



THE

# CHRONICLE

## QUARTERLY

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Weston Historical Society

### THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

We are saddened by the death of one of our benefactors, Mrs. Cleora Burr Coley on February 21. Mrs. Coley and her husband, James, who passed away in 1966, have willed their house, barn and surrounding property to the Historical Society. We will be eternally grateful to these two wonderful people for their continued interest in the welfare of the Society. Her untimely death has transferred additional responsibility to your Society. We will be communicating to you on the progress we achieve in expanding the roll of the History of Weston.

### BARN UPDATE

As we go to press, we can only state that the appeal before the Zoning Board of Appeals still has not been finalized, although we have reason to believe that an answer will be received within the next 1-2 months. We have been fortunate in having the assistance of Attorney George Guidera during the past few months.

### FLIP, AS SERVED IN TOM BANKS TAVERN

Keep grated ginger and nutmeg with a fine dried lemon peel rubbed together in mortar. To make a quart of flip: Put the ales on the fire to warm and beat up three or four eggs with four ounces of moist sugar, a tablespoonful of grated nutmeg or ginger, and a quarter of good old rum or brandy. When the ale is near to boil, put it into one pitcher and the rum and eggs, etc. into another, turn it from one pitcher to another until it is smooth as cream. To heat, plunge in the red hot loggerhead or poker. This quantity is styled one yard of flannel.

### WINTER IN WESTON

Remember the blizzard we had five years ago when the governor banned cars from the roads so the snow plows could clean the snow away? Well, imagine coping with snow only half as bad in the days before trucks, snow plows, sand and salt! Weston residents of the 18th and 19th century did cope with these conditions every year. Using the methods available to them, they cleared the narrow roads as best they could so the sleighs and sleds could get around.

The roads, not more than wide trails at first, were narrow, barely wide enough for one wagon. Each family had to clear the necessary paths to the barns and other outbuildings and the farm lane to the main road. Usually the length of road along a farmer's land had to be cleared by his family and such neighbors who lived nearby. They all helped remove the snow drifts and pack down the snow. This was called "breaking" out of the snow. The farmers joined their oxen together to break the drifts down the road.

As in most New England towns, roads were cleared to the taverns, then to the schools and meeting houses and the mills. People didn't travel far in the 1700's and 1800's. Most of their needs were met by their own activities on each farm: homespun clothing, food put by for winter months, a cow, milk, hogs for meat and chicken for eggs and an occasional Sunday dinner. Firewood was stacked nearby the kitchen to provide warmth from the fireplace in the house and, in the 19th century, the wood stove in the kitchen. The fires and stoves kept the house warm. Maybe not by today's standards, but enough to take the chill out of the air in the backrooms.

Winter time was the time for sleighing and dancing, especially for the younger people. Residents used to con-

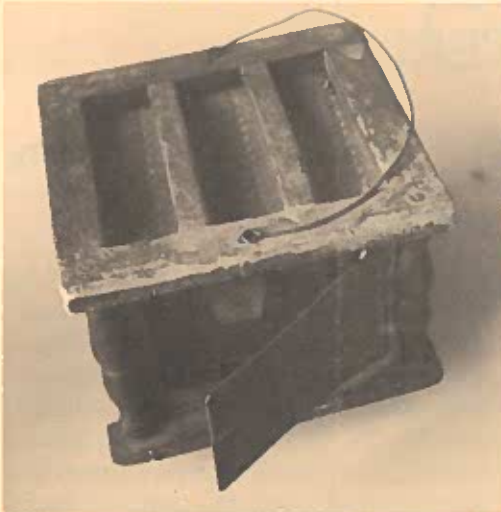
gregate at Tom Banks Tavern (on Lyons Plains Road) for friendship, food, drink and dancing. Travelling peddlers would spend several days at the tavern, selling their wares and playing fiddle for the dances. The fact that Tom Banks served pretty good flip helped keep his tavern full of residents until the early hours of the morning.

But winter brought more than just snow and the enjoyment of visiting Banks tavern. Most of the people stayed home and minded their chores during the lonely weeks of cold weather. One important chore was done in winter by some of the residents. They cut ice from the mill ponds and put it in their ice houses to help keep things cool during much of the summer. Probably not everyone had an ice house, but those that did not helped those that did fill the house in return for some ice in the spring and summer. The winters also brought chills, colds, pneumonia, etc. Despite the fireplaces, stoves, bed-warmers, hot sand boxes for the carriages and sleighs, and home cold remedies, Weston residents had their share of sickness and death due to cold, damp weather. Many times sickness lingered on because of the absence of modern medicine and medical practice. Most old time remedies helped to relieve the suffering but probably did little to actually cure an illness.

Anybody for the Good Ol' Days?

# 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 last issue was a smoker used by beekeepers to quiet their bees while working around their beehives. No one wrote in with an answer. The present day smokers have a different shape and present day beekeepers probably were not sure what the item was from the picture.

## NEXT ISSUE

- Barn Plans
- President's Corner
- Picture Quiz
- Weston's Historical Notebook

Meeting, April 5

The next meeting of the Historical Society will be held on April 5, 8:00 p.m. at the Norfield Church. The Speaker will be Mr. Lowell Hess who will speak on analyzing old houses. Mr. Hess is from Southport. We will also bring members up to date on the status of the Coley Museum property.

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## Public Invited to Celebrate American History Month

This year the annual celebration of February as American History Month is being handled cooperatively by three local groups. The Friends of the Weston Library, The Weston Historical Society and the Devil's Den Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution sponsored a reception at the Weston Library, Sunday February 13, 1983 at 4 p.m. to honor the winners of the annual N.S.D.A.R., American History essay contest for students of the Weston Middle School.

Fifteen fifth grade students submitted essays on the general topic of Everyday Life in Early America set by the national contest committee. First prize was awarded to Shana Lory, Trails End Road, for an essay on Growing Up in Early America, second prize to John Alden, Blue Spruce Circle, for Schools in Early America. Three essays won honorable mention: Schools in Early America, by David Purvis, Norfield Woods Road, Important Weapons of America, 1750-1850, by Keith Rapaport, Kettle Creek Road, and Doctors in Early America, by Dana Sapper, Blue Spruce Circle.

Participating students were from the classes of Mesdames Mary Lou Frey and Mary Beth Cook, and Nancy Mehos and Ellie Core. Peter Meehan, Coordinator of the Middle School English Department, and long a supporter of participation by students in this and

other writing contests gave special guidance to the students during the research and writing of the essays with the help of his aide Mrs. Kindwall.

Mrs. Lee Chandler was local D.A.R. chairman for the contest; the judges were Mrs. Charles Howes and Mr. and Mrs. Frederic Hahn, Jr.

The subject of this year's essay contest was chosen as the theme of the library display for February, using appropriate books, and articles drawn from the collection of the Weston Historical Society and loaned by members of the organizations.

The public was invited to attend the reception on February 13 to meet the winners and view the display, by Mrs. Marjorie Schulke for the Friends of the Weston Library, Mrs. Jeannette Ellegard of the Weston N.S.D.A.R., and Mr. Herbert Day of the Weston Historical Society.

## HISTORICAL BRIEF

### Weston's First Resident Doctor

Dr. Frank Gorham was the only resident physician and surgeon Weston had up until the mid 1900's. He was born in Weston in 1852 and died in 1926 at 74 years of age.

Dr. Gorham graduated from Yale Medical College in 1876 and practiced in Weston his entire life as a doctor. He married Miss Fannie Salmon and, for awhile, served in the state legislature.

With no telephones in town, a resident who needed the doctor had to hitch up the wagon or saddle up his horse to go and get the doctor. Then the doctor had to do the same thing and ride to the patients home. This double journey often took 2-3 hours in bad weather, depending on how far the doc-

tor had to travel. The patient, if seriously ill or injured, could become worse or even die before the doctor arrived. And unless expecting mothers gave the doctor ample time to make the buggy ride, her baby might be born before he arrived. When he was present to assist in the birth, his top bill for delivering a baby was \$25.00

Without the present day sterilizing methods, doctors were exposed to many infections which could result in sick doctors and probably died in some cases. However, as one of his patients remembers, Dr. Gorham used a little chewing tobacco and a dash of whisky for disinfecting himself and never caught nothin'.

# Weston's Historical Notebook

## Norfield Grange

The Grange is a family organization, non-political and non-sectarian. The only farm fraternity in the world, it was conceived by Oliver H. Kelly when he was sent to the South to study agricultural conditions and needs during reconstruction after the Civil War. On this trip he found that his being a Mason opened many doors to him so he got the idea of a nationwide fraternity of farmers. With six friends, he founded the Order of Patrons of Husbandry.

The National Grange maintains headquarters in Washington, D.C. It supports a lobby in Congress to push legislation favorable to farmers and the public welfare. It was instrumental in getting rural free delivery and parcel post service, regulation of public utilities and freight rates, land grant colleges, experiment stations, pure food and drug laws, State Police and fire protection and farm research.

Each October members attend the State Grange session where resolutions are voted on for presentation to our legislators recommending or opposing new laws. For many years the slogan of the State Grange was "Let's get Connecticut out of the mud."

Norfield received its subordinate charter in 1896. The first meeting was held on January 6th. In making his report to the state master, Mr. J. H. Blakeman, a deputy from Stratford who helped organize the local Grange, mentioned that the thermometer stood at 14 below zero. The master replied that it was clear that the cold of winter did not freeze their zeal and he hoped that the heat of summer would not melt it!

At first the members met upstairs in one of the Jarvis School buildings which burned in July 1904. The Grange put an addition on the small town hall that stood behind the Congregational Church. That burned in August 1951. They then met in Emmanuel Church's basement and later in Faile Hall when that was built. A number of male members took down a barn in New Canaan and brought it to a lot the Grange had bought at 12 Goodhill Road where they reconstructed it using the beautiful beams in the frame. Meetings are held the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month. Every year an Agricultural Fair is held on the grounds the Sunday after Labor Day. Sewing and handicraft contests are open to the public each spring. A member may attend a Grange meeting anywhere in the country. Several times a year neighboring Granges are invited for a covered dish supper. Three youngsters are sent each summer for a week at the State Grange Camp Berger. Contributions are made to a number of charities.

One of Norfield's former officers was the first milk inspector in the state. Norfield Grange started the Visiting Nurse Service in Weston, sponsored the Cub Scouts, cleaned up the Coleytown Cemetery and erected the bronze plaque in front of the Norfield Congregational Church to honor those who gave their lives in World War II.

For more information about the Grange, the Weston Library has "The Grange—Friend of the Farmer" by Charles M. Gardner which covers the eighty years from the beginning in 1867 to 1947.

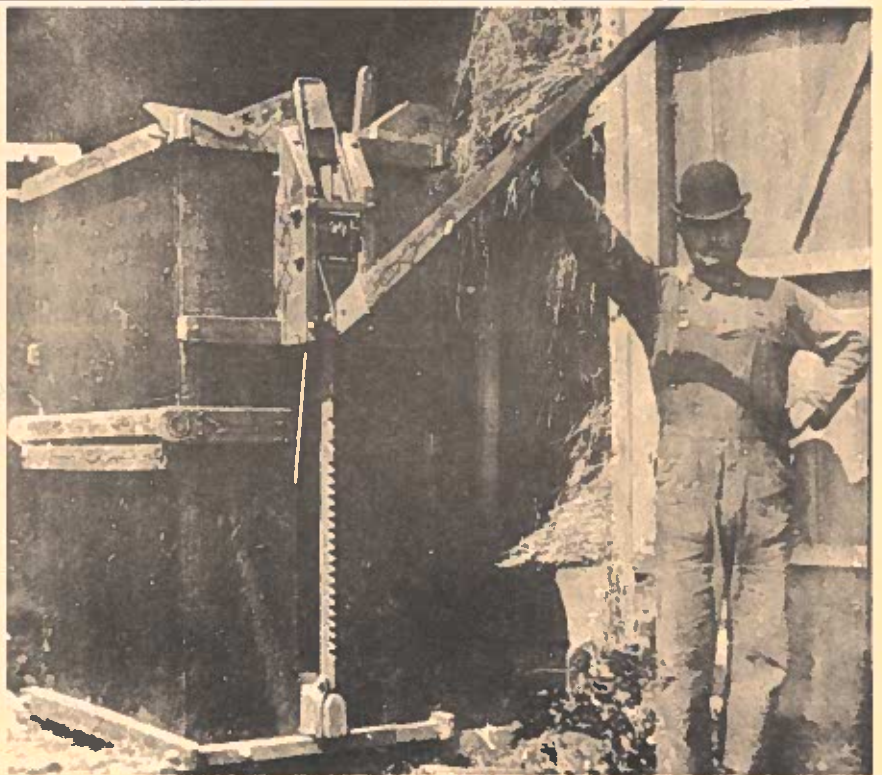
### 1983 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

It is time to renew your WHS membership. The 1983 dues have gone up as announced in the Chronicle last fall. Anyone who paid dues since January is paid up for 1983.

We are offering a marble WHS paperweight for contributing and life memberships. You will receive a notice reminding you for the 1983 membership renewal from our membership chairman.

### THE LOCKWOOD HAY BALER

Irving J. Lockwood designed and built several of these hay balers in the late 1800's. The hay was put in through the door on the upper left side. The door was closed and a pressboard was cranked up much like a jack. The hay was compressed and tied with wire or twine. We have a Lockwood baler in our barn museum.



*Irving Lockwood and his baler.*

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## **HIGHLIGHTS**

- Winter In Weston
- Weston's First Resident Doctor
- Norfield Grange
- The Lockwood Baler