

THE WESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

Vol. No. XXXVIII



Spring, 2007



The Field School opened in 1950 as Weston High School and has served the community as a high school, junior high, and upper elementary school. Its future is now under study.

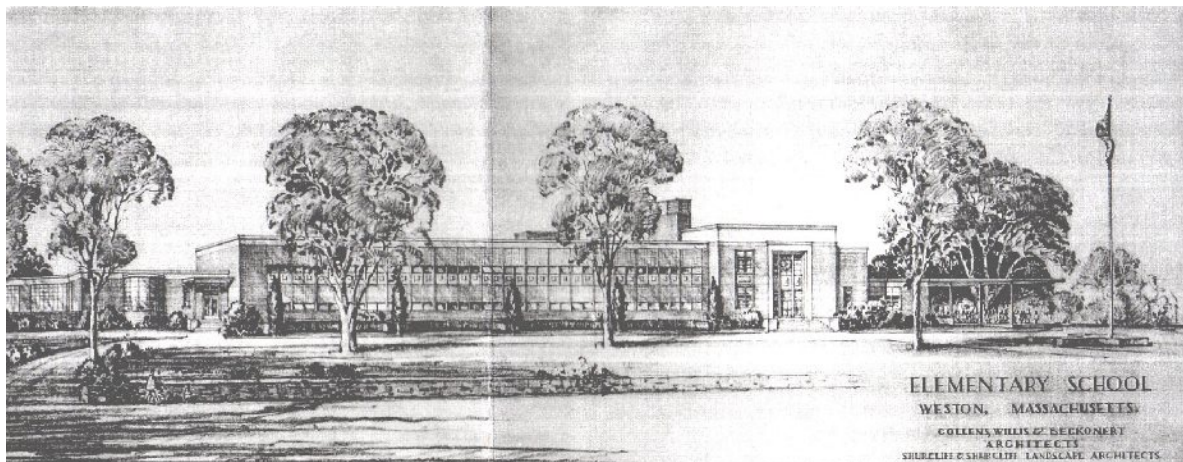
A History of Field School

The building now known as Field School was planned as an elementary school to accommodate the baby boom clearly on the horizon at the end of World War II. At that time, elementary students were housed in what are now the Brook School Apartments A and B. The 1946 *Town Report* records the recommendation of the Finance Committee “that a building committee . . . give serious consideration to the rapid obsolescence rate of school buildings and accordingly build an appropriate and adequate school plant with a minimum of superficial appointments to keep the cost at a minimum and with an interior design that permits of flexibility.” A suitable site was needed, and in 1946, 46 acres of land in close proximity to the existing school complex was purchased from Harvard Uni-

versity for \$10,000. The land had been given to Harvard's Arnold Arboretum only a few years earlier by Louisa Case, sister of Marion Case.

The Building Committee began work in September 1946. They hired Weston resident Harold B. Willis (1890-1962) of the Boston firm of Collens, Willis and Beckonert to design the new school. Willis designed many notable buildings in the Northeast, including the Newton City Hall, Hammond Castle and Stillington Hall in Gloucester, and the Cloisters Museum in New York City. In Weston, his work included his own home at 49 Concord Road (1921), the original Meadowbrook School (1924), the brick mansion at One Townhouse Road (1929), and the Sears Memorial Chapel at First Parish Church (1930). According to committee member John Brooks, Willis "put his whole heart into doing this and doing it right." For site planning and landscape design, the committee engaged Arthur A. and Sidney N. Shurcliff, a well-known firm with long ties to the town.

According to the Report of the Elementary School Building Committee, printed in the 1947 *Town Report*, the architect was instructed to design a building "of sound, permanent, modern construction without useless decoration" that was "flexible in layout to provide for changing views on educational programs over a long period of years." Single-story and two-story structures were considered; and a two-story layout was finally selected as "the most appropriate to the contours of the site, the most economical to operate, and the most adaptable to expansion." According to the report, "a suitable exterior design was chosen from various alternatives of conventional and simplified treatments." In a letter dated March 17, 1947, from Harold Willis to Ed Hubbard, Chair of the Building Committee, Willis writes "The talk I have heard seems to be away from a Colonial scheme, and rather in favor of the least expensive and most efficient type of modern school building."



The choice of the fashionable Modern style for Weston's first post-war school was appropriate for both aesthetic and practical reasons. Modernist ideals, particularly the emphasis on functionalism and the omission of "superfluous" ornament, dovetailed well with the town's financial concerns during this time of rising taxes and exponential growth in the school-age population. The building exemplifies characteristic features of the style, including the "ribbon of windows," a term for the long expanses of windows that give the building the horizontal orientation so typical of Modernism.



The football field behind Weston High School (now Field School) can be seen in this aerial view probably dating to the 1950s.

Plans changed dramatically after a disastrous April 7, 1948, fire that gutted the Weston High School (now Brook School Apartments C). At a Special Town meeting a few weeks later in May, Town Meeting took quick action, voting to abandon the idea of a

new elementary school and to adapt the architectural plans to a new high school for grades 7 to 12. The burned high school was reconstructed as an elementary school.

The building committee and architect reworked the earlier plan to meet the needs of older students. Dr. Homer G. Anderson, Superintendent of Schools in Newton, was consulted on the basic layout. A gymnasium was added, along with a cooking room, automotive shop, woodworking shop, and mechanical drawing area. The new building had twenty classrooms, three more than the old high school, and a total size of 56,286 square feet. According to a brochure printed for the dedication, the building could accommodate 400 students, with 300 being the size of the initial student body. The report of the Special School Building Committee, dated September, 1948, noted that future expansion could be accomplished by adding a wing attached to the gymnasium.

Because of the emergency situation created by the fire, the town received dispensation from the state legislature to let the contract on a cost-plus basis rather than putting it out for public bid. The contractor, Farina Bros., Inc., began work in September, 1948. Classes began in the new building on January 5, 1950 and dedication exercises followed on March 25. After the ceremony, the building was opened to public inspection and some 1300 people reportedly came to take a look. The final cost of construction, furnishing, and landscaping, along with design fees, was approximately \$925,000. Furniture and equipment salvaged from the burned school were used wherever possible.

All accounts of the new building emphasize the natural light. Rather than having all metal sash windows, the town spent an estimated \$5,000 extra for some 6,720 glass bricks designed to increase the uniformity of classroom light. The exterior contained a



Above: High school students with Helen Green, Weston math teacher from 1916 through the late 1950s. Below: (l-r) Jean Havey, Dottie White, Lisa White, Nancy Healey, Joan Havey, and Phoebe Murphy with Donna Cugini, captain. 1955-56 school year.

reported 10,096 square feet of glass area, including both clear glass and glass bricks. According to a newspaper article in *Boston Post Magazine* of September 11, 1950, the new high school was a “marvel of modern science,” that was “85% glass” on the exterior,

The building was aligned in an east-west direction to minimize the need for window shades. Because of the sloping grade, usable classrooms with natural light could be located on the lower level. The building employed a new technique of constructing floors. Interior walls were not permanent but could be moved at will and locked in place at any eight-foot interval. Colors were chosen to “give a soft, restful effect to take best advantage of the good natural light and to reduce contrast to a minimum. The *Boston Post Magazine*

article noted that such color tones would “control irritability and distraction.”

In the decades that followed, as additional school buildings were constructed, the use of the 1950 building changed. In the fall of 1955, 7th and 8th grade students moved into the former Brook School Building A, available because of the 1955 opening of Country School. In the fall of 1961, the new high school on Wellesley Street opened and the 1950



Weston High School prom court with Judy Jones as queen, 1953-54 school year.

high school became a junior high. In September, 1970, after completion of the present junior high school in 1969, the former junior high was remodeled and made ready for occupancy as an elementary school christened “Field School” following the rural naming theme already established with Country, Woodland, and Brook. At that time Field was used as an “intermediate” school for grades 4, 5 and 6.

In 1981, with the continuing drop in school enrollments, Field School became the second Weston school to close, after Brook in 1976. Field was leased to organizations that could use existing classrooms, thus preserving the possibility of reopening the school if enrollments increased. It housed a variety of educational and recreational programs including Weston Wing, a day care center, and the Children’s Center, an after-school program.

In 1994-95, Field School was renovated to house grades 4 and 5. The town appropriated \$1.86 million and the renovation committee worked with Todd Lee-Clark-Rozas Associates, Inc. to bring the building up to code, remove asbestos, and make it handicapped accessible, including installation of an elevator. In May 2005, the Town approved a warrant article for a feasibility study of the Field School, “to establish a comprehensive plan for building improvements including capital needs, space reconfiguration and programmatic upgrades.” (2005 *Town Report*, p. 84). The feasibility study also looked at options to replace the school.

by Pamela W. Fox, with thanks to John Brooks, member of the Special Building Committee from 1946 to 1951.

Special Case Estates Issue, Part II

(Continued from Fall 2006)

This issue includes excerpts from the Green Books of 1922 to 1943.



Hillcrest Gardens, Weston, Massachusetts, The Thirteenth Summer by The Gardeners (1922)

“A pleasant feature of the summer has been the photographs Mr. Alfred Cutting has taken each month of our garden, so putting the summer’s blossoming on record. This season he was especially interested in photographing the little children on the place. In May the yellow house [101 Wellesley Street] in the flower garden opposite my cottage was opened for the gardener, Mr. Arthur Williams, his wife and three children. Little Jack Williams, though only four years old, has delighted all summer in being given some job to do in the garden. In the spring he liked to go round the grounds with his father or me to see if the buds had started on the shrubs. Later in the summer he helped in harvesting the seeds. On Labor Day between the reading of the two classes of the boys’ papers [the older and younger boys], the six little children on the farm with a neighbor’s child, ranging in age from two to nine years old, stood in a row by the platform and recited and acted:

Up the world, and down the world,
And over the world and through,
Never sit down with a tear or a frown,
But paddle your own canoe.”

(Marian Case, p. 10)

Hillcrest Gardens, Weston, Massachusetts. The Fourteenth Summer, by The Gardeners (1923)

“On the other side of the windbreak of trees will be found the Iris trial bed. This bed has progressed rapidly under the personal supervision of Mr. John C. Wister, President of the American Iris Society. In this bed will be found most of the best varieties of iris and new ones to be tested. In the first row are the early dwarf varieties. The next row is filled with the intermediate kinds. The next seven rows contain most of the best of the tall bearded late varieties introduced up to 1920. The next three rows contain the introductions of the year 1921, 1922 and 1923 respectively. The last two rows contain new seedlings not yet in the market, but which have been sent here by iris breeders for trial. The idea of this bed is to test out the new varieties, to see if they are distinct and superior, or old kinds masquerading under new names.” (THE IRIS AT HILLCREST GARDENS, John A. Fraser, p. 40)

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Hillcrest Gardens, Weston, Massachusetts, The Fifteenth Summer, by Marian Roby Case, F.R.H.S. and The Gardeners (1924)

“We had six boys on our waiting-list all summer, but by taking boys from all over the country we feel that our influence will broaden.” (Marian Case, p. 21)

* * *

“It is difficult to describe a place which contains such a variety of land as Hillcrest Gardens does with its woods of white pine trees. . . , its meadow through which a brook flows which is full with forgetmenots or mysotis in June, and bordered by the beautiful tall flags of the pseudacorus iris on which there is always a lovely play of light and shade. Then across Wellesley Street is a flat field in which we grow our vegetables. Robert’s paper gives an idea of our orchards and the large vineyard with its many varieties of table grapes.

“The next paper gives a further description of the road which runs through the woods which formerly separated the land owned by Nathan Barker from that of the Hastings’ estate. The Hillcrest house, where Mr. Mezit, (sic) our Russian foreman, now lives, was the Hastings’ homestead [131 Wellesley Street]. When the sons were married they built houses across the road. For a hundred years the name of Hastings has been associated with this land so it is fitting that the land between Wellesley and Ash Streets should be known as Hastings’ Field.” (Marian Case, p. 24)

* * *

“The circulation of our green book is now so large, it being on file in several city libraries besides that of the Massachusetts Agricultural Library at Amherst, the Library of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, and the Town Library of Weston, that the accurate information given by these papers is important. This year we had many young boys whom Mr. Quinlan had to help

131 Wellesley Street (left) was built by Thomas Rand Jr. about 1790. Rand heirs sold it to farmer Josiah Hastings in 1817, and his descendants sold it to Marian Case in 1909. Miss Case used it as the home for her farm superintendents, including Peter Mezitt and later Tom Park. The Hastings farm included land across Wellesley Street.



with their papers. Next season with older boys we hope that the boys' papers for Labor Day will have the boys' own individuality impressed upon them." (Marian Case, p. 29-30)

* * *

"For fifteen years we have kept the boys. We now need to get the boys who will profit by the advantages they receive here, and who in time may become leaders along horticultural lines." (Marian Case, p. 36)

* * *

"If we consider only the best development of Hillcrest Gardens from an economic and horticultural point of view we would now give up the growing of vegetables here, but we have also to think of the education of the boys and have so far thought of our neighbors. But Hillcrest Gardens is growing out of Weston, and the cultivation of our fruit trees and flowers is crowding out the land we can give to our vegetables. We would be glad to have someone else grow fresh vegetables for the people of Weston—though now the Hillcrest Market is quite a feature in the town." (Marian Case, p. 42-43)

* * *

Hillcrest Gardens, Weston, Massachusetts: The Sixteenth Summer by Marian Roby Case, F.R.H.S. and the Gardeners (1925)

"A summer among the boys at Hillcrest would cure one of socialism, for with the same opportunity, they show such different results at the end of the season. It also shows that reading and writing or good scholarship is not always the truest test of useful citizenship, for some of our best workers have not the highest standing in school. Yet at Hillcrest Gardens, the boys are taught to record what they see in their Observation Papers, and the day after each lecture they write a report of it, and so are taught to listen to the lectures.

“It is also very interesting to notice the reaction of the boys on each other. It is not always the youngest boy on the farm who, to use the boys’ expression, is “the kid”; nor is it always the oldest boy who is the leader. The boys have created a spirit at Hillcrest which now helps to keep them in order.” (Marian Case, p. 13)

* * *

“Spring came early this season so that on my return from Africa the middle of April, the garden was very lovely. The fruit trees all blossomed well. . . .

“The weather on the twentieth of May was bright and pleasant for a supper given for the Benevolent Society of the First Parish of Weston, at which we welcomed about two hundred guests to Hillcrest. The tulips and lilacs were then very beautiful. The Rosa Hugonis was also covered with its lovely yellow blossoms. . . .

“We also had a pleasant day on the eleventh of June when a sale was held in the boys’ clubhouse for the Christopher Shop which helps the handicapped people to sell their handicraft and for The Disabled Service Men’s Exchange. . . .

“We also had a bright blue day with the glorious oak trees at the height of their autumn coloring on October twenty-first, when we welcomed to a luncheon at Hillcrest Gardens, a hundred and fifty or more members of the Women’s National Farm and Garden Association, who were holding their semi-annual meeting in Boston. After the luncheon, Miss Annie R. Blanchard of Melrose gave a good, practical talk on the home culture of bulbs for winter flowering.” (Marian Case, p. 21-22)

* * *

“On the old Post Road in Weston town
The Hillcrest Market stands;
The village patrons are supplied
By many boyish hands.
Fresh fruit and vegetables are brought
For everyone to view,
So you see, in helping Hillcrest
We’re really helping you.

“With the coming of Labor Day, the Hillcrest Market passes its fifth successful season. The Market, which is situated on Central Avenue [now Boston Post Road] by the Village Smithy, was opened in 1921 in order to supply the townspeople with strictly fresh fruit and vegetables. Since then the Market has grown and many people from Boston, Auburndale, and adjoining cities come to the Market in order to get fresh fruit and vegetables which they are unable to get as well elsewhere. The Market opens as soon as the early vegetables are ready. It closes about October fifteenth so as to give the people the benefit of both early and late fruit and vegetables.

“In addition to our regular fruit and vegetables we have sold our surplus plants. Early in the season pansies, daisies, Iceland poppies and sweet alyssum were on sale. During the latter part of June iris, phlox and zinnias could be obtained.

“Besides being a help to the community the Hillcrest Market is also an asset in beautifying the town. An unattractive barn has been changed into a most attractive tea house and on the piazza Mrs. Green sells our produce.

“This spring on account of the scarcity of strawberries our sales were not very large. Mid-summer crops were normal, and in fact the rains made yields heavier than last year, and with the plentiful supply of peaches the Market has easily made up for the lack of sales in the spring. Corn was very late in ripening this year. . . .

“. . . We aim to keep our prices on fruit the same throughout the entire season. . . .

“The Market is a boon to canners as we carry nearly every kind of fruit. The fruit and vegetables are picked every morning at about 7:30, cleaned and washed and placed on sale at 9:30. All produce that is left over, should there be any, is sold to peddlers in Waltham.

“This year many people have been coming to the barn to buy things; this causes confusion and delays the men’s work for they must go and pick the vegetables desired. Next year, I believe, Miss Case is going to encourage the people to buy at the Market. . . .

“Miss Case, as usual, did not consider the financial end of the matter but only the great benefit it would be to the community. I am sure that the townspeople are very grateful to her for the work she has done as shown by the notes of appreciation which have been received by her. . . .”(THE HILLCREST MARKET, S. Elbert Steele, p 37-39)

* * *

“Before starting this market by the Post-Office and Village Smithy, we sent a truck about the town which was not satisfactory, as it was impossible to supply all our neighbors with fruit and fresh vegetables at nine o’clock in the morning. This village market as presided over by Mrs. Green is a picturesque feature of the town, and there she hears if there is illness or other distress to be relieved. It is a good centre for wholesome village gossip.

“. . . Tom Park, who now has charge of all the business side of Hillcrest Gardens, keeping our books, taking our produce to market, and giving the orders for tools needed on the farm, came to us as a boy of fifteen the summer before the first six boys were employed at Hillcrest. . . .”(Marian Case, p. 39-40)

* * *

“We have over sixty varieties of apples at Hillside (sic) Gardens, and realize that if we consider only the financial side of our farm we would continue to grow more fruit and fewer vegetables, for when we plant a tree we make an investment on the farm which increases in value as the tree matures. We plant our vegetables in the spring and pull them up in the summer or autumn. Where beans and peas have been planted the land is richer from the nitrogen in their nodules. Corn and potatoes break up our land, but how is it with beets, carrots and turnips? Vegetables as a whole need more care and enrichment of the land. They are no financial investment, but it is good training for the boys and our neighbors like them. We still grow potatoes at Hillcrest, though peonies are taking their land. . . . (Marian Case, p. 53)

“Jack Williams, our gardener’s son, was the youngest boy at Hillcrest Gardens. His interest in all sorts of gardening is so great that one Friday morning I took him to the Arnold Arboretum to see Professor Sargent. . . .Sunday morning Jack was lying in wait for me as I was starting for church, and said, “Miss Case, did Professor Sargent’s interest in trees begin when he was a very little boy? Won’t you let me work on the farm this summer?” I hesitated, for Jack was only seven years old, but he was eager to be with the other boys. So I told him if he would rest in the afternoon he could try it. Early in the summer Dr. Wood examined all the boys and found them in good condition. Jack is very proud of his bank book, and at seven years old seems to have started on what now promises to be his lifework. He was frail as a little boy and has gained in weight



137 Wellesley Street was built for farmer Otis Train about 1847. George Milton, a Boston merchant, purchased the property in 1869 and used it as a summer place for more than 40 years before selling to Marian Case in 1912. He retained life tenancy. Following his death in 1918, the house was occupied by Theodore Chandler and his wife Mary Williams Chandler, who was a relative of Miss Case.

this round table was one covered with many varieties of grapes, and another with apples. On this table strawberries and raspberries were shown. Our display was proclaimed by all to be the prettiest we had shown at any Grange Fair in Weston. We received sixty-four ribbons, fifty-one of which were blue. At the end of the evening the Grange received thirty-five dollars from our sales.” (Marian Case, p.60-61)

and hardiness through the season. His contact with the older boys has also done him good. On Labor Day, being too young to write a paper, he collected six different varieties of oak leaves, pressed them on paper and showed the black, red, scarlet, chestnut, and pin oak leaves, having noticed the difference in each one.” (Marian Case, p. 57-58)

* * *

“The Grange Fair in Weston was held on the twenty-ninth of September. It was a bright afternoon and there was a larger attendance than usual. The display from Hillcrest Gardens covered three tables. A round one in the centre of the hall was covered with vegetables and decorated with bright colored maple leaves, barberries and sprays from the mountain ash. Cornering on

* * *

“Your beautifully decorated and bountifully laden booth was, as always, the chief attraction of the [Weston Grange] Fair, many attending just to see the wonders of Hillcrest Gardens.” (Letter from Ruby G. Lovewell to Marian Case, p.61)

Hillcrest Gardens, Weston, Massachusetts, The Seventeenth Summer, by Marian Roby Case, F.R.H.S. and The Gardeners (1926)

“Many inquiries are made as to how boys enter Hillcrest Gardens. We mean not to take boys under thirteen years of age except in such cases as Edmund Mezitt and Jack Williams, sons of the superintendent and head gardener of Hillcrest, who live on the farm and have a decided interest in its work. Other boys must send a written application to Mr. Leon R. Quinlan, Hillcrest Gardens, Weston, Massachusetts, stating their age and their interest in horticultural or garden work. We consider no applications from parents, as we want only those boys who are really interested to come.” (Marian Case, p. 16)

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“Our spraying season usually begins with the delayed dormancy spray in April. At this time the buds on the apple trees are swelling. . . and the blossom buds on the peach trees. . . are showing pink. At this time we spray our fruit trees and berry bushes with a strong lime-sulphur solution, using twelve gallons of commercial lime-sulphur, 3/4 pt. of 40 per cent nicotine sulphate and 4 lbs. of dry arsenate of lead to 100 gallons of water. This is



Hillcrest was known for its lavish displays of fruits and vegetables. This photograph appears in the 1942 Green Book. It was taken at a September display at Weston Town Hall, set up by Miss Case and the men of Hillcrest Gardens for the Garden Club of Weston. According to Miss Case's account, "Every flower and vegetable in season was included. The fine display of fruits brought many comments. The apples and grapes made a great hit with the Club, and the other growers looked at them with envy. The show-piece was carefully planned with regard to color and size of the specimens. The American and Hillcrest Flags held the place of honor at the top of this tower of color, accented by bright spotlights from the ceiling. In the center near the bottom was a large blue ribbon which Miss Case and Hillcrest Gardens will treasure for many years." (p.47)

for scale insets, bud moths, tent caterpillars, aphids and peach leaf curl.” (SPRAYING, Peter J. Mezitt, p. 28)

* * *

“Miss Case has grown Peonies at Hillcrest for many years but it was not until 1923 that the beginning was made of a really extensive collection of varieties. At that time the varieties were planted out in alphabetical order in rows on the hill now occupied by Delphiniums, and in the fall of 1924 they were moved to the present Peony Garden. There are in the collection at present nearly 200 varieties of double Peonies.” (PEONIES AT HILLCREST GARDENS, John C. Wister, p. 35. Later in this report, Wister, a well-known Pennsylvania horticulturist, discusses the single varieties, Japanese peonies, and Japanese Tree Peonies.)

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“Arthur came to us in July as one of the boys failed to come to two of the lectures. As no boy is allowed to be away from Hillcrest on Wednesday afternoons except in case of illness, we had to let him go. Even though he besought us to let him come back. But each year we find that to keep order at Hillcrest Gardens our few rules have to be enforced. No boy can be indulged as an individual; each boy has to be treated as one of twenty. Also, with our long waiting list we have to think of those who are eager to work at Hillcrest Gardens. If a boy gives out in July, there is a boy ready to work in his place at eight o'clock the next morning.” (Marian Case, p. 55-56)

* * *

“Each year one of the important excursions for my class in Horticulture is Hillcrest Gardens. There are many features for observation and study. Of special interest are the large collections of Iris, Peony, Delphiniums and other garden flowers. The special plantings of roses, wild garden, marsh garden and display of annuals, both for the flowers themselves and for the way in which they are arranged. . . . Thus we have a laboratory for the observation of garden plants and garden design.

“There is further interest in seeing how a worn-out farm has been brought back to a good economic return and at the same time the natural beauties have been saved and countless new ones created. New fruits and flowers are always being tried and these in turn become common in other gardens. The practical value of the gardens is demonstrated by the fruits and vegetables of highest quality which are sold directly to the citizens of the town and to visitors. The range from purely esthetic to plant breeding, plant testing and marketing of farm and orchard crops practically covers the field of gardening outdoors. There is no garden quite like Hillcrest, and Miss Case is most willing at all times to give the personal history of every experiment.

“Another unique factor, not visible to the casual visitor, is the fact that each summer some two dozen boys make this garden and farm a field laboratory for work and study, each choosing the special part of gardening in which he is interested for a report at

the end of the summer. Thus Hillcrest Gardens each year are teaching a group of boys the realities of good gardening and serving as inspiration to all who visit them. (Stephen F. Hamblin, Instructor in Horticulture and Director of the Botanic Gardens, Harvard University, October 12, 1926. p. 72-73.)

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“At the request of Miss Case I should like to tell you in a few words about how I came to start the Weston Nurseries.

“From my early days I was accustomed to the growing and propagating of plants, and later I was able to continue this fascinating work at Hillcrest Gardens, but it was always my dream to have a place of my own where I could raise plants for market and try different methods of propagating. The opportunity came in July, 1923, when we bought a farm of 78 acres. I say ‘we’ because it was bought in partnership with my wife, who is equally interested in growing plants, and who attends to the propagating and general looking after the place.

“The nursery is situated on the Wellesley boundary of the town, only about two miles from Hillcrest Gardens, where I have been Superintendent for eleven years. No doubt these years of association with one of the most beautiful and interesting places in the country for plant enthusiasts constantly strengthened my love of plants. The land of the farm proved to be ideal for growing all kinds of plants and the location is beautiful. After three years of cultivation we have several acres planted with a large variety of plants. Foreign and native seeds have been used. At present, we have about 1,000 different varieties of plants. . . . In this last year the sales have increased, and we have been able to buy more seeds and plants for propagating. Friends have remarked that our nursery looks more like a botanical garden than a commercial garden on account of the many varieties of plants.

Upon investigating the wild part of the farm we were surprised to find a large number of rare native flora. . . .

The success of our nursery in large part is due to Miss Case for allowing me to supervise the nursery work besides carrying on my work at Hillcrest Gardens. (WESTON NURSERIES, Peter J. Mezitt, p. 78-79)

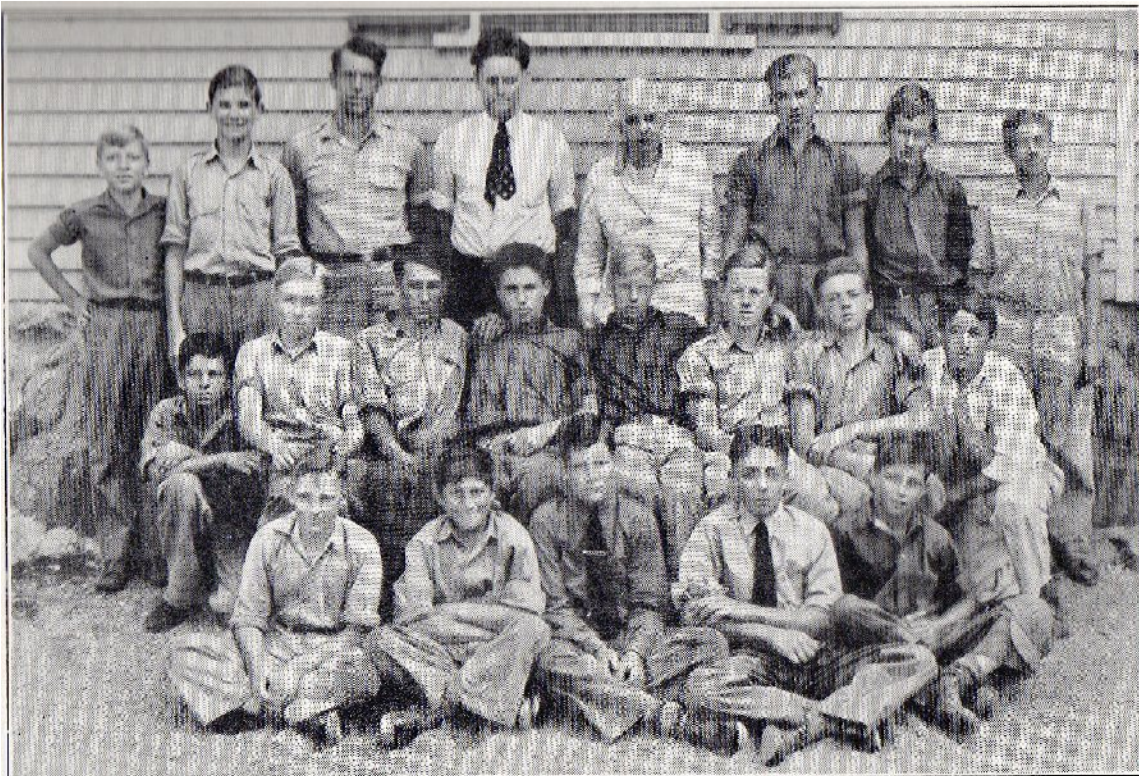
Hillcrest Gardens, Weston, Massachusetts, The Eighteenth Summer, by Marian Roby Case, F.R.H.S. and The Gardeners (1927)

“I believe that this is the first time Landscape Work at Hillcrest Gardens has been chosen as a subject for a Labor Day paper. By comparing the general layout of the gardens with those of other large estates in Massachusetts, I find that there is much to be said in favor of the planning arrangement here.

“Of course, as a partially self-supporting place, it cannot be fairly rated with the Arnold Arboretum or other such show gardens, where large sums of money are given especially for their improvement. In spite of this advantage that they have, there are many features at Hillcrest Gardens which bring our gardens in at the lead.

“First, there is originality. It is not formal, with high trimmed hedges like a copy of an old English garden, but it has a style of its own. Second, unlike most places, Hillcrest encourages midsummer flora culture. There is a steady succession of bloom from spring until fall.

“As one enters our flower garden, there are three large sugar maple trees, and walking down the road, which is bordered by tall cedar trees, one comes to the flower beds. Many of these seeds come from foreign lands. As one walks around, one sees that the natural effect in planting is preserved. The borders along the wood road consist of highly cultivated plants; but they are set in perfectly natural surroundings. This plan is also carried out in the Bog Garden and Wild Gardens. In fact, it is so everywhere at Hillcrest. There are no sharp clashes anywhere. Each garden seems to blend nicely into its background. (LANDSCAPE WORK AT HILLCREST GARDENS, Carlisle Nason, p. 16-17).



From right to left, Miss M. R. Case, John Thomas Park, James B. Pender and The Boys.
From the 1936 Green Book.

Hillcrest Gardens, Weston, Massachusetts, The Nineteenth Summer, by Marian Roby Case, F.R.H.S. and The Gardeners (1928)

“Labor Day is the last day of our formal season, but this does not end our connection with Hillcrest Gardens. Some of us boys come to Hillcrest on Saturdays after Labor Day as there is a lot of work that we can, and like to do, right through the year. While there is work in the fields we help the men dig potatoes, pick apples, tomatoes, and other crops. We also work in the flower gardens. Some of us have been given the right to take care of certain gardens. This summer Jack Williams is taking care of the Iris garden, while I am taking care of the Peony garden.

“The other boys are reading papers today about various things that go on during the summer. . . so I will not go into detail about them.

“What interests us most is the winter work. Last winter Mr. [Harold] Stanton [the boys’ instructor at Hillcrest] taught us caning, that is, to repair chairs. We did this kind of work for the most of the winter. Mr. Stanton also taught us woodwork.

“When Christmas comes, Miss Case gives us a Christmas party. Last year this party was held in the office of the new barn. (This is for the children who live at Hillcrest Gardens, or are very closely connected with it.)

“In spring as soon as it gets warm we work at the [cold] frames and greenhouse, transplanting little seedlings and weeding. There is a lot of work to be done on the place before the summer season opens, so that some of us who live near Hillcrest are able to work on Saturdays. We help the men prepare the ground for planting seeds of different kinds of vegetables, planting, weeding, spraying and many other kinds of work.

“I am sure we boys all enjoy the work at Hillcrest, because, besides working and studying, we also have a lot of good times. So I do not think that a summer could be spent more profitably than right here at Hillcrest Gardens. (A YEAR AT HILLCREST GARDENS, Edmund Mezitt, p. 9-10.)

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“Have you ever watched a mosquito feed? Do you know what it eats? A small mosquito lit on my arm and, as I wanted to watch it, I did not smash it. First it inspected about a square inch of skin, evidently looking for the first large pore in which to insert its sucker. Next it probed a little area with it and then stood



In this undated photograph, Marian Case appears to be holding up one of her many awards for her educational and horticultural work at Hillcrest.

still. I could feel it sticking its needle into me. Then it ate its dinner of blood, which it did by sucking through the hollow needle-like sucker. When it had as much as it could hold it drew the sucker out, preparatory to flying away. I then brought my open hand down on it and squashed it. A small streak of blood remained to show that it had had some dinner from me. Although they are a pest, they showed mankind how to make blood transfusion (sic). Everything on God's earth has its use." (AN INTERESTING DINNER, observation paper by James Pender, p. 16)

* * *

"On June eighth of this year papers were passed for five acres of land on which a growth of tall white pines make a good screen for Hillcrest Gardens against any buildings which might be put up between Hillcrest and Chestnut Street. The land was bought from the Hill Land Trust. . . . (Marian Case, p. 58)

Hillcrest Gardens, Weston, Massachusetts, The Twentieth Summer, by Marian Roby Case, F.R.H.S. and The Gardeners (1929)

"Hillcrest Gardens or Farm, as our land was called for several years, was started in 1909 as a cure for bronchitis. Realizing that I could not continue to spend my winters among the east winds of Boston, I took a cottage in Weston for the winter, and, with horseback riding and other out-of-doors exercise, kept well. About this time land next to our old family estate in Weston came into the market. I then felt that if I were to live in the country it would be well for me to have my interest there, so I bought my first land of about twenty-three acres. We now have a hundred. One of the houses on the land was bought with greenbacks.

"The farmers in Weston were amused at my having purchased the land with the thought of growing fruit and vegetables on it. But when Mr. Albert C. Burrage, the President of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, went over it, he said that he felt that I was fortunate to have in so small an area such a variety of land for the experiments I wished to make—to grow not only vegetables for our market, which was opened for the benefit of the townspeople in 1921, but many varieties of fruits and choice flowers. . . . But the work for which the Trustees of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society awarded us their large Gold Medal was for having the boys at Hillcrest. Thomas Park, who is now the chief manager of Hillcrest, came the first summer, as a boy of fifteen, and helped in clearing the land of rocks. The next summer we had six boys here, and now twenty is our regular number. . . . During these twenty years we have had a hundred and forty-four boys at Hillcrest and would have had more if the boys had not returned summer after summer. . . . It was gratifying this autumn to have one of the first six boys bring his bride to Hillcrest from New York two days after he was married to show her the gardens where he had spent a happy boyhood.

". . . I shall not forget the two boys whom I first asked if they would like to work at Hillcrest. I had gone for one of them and found him and another boy sprawled on a sofa with a checkerboard spread out between them. It was a bright summer morning, and I felt that the boys would be better out-of-doors doing active, useful work which should turn indolent boys into able men.

As I asked the boy whom I had gone for if he wanted to work on the farm, the other one looked up at me with imploring eyes. So they were among the first six boys to come to Hillcrest. Thus the work with the boys began and has grown in importance, though it was not in my mind when I first bought my land.” (Marian Case, p. 9-12)

* * *

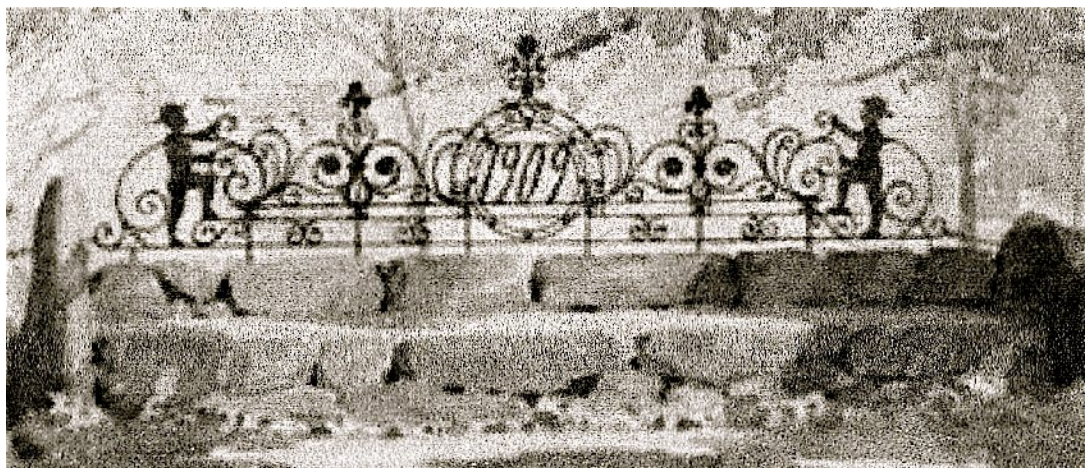


“The Flower Garden, I think, is one of the prettiest and most interesting places at Hillcrest. . .The entrance to the garden is off Wellesley Street just opposite Miss Case’s cottage.

“On the left of the driveway is the gardener’s house, in front of it an old picturesque well

which attracts our attention at once. Over it is a wooden bucket, which is attached to a windlass by a long chain. The well is partly hidden by flowering shrubs. On the right is a lawn in which are some Rose beds, and, acting as a background, a perennial border and a garden bench. This seat has an Ironwork back with the figures 1909 (the date when the first land for Hillcrest was bought), and a Hillcrest boy on each side. Near the seat is a big boulder covered with climbing Honeysuckle; the boulder has a sundial set in it, on which you may read this little motto: ‘My face marks the sunny hours. What can you say of

Above: 101 Wellesley Street, built about 1843 for farmer Nathan Barker, was purchased by Marian Case in 1909. She named it The Sentinels and used it for Hillcrest staff. In 1922, her gardener, Arthur Williams, moved here with his wife, Stella. The Williamses were immigrants from England. Their children, Vyvyian, Jack, Irene, and Tom grew up in the house at #101. Note the “picturesque well.” Below: This drawing shows the ornamental ironwork bench made for Marian Case by Weston blacksmith Oliver Patriquin. 1909 was the date when the first Hillcrest land was purchased. A Hillcrest boy stands at either end. The bench was located in the Flower Garden behind 101 Wellesley Street.



yours?” (THE FLOWER GARDEN, Harry Cann, p. 26-27)

[Cann goes on to describe the Rock Garden at the corner of the gardener's house, the lawn, the beds of phlox and dahlias, the morning glories on a wire trellis, and the big oak gate, on either side of which were American Pillar Roses covering the high stone walls, the long arbor of Rambler Roses, beds of other rose varieties, and the delphinium and other perennial beds and borders.]

• • •

“The high stonewall back of the espalier is the result of a visit to Tokio (sic), where I enjoyed seeing the dark green pines drooping over the grey stonewalls around the Mikado's palace. At Hillcrest we have the tall White Pines behind our wall, but with me the association lasts.” (Marian Case, p. 28)

Hillcrest Gardens, Weston, Massachusetts, The Twenty-first Summer by Marian Roby Case, F.R.H.S. and The Gardeners (1930)

“As you look over the beautiful grounds today, it is hard to realize the vast amount of time, labor, and money it has taken to get them in their present state of cultivation. When this land was purchased by Miss Case, it was practically all in poor condition and had to be cleared of stones and stumps. The removal of the stones was fairly easy to accomplish, but the removal of the stumps was another matter. It was found necessary to blast them out with dynamite. Considerable dynamite had to be kept on hand for this purpose. It was deemed advisable to construct a small cement vault in the woods, at a considerable distance from other buildings, for storage purposes.

“Near the Cave, as this storage vault is known, are a pigpen and two sheet metal garages. One garage is a three stall affair, the other a one stall. One of these buildings was erected in 1910, the other when the old yellow barn was taken down, and is used for storing sleighs and farm implements.” (THE CREATION OF HILLCREST, James Pender, p. 21 - 22)

[Editor's Note: This excellent summary includes the following additional points of interest: that the veranda was added to the clubhouse in 1927; that the iron gate on Wellesley Street was installed in 1929 to facilitate passage from Appletree Cottage to Louisa Case's house across Wellesley Street; and that above the barn was a weathervane “Boy with the Hoe” considered emblematic of the work of Hillcrest Gardens.]

* * *

“This summer we had some aerial photographs taken of Hillcrest. . .

“The other photograph shows the garden by my little white cottage, the garage back of it, and the gardener's house among the trees opposite Appletree Cottage. Back of this is the high stonewall, in front of which the seedling climbing roses are planted. In the

hollow by the open field is my sister's cow barn where her Guernsey herd is kept. This photograph also gives an idea of our woodlands. Back of the high stonewall are the tall pines for which the house now occupied by the gardener was called The Sentinels. Through this growth of trees, beginning at the end of the high stone wall, runs the wood road. . . (Marian Case, p. 25)

Hillcrest Gardens, Weston, Massachusetts, The Twenty-second Summer, by Marian Roby Case, F.R.H.S., and the Gardeners (1931)

"I have chosen the barn as the subject of my Labor Day paper because it is the center of all activities at Hillcrest. It is built of yellow brick with a slate roof and has a greenhouse connected with it. It was built in 1927. As you enter the main door at the side you see a large room with a concrete floor, and a balcony running along the farther side. On your right you see two sinks for washing vegetables and a shelf where small fruits are kept. There are also two closets, one a cooler where some of the fruits and vegetables are kept, and the other a storeroom for lawnmowers and other tools. Right next to the main door is an ashcan where rubbish is thrown. Beside the cooler is a door leading into another room where vegetables are washed and empty bushel boxes stored. To the left of the main door is a drinking fountain and above this are the racks where rakes, hoes, shovels, and pitch-forks are kept. Also on this side is a flight of steps leading to the balcony. At the farther end of this balcony is a room where fruit boxes are stored. At the head of the stairs is a room where Miss Case keeps some of her books. At the foot of the stairs is Mr. Park's office where the farm's business is carried on.

"In back of these rooms a hallway runs the whole length of the barn and at either end there is a large door. Here the horses are harnessed each morning by Mr. Cain. Along this hallway are the horses' stalls and the harness room. There are electric lights for each stall, and steam-heated radiators run along the hallway. Over the stalls is a hayloft where the horses' food is kept. The grain is stored in bins which are connected by tubes with the harness rooms. The hay is kept in bales and fed to the horses through mangers in the stalls.

"In the cellar most of the farm equipment is kept, such as wagons, ladders, and harrows. There is also a room where manure is deposited for fertilizer.

"Branching off from the cellar is the greenhouse where the plants Miss Case sends home from abroad are raised, and delicate plants cared for during the winter months. In connection with the greenhouse there is a rack for the plants and seeds.

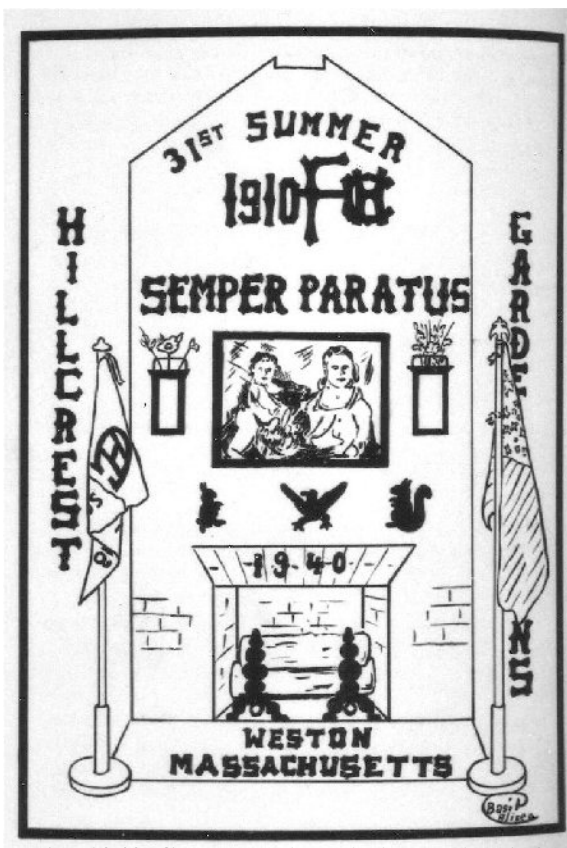
"I hope that after the exercises you will all inspect the barn as it is a fine example of its kind and Hillcrest would have a hard time without it." (THE BARN, Philip Menelly, p. 24-25) [*Editor's note: Following this report, Miss Case writes that cold storage equipment had not yet been installed because of the expense of running it.*]

Hillcrest Gardens, Weston, Massachusetts, The Twenty-third Summer, by Marian Roby Case, F.R.H.S. and The Gardeners (1932)

"We bought Crosslots when the building now used as the boys' clubhouse was being put up. The interior had not been built in, so we had no dividing walls to take down. At first the ceiling of the upper room was too low. This was afterwards remedied by Mr. Samuel W. Mead of Weston, who gave the room a high vaulting. So now we have a very pretty little hall which is useful not only for the boys' studies and lectures, but also for especial occasions at Hillcrest. (Marian Case, p. 48-49)

Hillcrest Gardens, Weston, Massachusetts, The Twenty-fourth Summer, by Marian Roby Case, F.R.H.S. and The Gardeners (1933)

"This year I have chosen the Club House for the topic of my paper; so many of our activities are being carried on there. The Club House is a two-story building with a wide piazza on two sides. On the lower floor is a large room with a long table in the center. On this fruits and vegetables are attractively arranged to be sold after the Wednesday afternoon lectures, also on Labor Day. In the upper room we have our study hours and it is here that the many interesting lectures are given. To the right of the raised platform are the bookcases which contain many valuable books on farming, gardening, forestry, and other interesting subjects. Here also we boys keep our diaries and drawing-pads. On the top of the bookcases are the leaf presses for pressing leaves, and the butterfly cases. On the opposite side is an old-fashioned fireplace above which is the Hillcrest motto of "Semper Paratus," which means "Ever Ready." On the other side of the fireplace are the American and Hillcrest flags, also the beautiful metal vases which are a new addition to the Club House this year. The shelf having fallen this summer the braces which held it are now decorated with a handsomely hand-made iron squirrel, bird and rabbit. These and the vases before mentioned



The 1940 Green Book includes a sketch by one of the boys of the fireplace in the club house. The drawing shows the objects described in the report at left, including the flags, the Semper Paratus motto, the metal vases to hold flowers, and the painting of Ceres by Florentine painter Alberto Angeli (see page 23)

were made for us by Mr. Petriquin (sic) the blacksmith [Oliver Patriquin]. Above these is the beautiful painting representing a bountiful harvest in a year of plenty.

“A group of some of the first Hillcrest boys’ photographs hang on the wall to my right. Many of these boys have returned to Hillcrest to tell the present boys of their experiences, while they were at Hillcrest and since. On my left one may see an air photograph of Hillcrest taken from an aeroplane several years ago, which makes no distinction between older and younger boys when looking down from above. This beautiful view gives one a very different impression of Hillcrest than what you get from the ground,.

“At the back entrance of the room is the lantern which throws the pictures on the screen during the illustrated lectures. It is kept in a cabinet. At the foot of the stairs near the front door is a pushbutton which connects with the large bell over the Club House. This bell is used to call those people in to the lecture who find the garden so interesting that they forget the time.

“The Club House is situated in a lovely spot. It is surrounded by a border of Lillacs, a rock garden, and the colorful annual beds. All in all, the Club House plays a very important part in our daily life at Hillcrest. (THE CLUB HOUSE, Tom Williams, p.36-37)



This 1943 photograph shows the last “class” of Hillcrest Boys. Because so many young men were in military service, the group was smaller and younger than in previous summers. That year Miss Case, although ill, came to the clubhouse on Labor Day to hear the boys’ papers, but she did not take charge of the exercises. The American and Hillcrest flags were carried by Hugh Chandler and Charles Spencer, the two boys who had been at Hillcrest the longest.

“The large painting to which Tom referred as representing a bountiful harvest was done by Mr. Alberto Angeli of Florence, who crossed on the steamer Columbia with us in the spring of 1926. He was coming to America to decorate some rooms in Florida. . . . I told him of the work with the boys that is done at Hillcrest Gardens and asked him to make a painting for their clubroom. The result was a beautiful picture of Ceres holding a large panier of fruit with a little boy in the corner. The introduction of the boy turned the Latin story of Ceres with her daughter Proserpine, who while she was underground with Pluto ate the three pomegranate seeds, so as a penalty has to return underground for three months every year, thus making our winters. . . . (Marian Case, p. 38)

* * *

“The Greenhouse was built in the year 1927. It is made of glass, wood, cement and metal. The greenhouse now is not very big but an addition is going to be made soon. This glass house is . . . connected with the back of the barn cellar. The greenhouse is heated by hot water from the boiler in the cellar of the barn.

“The greenhouse is used for growing plants whose flowers are wanted early in the spring, also quite a few tomato plants are grown for spring eating. Besides these, many seeds from foreign countries are grown; these seeds are sent home by Miss Case from her travels.

“There is quite a collection of little oak trees grown from acorns which Miss Case sent home from Italy. Miss Case has a collection of different Ivy plants; some of these seeds were sent from Algiers, Rugosa, and Pompeii. We have some daisy flowers called Gerbera, which are very pretty in the spring. These seeds came from Egypt.

“All kinds of annuals are raised to beautify our gardens. They are planted out as soon as the weather is warm and the frosty nights have gone. Miss Case has a conservatory at her cottage, to hold flowering plants, so we find the greenhouse very useful in raising potted plants to keep this bright in the winter time and early spring. We also have raised a lot of Azaleas and Rhododendrons and have planted them around the estate. . . .” (THE GREENHOUSE AND SOME OF ITS PLANTS, Philip Menelly, p. 41-42)

* * *

“This year, to save overhead expense, instead of running our own market we had our fruit and vegetables taken by The Weston Quality Market, from which Mr. Miller sent us a check each week. This saved much in petty bookkeeping. The first of August we began to send our truck with fruit and vegetables to Waltham. From the sales there we had good results. Fruits and vegetables are also sold after the lectures on Wednesdays, but we do not encourage small sales at Hillcrest Gardens. They take the men’s time when they are busy with their work.” (Marian Case, p. 49)

* * *



Bronze statue of a boy, sculpted by Marian Case's cousin, Hugh Williams Bigelow,

Hillcrest Gardens, Weston, Massachusetts, The Twenty-fifth Summer, by Marian Roby Case, F.R.H.S. and The Gardeners (1934)

“On this twenty-fifth anniversary of the starting of Hillcrest Gardens, or Hillcrest Farm as we first called our acres, my mind went back to the confusion of those first few years when the men we first employed were not the ones we wanted and the boys were most unruly. Through all these years one boy has kept faithful to his job from the afternoon when he sorted the bricks, throwing the poor ones into the cellar of the old red barn and piling up the good ones for further use. Today he has charge of the farm and is bringing us money from our crops, although not enough to pay all our expenses, for we are ambitious at Hillcrest Gardens, and wish to do all we can for the twenty boys who gather here each summer.” (Marian Case, p. 9) [*Miss Case was describing her superintendent, Tom Park*]

Hillcrest Gardens, Weston, Massachusetts, The Twenty-sixth Summer, by Marian Roby Case, F.R.H.S. and The Gardeners (1935)

“The bronze statue of a boy in front of my cottage was by Mr. Hugh Williams Bigelow, and stands above a basin for the birds to bathe in while I can watch them from my piazza.” (Marian Case, p. 62) [Bigelow was Miss Case's cousin]

Hillcrest Gardens, Weston, Massachusetts, the Twenty-seventh Summer, by Marian Roby Case, F.R.H.S. and The Gardeners (1936)

“Early last spring, Miss Case asked me to watch some seeds which had been shipped from the Kirstenbosch Gardens in South Africa, and to report on them today.

“These seeds arrived here on April 26, 1936, and included twenty-two varieties. I am sorry to say that not all of the twenty-two came up. Bad conditions encountered on the ship on which they crossed by mail probably caused this. . . .

“Before launching on a description of these plants, I would like to tell you a little about the Kirstenbosch Gardens, of which, by the way, Miss Case is a life member. Nestled into the mountains of South Africa, this widely known botanical garden is one of the beauty spots of the most beautiful of all British colonies. Not only that, but it serves a more important purpose in shipping seeds of rare plants to all countries of the world where these seeds may be unknown. A great variety of plants can be grown in the gardens because of the different types of land. Some of the plants are now growing in Hillcrest’s Picking Garden.” (FLOWERS FROM THE BOTANICAL GARDENS OF SOUTH AFRICA, Theodore Chandler, Jr., p. 32-33)

Hillcrest Gardens, Weston, Massachusetts, The Twenty-eighth Summer, by Marian Roby Case, R.F.H.S. and The Gardeners (1937)

“So many things happen here at Hillcrest Gardens during the summer while the boys are here that the happenings always make an interesting Labor Day paper. I hope in presenting this summer’s happenings I will prove acceptable to my audience. I have kept a record of these happenings in a diary form . . .

“June 24—This morning at eight o’clock I arrive, to find the strawberry bed producing a heavy crop of good berries. Several of the boys had been picking over a week already. Among the assembled twenty boys are eight strangers whom I will know pretty well by Labor Day.

“June 29—Today we got our uniforms. As a special innovation, and a very good one, we have two green sweaters instead of the brown jackets we used to have. One sweater is to be kept for lectures and Labor Day, and the other sweater is for general everyday use. On the everyday sweater we have a shield of gold colored felt with green letters. These are the farm colors. P.S. The new green ties are much snappier than last year’s black ones.

“July 2—Today I decided to write about the history of the summer for Labor Day. Labor Day seems pretty far away but we are preparing for it already.

“July 3—Today after working in the morning I spent a very enjoyable afternoon riding to Benson’s Animal Farm in New Hampshire with four other boys in Miss Case’s car. The chauffeur drove the car as he always does. There were a few changes at Benson’s from last year. These trips are enjoyed by all the boys who take them.

“July 5—We celebrated the Fourth of July today.

“July 6—Gee, it’s hard to pick strawberries when you are tired! Today we picked the first raspberries.

“July 10—A different group of five boys went to see the Harvard and Yale track team get beaten by Oxford and Cambridge. The score was seven to five for the Englishmen. There were some good performances.

“All this week we have had unbearable hot weather. On July 8 of this week we had the hottest day in sixty years, and I was weeding in the onion patch—without a bit of shade all the afternoon. In the sun the temperature went higher than our thermometer could record. In other words, it was over 120 degrees. Anyway I got a good tan.

“The boss [James Pender, Cornell student and former Hillcrest boy who was in charge of the boys that year] left after work today to go to Princeton University to compete for the Cornell-Princeton team against Oxford-Cambridge. Eddie Mattson took charge of the boys for the two days he was gone.

“July 16—Miss Case read us the Happy Warrior today in study hour. Every year the boys look forward to Miss Case’s rendition of this inspiring poem. A former Hillcrest boy put on an exhibition of boxing with one of the local boys, but sad to say he was floored in the first round, a few seconds after it started. Better luck next time!

“July 17—A third trip took five more boys to Benson’s Animal Farm.

“July 19—The boss got back on the job again. He did not win but he had a good time.

“July 22—We lost one of our ranks today. Emerson Canney decided the world was out of step with him.

“July 23—A new face appeared around the barn this morning to take the place of the one who quit. Mrs. Webster came Friday and gave a talk to us boys on fungi. Yesterday the boys collected a great variety of fungi for her.

“July 24—The last trip to Benson’s.

“July 28—Eddie Mercier missed a lecture today, and tomorrow he goes home. It’s the rule here.

“July 29—8 o’clock. Another new face in the line-up to take the vacant place.

“July 30—A Mr. Clark, from Webster’s studio, took our picture for the green book today.

“July 31—Yippie! Pay day!

“August 2—I determined to do my best during the hot weather that always comes in August.

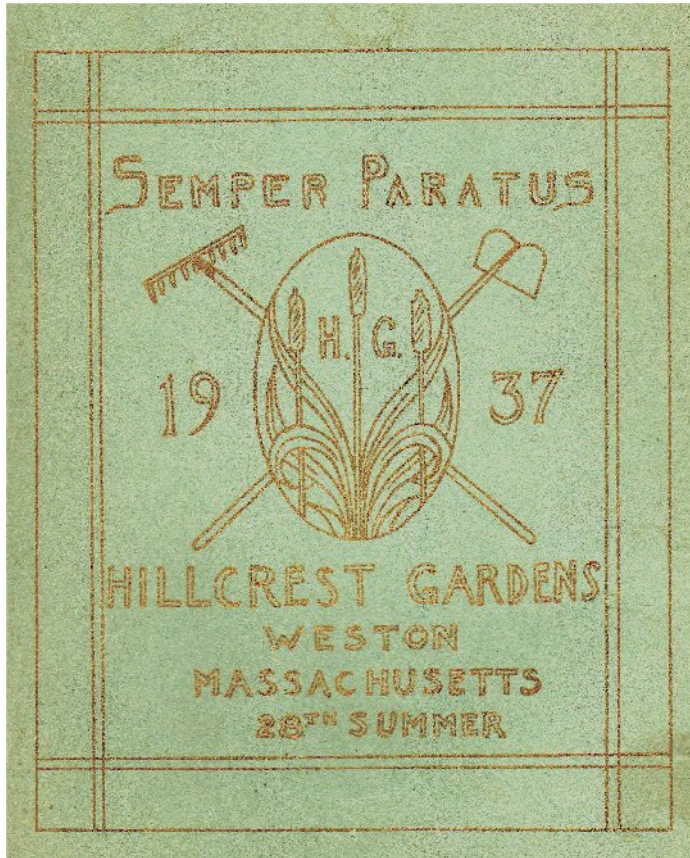
“August 3—The picture taken on Friday came out pretty except me.

“August 6—The entertaining Mr. Whitney gave a talk in study hour on designs. We are getting ideas for a design for the cover of our green book.

“August 9—We designed the cover for the green book. Maurice Subelia’s design was much better than anyone else’s and will appear on the cover.

“August 10—Robert Perkins got in step with Canney. If a boy leaves in August his place is left vacant.

“Since July 15 we have had three very light rains which added together were hardly enough to wet the ground. The spell is broken for this noon we had a downpour that left huge puddles in the half hour it rained. The high wind in back of it broke several limbs off trees, but did very little other damage.



“August 11— Only eighteen boys today. Bill, Emerson’s brother, was taken from the farm by his folks as they wanted to do some traveling.

“August 12— Only eighteen boys today.

“August 17—It looks as if there would be the heaviest tomato crop ever this year. Tomatoes have been coming in pretty steadily for quite a while already. We have finished the raspberries for this year. Six weeks is a long time to pick the same kind of berries.

“August 20—Dr. Ellsworth Huntington talked to us in study hour today about the weather and crops. He said that an inch of rain during the hot weeks is worth a hundred and fifty million dollars to the country. Afterward we fig-

ured that if the country were three thousand miles long and two thousand miles wide, and water cost a cent for ten cubic feet or about seventy-five gallons, it would cost almost fourteen and a half billion dollars for that much water to pass through a faucet. How about it, Mr. Roosevelt?

“The funniest event of the season’s happenings was this afternoon when three boys were sent down to pick yellow beans. In a half hour they straggled back to the barn, all sweaty and hot, with half a bushel of beans between them, Tom had just made a remark that it was too bad anybody had to work on such a hot day. When the boys came into the barn with their beans, Tom was waiting to take the beans to the market. The boys said, ‘Tom, this is all we got.’ Tom had just walked through the bean patch that noon. He forgot what he said just before they came in. Two minutes later the three boys hurried out of the barn with a scared look and picked a bushel in twenty minutes. Now, whenever a boy doesn’t do his duty, we say ‘No beans?’

“August 26—We waited all summer for today. It started a bit cloudy but by ten o’clock it had cleared up and the sun had come out. The reason we were worried about the weather today was because today is picnic day. The bus took a crowd of eighteen singing boys to Canobie Lake Park, where they had a grand and glorious time. We played baseball, went swimming, rollerskating, and rode on the amusements, and saw all the sights. Thank you, Miss Case!

“August 27—Boy, I am tired. It rained all day.

“August 31—Three cheers for pay day. We had a rehearsal for Labor Day. It is getting pretty close now.

“September 1—Bird Contest day. After a mighty struggle the goshawks flew down from the north to beat me--in the finals against George Olson. Maybe George does know more about birds than I do. Let me look for a goshawk some day through the glass that you won, will you, George? Another boy hit the exit trail. Arthur Turcotte failed to show up for the Bird Contest.

“September 3—Today is our last study hour. Mr. Crowley has our thanks for all the interesting things he has taught us.

“September 4—Today we are cleaning up the club house and the farm for Labor Day.

“Labor Day—The end of the road. At last fifteen boys have survived the march, with two recruits half way on the journey. After waiting for almost three months, my knees are wiggling at last. Thank you.” (HISTORY OF THE SUMMER, James Gregoricus, p. 43-47)

Hillcrest Gardens, Weston, Massachusetts, The Twenty-ninth Summer, by Marian Roby Case, F.R.H.S. and The Hillcrest Boys (1938)

“. . .the Dorgan house [next to Appletree Cottage] is to be taken down next spring as it is several years since it has been used, so it has fallen into disrepair and is too near my cottage to let.” (Marian Case, p. 52)

* * *

LIST OF TREES DESTROYED [IN THE HURRICANE OF 1938]

2500 Pines, average caliper 16-18”, many 2 to 3 feet in diameter

500 Oaks, average caliper 12-18”

250 Maples, average caliper 12-15”

(3 of these Maples between Miss Case’s cottage and the house of Mr. Williams, the gardener, were 2 feet in diameter)

TREES IN ORCHARD

74 Apple Trees, average caliper 6-8”, 15 years old, best bearing age

15 Peach Trees, 7 years old, best bearing age

8 Quince Trees

6 Plum Trees

Many ornamental trees and shrubs, among them the following:

8 Lilacs, 10-12’

1 Sargent cherry, unique specimen



This photograph in the 1938 Green Book shows the uprooted Poplar simonii next to the club house after the Hurricane of 1938. In his report on the storm, Jack Williams wrote "It had long been a favorite at Hillcrest Gardens for the shade it afforded the rock garden, and for its disease-resisting qualities."

1 Poplar simoni, 50' high, 35' spread
 3 Chinese Elms, among the oldest in the country.

"We have had twenty-nine summers for making our gardens, planting our trees, and educating and employing our boys, but with this destruction and the expense of clearing our land from it and repairing our buildings, we have reason to wonder what the future of Hillcrest Gardens will be!" (Marian Case, p. 75)

Hillcrest Gardens, Weston, Massachusetts, The Thirtieth Summer, by Marian Roby Case, F.R.H.S., Jack A Williams, and The Hillcrest Boys (1939)

Editor's note: This was the 30th reunion year and many of the Hillcrest Boys came for the Labor Day festivities and reunion. Marian Case had been ill but was able to attend. Dennis Crowley, one of the early boys and later a teacher at Hillcrest, gave a report on the activities of many of the "graduates", summarized as follows:

Harold Mosher, Superintendent of the Riverside Golf Course, MDC

John Lovewell, salesman

Herbert Lovewell, instructor in military aviation, US Navy

Dr. Stanley Hobbs, dentist in Waltham

Dr. Joseph Hobbs, physician, Williamsburg, Massachusetts

Anton Scholz, salesman

Edmund Mezzitt, student, landscape architecture, Cornell

Ernest Little, MIT student in chemistry

James Pender, student in agriculture, Cornell

Charles Pear, MIT graduate, member of the staff at the Blue Hill Observatory

Bernard Perry, associate editor, E.P. Dutton & Co. publishers
Tom Park, superintendent, Hillcrest Gardens
Jack Williams, superintendent, Hillcrest Gardens (in 1939)
Dennis Crowley, teacher and lawyer in Boston
James Plumer, assistant professor of Far Eastern Art, Univ. of Michigan
Harold Weaver, railway postal clerk, New York
Daniel Daley, milk technologist
John Cassidy, police officer, Weston
Antonio Rizzo, landscaper
Robert Turnbull MacAfee, student, Essex County Agricultural School
Carl M. Druse, Jr., gardener
Edward B. Nichols, employee, Rustcraft Publishers
Joseph LeBrun, job master machinist
Theodore Leaf, store manager
Robert Lassman, bookbinder
Robert Noone, sailor and tea blender
John Nomer, student
Arthur L. Coburn, Jr., banker

The former Hillcrest boys praised Miss Case's work with comments like this one from Antonio Rizzo "[the boys] not only learn botany, but also learn to respect people. That is why Miss Case has done more than enough for Hillcrest Gardens." (p. 26)

* * *

"Those who are gathered here today have heard something of the history of Hillcrest Gardens during these last thirty years. Some of you probably know that Miss Case hopes that the work she started in 1909 will not have to be given up after her death. She is anxious to have it continue into the future if arrangements to do so can be made.

"In these troubled times it is hard to feel sure of anything. Yet I hope that means of carrying on this beautiful place and this summer school of horticulture for boys may be found.

"Various plans have been suggested. Perhaps the simplest and certainly the least expensive would be to turn the land over to some existing organization to run as a park and nothing more. It might be given to the town of Weston, or to the



This photograph of Marian Case was taken in Naples, Italy, in 1929. Because of her health and horticultural interests, miss Case often traveled to the Mediterranean in winter. Contacts from around the globe sent seeds to Hillcrest for trial.

county, or to the Metropolitan Park system. Other organizations that might be able to run it as a park are the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, Harvard College (through the Arnold Arboretum), or Wellesley College. These three might be able to go further than the simple park idea and might keep up or enlarge the present gardens, conduct test gardens of herbaceous plants and of annuals, and institute research work in various fields connected with flower gardens.

“To continue the school will be more difficult because it will require additional money. As a separate organization it would require a competent director and a teaching staff. Here again it would be desirable instead of building up a new organization, to turn it over to some already existing legal body, such as the public schools of the town of Weston, which is nearby and which already has a fine teaching staff, or to some nearby college with a department of botany such as Harvard or Wellesley, or even to some distant institution like the State College of Agriculture at Amherst.

“Of all the organizations mentioned it has seemed that the Massachusetts Horticultural Society might be the best fitted to carry on this work. This Society which is 110 years old is constantly taking a more important place in New England horticulture. It has never had the opportunity to own land and to develop gardens and it might under certain circumstances welcome this opportunity. I say “certain circumstances” because at the present time the problems of this Society (and of many others) are financial. It cannot embark on any new enterprise unless sufficient new money can be obtained so that the new enterprise will not be a drain on its present resources.

“It would be less expensive for the Horticultural Society to carry on the work here than for any other organization that comes to my mind, because it already has a competent staff of horticulturists and is in touch with teachers and lecturers.

“Whatever else the future may bring one thing is certain. It will bring change in the horticultural world just as change is the rule everywhere else. The work at Hillcrest will necessarily have to change greatly and its exact role in the horticulture of the future cannot be foretold. New conditions necessitate new methods. The gardens here now are already very different from those of only thirty years ago. We cannot lay down exact programs for the future. All Miss Case can do is to express her wish that her present work should continue. She and all of us must trust to the intelligence and good faith of the persons and organizations who may take over the work here. If they follow the spirit of the founder, there will be many years of usefulness ahead for these gardens started in 1909 by Miss Marian Roby Case. (THE FUTURE OF HILLCREST GARDENS, John C. Wister, p. 30-32)

* * *

“Miss Case, Hillcrest Boys, and Friends: In the past twenty-five or even fifty years machines have come to play an important part in agriculture both in our country and in fact all over the world. Through the use of machines we are able to get more work done, which leads to a larger and generally a better grade of farm products.

“In this paper I am going to tell you mostly about the machines here at our Hillcrest Gardens. I will first try and tell you of the larger, as well as the most important machines; and also how they are used here at Hillcrest.

“First I will take what I think are the most important machines on the farm; they are the two trucks. One is a Ford and the other a G.M.C. These trucks are used to collect the harvested crops around the farm and to carry the smaller implements to different parts of the farm. These trucks are also used to take the produce to market.

“Next we take the tractor. At Hillcrest we have a McCormick (sic) Deering Farmall; it is a gas-driven tractor. This is used in the spring to do the heavy plowing and harrowing. During the summer it is used to tote around another large machine known to us as a spray wagon. During the winter the tractor was used to do the heavy hauling in the process of logging which followed in the wake of the hurricane. Another useful machine is the one just mentioned above, the spray wagon. This is a machine that has its own gas-driven motor which forms the pressure used in spraying. To this motor is attached a large wooden tank in which the spray is mixed and contained while the process of spraying is going on.

“Next is the roto-tiller. This is a machine which has fork-shaped instruments which are whirled in the ground. These are turned by the little motor which is the sole power of this hand-operated machine. It is used to break up the soil into very fine particles.

“We now take a very important machine called a power-driven mower. Through the aid of this machine we can do all the lawns at Hillcrest Gardens in a day, which by hand would take two or three days.

“Then there are the fertilizer spreader, corn planter, horse-drawn plows, harrows and cultivators, also hand-powered cultivators and many other small less important machines which I have mentioned.

“We are expecting that the future will yield bigger and better crops in a still shorter time than at present. This will be brought about by the aid of two still growing fields, that of chemistry and machines.” (MACHINES AID IN AGRICULTURE, Maurice Subilia, p. 44-45)

* * *

“I am quite sure that none of us will ever forget the terrible havoc wrought by the hurricane which struck New England with devastating force during the late afternoon hours of last September 21st. Nothing quite like it had ever been experienced here before, certainly not in my lifetime. Beautiful trees I had known and loved since the earliest years of my childhood for their beauty and rugged strength, within a few short hours lay broken and battered like dethroned giants. Such is the terrific force of Nature in a tantrum.

“. . . I shall devote my paper to the task of cleaning up the woods at Hillcrest during the late fall and winter months. On Saturdays the larger boys aided in the work of cutting, carrying and burning brush. This was good healthy work, which gave us firm muscles and big appetites. After the brush had been burned, the small branches and split

and twisted trunks were cut into lengths and piled to be used later as firewood. When this had been completed the real work of lumbering was ready to begin.

“With a four-foot stick the large tree trunks were measured off into either twelve or sixteen foot lengths. Then the trunk was sawed into lengths and hauled by either the horse or tractor to a bunk from which the large Brockway truck, capable of carrying up to eight tons of logs, could be easily loaded. . . .

“During the winter months the Government hired a field in Wayland in which the lumber was to be stored until a portable sawmill could be established to saw the logs into lumber suitable for building purposes. About the middle of December we started to haul logs. . . .

“. . . we managed to average about five trips a day. Each load scaled about one thousand board feet. Under the able supervision of Charlie, the truck driver, the loads were well and sturdily built to withstand the rough going between Hillcrest Gardens and the Government cache in Wayland. . . .

“Surprising as it may seem we hauled our one hundred and thirty thousand board feet in less time than any of the other concerns. Most of this was white pine which constituted our greatest loss at Hillcrest. By the end of the winter there were a million and a half board feet stored in Wayland with an estimated million and a half yet to be hauled.

“In June of this year, the sawmill having been installed, the task of converting the raw logs into usable lumber for building purposes was undertaken.” (AFTER THE HURRICANE, Thomas Williams, p. 47-52)

Hillcrest Gardens, Weston, Massachusetts, The Thirty-first Summer, by Marian Roby Case, F.R.H.S., Jack A. Williams and The Hillcrest Boys (1940)

“Last winter a long illness dulled my interest in what was going on about me until one morning in Pasadena I happened into the seed store of Douglas Fraser and Son, where I woke up. Here I made the acquaintance of Mr. Douglas Fraser. . . .

“Mr. Fraser also said that he knew our friends, the Menella family in Torre Del Greco, the little town which nestles under the sun and shade of Mount Vesuvius, the smoky mountain. From the garden of the Menellas we have received seeds for many years. Although the Mr. Menella who used to send us our seeds is now dead, we continue to receive some seeds from his two sons, or did through the winter of 1939 and 1940. Whether these seeds will continue to arrive, with all the countries of Europe at war, we cannot tell, but we are looking for the day when peace shall reign and the world will blossom with the flowers of Italy and of our own native land, for America has many wild flowers of which we should be proud.” (Marian Case, p. 9)

Hillcrest Gardens, Weston, Massachusetts, The Thirty-third Summer, by Marian Roby Case, F.R.H.S., William L. Chandler and The Hillcrest Boys (1942)

“I am sure all the boys regretted the impossibility of the Canobie Lake trip this year, but we know that this is because of the lack of transportation materials and facilities.” (THE EFFECTS OF THE WAR ON HILLCREST GARDENS, Henry Johnson, p. 11)

* * *

“Miss Case and Friends of Hillcrest Gardens:

“. . .after hearing Mr. Dallas Lore Sharp’s lecture on ‘Soldiers in Overalls’ I decided to change to this present title.

“Mr. Sharp said that the New England farms are small but grow mostly vegetables. This is a great help because it saves room on trains and trucks for more important manufactured goods by supplying Boston and other large cities with fresh fruits and vegetables.

“This brings us to the situation at Hillcrest Gardens. We are helping the war effort in many ways. First we have the opportunity to learn to respect other peoples’ property. Also we are doing work which improves the mental and physical condition of our bodies. This is something that is necessary in the future to our country.

“The other great service, which is directly more important is the feeding, or helping feed, Weston, Waltham, and other near by towns.

Hillcrest Gardens sends a large truck load of fresh vegetables to Waltham and another truck to the Weston Market every day. The average load contains corn, tomatoes, beans, beets, carrots, peppers, apples, and any other crop which is in season.

‘To many people this may seem small, but when it is figured that a load goes every day it is easily seen that many a train car is saved for vital defense transportation.

“Remember, that no matter how small your job seems it is worth doing well if it is worth doing at all. Every one at Hillcrest has learnt this and we all try to live up to it. Your Victory Garden may be small, but keep it free from weeds





Photos taken at the October 14, 2006, special event “Celebrate Case: Honoring our Past, Protecting our Future.” Six former Hillcrest boys participated in a panel discussion. Above left:(l-r) Jack Williams, Tom Williams, Hugh Chandler, Tom Coburn. Below left: (l-r) George Gallitano, Salvatore Rizzo and Jack Williams. Above: Pam Fox as Marian Case. At a Special Town Meeting on November, 2006, Weston residents voted to purchase the Case Estates from Harvard University.

and garden pests and keep the railroads free for vital troop and defense transportation.” (SOLDIERS IN OVERALLS, George Gallitano, p. 11-13)

“During the summer of 1943 many of the lectures that in past summers have attracted much interest in Weston have had to be canceled. The gasoline shortage has kept lecturers and audiences away from Weston.

“The same situation prevails all over our country, all over the world, multiplying our gardening problems by the hundreds. Food must be consumed by the local markets because transportation facilities of all kinds—cars, trucks, refrigeration cars—are overloaded.

“If the United States must be the ‘breadbasket’ of the world for the next few years, . . . then many small gardens must take the place of a few large ones.

“Hillcrest Gardens is doing a fine job in training boys to help the threatened food problem. Gardening takes more willingness to work, patience and good honest sweat. Boys who have spent summers at Hillcrest will be well able to take on the tremendous job of filling local food markets and releasing more supplies for the tragic countries in Europe.” (GASOLINE AND GARDENING, Albert Everett, p. 44-45)

The Weston Historical Society would like to thank George Bates for the gift of two milk bottles from the Wellesley Farms Dairy, which was located on the Charles Jones Estate on Glen Road. One bottle is embossed and the second has orange pyro glaze lettering.

With Grateful Thanks to our Life Members

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