

# WESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

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*Hannah Fiske (fourth from left), daughter of a prominent Weston family, volunteered in wartime France for the Shurtleff Memorial Relief, a charitable organization that collected food and clothes for people driven from their homes. (See page 24) (Photo from nicokubel blogspot)*

## Weston in the Great War: Part II

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**Correction**, Fall 2018 *WHS Bulletin*, page 14, paragraph 2  
The population of Weston in 1915 was 2,342.



*Company I, 5th Regiment, Squad 15, Military Training Camp, Plattsburg, NY, July 1916. (Back row) \_\_\_ Tisdale, Frederick S. Kenney, Charles Warren, Hugh Smith. (Front) \_\_\_ Bushman, Max Whitney, Percy Gerwig, Allen Russell (Weston Historical Society Collection, gift of Eloise Kenney),*

## ***Introduction***

November 11, 2018 was the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the armistice that officially ended World War I. The Fall 2018 issue of *The Weston Historical Society Bulletin* was devoted to the impact of the war on the town of Weston. In the years before the U.S. entered the war, Weston residents watched from the sidelines or got involved through military training, relief work, or enlisting in foreign forces. After the U.S. declared war on Germany in April 1917, young men entered military service and those at home aided the war effort by buying Liberty Bonds, knitting sweaters, making bandages, conserving food, and canning fruits and vegetables.

This issue is about the men and women who served in the war and those who died. It is about their experiences fighting overseas, in countries that farm boys from Weston had never seen. It is about homecoming festivities and memorials. Finally, this issue is about two important Weston organizations established in the aftermath of the war: the Women's Community League and Weston Post 214 of the American Legion.

*Pamela W. Fox, author and editor, Spring 2018 WHS Bulletin*

# Part IV:

## In Service to the Nation

### *Weston Men Who Died*

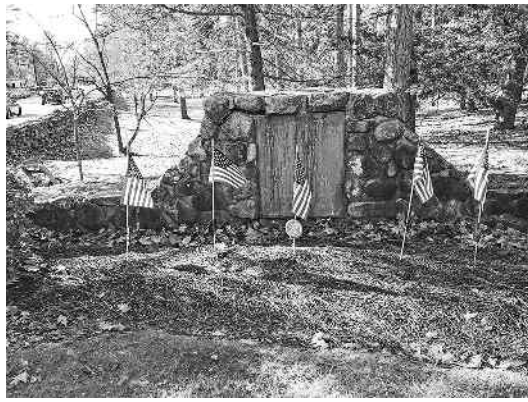
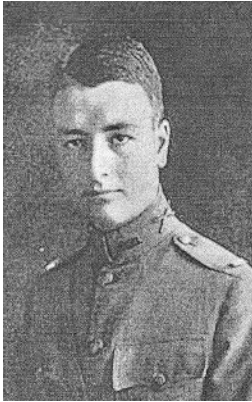
The 1918 *Town Report* includes a list of the 147 men and six women from Weston who served in World War I.<sup>1</sup> Six men died in service: John Blanchard, Robert Denton, Lawrence Dwight, Charles H. Fiske, 3<sup>rd</sup>, Frederick W. Henderson, and Philip Winsor. Five of them succumbed to disease, probably influenza, often within months of leaving home. The six men represent a broad spectrum of Weston society, from immigrant teamsters to sons of privilege. Because of the prominence of their families, the lives of Charles H. Fiske 3<sup>rd</sup> and Philip Winsor are better documented.

*The author would like to thank Madeleine Mullin, Weston's Local History Librarian, for her research on these men, using Ancestry.com, FindAGrave, and other internet sites, which link to military records, census records, ship manifests, passport applications, and other sources. The compiled information can be viewed in the Local History Room at Weston Public Library.*

**John Joseph Blanchard** (1893-1918) was born on Prince Edward Island and was a Canadian citizen. When he registered for service, he was working as a teamster at the farm of Benjamin Blake (the Blake Estate) on Park Road in Weston and living in Auburndale. On his registration, he signed his name with an X, indicating that he was illiterate. Blanchard entered the war in September 1918 and died on October 11, 1918, of disease.

**Robert Baird Denton** (1893-1918) was born in Wellesley and is listed as a naturalist on the 1910 census. He enlisted on December 11, 1917, and died on January 6, 1918, at Camp Meade, one of 16 training sites for troops preparing for the war.

**Lawrence Dwight** (1896-1918) was born in Boston and trained as a cadet at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point from June 1914 to August 1917. He was commissioned a second lieutenant, assigned to the 1<sup>st</sup> Trench Mortar Battery, and shipped overseas on January 4, 1918. He died of pneumonia less than one month later, on February 2, 1918, at the Naval Base Hospital 1 in Brest, a port city in Brittany.<sup>2</sup>



*The family of Charles Henry Fiske 3rd donated Soldiers Field Park in his memory and later erected this monument at the corner of the park, at Concord and Boston Post Roads. (Photo by Pam Fox)*

**Charles Henry Fiske, 3<sup>rd</sup>** (1896 – 1918) was born in Boston and graduated from the Country Day School in 1914. His family's involvement in the war effort is described in Part 1, Fall 2018, p. 42-43. His parents traveled abroad after his graduation and he studied at Trinity College in Cambridge, England. Fiske was admitted to the Harvard Class of 1919. After his freshmen year, in the summer before the US entered the war, Fiske joined the American Field Service and served as an ambulance driver in France and the Balkans until June 1917. He was a volunteer chauffeur with Major Palmer until September 1917, when he returned to America. He enlisted with the U. S. Infantry, 77<sup>th</sup> Division, in January 1918 and sailed to Europe in April as a sergeant and soon thereafter as a second lieutenant.<sup>3</sup>

Fiske died at a Red Cross Hospital in Paris on August 24, 1918, of a wound in his shoulder received in action near Fismes, Marne, on August 12. He is buried in the American Cemetery in Suresnes, Seine. His name is carved in stone on the walls of Memorial Hall at Harvard, and his family placed a memorial marker at Linwood Cemetery. In 1921 they donated Soldiers Field Park in Weston in his honor. Ten years, later a memorial to Fiske was built at the corner of the park, at Boston Post Road and Concord Road.

**Frederick William Henderson** (1898-1918) was the son of immigrants from New Brunswick, Canada. He died of disease on June 1, 1918, while training in Toronto with the Royal Air Force of Canada. His brother George served in the U.S. Navy.<sup>3A</sup>





*Even before the U.S. entered the war, Philip Winsor went to France and volunteered as an ambulance driver. He died of pneumonia just before the Armistice was signed.*

**Philip Winsor** (1893 – 1918) was the son of investment banker Robert Winsor and his wife Eleanor (see Part I, Fall 2018, p. 10). He was born in Weston and educated at Middlesex School and Harvard University, Class of 1915. *The Memorial Volume of the American Field Service* paints an intimate portrait of a young man who was “handicapped from boyhood by illness, who nevertheless by sheer force of character won to health, achievement, and honor in his country’s cause.”<sup>24</sup> According to this account, Winsor entered Harvard in 1911 but took a year off due to ill health, graduating in 1916. In September that year, he sailed for France to drive an ambulance for the American Hospital at Neuilly, in Paris, returning in January 1917. When war was declared he went to Plattsburg as a candidate for a commission but after six weeks he was dropped from the squad, and, according to this account, “he himself felt that he was entirely unfitted for a command.”<sup>25</sup> But he was determined to return to the war: The account continues:

“Phil” felt he must get back to France in some capacity and yet he loathed the very thought of war and the horrors it entailed. Most of all he hated the sickening work of carrying wounded, and perhaps because he hated it most he decided to take up the work again and this time at the front, he was sent out in the early summer of 1917 to Section Four, and when, in the autumn, the Field Service was absorbed by the American Army, he enlisted in the U.S. Army Ambulance Service. For a year it was an uphill fight. He doubted his ability to carry on the work he had undertaken and he dreaded the dangers to which he was exposed, yet to conquer this very dread, he always volunteered for any particularly dangerous task and was twice cited for the Croix de Guerre.<sup>6</sup>

According to this account, by the summer of 1918, Winsor had overcome his self-doubt, his physical health had improved, and he was recommended by his officers for a commission. The narrative is corroborated in the *Gold Star Record of Mas-*

*sachusetts*, which contains a list of soldiers who died in service and includes this information about his “Croix de Guerre with bronze star:”

A very fearless and zealous soldier. During the period from July 9 – 21, 1918, he never hesitated, in spite of a violent bombardment to go to the very advanced first-aid stations to keep up the evacuation of the wounded.<sup>7</sup>

His life was cut short a few months later when he fell ill with pneumonia and died on October 24, 1918, close to the German border. A newspaper article reported: “This news, received by cable by his father, Robert Winsor, Wednesday morning, came as a complete shock to his parents, relatives, and many friends, who had had no previous intimation that he had been ill.”<sup>8</sup> At a memorial service at First Parish Church in Weston the following May, the Rev. Charles Russell praised his enlistment in the ambulance corps before the United States even entered the war, “because he saw it was a cause that was clearly right, and the service which was central in him went out freely.”<sup>9</sup>

Winsor is buried in Bussang, Vosges, France. His family placed a bronze marker in his memory at Linwood Cemetery.

### *The 26<sup>th</sup> “Yankee” Division*

Approximately 10 percent of the Weston men in service were part of the 26<sup>th</sup> Division, known as the “Yankee Division.”<sup>10</sup> Its distinctive insignia, worn on the left sleeve, was a monogram of the letters YD in dark blue on a diamond-shaped field of olive drab.

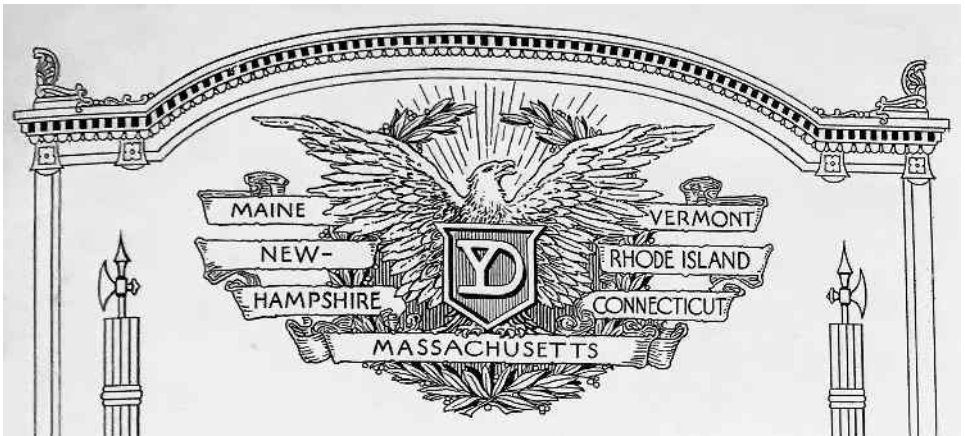
Activated in Boston in August 1917, the Yankee Division was made up of New England National Guard units and a quota of National Army troops from Fort Devens in Massachusetts. Some of the men were raw recruits but others had been part-time soldiers for years. Some had served in the 1916 war with Mexico (see Part I, Fall 2018, p. 9). The Yankee Division was divided into twelve units, including the 101<sup>st</sup>, 102<sup>nd</sup>, 103<sup>rd</sup>, 104<sup>th</sup> Infantry, 101<sup>st</sup>, 102<sup>nd</sup>, 103<sup>rd</sup> Machine Gun Battalion, and 101<sup>st</sup> Field Signal Battalion, among others.

The first troops sailed from Hoboken, New Jersey, to France in September 1917. The Yankee Division was the second division of the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) to arrive on the Western Front and the first wholly organized in the United States and transported complete to France. The division remained in training for about four months, during which time troops were engaged constructing

hospitals, building telephone lines, acting as labor detachments, organizing supplies, and otherwise making preparations for the army, which began to arrive after January 1, 1918.

The Yankee Division saw extensive combat, including in the first two battles in which Americans fought without the support of the French infantry. The 104<sup>th</sup> Infantry became the first military organization in American history to receive a decoration from a foreign government when it was awarded the Croix de Guerre by the French on April 28, 1918, for bravery in the Battle of Apremont (see page 15). The division was cited and commended by the French and American armies many other times as well. The division served 210 days and suffered 1,587 killed and 12, 077 wounded in action. It was demobilized in May 1919 at Fort Devens.

The following Weston men, and probably others, served in the Yankee Division: Roger Williams Bennett, Bernard Brenoid, Oscar Briggs, Philip Burrage, John Crossley, George William Andrew Hammond, William J. Henderson, Harry Hersum, William Lambert, John Philip Lane, Philip Lockwood, Clifford Lovewell, Richard Mead, Ernest Moore, Lawrence Page, Lucius Manlius Sargent, Harold Stevens, Reginald Stevens, Clifford Swenson, William Vittum, and Lawrence Wyatt.



*Many of the men from Weston served in the 101<sup>st</sup> and 104<sup>th</sup> batallions in the 26<sup>th</sup> Division, which was made up of units from New England and was known as the "Yankee Division. In this illustration, note the "YD" monogram.*





**Harold Frederick Jacobsen** (b. 1887) a Kendal Green resident, was the son of Norwegian immigrants. He graduated from Waltham High School in 1906 and worked as a draftsman before and after the war.

My first impression of the U. S. Army was that it is full of rumors. I quickly decided to believe nothing I heard except official orders. We also learned that we were liable to be one thing today and another tomorrow. The one idea with most of us was to get across, as being in this country with the war over in France seemed like going to a circus and staying outside. But we did not have to wait long before the good news came that we were about to sail to where the real war was going on. It was a wonderful sensation when we found ourselves crossing the Atlantic. It was not all clear sailing however, as our transport was struck by a British Freighter in the Bay of Biscay in the middle of the night. Several of our men were lost but we managed to get into Brest with the boat canted over several degrees. Our "Rest Camp" was not exactly as we had pictured it. Neither was the transportation by rail. . . . But we were at war to end wars so what did we care for a little hardship. It was while riding in one of these "Side Door Pulmans" that I was taken with influenza so I got a free ride in an ambulance. I hated to leave my "outfit" but right here let me give a cheer for the Medical Corps. I was in a machine gun Co. [sic] but I now had a chance to see what the Medical Corps was and the splendid way in which we were cared for. It was some time before I was myself again and in the meanwhile November 11, 1918, had passed and being a casual [sic] I was back to the U.S. about a month later. Only one who has crossed the ocean has a chance to realize its vastness and to gain a greater love for that wonderful country called America. And let me not close without giving a cheer for the American Red Cross.

**William O. Kenney** (b.1888) The son of furniture maker Charles Kenney, William and two of his brothers served in the navy; his other brother was in the army infantry (see page 9). He wrote:

I look back on my service in the U.S. Navy with a great deal of pleasure. We saw some very strenuous service on Escort Duty and experienced some pretty disagreeable times, often being at sea when it was all you could do to keep your feet under you. But the true sailor is an optimist and all the discomforts were forgotten when back in port. The Navy men I came into contact with were fine fellows, both the Regulars and the Reserves. . . .

We took part in no engagements with the Enemy but were under constant mental stress of knowing that we might be attacked by submarines at any moment of day or night when at sea.



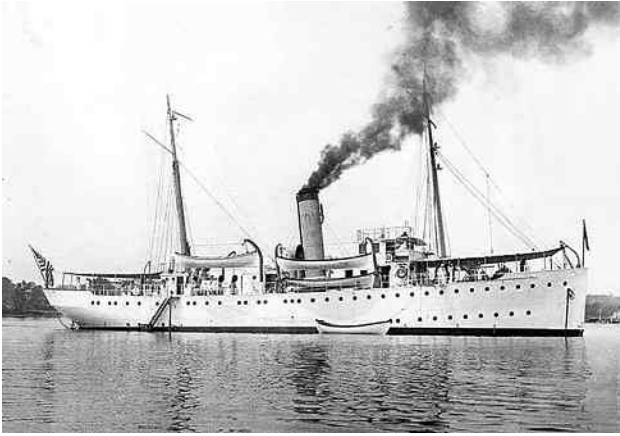
*Travel orders for Naval Ensign William O. Kenney (WHS Collection, gift of Eloise Kenney)*

One very pleasant diversion we had was a trip from Brest to Gibraltar as escort for the *U.S.S. Buffalo*. The duty was just as arduous and hazardous, but we had a pleasure to see Gibraltar and this trip helped break the monotony of our usual routine. But the real thrill came as we weighed anchor on December 11, 1918, for the last time and headed West with home-ward bound Penant [sic] flying to the breeze.

**Charles Ellis Mead** (b. 1895), the son of architect Samuel Mead and his wife Marion, was an ensign in the navy. He wrote:

My entire service, other than a few months of training at the Cadet School, 1<sup>st</sup> Naval District, was spent on 110 ft. U.S SubChasers which were built and equipped for service in hunting German submarines during the war. I crossed to England on one of these vessels in May–June 1918, as Executive officer, and was engaged in patrolling the English Channel, with Plymouth as a base, until after the Armistice. The winter of 1918 to 1919 was spent in cruising along the southwest coast of England. In February I left Plymouth in company with a number of other Chasers, intending to return to the U.S. Upon reaching Lisbon, Portugal, I was detailed, with 8 other Chasers, to go to Archangel, Russia, for operations against the Bolsheviks. Having reached Inverness, Scotland, the expedition was finally abandoned in May 1919, and I eventually returned to the U.S. arriving on August 18, 1919.

I was never engaged in any actual battle with the enemy, tho [sic] on one occasion, in September 1918, I did take part in a submarine chase which lasted most of one night. At that time the submarine was never visible, tho [sic] sounds heard on our listening apparatus indicated that the submarine was close at hand.



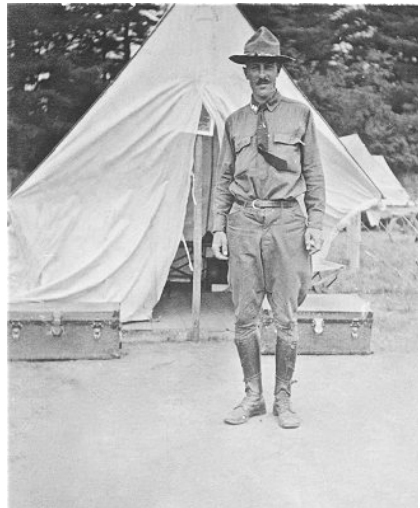
*Coast Guard Cutter U.S.S. Ossipee.*

**Erlon Arthur Merrill** (b.1892) left the service as a chief machinist mate in the navy. From August 1917 to September 1919 he was assigned to the *U.S.S. Ossipee*, stationed in Gibraltar. Built as a Coast Guard cutter, the ship was escorting convoys

of Allied merchantmen between Gibraltar and South England/Wales and once, in Merrill's tenure, to Bizerte and Tunis in Africa. During Merrill's time on the *Ossipee* they escorted 596 merchant vessels. They met with enemy submarine action on ten different occasions; five of these resulted in sinking of five vessels under convoy. One attack against the *Ossipee* itself resulted in the ship dodging the torpedo "by prompt use of helm and engine," with the torpedo passing clear of the stern by less than 30 feet. The sailors never sighted a submarine or any part of one, but there were innumerable false alarms: buoys, barrels, whales, fish, sub-chasers, motor-launches, etc. The *Ossipee* made five attacks with depth charges, dropping sixteen depth charges. The cutter cruised 48,012 miles in the war zone from August 1917 to November 11, 1918, during a time when Germany was conducting ruthless submarine warfare in European waters. In all the *Ossipee* steamed 61,000 miles from April 1917 to February 1919.<sup>11</sup>

**John Donaldson Nichols** (b. 1884) submitted two accounts to the American Legion Post 214, with overlapping information. Both are quoted from below. He ended the war as an infantry captain and aide-de-camp.

Regular course of training at Plattsburgh, and then was placed in command. . . of a company composed of Negroes and Conscientious Objectors. Had lots of trouble as the "C.O's" refused



*The photo of John Donaldson Nichols was attached to the Military Record form that he filled out for the American Legion, Weston Post 214. (Weston Historical Society Collection)*

absolutely to do anything, and the Negros, who were willing hard workers, refused to eat or sleep with those damn poor white trash Conscientious Objectors!

Then was made adjutant of Division Schools 76<sup>th</sup> Division. . . Remained in this position when the outfit got to France except they were then called Base Training Schools. The Division gradually broke up until there were no schools left, so was appointed aide to Maj. Gen Harry I. Hodges and went to live in the beautiful Chateau de Meillant. The night of the Armistice, instead of celebrating in the town, I had to play bridge with the old Marquis & Marquise of the Chateau and my general all evening.

**William Goodwin Renwick** (b. 1886) left the service with the rank of captain, reserve military aviator.

At the outbreak of the War, I was engaged in making certain Experiments in armoured cars and motor machine gun units.

As Captain of Massachusetts National Guard Reserve, at the request of the Adjutant General of Massachusetts National Guard, I entered upon volunteer duty and designed and constructed a light armoured car model, which was submitted to the Board of Ordinance and Fortification at Washington, passed by them and recommended to the Ordinance Department, who are now in possession of specifications and plans.

At the completion of this volunteer tour of duty, I resigned from the National Guard Reserve January 27, 1918 and took commission in the Aviation Section Signal Reserve Corp.

During this time to the date of the armistice most of my time was spent in experimental work on aerial machine guns, aerial gunnery devices and machinery aeroplanes.

**Ralph Fremont Slayton** (b. 1894) left the service as a master signal electrician, Signal Corps Radio.

“A” Company of the 317<sup>th</sup> Field Signal Battalion maintained radio communication for all the divisions of the 5<sup>th</sup> Army Corps . . . This consisted of a station each for the divisions; a meteorological station for the broadcasting of wind velocities and atmospheric pressures for use by the Artillery in correcting ranges. A station on the ground . . . worked with a plane, also equipped with radio, which observed artillery fire and thru us informed



their unit of the effectiveness of their fire, whether short or wide, etc. in their range.

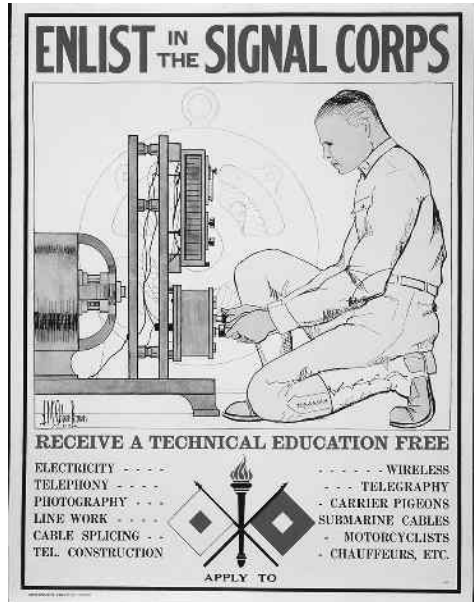
An observation Post station which sent back whatever information concerning German movements which could be deserned [sic] thru glasses. Our best observation post was located in the tower on Mont Faucon. Three goniometer stations which located by triangulation any German station (rdo) (sic) which we could hear. This was very effective in that our locations were very accurate and this was learned by the fact that the station would be absolutely silent after we had divulged the information to our artillery (the 55<sup>th</sup>).

The same station with the same call letters would pop up again in a new location a few miles away in a few days. An intercept station which intercepted and copied all german [sic] cipher for our intelligence section, which did nothing but decipher. A press station which copied press from the United States and posted bulletins in conspicuous places, for the benefit of all American soldiers.

All messages however unimportant were enciphered before sent. The Mohawk code was used and was probably the hardest code of any to decipher. All codes are decipherable.

Radio was a secondary means of communication until such time that telephone lines were disrupted, which was often; as often as heavy shell fire. Up until this time it was used simply for requisitions. After the phone went out, it was used for every bit of communication. It was absolutely accurate, quicker than phone and safer as far as secrecy was concerned. In all my experience, never once did I ever hear of operators not being able to establish communication and get the message off and checked back by the receiving station in less time than it takes you to read the first paragraph on this page.

**Reginald W. Stevens** (see pages 28-32)



*This World War I recruiting poster promoted the educational training offered in the Signal Corps. (Library of Congress)*

**John Joseph Sullivan** (b. 1888) the son of Irish immigrants, left the service in December 1918 as a private. He summarized his army experiences in one sentence: “One meal a day with starvation and cold.”

**William A. Vittum** lived on White Lane (now Brook Road) in the Kendal Green neighborhood. He entered military service in June 1916 and served on the Mexican border that summer and fall (see Part I, Fall 2018, p. 9) and later in Europe. He left the service in November 1918 as a private first class.

What I consider the most important event in my military . . . service in the world war was the “Decoration of the Colors of the 104<sup>th</sup> United States Infantry” by the French government and I am proud to say that I was a member of that regiment.

An extract from the “Stars and Stripes” of May 3, 1918 reads as follows: The award of the ‘Croix de Guerre’ to the 104<sup>th</sup> Infantry en masse. . . For the greatest fighting spirit and self sacrificing during action of April 10, 12, and 13, 1918. Suffering from very heavy bombardments and attacked by very strong German forces, the 104<sup>th</sup> Infantry succeeded in preventing their dangerous advance, and with greatest energy reconquered at the point of a bayonet the five ruined trenches which had to be abandoned at the first onset, at the same time taking prisoners.

This was the first time in history that an American regiment was decorated en masse by an appreciative foreign government.



*On April 29, 2017, the Massachusetts National Guard held a reenactment of the awarding of the Croix de Guerre to the 104th Infantry Regiment, 26th Division, at Apremont Park in Westfield, MA. The 104th was the first foreign unit to receive this award. (Photos from Wikipedia)*

**Harold B. Willis Sr.**  
(see page 17-20)

## *Austin Sherman Hale*



Austin Sherman Hale graduated from Waltham High School in 1899. He worked for 38 years, from the day he graduated, for New England Telephone and Telegraph Company, rising to the position of plant supervisor in several Greater Boston communities.

In World War I, each telephone company in the U.S. sent a battalion to the front. Hale served in the 401st Telegraph Battalion, made up of New England Telephone Company employees who were brought on active duty for the war. They mobilized at Camp Devens in October 1917 and were given instruction in motor cars and semaphore and wig-wag practice (methods of communicating using signal flags), with French lessons in the evening. The war was a period of tremendous change in information technology with the use of semaphores, telegraph, and telephone for combat command and control. The battalion served for 20 months.

What was unique about Austin Hale is the way he facilitated communication and camaraderie among servicemen in both world wars. In World War II, Hale sent out weekly mimeographed letters entitled “Here and There to Show we Care,” (later renamed “Ties with Home” or just “Ties”) filled with news from fellow Weston soldiers. At the request of his World War I battalion members who had read the World War II letters, Hale began sending a letter called “The Link”



*Above: Austin Hale in World War I. Right: Hale in 1957, with his typewriter and photos of the many servicemen who received his letters. (Weston Historical Society Collection)*

every three months to the 180 surviving members of his WWI battalion. In 1949, about 1000 copies of his Christmas poem were mailed out to friends, most of them veterans and some still in the service.

Hall was chairman of the 1950 reunion of the 401st Telegraph Battalion, held at the Ocean House in Swampscott. The following year, reunion participants had a turkey dinner in the cafeteria of the newly opened Weston High School (later Field School and since demolished), followed by a procession of some 30 cars heading for the “World War I and II Gold Star Memorial Boulder” in front of Town Hall. The cavalcade stopped at St. Julia’s Church, where 30 of the men entered for a brief meditation and prayer. Then the group drove to Hale’s home at 19 Jones Road, where pictures were taken for “Telephone Topics.” Later the First Baptist Church Ladies’ Aid Society under the leadership of Gold Star mother Mrs. James W. Hanney put on a baked bean, brown bread, and ham supper topped off with strawberry shortcake.

In December 1961, on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beginning of World War II, Hale, age 81, typed, mimeographed, and mailed the weekly edition of what he was then calling “Ties.”<sup>15</sup> His “boys” celebrated with a surprise party at his nursing home in Waltham.<sup>15</sup> By March 1964, Hale had sent letters for 1140 weeks in a row. The historical society collection includes many years’ worth of these letters, the last dated May 20, 1964.

### ***Harold Buckley Willis Sr.***

Harold B. Willis Sr. (1890 – 1962) had a military career of legend.<sup>16</sup> Willis was born in Boston, attended Newton High School, and graduated from Harvard College, Class of 1912. He was not a part of the Weston community until after the war, when he married Cornelia (“Posey”) Fiske.

Willis enlisted in the American Ambulance Field Service in February 1915 and arrived in France in April that year. He was cited on July 4, 1915, for “rescue of wounded under fire.” In June 1915 he enlisted in the Foreign Legion of the French Army and transferred to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Groupe d’Aviation, where he trained as a fighter pilot. He arrived on the Somme front with the Lafayette Escadrille in March 1917. The medals he won are too numerous to mention.

On August 18, 1917, Lieutenant Willis was shot down behind enemy lines at Verdun. He described the incident this way:

I will tell you how I happened to be the first in the Escadrille to be taken

alive – a dubious distinction. We were protecting a group of bombing planes on a day-light raid some distance in enemy territory. Suddenly we were attacked by a rather energetic patrol of mono-places [Note: a monoplace is a single-seat plane) and a general mix up ensued. One of our planes in front of me was attacked and I was able to ‘crock’ the German – short lived satisfaction. The monoplace was protected by two others which in turn attacked me from behind, riddling my machine. To continue in a straight line was fatal. So I [reversed course] and attacked, my only defense.



*Willis redesigned the insignia for the Lafayette Escadrille, reportedly changing it from a Seminole to a Sioux warrior. (Photo from The Lafayette Flying Corps, Vol.1, 1920, p. 493)*

Immediately, of course, I was separated from our group, which continued. It would not have been so bad had my motor not been touched at the first volley. It worked only intermittently, causing loss of height. We had a wild fight almost to the ground. I did all sorts of stunts to avoid fire in the line of flight. The enemy flew well. We missed collision twice by inches. I was badly raked by cross fire; music of bullets striking motor and cables. Toward the end my wind-shield was shattered and my goggles broken by a ball which slightly stunned me. I had an awful feeling of despair at the thought of the inevitable landing in Germany. As I neared the ground I had an instant's desire to dive into it—saw a wood in front of me, jumped it and landed instinctively on the crest of a hill. One of the Germans flew over me waved his hand, turned and landed followed by his two comrades.

All saluted very politely as they came up—young chaps perfectly correct. My machine was a wreck, thirty bullets in the fuselage motor. . . It was a beautiful machine and had always served me well. Too bad!



The aviators took me to lunch at their quarters where I awaited a motor which took me to a prison in a fortress. One always expects to be either killed or wounded—never taken. So I had left the ground in two sweaters no coat and with no money. Confess I cried like a baby when I was finally alone in my cell. The first three days were terrible. One is not glad to be alive, especially when one wakes, forgets for a moment where one is, and then remembers. Pleasantest are the nights, for one always had vivid dreams of home or the Front. You can understand how wearing it is, to be helpless—a sort of living corpse—when there is need of every one. I try not to think of it.<sup>17</sup>

Willis was interned in ten different prison camps during 14 months in captivity. He wrote “The sanitary conditions are indescribable . . . Villigen is a synonym for filth.” The Germans boasted that it was not possible to escape from Villigen. When the lethal Spanish flu hit, German guards refused to isolate infected prisoners.<sup>18</sup>

After several attempts, Willis, disguised as a German guard, made his escape on October 4, 1918. This plan was accomplished by means of an intricate and coordinated plan reminiscent of the movie *The Great Escape*. Electric lights were short-circuited. With one other prisoner, US Navy Lieutenant Edouard Izac, he crossed the Black Forest mountains, hiding by day and traveling at night by means of a luminous compass, aided by the stars. After a week they swam across the Rhine River to Switzerland.<sup>19</sup> On arriving back in Paris, Willis was awarded the *Medaille Militaire* and permitted to return to the Argonne front. He returned to the U.S. in 1919, after which he was induced to give accounts of his war experiences in various cities across the country.

In May 1920, Willis married Cornelia Horsford Fiske, member of the prominent Fiske family in Weston. Cornelia was the sister of war veteran Gardiner H. Fiske and artist Gertrude Fiske. Her other sister, Hannah Bradford Fiske, had died the previous June after returning from doing relief work in France (see page 24). Willis practiced architecture with the firm of Allen and Collens, later Collens, Willis, and Beckonert. In addition to his own house at 49 Concord Road, his work includes Newton City Hall, Weston High School (later known as Field School and since demolished), Sears Memorial Chapel at First Parish Church, Hammond Castle in Gloucester, the Cloisters in New York City, and buildings at Mt. Holyoke, Springfield College, and Union Theological Seminary.

In 1931, Willis designed the memorial to Charles H. Fiske 3<sup>rd</sup>, son of his wife’s cousin, who had died in World War I (see page 5) The stone memorial with bronze plaque is located at the corner of Boston Post and Concord Roads in Soldier’s Field Park, a triangular piece of land given to the town by the Fiske family in memory of Charles. Willis also designed the Merriam entrance gate to Central Cemetery.

World War I was not the end of Willis's military service. During World War II, he joined the Army Air Force and served with the rank of major in Africa, England, and France. He was released from active duty as a colonel.



*View of French town of Saint-Nazaire brought back to Weston by a World War I soldier. (Weston Historical Society Collection)*

### ***John Crossley: A Soldier's Experience in Europe***

*What was it like for a country boy from rural Weston to arrive in France? Two letters in the WHS collection offer vivid descriptions. Three years after the first 1918 letter, writer John Crossley died from the effects of mustard gas poisoning at about age 20.*

*Crossley was born in 1902 of Irish and Canadian immigrant parents. He lived on Park Road and his father is listed in the 1911 directory as a gardener, probably for one of the estates in the area. The letters were written to his neighbor Alice Tyler Fraser, long-time curator of the historical society, who donated them in 1985.*

*Crossley sailed for Europe in September 1917 as a private in Company 1 of the 104<sup>th</sup> Infantry and returned to the states in August 1918 with other wounded. He writes to Alice from an army hospital, where he was being treated after exposure to mustard gas. Crossley died on November 15, 1921, at Saranac Lake, a destination for health seekers including ex-servicemen. In the first letter, dated November 6, 1918, and written from U.S. General Hospital 16, Crossley describes a village in France:*

Dear Alice,

Your letter came this morning and you don't know how glad I was to hear from you. . .

Yes, at last I have got back from "over there," physically a wreck, but my spirit is not broken by any means. I got gassed in June and was sent back here in August with the rest of the cripples.

I was in France eleven months, five months of which was in the trenches or ditches as we used to call them.

We sailed from Canada, and I had the opportunity of seeing considerable of England in a week we spent there and then across the channel to France.

We had a pretty tough time last winter, being situated in a small village amongst the Vosges Mountains. New England winters haven't anything on the one we spent there.

It was a typical French town, where the people, young and old, wear wooden shoes. A small river ran through the town.

Over the river was a low, arched stone bridge over which ran the only street in the village. By the side of the river was an old fashioned grist mill operated by water power and presided over by a big, burly Frenchman who had the most contented look on his face of any one I've ever seen. He was, I believe, the wealthiest individual in the town.

Directly opposite the mill was the church, where the people of this village assembled on Sunday morning to worship. The church, like the bridge, was built in the early age.

On the other side of the bridge was the village smithy who did all of the shoeing of horses and oxen. This town like every other small hamlet of France, no matter how small, boasted of a school. A rough school it was indeed, much coarser than the little red schoolhouse that you and I attended. [Editor's note: District School #5 on South Ave]

The teacher was an elderly lady, the wife of the town crier, who every time that any official news would come into town would march down the street in his ancient uniform, beating the drum and making lots of noise.

There were only three stores in the town and very little could be bought at any of them. Milk, eggs, butter and cheese could be bought of any of the villagers. I couldn't say the number of inhabitants that this town had, but I know that there wasn't [sic] more than fifty houses occupied.

A thousand of us were billeted in this town for three months before we went into the lines, which were forty miles away. We had some very thrilling experiences after we got in which would fill a book.

*The letter continues with information about various Weston people and closes with the hope that he would be able to see Alice soon. A second letter of November 25 says that he had suffered a relapse and was confined to bed "don't know for how long." The letter talks about celebrations that took place when peace was declared and how that meant that everyone would be coming home soon. In this letter, he describes passing through Paris on his way to the front:*

Coming from Nancy [a city in France] down in Lorraine on our way to Chateau-Thierry [a city in France], we passed through Paris and it certainly is a wonderful city. It reminds a person of one of our own cities with its tall apartments and office buildings and huge cathedrals.

I had the opportunity to go through the two wonderful cathedrals at Soissons, a fairly large city near the front, on the Aisne River. It had some of the most wonderful paintings and marble works in it that I've ever seen, but two weeks later, we were driven back by Fritz [Editor's note: the name Fritz here refers collectively to the German soldiers, who forced the Allies to retreat] and he [the Germans] captured the city. When we retook it in July we found that he had slashed the priceless paintings with knives until they hung in tatters from their frames. He broke all of the marble statues, took the chimes out of the tower, that had called the people to church for over fifty years, and then mined the cathedral so that when they evacuated the city he could blow the place up.

This will probably give you an idea of the kind of war Germany has been waging for over four years, robbing cathedrals and other places of worship, rifling quiet hamlets and murdering innocent women & children.

I am very glad that I had the opportunity to help make this world safe for "Democracy" even if a little bit of Fritz's gas did take a hold over me. I have seen some odd sights in the last year or so; also a few which I wouldn't like to see repeated, but hope that it's over for all times.

## *Weston Women in the Service*

The 1918 *Town Report* lists the following six women who served in World War 1, doing relief or YMCA work overseas or working as a Red Cross nurse at home: Mary Doyle, Gertrude Fiske, Hannah Fiske, Jane W. Gale, Suzanne Z. Johnson, and Marjorie L. McGahan.

*The author would like to thank Madeleine Mullin, Weston's Local History Librarian for her research on these women, using Ancestry.com, FindAGrave, and other internet sites, which link to military records, census records, ship manifests, passport applications, and other sources. The compiled information can be viewed in the Local History Room of Weston Public Library.*

### **Mary Alice Doyle (1889 - 1982)**

*The Waltham Daily Free Press Tribune* of October 3, 1919 reported: "Miss Mary Doyle of Park Road returned from a year and a half spent as a Red Cross nurse at Camp Upton, New York." Doyle was the daughter of immigrants from Ireland. Prior to the war, she worked as a stenographer at a rubber company. She and World War I soldier Edwin Columbus Zuber married in 1926 in Ohio.

### **Jane Loring Winsor Gale (1868 – 1952)**

Jane Winsor Gale (Mrs. Lyman W. Gale), sister of Robert Winsor (see Part I, Fall 2018, page 10), was about fifty when she served for 11 months as a canteen worker for the Y.M.C.A. in various cities in France and for six months as Secretary for the Officers' Club at Tours.<sup>19A</sup> Before the war, she helped found and manage the Toy Theatre in Boston and just a month after returning in February 1919, she managed the Friendly Society production of *The Red Mill*. Her most lasting contribution to Weston was as the driving force behind the founding of the Women's Community League in June 1919 (see page 37).



*Jane Gale is seen here in a detail from the Friendly Society cast photo of the play *The Red Mill*. Just a month before she had returned from war work in France.*



## Hannah Bradford Fiske (1897 - 1919)

Hannah Bradford Fiske, daughter of Andrew and Gertrude Fiske and sister of artist Gertrude Fiske, served in France from November 1917 to April 1919 as a volunteer for the Shurtleff Memorial Relief, which was organized by Mrs. Ernest Shurtleff to provide food, clothing, and furniture to war refugees. Fiske did transportation and delivery work and took charge of maintaining the organization's automobiles. She also worked at the American Red Cross Post Office Department.<sup>19B</sup>

A child of privilege, Hannah grew up in Boston and Weston, where the family had a country home on Concord Road. She was president of the Class of 1915 at Winsor School; and in that role, it was Hannah who gave the School lamp, "emblem of light and learning" to the head of the class to follow.<sup>19C</sup>

Hannah made her debut in 1915 and was a member of the Vincent Club and treasurer of the Boston Sewing Circle.<sup>19D</sup> For her debutante daughter, Mrs. Andrew Fiske gave a tea at their Commonwealth Avenue home, which was decorated with pink roses. Hannah wore white satin and carried a bouquet of lilies of the valley and roses.<sup>19E</sup> *The Waltham Daily Free Press Tribune* contains announcements of a tea and dinner dance given for Miss Fiske and a luncheon she hosted for the Sewing Circle.<sup>19F</sup>

Hannah Fiske left for France in October 1917. Soon after her return in 1919, she was hospitalized and a few weeks later died of spinal meningitis at age 22.

Newspaper obituaries praised her dedication: "Miss Fiske had done much good work in attending to the needs of refugees, and she devoted herself unsparingly to the work to which she had volunteered her services."<sup>19G</sup>

## Suzanne Johnson (1890 – 1937)

Suzanne Johnson was born in Nahant and in the 1910s lived on Old Road in Weston with her sister Edith Johnson



*Hannah Fiske is seen here working in France for the Shurtleff Memorial Relief (photo c. 1917-19 from nicokubel blogspot)*



*As secretary of the National War Work Council of the Y.M.C.A., Suzanne Johnson served for 15 months in France and Germany. See page 26 for one of her letters home.*

Paine and her family. On December 8, 1918 she was appointed secretary of the National War Work Council of the Y.M.C.A. of the United States for 15 months' service with the American Expeditionary Forces (A.E.F.) in France and German. This was after the Armistice but before the peace settlement, and A.E.F. troops were occupying parts of Germany including Coblenz. Johnson served as a dance instructor from January 17, 1919 to July 22, 1919. On her return to Weston, she married Karl Kenney, son of school furniture manufacturer Ralph Kenney, and settled in Wayland.

See next page for a letter from Suzanne Johnson describing her war experiences.

### **Gertrude Fiske**

Gertrude Fiske's listing in the *Town Report* is puzzling. Both the artist and her mother shared this name, and neither is documented to have gone overseas. See Part 1, Fall 2018, p. 17-18 and 42-43 for information about the contributions of the artist and her family to the war effort.

### **Marjorie McGahan**

In researching this article, no information was found about Marjorie McGahan.

DESCRIPTION OF APPLICANT.

Age: 27 years      Height: 5' 10"      Build: Slender  
 Sex: Female      Eyes: Blue      Hair: Chestnut Brown  
 Complexion: Fair  
 Distinguishing marks: None

IDENTIFICATION.

I, Frank H. Palmer, solemnly swear that I am a [ ] citizen of the United States; that I reside at Weston, Massachusetts; that I have known the above-named Suzanne Johnson personally for 18 years and know [ ] to be a native citizen of the United States; and that the facts stated in [ ] affidavit are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Frank H. Palmer  
 Mayor (Member of Bar, U.S. Court  
 Weston, Mass.)

Sworn to before me this 22 day of December, 1918.


(Notary)  
Frank H. Palmer  
 Mayor of the City of Weston, Massachusetts

Applicant desires passport to be sent to the following address:  
2 Queen St. 2<sup>nd</sup> Fl.  
N.Y.C.

Home Address: Weston, Mass.

A duplicate of the photograph attached to the original application must be placed in the space marked below.

RECEIVED  
 2148  
 DEC 23 1918  
 A.P.



Suzanne Johnson

## Suzanne Johnson: The Dancing Unit

*Letter from Suzanne Johnson, probably to Anna Hall; written from Le Mans, France, March 6, 1919 (WHS Collection)*

Dear Anna,

I am in the dancing unit and they call us everything – flying squadron seems to be the name that sticks—We go out to the different Divisions and dance all afternoon and evening. It may sound like a cinch but believe me, it's hard work. A dance over here is quite different from one in the States. First of all the boys wear their only shoes, which are hobnails, and if you ever get kicked or stepped on with one of those you're a cripple for life. Naturally we wear our heaviest shoes too.

I thought I could never dance with heavy shoes but you never know what you can do until you live in France. Often times we

dance in tiny dimly lit halls with wooden floors or in places with stone floors. Sometimes it's a tent with a wooden floor much covered with mud. So you see there are difficulties that must be overlooked.

While we danced every night and one afternoon last week, we really didn't begin our regular schedule until last Monday when we went out to Coulaus[?] to the 84<sup>th</sup> Div. The officers entertain us and usually double up on their billets so that we can have decent places to sleep. We have dinner with the officers—probably you picture a marvelous place and dinner. There were about four tables in the room and each table had one candle on it. That was all the illumination in the room. Of course there were many drawbacks but everyone is so delighted to see a bunch of "Honest-to-God-American Girls" appear on the scene that all drawbacks are forgotten.

After dinner we went over to a little hotel and danced with the men from 7 – 9 and the Col [Colonel] took us in his car to a marvelous chateau where the Count and Countess -- delightful elderly people received us and we danced with the officers until 11 . . . .

The next day I was laid up with indigestion but the other girls were shipped to two different towns for afternoon and evening dances with more men and officers of the 85<sup>th</sup>. Yesterday we were shipped to Domfront to another part of the Div[ision]. and we danced from 2:30 – 4:30 with the men, 7 – 9 with the men and 9 – 10:30 with the officers, then the officers gave us a little supper and sent us home to Le Mans. We get sent all over the country in everything—coal trucks, ambulances, Fords and occasionally real cars.

. . . we expect to be here in this area only about three more weeks. . . Then we go back to Paris and get whatever we need and go up to Coblenz. That will be our headquarters and we'll go out from there to the different camps. Everyone says that's a regular place with running water and all the comforts of home. Believe me, you don't have to live long in France before you do appreciate all the comforts that you left at home.

It is most interesting to see how people live over here. The family and all the animals live as close together as possible. That is strange to civilized Americans. The houses are damp—have almost a death-like chill in fact.

However it's an experience I wouldn't miss for worlds. My one regret is that I am not twenty people with at least 100 hands. The boys are a bunch of homesick children and you just wish you could do everything for them. They are so grateful for a smile and we almost break our faces smiling all the time. They certainly do appreciate us and worship us. The little orderly I had at Coulous kept my fire going all the time and wanted to bring me food all the time, for the mess sergeant sent over word that if there was anything in the world I wanted to eat I could have it since the American girls were so good to come down.

Anyone who has never been here cannot imagine what the little towns are like. They are so unlike even the most rural parts of the states and conditions are so different. The people seem to be busy all the time but they just travel around in the same little circles that their grandparents did before them and seem absolutely content. This irritates the progressive American, of course. However they've borne the brunt of this fearful nightmare so I suppose that we'll have to give them their due credit.

I shall be glad when all the boys are safely back home and I hope they will all be "Toot-sweet." I think they are going to amuse all the home folks with their French expressions.

*Many thanks to Virginia Wright for transcribing the letter and researching Suzanne Johnson.*



*This photograph is one of the many items in Corporal Stevens's trunk. Because it is not labeled, there is no way to know whether this is Stevens or one of his fellow dispatch riders. (Stevens trunk collection, WHS)*

### ***Corporal Stevens's Trunk: A World War I Time Capsule***

Reginald William Stevens (1894 – 1972), the son of English immigrants, was 22 years old and working as an electrician at the Edison Electric Illuminating Co in Waltham when he enlisted in June 1917. He was assigned to the 101<sup>st</sup> Supply Truck Train, 26<sup>th</sup> Division, France, and rose to the rank of corporal. According to a *Waltham Daily Free Press Tribune* article of April 11, 1919, Stevens was a dispatch rider and was wounded twice, once by a piece of shrapnel and “once when his jaw was broken in a motor cycle accident which occurred when he was making record speed in delivering a dispatch.” He spent time in an English hospital. Corporal Stevens participated in nine battles and engagements, according to a military record sheet.<sup>20</sup>

The April 1919 newspaper report noted that Stevens's mother was one of those who “went down the harbor” on the *Machignonne*, the “Mothers' Boat,” to meet the incoming *U.S.S. Mt. Vernon* (see photo page 33). According to the article, out of the vast throng of soldiers she was able to find the face of her son even before the liner docked.<sup>21</sup>



Stevens's trunk was shipped back to Weston, where it was put in storage and later donated to the Weston Historical Society. Beginning on the next page are descriptions of some of the many items—from a gas mask to a French phrase book—found in this World War I “time capsule.”

AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCES  
QUARTERMASTER CORPS, SALVAGE DIVISION  
BAGGAGE SERVICE

Pkg. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Contents \_\_\_\_\_

Vessel \_\_\_\_\_

Name, Rank & Organisation \_\_\_\_\_

U. S. Address *Reginald Wm Stevens  
Warren Avenue Weston Mass.*

STOW IN HOLD  
NOT WANTED ON VOYAGE

What can we tell from these objects? Soldiers were encouraged to learn at least simple French (the French phrase book) and to understand the area (the pocket guidebook to Saint Malo published by the Y.M.C.A.) The pocket size hymn and prayer book and the “Daily Portion” New Testament were published for and distributed to soldiers. Corporal Stevens saved the “Order of Dance” from a Christmas Eve party and the menu from a fancy hotel. He saved humorous communications like the “weakly” newsletter “The Gas Shell” and humorous poems circulated among the soldiers (“The Soldiers Prayer,” p. 32).



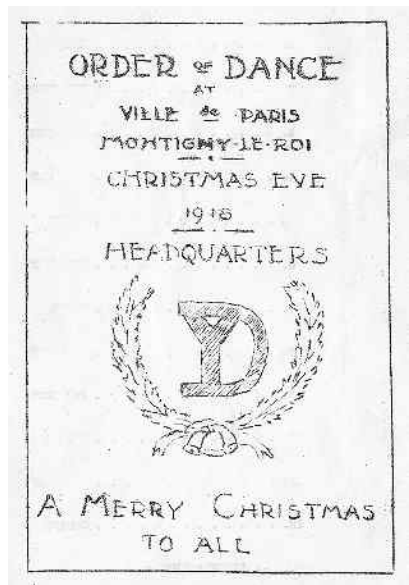
*Army authorities estimated that of the young men applying for enlistment prior to the war, one-fifth were syphilitic. This image is on the cover of an information booklet published by the War Department. (Stevens trunk collection, WHS)*

Also in the trunk was a booklet published by the War Department, which was concerned about the spread of venereal disease back home. In addition to information about symptoms and treatment, the military wanted the men to know that most infected soldiers brought these diseases to Europe from back home:

“ . . . Most of those who were treated for these diseases in the army, while we were at war with Germany, got them before they came to camp. Only about fifteen men out of every hundred treated got them after coming to camp. It cost the Government \$10,000,000 for treatment in the army and navy during the war.”



- Pocket guide “Plan Commode de Paris,” with alphabetical listing of roads and corresponding Metro stations.
- The “‘Daily Portion’ New Testament, with short Introductory Notes and the Chapters divided to promote the habit of Daily Reading” sold by Scripture Gift Mission and Naval and Military Bible Society, 15 Strand, London W.C. Pocket size, with 318 pages in small print and a tan canvas cover with the words “Active Service 1917.”
- Hymns and Prayers for the Use of the Army and Navy (Boston and New York, Houghton Mifflin Company), pocket size, published in August 1917 “to provide hymns familiar to all, [and] readings from the Bible which bring the message most needed in the life of soldiers and sailors. . .”
- Pamphlet on Venereal Disease, “When You Go Home—take this book with you,” published for distribution by the War Department, Commission on Training Camp Activities. The message: “You have won the war against autocracy. The fight against venereal disease—as base a hypocrite, as foul a murderer as any Hun—has only begun.”
- The Gas Shell” published WEAKLY [sic] by THE HARD WORKING BUNCH, Headquarters Vint-Sees Division (mimeographed humor newsletter).
- 8.5 X 11” sheet of paper, folded, “Order of Dance” at Ville de Paris, Montigny-Le-Roi, Christmas Eve, 1918, Headquarters, A Merry Christmas to All.” Inside, the order of the 24 dances, alternating Waltz, “One Step,” and Fox Trot.
- Business card from the Grand Hotel du Prince Eugene in Paris.
- Armee Americaine Permission, Quart de Tarif, December 3, 1918, permission for seven days leave for Corporal Stevens to visit La Bourboule.



*(Left page) Unidentified photo and St. Malo guide from Reginald Stevens’s trunk. (Right page) Stevens must have enjoyed this Christmas Eve 1918 dance, held just after the Armistice was signed. He saved the “Order of Dance.” (Stevens trunk collection, WHS)*



- Fancy menu for a restaurant at the Grand Hotel des Ambassadeurs in La Bourboule, Signed by Arthur Wilkie and R.W. Stevens on December 8, 1919.

- Ticket for the Second Seating at Mess No. 48 on the R.M.S. *Saxonia*

**US-made objects:** gas mask with instructions on its correct use, shell casing dated November 1915, American rifle cartridge, artillery fuse, timer, camp inflatable pillow, holder for shaving items, flask, glass, with woven grass covering.

**German-made objects:** cartridge box worn on belt, matchbox holder, military phone, canteen.

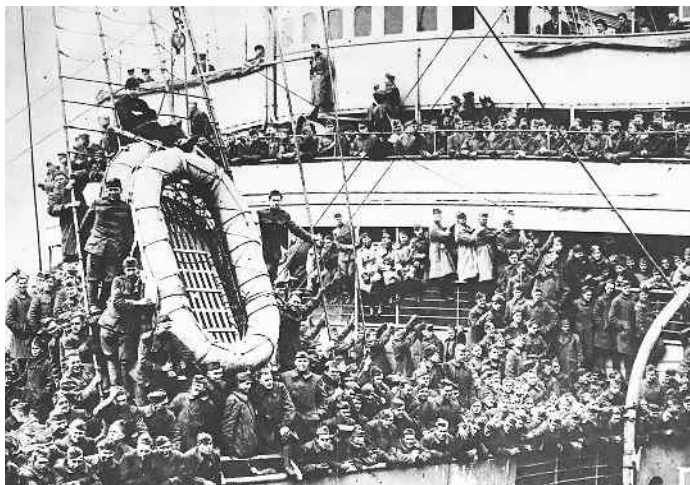
*For identification of the objects in the Stevens trunk, the author would like to thank Weston resident Andrew Tabak, who volunteers at the Fort Devens Museum. Incorporated in 2000, the museum is a private, non-profit organization that collects, preserves, and shares artifacts and stories that tell the history of Camp Devens and Fort Devens from 1917 to the present.*

The Soldier's Prayer

Our Father who art in Washington  
 Honored by thy name  
 Give us this day  
 Our long delayed pay  
 And forgive the bugler, the mess sergeant  
 and all who wear bars,  
 And lead us por into the Army of Occupation  
 And deliver us from the Fatigue Squad.  
 For thine is the Army, the M.P.'s. and the Q.M.'s.  
 And the Field Clerks, forever and ever.

Ahi Ouil

*One of three typewritten parodies found in the trunk of Col. Reginald Stevens.*



*The U.S.S. Mt. Vernon with soldiers returning from the front. (Library of Congress, *The War of the Nations: Portfolio in Rotogravure Etchings*)*

## Part V: After the War

### *Soldiers and Sailors Return Home*

After four years of bloody stalemate along the western front, the entrance of America's well-supplied forces into the conflict marked a major turning point in the war and helped the Allies to victory. When the war finally ended, more than two million American soldiers had served on the battlefields of Western Europe, and some 50,000 had lost their lives.

On Monday morning, November 11, the church bells of Weston rang out the glad tidings of peace, beginning at four o'clock and continuing throughout the day.<sup>22</sup>

The next morning, a service of thanksgiving was held at First Parish Church, with three Weston pastors participating. A large number was present, according to newspaper reports, which also noted that many Grange members skipped their regular meeting to go to the Victory parade in Waltham.<sup>23</sup> A Union thanksgiving service took place on November 27.

It took months before the soldiers and sailors returned. A newspaper article in May 1919 reported that of the 147 Weston men in the service, 79 had been discharged but only 37 had returned.<sup>24</sup> A Welcome Home celebration was planned for Memo-



rial Day. Invitations were issued to the returned servicemen and their relatives. The men were requested to wear their uniforms, and a large welcome home flag hung from town hall.<sup>25</sup>

### *The War Memorial: “Strength and Simplicity”*

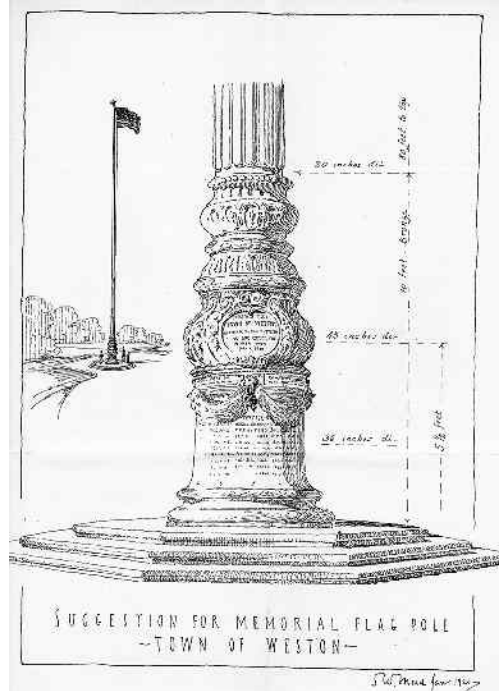
The 1919 *Town Report* includes the report of a committee tasked with choosing a fitting memorial to the World War I soldiers. Architect Harold Graves, chairman, described their initial idea:

After looking into the various forms which memorials of this character were taking, your Committee voted that a well-designed flagpole with a substantial base would be a beautiful and dignified form of expression.<sup>26</sup>

The committee consulted with Samuel W. Mead, another local architect, who submitted a design for a flagpole 90 feet high and 20 inches in diameter. The proposed 10-foot-high base of cast bronze would have suitable space for inscriptions and lettering at proper height for reading. A series of three granite steps would surround the base. No definite site was selected. The estimated cost was \$13,000.<sup>27</sup>

The following year, the committee recommended the erection of a simple Memorial Flagpole in front of Town Hall, with a boulder near the base. A bronze tablet on the boulder would bear the names of the men who lost their lives in the war. They also recommended that two bronze plaques be placed in the Town Hall auditorium with the names of all who served.<sup>28</sup>

*This drawing by Weston resident and architect Samuel W. Mead was included with the 1919 Town Report. The committee ultimately chose a less expensive memorial.*





The flagpole, boulder, and tablet were in place for dedication on Memorial Day 1921, and the two tablets inside were dedicated on Memorial Day 1922. The total cost was \$5,296.<sup>28A</sup>

More elaborate ideas, such as building a memorial “Community House” with gymnasium, Scout meeting rooms, and an up-to-date swimming pool reflected recreational needs not met until years later.



*The flagpole, boulder, and bronze tablet were all dedicated on Memorial Day 1921. (Photo by Pam Fox)*

At the March Town Meeting in 1921, the town voted to accept the gift of a 1.25-acre triangular piece of land bounded by Boston Post Road, Fiske Lane, and Concord Road, to be used as a “Public Park and Recreation Ground.”<sup>29</sup> The Report of the Park Commissioners for 1921 says that the park was a gift from the heirs of Augustus H. Fiske and was to be called Soldiers Field. The monument in memory of Second Lieutenant Charles Henry Fiske 3<sup>rd</sup> was designed by Harold B. Willis Sr. and erected by the family a decade later. The inscription on the tablet reads: “He trained and served in many lands to find at last a death in France.”

In 1953, the Weston War Memorial Educational Fund, a scholarship for post-secondary education, was established as a memorial to citizens of Weston who served in the Armed Forces in all wars.

## *Razing the Old Town Hall*

After the new Town Hall was completed in 1917, improvements were made to the 1848 Town Hall so that it could be used for war relief work. The American Red Cross, American Fund for the French Wounded, and Weston Branch of the Special Aid Society each held weekly work sessions there on different days of the week. Even after the armistice, volunteers continued to meet to knit, sew and make surgical dressings. (See Part I, Fall 2018, p. 37 – 40)

In mid-March 1919, the French Wounded held a luncheon there to mark the end of regular meetings. Ninety-one workers were seated at tables for a “delightful menu . . . of creamed chicken in patty shells. . .” The tables were decorated with the French national colors, and vases of yellow daffodils “gave a brilliant touch of color to the room.” For her untiring efforts, Anna Hall was presented with three bouquets: roses, violets, and a patriotic mix of red, white, and blue flowers.<sup>30</sup>

Six months later, a newspaper article noted that, although regular meetings to sew for the French Wounded had been discontinued, articles were still being forwarded to France. Knitted garments and children’s clothing were still needed by the refugees “who even now are in great want in many sections of the country despite the cessation of hostilities.” Yarn for knitting could be obtained from Anna Hall.<sup>31</sup>

In April 1919, in anticipation of the razing of the old Town Hall the building was “thoroughly examined by an expert on the extermination of rats, and under his instructions the place has been carefully ridden of these pests.”<sup>32</sup> The removal of the building shortly thereafter opened up a view from the library across the Common to the new Town Hall.



*The present Town Hall at the left in this photo, completed in 1917, was located across the newly created Town Green. The Old Town Hall, built in 1848, was left standing until 1919 to provide a location for war relief work and other war-related activities. (Weston Historical Society Collection)*



*This postcard is the only known image of the Willow Plate Tea Room, created by the newly formed Women's Community League. The tea room operated from 1919 to 1921. (Weston Historical Society Collection)*

## Women's Community League Celebrates 100th Anniversary

One outgrowth of World War I was the founding of the Women's Community League, which is celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its founding in 1919. The first organizational meeting took place at the home of Mrs. Francis Blake on Orchard Avenue on June 5, 1919.<sup>33</sup> Jane Gale (Mrs. Lyman Gale) was the first president, from 1919 to 1921 (see photo p. 23). The following is a later recollection of how the league came about:

The Women's Community League of Weston had its impetus in the Old Town Hall around the tables where the women worked for the Red Cross one day a week, and for the French Wounded on another; and in the Canning Kitchen where they conserved the vegetables from their Victory Gardens. Here they talked about what a good thing it was that women from all organizations and from all parts of town worked together for a common cause. With the World War drawing to a close the workers realize how much they would miss this friendly cooperation. With certain vigorous and idealistic women as leaders, they organized for service to the town. . .<sup>34</sup>

Agnes Fitzgerald, the first recording secretary, recalled: "Jane Gale . . . , I am sure was the prime mover but I expect that Alice Jones was a close second. The idea was that we must keep up the cooperation learned during the war and carry on the work of Weston women. . ."<sup>35</sup>

## *Willow Plate Tea Room*

One of the league's first acts was to open the "Willow Plate Tea Room" in a remodeled barn that is now Cambridge Trust, at 494 Boston Post Road. Members did the painting and decorating, and the tea room opened on July 14, 1919, "as a meeting place and convenience for the people of the town, for luncheon and tea and for the purchase of cake, pie, bread etc., and also of the increasing business from automobilists driving through Weston." Baked goods were sold on consignment and "some of the consigners are already receiving checks for more than 10 dollars a week . . ." <sup>36</sup>

A glass showcase held fancy work on consignment and a second case displayed food for purchase. Walls were painted a clear blue, and curtains of Chinese blue and white matched the willow pattern china purchased from a Boston store. Assorted Winsor chairs surrounded five round dining tables covered with tablecloths of the same blue and white material as the curtains. House specialties were hot rolls, doughnuts, and orange layer cake. The Tea Room was not financially successful and closed some two years later. <sup>37</sup>

## *WCL: 1919 to 1945*

By the summer of 1919, the league had started Tuesday night "community sings," Thursday night dancing classes, and Saturday night dances as part of its goal to strengthen community spirit and "the social interests of the Town." <sup>38</sup> Dances were held in the Town Hall from 8 to 11, with two league hostesses. According to newspaper accounts, the committee invited "young and old." "Informal, simple dress" was requested and "a conservative style of dancing is required." <sup>39</sup>

A festive event at Town Hall on October 18, 1919, presented the league's accomplishments in the first four months. By that time, the group had a reported 225 members. The *Waltham Daily Free Press Tribune* described the evening:

. . . the Lower Town Hall [see page 40] in Weston was crowded full and overflowing Saturday evening . . . Every one present – men, women and children – praised the League and gave their hearty support. . . Harold Cole's orchestra of six pieces opened the meeting with a rousing overture, and "America" was sung. . . Mr. Humphrey lead in some very snappy singing of some of the best of the wartime songs for the home and camp . . . [Selectman] B. Loring Young . . . was so cordial and expressed such high hopes for its success and usefulness that every women there was fired afresh with enthusiasm and consecrated anew her determination to make the League an instrument for furthering of Happiness and Welfare in the Community. <sup>40</sup>

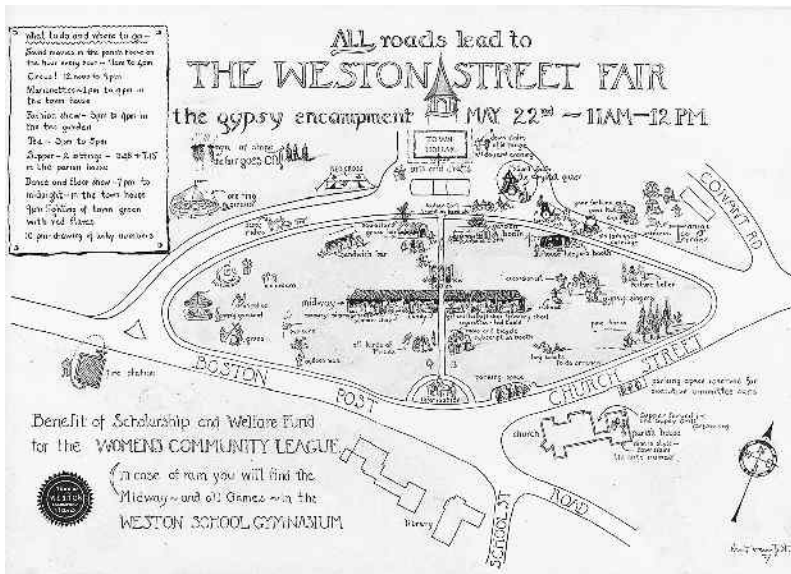
Annual meeting luncheons were held every year at Town Hall or Weston Golf Club, at least through the mid-1950s.

Early in its history, WCL established an Education Committee to plan regular lecture series on a wide variety of topics including travel, current events, and books.



An Art and Music Committee planned afternoon musicales. Special events and fundraisers included Christmas dances, Children’s Christmas parties, Fashion Shows, a Street Fair and “gypsy encampment,” Gay Nineties Dance, Spring Bazaar, theatrical performances, and “Country Dancing on the Green”, which began in 1949 and continued for many years.

In the mid-1920s, the league began furnishing milk to needy school children. In 1929, it made an offer to the School Committee to pay for half the cost of equipment needed to start a school lunch program. For a year, league members provided lunch to more than 200 children every day, with some assistance from volunteer



(Above) Marion Perry Kenney dressed as a gypsy for the May 1937 Weston Street Fair, “a gypsy encampment.” The days’ schedule began with a circus and continued with marionettes, a fashion show, tea, supper with two seatings, a dance and floor show, and 9 pm lighting of Town Green with red flares. (WHS Collection, gift of Eloise Kenney); (Below) Street Fair promotional drawing by Weston artist Henry Davenport. (Weston Historical Society Collection)









*The Chrysanthemum Ball was a black tie dinner dance held for many years in November at Pine Brook Country Club. (1975 invitation, Weston Historical Society Collection)*

England) inherited the Josiah Smith Tavern (then known as the Jones House or Jones Tavern) on the death of the second Jones sister. The Town leased the house and began raising restoration funds. In 1952, the Women's Community League donated \$2,000 toward the \$15,000 that the Weston Tavern Committee needed for the work.<sup>49</sup> In 1953, WCL minutes report that two rooms were being renovated for the exclusive use of the Children's Exchange. Local

architect Marjorie Pierce helped with the architectural details.<sup>50</sup> The rest of the house was to be used for town offices, committee rooms, party rooms, work rooms, and "archives for our historical treasures."<sup>51</sup>

A report in the minutes by Mary Elizabeth Winsor noted: "We are proud that the Women's Community League was the first organization to back up its approval with hard cash. . ." The president, Mrs. C. Richard Soderberg, was credited with "seeing and seizing the opportunity to sparkplug this unique contribution to town life."<sup>52</sup>

The Community League Garden Club was founded in 1953 and has been responsible for many town beautification projects including the JST tavern and barn garden, high school garden, and Fiske memorial garden. Other interest groups have included Book Clubs, Bridge, Sociables, Newcomers, Antiques Appreciation, and Juniors. For many years, the Chrysanthemum Ball at Pine Brook Country Club was the major social and fundraising event.

### ***1974-76: Restoring "The Barn"***

In 1974 S.P.N.E.A. expressed concern that heavy use of the tavern on Clothing Exchange days was taking a toll on the historic building.<sup>53</sup> It was suggested that the barn and connecting wing be converted into a facility to house the exchange and provide space for WCL social and educational meetings and luncheons. At the time, the barn was being use for storage of cemetery maintenance equipment and other town items. The league had accumulated about \$40,000 in reserve funds, and



*1963 photo of a Women's Community League Tea. (Weston Historical Society Collection)*

creating a headquarters seemed a suitable use. Polly Germeshausen, who chaired the renovation, was determined that the project would be the league's contribution to the 1976 U.S. Bicentennial.<sup>54</sup> Longtime WCL member and architect Marjorie Pierce drew up the plans.

The complicated project required approvals from both the Town and S.P.N.E.A. Mrs. Germeshausen obtained a state grant of \$10,000 from funds allocated for Bicentennial projects of a permanent nature.<sup>55</sup> The barn and connector required extensive structural repairs. Septic requirements had to be met, and electricity and water had to be brought in from Boston Post Road. A glass wall installed behind the sliding barn door brought light into the rooms but could be closed to restore the building to its original appearance. The kitchen, rest rooms, and exit stairs were constructed so that changes were "reversible," as required by S.P.N.E.A.<sup>56</sup>

The necessary work cost \$10,000 more than available funds; the extra was borrowed from members on notes of 6%. Mrs. Germeshausen donated 100 chairs. "The Barn" was dedicated with an open house on September 14, 1975.<sup>57</sup> Rent-



*League president Regina Hajjar greets Santa and some of the many children enjoying last December's WCL Winter Festival. (Photo by Pam Fox)*

als for meetings and events have provided additional income since that time.

## *The Women's Community League Today*

Under current president, Regina Hajjar, WCL organized the hugely successful Winter Festival on the Town Green in December 2018. Hundreds of residents enjoyed music, children's crafts and games, cookie decorating, "Polar Express" train rides, marshmallow roasting, a visit from Santa, and the festive tree lighting.

In 2019, its 100th year, Weston's oldest community service organization is facing a major challenge: the planned closing of the Josiah Smith Tavern for restoration. Design and engineering work are underway, under the guidance of the Friends of the JST. The vote to use Community Preservation Act funds for construction will take place at the Fall 2019 Town Meeting. Restoration is expected to take two years. When the building reopens, WCL will rent space on the first floor of the tavern as well as a small second floor office..

As the league's second century begins, Hajjar expressed confidence in the future:

The Women's Community League has adapted to change and evolved throughout the past 100 years. We will continue to grow and carry on the WCL mission to provide social, philanthropic, and educational benefits to the Weston community.

## *A Century of Contributions*

In 2018, WCL Treasurer Mary Ann Riordan went through a 100 years of minutes and documents and compiled this record of more than \$1 million in contributions to Weston organizations and scholarships and prizes for Weston High School students.

### **Donations to Community**

Weston Public Schools \$9,952  
Council on Aging \$11,311  
Town of Weston \$21,159  
Weston Fire Department \$6,100  
Weston Police Department \$9,065  
Weston Public Library \$36,558  
Josiah Smith Tavern & Barn \$110,588  
Other Donations \$43,789  
**TOTAL \$248,524**

### **Scholarships and Prizes**

Recorded Scholarships \$415,195  
Prizes \$47,351  
Camperships \$15,787  
Estimated missing-year scholarships  
\$340,000  
**TOTAL \$818,333**  
  
**Grand Total**  
\$248,524 + \$818,333 = \$1,066,856



## **Weston Post No. 214, American Legion Inc.**

*This article is based on “Weston Post, No. 214, American Legion, Inc. Post History” written by Harry Jones in 1951 and updated by Jones in 1998 when the Weston Post was dissolved. Jones was a veteran of World War II and Post Commander from 1957 to 1959. In 2013, Jean Jones donated the American Legion Auxiliary bell to the Weston Historical Society, along with Harry Jones’s Legion cap and Past Commander pin.*

### ***Founding of the American Legion and Weston Post No. 214***

Another outgrowth of the war was an important national organization, the American Legion, which evolved from a group of war-weary World War I veterans into one of the most influential nonprofit groups in the United States. After initial meetings in Paris in the spring of 1919, the American Legion was chartered by Congress on September 16, 1919, as a patriotic veterans organization assisting veterans, service members, and communities. Membership grew swiftly to over one million, and local posts sprang up across the country.

One of these was Weston Post No. 214. On September 17, 1919, the day after passage of the Congressional charter, William J. Henderson called a meeting of 34 Weston veterans at Town Hall.<sup>58</sup> After an address by a representative from the Legion State Headquarters, Gardiner H. Fiske moved that an American Legion Post be formed in Weston. The motion carried unanimously. There were 69 char-

ter members.

At a second meeting, the following men were elected as officers: Commander, Lawrence B. Page; Vice-Commander, William J. Henderson; Adjutant, Roger W. Bennett; Finance Officer, Austin S. Hale; Historian, Lawrence M. Wyatt; Chaplain, William M. Bartlett. In the 1931-32 year, the post was incorporated under the laws of Massachusetts as “Weston Post No. 214, American Legion, Inc.”

Lawrence B. Page (1887–1945) the first commander, has been described as “truly a pioneer in the founding of Post 214, and led by his enthusiasm and inspiration, a strong foundation was laid which has since helped to successfully carry us over periods of instability.”<sup>58A</sup> As a Captain in World War I, Page commanded Batteries B and D of the 102<sup>nd</sup> Artillery Regiment, 26<sup>th</sup> Division, and was awarded the Croix de Guerre and additional citations. During World War II, he served as lieutenant colonel with the engineers of the State Guard.

### *Proposals for a “Community House”*

In the years immediately after the war, there was discussion of building a Community House in Weston as a war memorial and headquarters for Post 214. This idea was brought up periodically over the next decades but never enacted. Post 214 meetings were held at Town Hall or Weston Golf Club, where they often included a social component such as bowling, whist, moving pictures, and speakers.

In 1930-31, plans for a clubhouse were drawn up by World War I veteran and architect Harold B. Willis and received unanimous approval. The Jones sisters, owners of what we now call the Josiah Smith Tavern, offered the post, without charge, a parcel of land for the proposed clubhouse, with the provision that the post take necessary legal action to prevent the land from ever falling into the hands of the State or National Departments of the Legion. In his history, Harry Jones writes: “For various reasons, it was decided not to accept the land offered for our clubhouse, and the Jones sisters were so advised with our thanks.”

### *Community Service and Social Events*

Weston Post 214, an all-male organization, and the Women’s Community League were similar in their focus on service and strengthening community bonds through social and educational programs. Both organizations raised funds to enhance school services and provide scholarships for Weston students. In the early





*In 1934, Weston Post 214 presented the English play Journey's End. Because the subject is a major battle on the English front, the uniforms are English. Most of the cast members were World War I veterans from Weston. (Back row, l-r) George Hammond, Gordon Grant, Herbert Crouch, Dudley Ranney, Edward "Ned" Thayer, Lawrence Page; (Middle row) John Scott, William O. Kenney, Cliff Pearce; (Sitting on table) J. Donaldson Nichols; (Sitting) L. Manlius Sargent, Arthur Havilland. (Weston Historical Society Collection)*

1930s, through the efforts of Post 214 members, a dental clinic was installed in the Weston schools. In 1939-40, Post 214 worked with high school alumni to raise money to purchase sweaters for the Weston High School football team. In 1944, the post decided to sponsor a Junior Legion Baseball program and obtain uniforms. In the early 1950s, they contributed toward purchase of uniforms for the high school band. In 1945-46, the Boosters Club was formed by members of Post 214, with Commander Wilmot Whitney as first president and Legion member Harold W. Martin as first treasurer.<sup>59</sup>

Like the Women's Community League, Post 214 regularly sponsored theatricals and concerts to raise money for community service and scholarships. One of the most successful was the 1934 production of *Journey's End*. This play, first produced in England in the late 1920s, takes place on the English front lines just before and during the major German attack of March 21, 1918. Most of the 11 cast members were Weston World War I veterans.<sup>60</sup>

Also in 1934, the post sponsored a Masquerade Ball, a mid-winter tradition that evolved into a Washington's Birthday Ball. Decorations at Town Hall took on themes like the circus, "country store," and Roaring Twenties. In later years, the Washington's Birthday dance evolved into "The No Dance Dance," with contri-



butions solicited and the total amount going to the Scholarship Fund.

The post history includes a year-by-year account of the many community events as well as member events such as yearly outings to the Winsor estate in Cataumet or to Lawrence Page's camp in Marshfield for camping and fishing.

As the country entered the worst depression in its history, many Weston families lacked clothing, fuel, and food. Quietly, and "even unknown to some of the members," the Post 214's Welfare Committee worked diligently to help. Anonymous donors provided funds for coal, clothing, and groceries delivered to poverty-stricken homes. In late 1949, the Goodwill Committee was formed and tasked with remembering the sick and elderly at Christmas, Easter, and throughout the year.

## *World War II*

World War II brought new ways for Post 214 to serve the community and the country, as historian Harry Jones recounts:

The year 1940 gave Weston Post its first opportunity to render assistance to our Country as the dark clouds of the second World War were billowing on the horizon. Quick action was taken upon a letter received from the War Department requesting the forming of an Aircraft Warning Service Observation Post. A committee appointed to select a suitable location chose the Water Tower at Regis College. . . A communication line was installed in the Tower and the test period started on January 21, 1941.<sup>61</sup>

Members rallied to the call to serve as Air Raid Wardens, Auxiliary Firemen, and Auxiliary Police. The Airforce Warning Service was efficiently maintained, and those standing watch were allowed extra gasoline for transportation. During the war, the post was generous in support of the American Red Cross.

Of the year 1941-42, Harry Jones writes:

Just as war brings inevitable hardships on every individual, so too did our Post suffer hardships during the years of World War II. Many "old soldiers" answered the call to aid their Country for the second time. The strictness of gasoline rationing necessitated the canceling of many meetings. Nevertheless, the ties of comradeship are strong and periods of trials and tribulations only serve to strength them.<sup>62</sup>

In 1942, the group established the “Weston Post, No. 214, American Legion Charitable and Education Foundation” to provide college tuition assistance for Weston High School students. The father of the fund was John W. Boyd. The post launched a campaign for contributions.<sup>63</sup>

In 1942-43 the post voted to send Christmas packages to Weston men in the service. They also voted to suspend all future meetings due to the acute shortage of gasoline. In 1943-44 the Legion was present, in a body, as part of a capacity crowd at the dedication of the Honor Roll at Town Hall.

### *Post-War Period*

Membership increased greatly as World War II veterans returned home desiring to maintain the “strong ties of comradeship of fighting men.”<sup>64</sup> Fifty-seven World War II veterans joined the ranks. Well-attended meetings were held at Weston Golf Club. In 1946-47, total membership was 234.

The influx of World War II veterans brought renewed energy. New fundraising events and programs were initiated, with varying degrees of success. The largest event ever attempted was a Class A Horse Show at the Weston Saddle and Bridle Club grounds off Sunset Road on June 25 and 26, 1949. According to the post history, much work was done to put the grounds into suitable condition. A dinner was held for exhibitors at First Parish House followed by a dance, “both modern and square,” at Town Hall. From the standpoint of the exhibitors the show was a complete success, with over 180 horses entered from all parts of New England. Unfortunately the two days of the show were the hottest of the summer, in the 90s, and poor attendance resulted in a large financial loss.<sup>65</sup>

In 1947-48, the Weston Post 214 American Legion Auxiliary was formed. The auxiliary was presented with a set of table colors and a bell. Mrs. William L. Rinehart was the first president.



*The American Legion Auxiliary Bell was presented to the newly formed auxiliary in 1947. It was donated to the Weston Historical Society in 2013 by Jean Jones.*



*Harry Jones (1913 - 1910) was one of the last 15 members of Weston Post 214. As Post historian, he wrote a history of the organization that was later donated to the Weston Historical Society. Harry served in the navy in World War II and was commander of Post 214 from 1957 to 1959. In his reminiscences, published in the WHS Spring 2009 Bulletin, he wrote that his first remembrance in life was of November 11, 1918, when his mother led him to the window, opened it wide, and told him that all the church bells would be ringing shortly. "So true this was— the sound of the ringing bells came from all directions." (WHS photo, gift of Jean Jones)*

In 1951-52, the post joined the Women's Community League and other local groups and individuals in raising funds for the Josiah Smith Tavern restoration, which the town had undertaken. The post sponsored a series of band concerts in late spring and early summer.<sup>66</sup>

Between 1953 and 1960, members contributed and solicited items for an annual Antique Auction held on the grounds of the Josiah Smith Tavern with a professional auctioneer. In December 1956, the post initiated an extremely successful Christmas Tree Sale that continued annually through 1975. The first year, two members drove up to Ludlow, Vermont, where 200 fresh cut trees were waiting. They arrived back after 10 pm but post members were there to greet them and unload. The barn was rigged with Christmas lights and the trees sold quickly and at a good price because of their freshness and good quality. The entire proceeds went to the Scholarship fund.<sup>67</sup>

### ***1963-1996: Membership Declines, Post 214 Dissolves***

For the period from 1963 to 1996, historian Harry Jones writes:

Due to deaths and the inability to obtain new members in any substantial numbers from the Korean War Veterans, Vietnam Veterans, and Gulf War Veterans, the membership steadily declined. Monthly meeting continued to be held but attendance was often small.<sup>68</sup>

Weston Post 214 sponsored the opening event of the town's U.S. Bicentennial celebration. A plaque was unveiled on a boulder in Lamson Park near the Town Hall, dedicated to the memory of Weston residents who assembled and marched to Lexington on April 19, 1775. A ceremony with band music and speakers was held in Town Hall, with Past Commander Harry Jones as Master of Ceremonies.

As the years progressed into the 1990s, membership dropped to 15. Nearly all of the 15 had held the various offices over the years and no one wanted to continue in office. On April 10, 1996, a letter was sent to the 15 members outlining the status of Post 214 and requesting a ballot vote on dissolution, a vote that passed almost unanimously. On July 10, 1996, at the final meeting of the 77-year-old organization, Commander John Gourgas announced the vote. Ed Dickson moved that the Scholarship Fund be turned over to the Town of Weston for addition to the Weston War Memorial Education Fund.<sup>69</sup>

Harry Jones, one of the last commanders as well as the historian, summarized the role of Weston Post 214 this way:

For 77 years, this Weston post was more a community conscious organization than a broader national oriented type of organization. Yes, we supported the national causes of veterans well being, their hospitals, their rehabilitation centers, their memorials, their benefits, and their Americanism programs, but most of our efforts and finances were directed toward our community, our schools, our youth, and our less fortunate.<sup>70</sup>

The last official act was to present the colors, the American Flag and post flag, to the Town of Weston for custodianship and use at patriotic observances.

## *Footnotes*

*TR*: Weston annual *Town Report*; *WDFPT*: *Waltham Daily Free Press Tribune* (included regular columns on Weston, Silver Hill, and Kendal Green)

(1) 1918 *TR*, 34-36. Note that the 1917 *TR*, 40-41, includes a shorter list of men, and one woman, in service at that time and also includes their branch of service and military unit; (2) *Gold Star Record of Massachusetts*, 375; (3) *WDFPT*, 9-6-18 and *Boston Sunday Globe*, 9-1-18, 3; (3A) *WDFPT*, 6-7-18; (4) *Memorial Volume of the American Field Service in France, "Friends of France" 1914-1917*, edited by James W.D. Seymour, Am. Field Service, Boston, 1921, 211-212; (5) *Ibid.*; (6) *Ibid.*; (7) *Gold Star Record of Massachusetts*, 375; (8) *WDFPT*, 11-22-18; (9) *WDFPT*, 5-9-19; (10) "Historical Data Concerning the 26<sup>th</sup> Division American E.F., prepared by the Second Section General Staff, 26<sup>th</sup> Division, American Expeditionary Force," undated typescript (after Dec. 1918), WHS collection, part of Stevens trunk

materials; see also Wikipedia. (11) “Synopsis of Activities USS Ossipee during ‘The Great War,’” report by Capt. W.H. Munter included with Erlon Merrill’s American Legion form, WHS collection; (15) “Soldier with a Golden Pen” *New England Pioneer*, Jan.-Feb. 1962; (16) *New England Aviators: 1914-1918, Their Portraits and Their Records*, introduction by A. Lawrence Lowell, Vol. 1, Boston 1919, 44-46, available from Google Books; (17) James Hall, *The Lafayette Flying Corps*, Vol.1, Boston, 1920, 493-496, available on Google Books;(18) “A Great Escape,” Part III by Jeff Smith, 3-21-12 in the *San Diego Reader* (<https://www.sandiegoreader.com/news/2012/mar/21/unforgettable/?page=1&>); (19) *Ibid.*; (19A) *WDFPT*, 2-7-19; (19B) *World War I Letters of Nora Saltonstall*, 262; *Overseas War Record of the Winsor School*, 7, 44-45; Ida Clyde Clarke, *American Women and the World War*, 454-55; (19C) *Memoir of Frances Cabot Putnam: A Family Chronicle*, Riverside Press, 1916; (19D) *WDFPT*, 7-2-19; (19E) *WDFPT*, 12-24-15; (19F) *WDFPT*, 10-15-15, 10-29-15, 1-14-16; (19G) *WDFPT*, 7-2-19; (20) See documents in the Stevens trunk; (21) *WDFPT*, 4-11-19; (22) *WDFPT*, 11-15-18; (23) *Ibid.*; (24) *WDFPT*, 5-9-19; (25) *WDFPT*, 5-23-19; (26) 1919 *TR*, 32; (27) *Ibid.*; (28) 1920 *TR*, 72-74; (28A) 1922 *TR*, 42; (29) 1921 *TR*, 201; (30) *WDFPT*, 3-21-19; (31) *WDFPT*, 9-5-19; (32) *WDFPT*, 4-11-19; (33) Typescript “A Summary of the Minutes of the Women’s Community League of Weston, Weston, Massachusetts: From June 5, 1919 to June 26, 1953,” opening page; (34) *Ibid.*; (35) *Ibid.*; (36) *WDFPT*, 10-24-19; (37) Summary, *op. cit.*, 101; (38) *WDFPT*, 8-8-19; (39) *WDFPT*, 10-24-19; (40) *Ibid.* (41) Summary, *op.cit.*, 94-95; (42) *Ibid.*, 81; (43) Information from WCL officers; (44) *Wellesley-Weston Magazine*, Spring 2019, 102-108; (45) *Ibid.*; (46) Summary, *op.cit.*, 11, 48, 61; (47) *Ibid.*, 12; (48) *Ibid.*, 14, 48; (49) *Ibid.*, 50-51; (50) *Ibid.*, 51; (51) *Ibid.*, 55; (52) *Ibid.*; (53) Information on the mid-1970s renovation comes from “Women’s Community League of Weston, Inc. *Newsletter*, January 1978, “Profile” by Lyn Pannone, copy in WHS files; (54) *Ibid.*; (55) *Ibid.*; (56) *Ibid.*; (57) *Ibid.*; (58) This and all other details of Post 214 history come from typescript “Weston Post, No. 214, American Legion, Inc. Post History” by Harry Jones, 1951, updated by Jones in 1998, in WHS archives; (58A) *Ibid.*, 19-20; (59) *Ibid.*, 20; (60) Weston Post 214 archives at WHS; (61) Post History *op.cit.*, 16; (62) *Ibid.*, 17; (63) *Ibid.*; (64) *Ibid.*, 19; (65) *Ibid.*, 22-23; (66) *Ibid.*, 28; (67) *Ibid.*, 30; (68) *Ibid.*, 34; (69) *Ibid.*, 35; (70) *Ibid.*, 35-36; (71) *Ibid.*, 36.







*Note the size of the Colonial-era O'Toole House at 449 Old North Ave (since demolished) compared to the elm tree in front. (WHS Collection, gift of Radha Iyengar)*

## ***With Grateful Thanks***

*To Radha Iyengar for photos and photo albums from the estate of Nettie O'Toole (later the estate of Ann Lesser), showing the O'Toole house at 499 Old North Avenue as well as the gardens, house interior, and the O'Toole Florist in Waltham (see photo at left).*

*To Carmen and Joseph Konzem for the 1928 oil painting of a barn at Roberts Mill on Stony Brook by H. Orne Rider.*

*To Faith Rand for the framed black and white print of Weston Town Hall by C.M. Goff, 1967.*

*To Nancy Bates for the small metal cream pitcher engraved "1747 Horse Show, 1961" and Weston school papers and notebooks 1940s.*

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