for Canada.

Ultimately, Elisha Jones's Weston properties were sold in seven different auctions occurring between 1782 and 1785. But the process was neither simple nor quick. One factor complicating the disposal of Jones's property was the extent of his landholdings and business dealings, which made accounting for his property and the claims against his estate quite complicated. In addition, while Jones demonstrated great business acumen throughout his life, he did not exhibit a similar acumen when it came to his legal affairs. He died intestate, and the lack of a will complicated the claims of his sons and their efforts to settle his estate, as well as necessitating a great deal of time and energy on the part of the state to ready his property for auction.

Three years after Jones's death, the selectmen of Weston petitioned Middlesex Probate Court for the appointment of an Agent for his estate. Within a year the original Agent had died, having only partially completed his duties, though he had obtained an appraisal of the estate. A new Agent had to re-certify and re-submit some documents. A second appraisal was completed, and the property was appraised at twice what it had been the first time around. In addition, certain claims by creditors against Jones's estate were approved by the Court, while some were decertified because they were deemed "groundless" and without support of "legal evidence." Because of the many issues surrounding Jones's properties in Middlesex County, the case dragged on until 1782. In 1786, more than ten years after Jones's death, Nathan Jones, on behalf of his father's heirs, petitioned the Middlesex Court to appoint Israel Jones administrator of his father's estate. As was the case with Jones's other probate, this administration was particularly complex, and Probate Judge Prescott did not order the accounts to be finally recorded until June 1801, a full twenty-five years after Elisha's death.

One compensation claim submitted to the British government by the heirs of Elisha Jones after the war refers specifically to an 85-acre tract of land called *Nonesuch*, about 15 miles from Boston. Both of the appraisals submitted by the Agents for Jones's estate refer to "The Farm Called Nonesuch." Ultimately, Jones's property on the Natick side of Nonesuch Pond was purchased by Nathan Jennison. Eighteen acres on the Weston side of the pond was purchased by Isaac Jones, Elisha's cousin and the proprietor of the Golden Ball Tavern, for 31 pounds.

The sale of these and other of Jones's properties, ended the story in Massachusetts, but it did not end the quest for compensation by his descendants in Canada. Loyalists, many of whom ended up in Canada, and some of whom ended up back in England, expected the British government to provide compensation as a reward for their dedicated support of the king throughout the conflict.

Many of those moving to Canada were given land, and some filed claims for monetary compensation for property lost in the conflict. Numerous claims were filed by Elisha Jones's sons and the widow of Elisha Jr. Ephraim, Jonas, Josiah, Simeon, and Stephen Jones filed a claim for 16,426 pounds on the property of their father and were each awarded 443 pounds. Mehitable Jones, the widow of



Elisha Jr., and one of her sons filed a claim for 7000 pounds on property confiscated from Elisha Jr., who had died shortly after the war. They were later awarded 858 pounds.

The treaty of Paris encouraged the hopes of loyalists for restitution and compensation by the new government of the United States. Article V of the treaty called on Congress to encourage state legislatures “to provide for the restitution of all estates, rights, and properties, which have been confiscated belonging to real British subjects;” furthermore, it called on local governments to allow British subjects to return to the U.S. to seek restitution, and to compensate those who purchased confiscated land so that it could be returned to its original owners. Article VI stated that “there shall be no future confiscations” from loyalists. The Treaty was ratified on September 3, 1783. Interestingly, three of Jones’s Weston properties were auctioned after this date, including his holdings on either side of Nonesuch Pond.

The British government was very proactive in taking action to compensate loyalists, but it was by no means a simple matter, and the entire process was the subject of much debate and hand-wringing. The Board of Loyalist Agents, which was formed in February 1783, advised Parliament on the issue of loyalist claims. Many historians believe that the Board’s insistence on dealing with the issue of compensation and its publicly articulated position that the government needed to take responsibility for the process helped bring down the government of Prime Minister Shelburne a few months later. A short time later a *Royal Commission on the Losses and Service of American Loyalists* was formed. The commission worked for the next five years, evaluating over 5000 claims and in the end accepting four out of five. It ultimately distributed about 3,000,000 pounds in compensation to the claimants.

After the death of Isaac Jones, the property on the Weston side of Nonesuch Pond changed hands on three further occasions. Ultimately, a small piece was sold, but this smaller section and the much larger one were once again consolidated when the property was purchased by The Rivers Country Day School in 1956 for the creation of a new campus. Groundbreaking took place on November 14, 1959, and the school’s third campus was officially opened in 1960.

The beauty of its natural setting is an asset of inestimable value to the Rivers community. While the potential agricultural value of the property certainly attracted Elisha Jones the businessman, the beauty of the natural setting surely contributed to his desire to acquire the property and add it to his vast real estate holdings. Through Elisha Jones, Rivers enjoys a fascinating connection to an important Revolutionary-era figure in Weston history as well as an important link to the story of the Revolution in Massachusetts.

by David Burzillo

(1) Information on Elisha’s children has been omitted from this article. Copies of

the full text are available at the historical society. (2) Dickson, Brenton H. III and Lucas, Homer C., *One Town in the American Revolution: Weston, Massachusetts* (Weston Historical Society, 1976.) pp. 36 - 50 and pp. 174 and 182-3.

## One Hundred Years Ago: Weston in 1910

*Excerpts from the Waltham Daily Free Press Tribune, from a clippings scrapbook in the Local History Room, Weston Public Library. Weekly columns chronicled births, deaths, marriages, accidents, illnesses, outings, vacations, guests, hirings and retirements, church sermon topics, fairs, entertainments, dances, organs shipped, graduations, and so forth, On July 8, 2010, the reporter noted "as our unbreakable rule is not to reveal the source of our information without the consent of the informant we assume the blame ourselves if anything is incorrect."*

**January 14:** "Those who unfortunately lost on the Boston election are manfully settling their bets."

"Ice has been harvested during the past week on Brown's pond about 14 inches thick."

**January 25:** "Mssrs. Paine and Merriam have returned from their southern trip, having captured 450 pounds of ducks, etc., all that is allowed under the law."

**February 11:** "The High school debate on Wednesday evening of last week was well attended and very interesting. . . The speakers all did well, but the general opinion of the audience was that the girls made the best debaters. Perhaps the suffragettes of the future may receive some aid from Weston."

**February 18:** "George Sibley had an uncomfortable experience with a bull last week which he was leading home. He was thrown down and dragged some 300 to 400 feet, hurting his hands and shoulder. He hung on to the rope, however, and got the animal securely under cover."

"The Court found against the Town of Weston in a suit brought by Albert T. Pope to recover for injuries to a horse in consequence of breaking through a bridge in the sum of about \$170."

"Many went to the Winter Carnival Tuesday evening in Lexington. McAuliffe carried four large barge loads and at least 100 went in private sleighs."

"Station Agent Trask's hyacinths are showing the accustomed blooms."

**April 8:** "The new State law making April 1 instead of May 1 the time for beginning the assessment of taxes will cause an early arrival of city people having

country residences.”

**April 15:** “Horace S. Sears has engaged Contractor Malloy of Waltham to make some very extensive improvements to his estate on Central avenue. He is having a heavy bank wall constructed from Wellesley street to the Dr. Jackson estate on the south of the avenue and from the concrete wall now built to the First Parish property on the north side. This wall is to be surmounted by a handsome and substantial fence of wrought iron with massive and ornamental gates. When completed the work will greatly improve the appearance of the estate.”

**May 6:** “A.E. Coburn went to Stow Tuesday to put his pasture into shape for the summer occupants.”

**May 13:** “Constable McAuliffe had trouble with some unruly pigs Thursday night. They insisted on taking to the woods.”

**July 15:** “There was quite a little mix-up of dogs in front of Cutting’s store Wednesday in which a greyhound . . . a Newfoundland. . .and a third much smaller dog were more immediately interested. The greyhound was much the worse for the encounter.”

**July 22:** “Through confusion as to the movements of two automobiles at the corner of Central avenue and Church street Monday afternoon, one of the machines was driven onto the lawn of the First Parish church.”

**August 12:** “If the youth of Weston do not show the advantage of correct training it will not be the fault of Miss Marion Case. Miss Case has shown much interest in their welfare, is teaching them the value of money by giving them some light employment whereby they are able to earn a small sum each week and is at the same time ministering to their pleasure. She has in mind the formation in Weston of a branch of the federation of Boys’ clubs.”

**September 16:** “The new engines are in operation at the electric lighting plant and those who desire can have all-day lighting now.”

**September 23:** “There was a slight fire on the roof of Drabbington lodge last Monday . . . Chief Parker seems to be chuckling some over the fact that the company from the center reached the Lodge before the one at Kendal Green.”

“The First Parish society held a very successful fair last Saturday . . . Outside the temporary fence were two cows from Mr. Winsor’s fancy herd and those who choose could drink fresh milk with absolute confidence in its purity. . . .”

**November 11:** “The Weston police are resplendent in their new uniforms. Chief McAuliffe is especially radiant.”

**November 18:** “Robert Winsor has about 75 laborers engaged in converting the swamp land, near the George Blake estate, into an attractive artificial pond.”

**December 9:** “The pond on Mr. Winsor’s estate, originally intended to cover 2 ½ acres will be enlarged to 5, and the excavation will be dredged to a depth of 10 feet.”

**December 23:** “Mrs. F.W. Batchelder was instrumental in securing a Christmas tree for the German and Italian children living on Sibley Road. . . others contributed for the occasion and aided in making the little ones happy.”

### *With Grateful Thanks*

*To Kay McCahan* for her donation of a framed print of the Josiah Smith Tavern in moonlight by artist Jack Richardson, as well as wood and metal printing blocks created for Arnold Arboretum Case Estates brochures

*To Cindy and Bob Mosher* for their donation of three scrapbooks of newspaper clippings and memorabilia compiled by Margaret Mosher.

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