

A Weston Timeline

(Taken from *Farm Town to Suburb: the History and Architecture of Weston, Massachusetts, 1830-1980* by Pamela W. Fox, 2002)

19th CENTURY



*Above: Garfield (later Footes) Mill on Stony Brook.
Below: Methodist Society's first church building.*



1817 Town purchases an 80-acre farm on Conant Road near the Lincoln line as a Poor Farm, replacing an earlier, more centralized “work house.”

1820s First summer residents and gentlemen farmers begin to move quietly into Weston

1821 Garfield (later Footes) Mill is established on North Avenue using power from Stony Brook. The cider mill was still in operation in 1950. Building also used for blacksmithing, wheel-wrighting, and, later, carriage making.

1824-25 Final separation of church and state in Massachusetts. Until that time, town tax dollars support the town church (First Parish) despite protests from both Baptists and Methodists, who have to file exemptions.

1828 The Methodist Society constructs a Gothic Revival house of worship on North Avenue. This building burned down on December 31, 1899.

1828 First Baptist Church moves from its original location on South Avenue to Boston Post Road. No pictures have been found of the 1828 building.

1831 Nathaniel Sibley and two partners establish Sibley Mills on Boston Post Road at Stony Brook, with a machine shop, gristmill, and mill for manufacturing cotton yarn machinery, all powered by Stony Brook.

1834 Boston and Worcester Railroad is the first railroad to lay tracks in Weston, Although the B & W (later the Boston & Albany) never had a station stop in Weston, proximity to Wellesley Farms and Riverside Stations improved transportation on the south side.



1898 photo of the screen factory on Crescent St.

1838 Samuel H.F. Bingham establishes a machine shop on Crescent Street on the site of an earlier mill. He produces machinery to make heavy woolen goods and the Bingham butter and cheese drill. In later years, the mill is used by Charles A. Freeman as a screen factory.



1840 First Parish Church builds its third meetinghouse in the Greek Revival style.

1845 The Fitchburg Railroad Company completes a rail line from West Cambridge to Fitchburg with at least one station in Weston, at North Avenue and Church Street. Three years later, rail service is extended to Boston.

1847 The Greek Revival style is chosen for Weston's first town hall, located opposite First Parish Church on what is now the Town Green.



Above: Third meeting house of First Parish Church, built in 1840. Right: First Town Hall, built in 1847, also in the Greek Revival style.



1850-1914 Immigrants begin arriving from Ireland (mid-1850s), French Canada (late 1860s), and later non-English speaking countries including Italy.

1852 G.W. Cutting Sr. builds a new general store adjacent to the Town Hall. Cutting's Store sells dry goods, grain, woodenware, agricultural tools, and "virtually everything that the average farm and household needed" except perishable items."

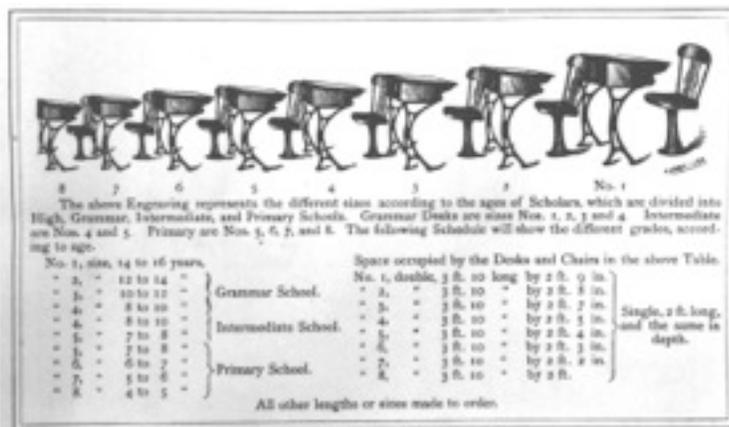
1851-53 Weston builds six new one-room district schoolhouses, replacing earlier school buildings.



1854 Weston opens its first secondary school, located in the town hall.

1854 Samuel Shattuck establishes a small manufactory to produce school desks and chairs, later operated by Oliver Kenney. It moves to Baldwinsville in 1917.

1857 Weston Public Library is established in its first location, the 1847 town hall.



Above: Cutting's Store, c. 1913. Center: One of Weston's six district schools. Below: Page from school furniture catalogue.



1861-65 Sixty-seven Weston residents serve as soldiers in the Civil War.

1863 A second wave of well-to-do summer residents and gentlemen farmers begins with banker and dry goods merchant James B. Case, who spends summer with his family in an existing farmhouse on Wellesley Street before building what is now Case House in 1889.

Late 1860s Town Hall is enlarged and a memorial marble plaque installed to honor 12 men from Weston killed in the Civil War. The plaque is now located in the new addition to the present Town Hall.

1873 Linwood Cemetery established.

1875 State census lists Weston's total valuation at \$227,883 for agricultural products and \$51,900 for goods and services, the most important being butchering, school furniture, and wool carding.

1877-78 Weston builds its first high school, on School Street, designed by Boston architect Carl Fehmer, with space for 75 students.

1881 First Baptist Church builds a Victorian Gothic church to replace its earlier building.



Above: 1884 painting by J. J. Enneking of the Hastings Homestead on North Avenue. Below: Weston's first high school building, later used as a grammar school. Left: Second church building for the Baptist Society.



1881 Passengers on the newly opened the Central Massachusetts Railroad line can now travel from Boston to Hudson. The new Stick-style Weston Station (now vacant) is located on Church Street.

1882 First town by-laws adopted. A town committee is chosen to select names for principal roads.



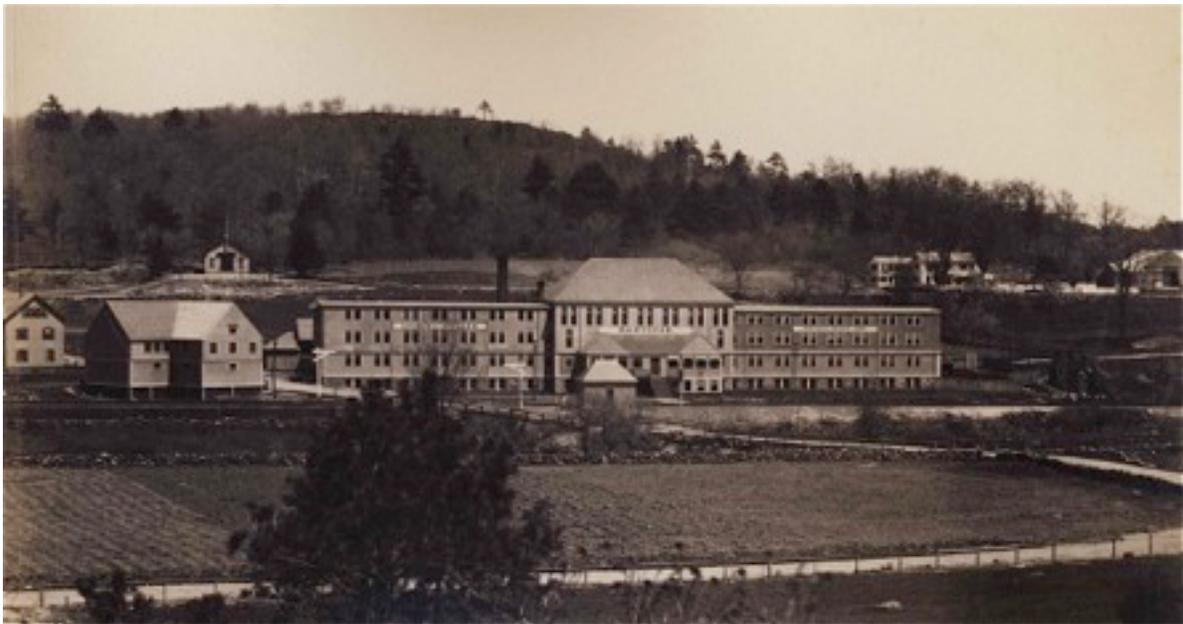
1885 First Parish Church establishes the First Parish Friendly Society to aid with fund-raising for a new church and to increase sociability.

1887 The Town Improvement Society is founded, with estate owner General Charles Jackson Paine as first president. It is reorganized in 1895 as the Village Improvement Society.

Late 1880s First telephones appear in Weston homes. By 1895, the telephone company is required to maintain public telephones in the town center and Kendal Green.



1888 First Parish completes its handsome fieldstone church, designed by Boston architect Robert Peabody and inspired by small country churches of medieval England.



1889 Hook & Hastings Co moves from Roxbury to Weston. The company, which built some of the country's greatest church and concert hall organs, is by far the largest of the town's 19th century mills and industries. Weston native Francis Henry Hastings builds the three-story wooden factory, 280 feet long, on his family farmland at North Avenue and Viles Street. The organ factory is the town's largest employer from 1889 to its closing in 1935.

1890 – 1930 Peak of the Estate Era in Weston. More than a dozen major estate mansions are constructed in the third wave of the estate era in Weston. Estate owners had a major impact on town government, schools, and private beautification efforts. They provided leadership and money, in amounts large and small, for projects to enrich the town.



Above: Hook & Hastings Co, organ factory, circa 1892 photo taken looking north from Viles Street toward North Avenue and Cat Rock. Left: 1893 photo of Francis Blake house, "Keewaydin", Right: 1904 photo of Hubbard house, "Ridgehurst."

1890s Bicycle craze in full swing.

1897-1904 Town leaders oppose several proposals to build street railway lines through Weston. They approve a plan for streetcars on North Avenue but financial difficulties prompted the company to annul the contract. Weston remains “one town without a trolley line.”

1890 Weston takes first steps toward establishing a fire department. The first piece of fire apparatus, a hook-and-ladder truck, was kept in Francis Henry Hastings’s shed on North Avenue and pulled by heavy farm horses owned by Thomas Coburn.



1890s Weston Police Department evolves from a system of using local citizens as temporary constables or special police to a department headed by P.J. McAuliffe as the town’s first chief of police (by 1908). The police department has no town-owned vehicles until 1915, when the selectmen purchased one motorcycle. The town does not have a full-time police department until 1922, when new state laws made this possible.

1893 Weston implements a centralized school system. Four district schools close the following year. District School #4 on North Avenue and #5 on South Avenue remain open longer because of strong neighborhood support.



mid-1890s A decorative metal watering trough is installed in the town center next to the flagpole on a small circle of cobblestones level with the road surface. A twin trough was placed at Church Street and North Avenue.

1894 Weston Golf Club, one of the earliest in the nation, is established. Until 1916, the golf course is located on leased land on the west side of Church Street.



Above: 1898 photo of John and Charles Martin hoeing fields on the Loring estate on Summer Street. Below: 1895 Weston High School (now Brook School Building A).

1895 Agriculture remains the mainstay of the town's economy. That year, Weston had 143 farms including 104 general farms (average 64 acres), 13 dairy farms (average 76 acres), four egg and poultry farms (average 22 acres), four market gardens (average 22 acres), and three florists (average one acre) with the remainder classified as wood or grass lots. Agricultural products most valued were dairy (34.5%) and hay (27%). Ninety of the 104 general farms were still farmed by the owner.

1895 Weston's second high school (now Brook School Building A) is designed by architect and local resident Samuel Mead. Boys and girls had separate entrances.

1890s Weston Aqueduct Company begins laying pipe to supply water to parts of town and allow watering of streets to keep down the dust.

1896 Weston Water Company is incorporated and issues stock to pay off debts of Weston Aqueduct Company. This and other private companies supply water to town residents until the early 1920s, when the town takes on this responsibility.

1896 The Weston Electric Light Company is founded and operates in conjunction with the Weston Water Company, with largely the same stockholders. Generating equipment is housed in the water company building and includes a dynamo. The town, which had been maintaining oil lamps, contracts with the electric company to provide power for new electric streetlights. The Weston Electric Light Company is sold to Edison Electric Illuminating Company in 1912.



1896-97 Estate owner Horace Sears purchases 46 acres on Pigeon Hill and hires a surveying firm to lay out the original 17 lots in Weston's first planned subdivision. Lots are sold to the town's slowly emerging professional class and to businessmen who take the Central Massachusetts Railroad into Boston,

Turn of the Century. Glen House Hotel on Glen Road reaches its peak of operation. It began about 1875, when Willard Jennings, like other Weston farmers, began taking in summer boarders.



1899 The new Drabbington Lodge is illuminated by electricity when it opens on North Avenue. A newspaper article at the time called it "one of the best of suburban hotels."



Above: At its heyday at the turn of the century, the Glen House Hotel had 40 bedrooms and five small freestanding cottages. Below: The Drabbington Lodge attracted visitors from many states.