



THE

CHRONICLE

QUARTERLY

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OLD BARNs

Old barns are beautiful, whether they are strong and sturdy or mostly fallen down. Since most of us have probably never seen too many new barns all we have to gaze on are old, gray, weathered barns of many sizes and shapes, most of which have outlived their usefulness and are left to slowly fade away. But all of these barns we look at were new barns at some date in the past, barns that were raised by farmers and their neighbors as was the custom.

These barns were their pride and joy and provided them with much needed shelter for livestock, hay, and equipment. Barns were built following the general shape of the barns in the farmer's homeland and built of like materials if available.

In New England there was timber-plenty to make barns of wood, leaving the stones for the fences needed to contain livestock.

We have several of these old barns in Weston, built by the ancestors of some of our residents. Some, like our barn museum, are in excellent condition; in fact, many have been remodeled into homes. Some are in advanced stages of decay and are close to collapsing. The Adams barn next to the old post office is in this stage. While it is still beautiful, it has been deteriorating slowly over the past 75 years. As it breaks up and dries out it becomes a fire hazard and eventually becomes a pile of wood.

Since the town had no specific need for the barn, the fact that it will benefit someone else should not draw tears from Weston residents. Let's remember the barn as we have seen it over the past number of years and when it has been moved we can say "this foundation is the site of the Adams barn. What a beautiful barn it was!!!!"

HAVE YOU PAID YOUR DUES?

A number of Society members have not paid their 1982 dues yet. If you forgot, how about sending it in now to: Mrs. Violet Greenwood, 158 Georgetown Rd., Weston, CT. 06883.

THE

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

PRESENTATIONS MADE TO THREE SOCIETY MEMBERS

At the May meeting of your society, Mr. Robert Harper Sr. and Mr. W. Scott Hill were presented plaques honoring their years of service to the society as trustees and past presidents of the society.

In presenting the plaques to Mr. Harper and Mr. Scott Hill, Herb Day, president, read from the plaques: "The Trustees of The Weston Historical Society take pleasure in naming you Trustee Emeritus, honoring your outstanding service to the society."

At a later presentation, Mr. Edwin Phelps was similarly honored and made a Trustee Emeritus. Mr. Phelps was a founder of the society and has served in several positions including president.

The society has grown under their direction and the major achievements of the society were accomplished during their terms of office.

HISTORICAL BRIEF

To extend telephone service from Cannondale Road to Langner Lane, two brothers and their two cousins, also brothers, cut and set the poles along Georgetown Road. They lived in the only four houses in that section. Later electric wires were strung on the same poles. At that time Langner Lane was just two wheel tracks over the ledges with grass growing in the middle. In the spring of the year Georgetown Road was impassable in places. Many times while the frost was coming out of the ground, men along the road were asked to hitch up their horses or oxen to pull some hapless motorist out of a mudhole.

BARN RENOVATION COMMITTEE 1982



Lou Bregy, Reeve Biggers, Anson Morton
Sylvia Boules, Lou Harber

BARN MUSEUM RENOVATION

In the last issue of the Chronicle we briefly mentioned that the trustees were planning a partial renovation of the barn. These renovations include the fitting out of a room on the second floor of the back portion of the barn which we have not been using. This room will be insulated, heated and furnished as a meeting room for craft demonstrations, trustee meetings, and other functions of the society. We will also make small repairs on the main barn building including repainting.

As we proceeded to obtain a permit for the work, we realized that the location of the barn and the present parking area were in violation of the zoning regulations. We therefore have applied for several variances to the zoning regulations to permit us to continue to operate as a museum. As this is written we have not had a response to this appeal. Hopefully, we will be successful and allowed to maintain our museum in this location.

If everything proceeds as planned, we hope to have an open house this fall in our new wing of the barn.

NANCY CAMPBELL SPEAKER AT MAY 19, MEETING

At the May meeting of the society Nancy Campbell led a discussion on the attitude, training, and operations problems and potentials in historic house interpretations. She also showed slides from her work as Director of Interpretation and Education at Sleepy Hollow Restorations in Tarrytown N.Y.

PICTURE QUIZ

Can You Name This?



If you can name the item in the picture, send your answer and your name and address to the Editor;

THE CHRONICLE
P.O. Box 1092
Weston, CT 06883

The answer will appear in the next issue.

Last Issue's Quiz

The item in the picture in the first issue of the Chronicle was a bed rope tightener. Many of the beds years ago had rope "springs" on which the corn husk or feather mattress was laid. This tool was used to tighten the rope which had a habit of stretching with use and the weather. Two people sent in the right answer.

Linda Martin and James Bennett.

Congratulations

The answer for this issue's quiz will appear in the next Chronicle.

VOLUNTEERS

In response to requests by the society for volunteer help, we have received many offers from readers and members to help in various ways. We appreciate your desire to help and we will be in touch with you. The society will be forming several committees covering our activities and *we will be* calling you for your help. Thanks.

MEMORIAL DAY PARADE

The WHS was awarded third prize for our "float" in the parade. We are indebted to Sylvia Bowles and her assistants and to Matt McCullough for the use of his 1927 Model T.

WESTON'S HISTORICAL NOTEBOOK

Each quarter we will explore a part of Weston history. In this issue we present a short history of the two oldest churches in town: Emanuel Church on Lyons Plains Rd. and Norfield Church on Norfield Rd. We are indebted to the church offices for the information presented.

THE PARISH OF EMANUAL CHURCH



The Parish of Emmanuel Church was organized in 1762 as The Episcopal Society of North Fairfield at Gilberttown. It was established and overseen for some years by The Rev. George Piggott, a Church of England missionary (S.P.G.) based in Rye, New York. The Rev. Mr. Piggott went about his work in Fairfield County on horseback, often under the protection of an armed guard.

A building—sizable for its time and circumstance—was erected by the Gilberttown Society just off Black Rock Turnpike on a site close by the present Gilberttown Cemetery. In Piggott's absence, the congregation was cared for by Lay Readers, notably one Philo Shelton (Yale, 1775).

In 1784 when Samuel Seabury returned from being consecrated Bishop in Scotland, the first man he ordained Deacon and then Priest was Philo Shelton, thus making Shelton the first man to receive Episcopal ordination in North America. In 1787 the town of Weston was incorporated (encompassing at that time what is now the Town of Easton, as well) and Shelton was called to be Rector of the continuing congregation which changed its name to The Episcopal Society of Weston. Shelton served as Rector until 1812 and was, during

THE NORFIELD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH



The first settlement in this section of Connecticut was the town of Fairfield, of which Weston was a part. Roger Ludlowe, who fought against the Indians in 1637, purchased land from the Pequonoke Indians and established a plantation at Unquowa—the Indian name for fair field (Fairfield). Part of this land was called the North Field, much of what is now the town of Weston.

The first church in Fairfield was located in Greenfield Hill; later a church was established at Greens Farms. Both churches were under the authority of the General Court of the Colony of Connecticut. Since church attendance was compulsory and because it was difficult traveling to lower Fairfield, farmers from the North Field area petitioned the General Court in 1756 for a church of their own. On June 23, 1757 the first meeting of the Norfield Parish was held. On July 4, 1757 the Reverend Samuel Sherwood was called to the ministry, and one month later with only twelve members the Church was organized.

In 1758, the first church building was built on land said to be on the corner of Kettle Creek Road, south of Heritage Lane. This church was never finished and a few years later the membership voted to build a second one using the timbers and materials of the older church. In 1784 it was constructed near the corner of Norfield and Old Hyde Roads. This meeting house served the Parish for 46 years until the

THE PARISH OF EMANUAL CHURCH (Cont.)

many of those years, Rector of Fairfield and Stratfield (now Bridgeport) as well.

In August 1845, the towns of Weston and Easton divided. There had been considerable discussion in the Society even before this time touching the necessity of a new building and its possible relocation. Sharp disagreement ensued between the Weston and Easton contingents of the congregation as to the proper location for a new building site, and when all other attempts at resolution had failed, the matter went into litigation.

Meanwhile, on their own recognition, two leading members of the Weston congregation, Hanford Nichols and Walter Treadwell, provided land and initiated construction of a new church building in the Lyons Plains section of Weston. The Weston congregation voted to accept the gift thus proffered by Nichols and Treadwell, and in November, 1846, a favorable ruling came out of litigation certifying that the Weston congregation constituted the legally continuing succession of the Episcopal Society of Weston.

In 1852, by action of the Convention of the Diocese of Connecticut in response to a request from the Weston congregation,

THE NORFIELD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH (Cont.)

present church was built in 1830. Some of the timbers and the large front doors of the second church are in our present church. The church was much the same then as it is today except the steeple was taller. Also, there were two pot-bellied

RESPONSE TO THE FIRST ISSUE

All the comments we have received on our first issue of the Chronicle have been good. Several excellent suggestions for future issues have also been received and will be used. We welcome all suggestions and comments.

Two aspects of the Chronicle stand out to this editor. First, we have received memberships from many Weston residents who were not members before and second, this second issue has been sent to the members. Continuity is important and now that we have printed our second issue we hope we are on the way to making this a regular quarterly publication. We do, however, need a permanent editor to really get the Chronicle off to a good start. We

the name of the Society was changed once more, this time being designated The Parish of Emmanuel Church.

As the industrial fortunes of Weston declined after the mid-nineteenth century, times were increasingly difficult for the tiny congregation as it struggled to maintain itself. The faith and determination of the people involved is all the more noteworthy when we recall that the population of Weston dwindled, during this time, from an 1860 high of 1117 to a 1930 low of 670. Among the men who served as Rector during this period was The Rev. Alexander Hamilton, a namesake of his famous ancestor who served as Washington's Treasurer and Secretary from 1789-1795.

In 1895, to mark the 50th anniversary of the "new" building, the interior of the building was remodeled and refurbished according to the tastes of the gothic revival, so-called, which was then in vogue. The original elevated pulpit on the East wall was removed and a stained glass window was put in its place commemorating The Rev. David Tomlinson, Rector from 1845 to 1864. In addition, a massive rood screen was introduced to span the front of the Church in its entirety, separating nave from Chancel, and period furniture and appointments were then filled in to taste. While

stoves for heating at the rear of the church where the two closets are now located. Behind the church were carriage sheds, some of which stand today.

All social life centered around the Church. In the Fall there would be wood cutting bees and hearty family dinners. A school house and firehouse were constructed on the property, and all town

have ideas but need a person with the experience, time and desire to help us produce a newsletter you will be interested in reading.

Don't be bashful. Drop a note to the W.H.S., P.O. Box 1092, Weston, CT. 06883 or call 227 6130.

GENEALOGY

The Weston Historical Society has purchased the conference proceedings of The World Conference on Records, preserving our heritage, sponsored by the Mormon Church. This meeting which was held in Aug. 1980, consisted of 300 lectures on all aspects of genealogy. These lectures are contained in 12 volumes and are on loan to the Weston Library for residents to use.

well-intended, this change was not altogether successful, since the heavy gothic mood did not harmonize with the clean lines and open atmosphere of the original Greek revival architecture. Consequently, in the 1950's the congregation removed the gothic additions and undertook the restoration of the building in such a way that it would more faithfully and felicitously express the original intent of the builders. A new pulpit was constructed, employing the front panel and the main lines of the old one. This then was moved to the North side of the nave, and a new Altar and lecturn, faithfully reproducing the original woodwork pattern, were made for their respective places. The stained glass window was left in place, but was covered with a plain but elegant wooden reredos, painted white. The cantilevered balcony was also added at this time, and under it, in the southwest corner, a small sacristy. Apart from minor changes, the building remains today as restored at that time.

A Parish Hall was constructed in 1956 and that, along with the Rectory, built about 1850 and presented to the Parish in 1867 by Hanford Nichols, make up the complex of buildings which a visitor to the Parish sees today.

meetings were held in the church until a town hall was built in 1883.

The Parish Hall, built in 1955, incorporates part of the old firehouse and the entire school house. The present church parlor is the old school house.

Norfield Congregational Church has been serving Weston for over 215 years.

MAPS

The 1867 map of Weston is available from the society. Please send \$2.00 to Weston Historical Society, P.O. Box 1092, Weston, CT. 06883.

NEXT ISSUE

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- *President's Corner*
- *Weston Historical Notebook*
- *How to Research old Weston Houses*
- *Picture Quiz*

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HIGHLIGHTS

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- Histories of Weston
- Picture Quiz
- Former Presidents Honored