



THE

CHRONICLE

QUARTERLY

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Weston Historical Society

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

We apologize for not having a second quarter issue of the Chronicle. We had hoped to be able to tell you that our appeal to the ZBA had been resolved and we were on our way towards bringing you a more visual Historical Society. As the second quarter drew to a close with no settlement, we decided to combine the second and third issues. However, we still do not have the problem resolved. Hopefully, the fourth quarter issue will contain good news on this subject. A separate letter will bring you up-to-date with the whole situation. We need your help by your show of support. Thank you.

SPECIAL NOTE

Weston's history book, *THE FORGING OF A CONNECTICUT TOWN*, makes an excellent Christmas present. Order your copy now. Available at the Weston Library for \$13.50 or by mail for \$14.50 from the Weston Historical Society, P.O. Box 1092, Weston, CT 06883.



This house, built in 1841 will be the home of the Weston Historical Society as soon as the house is cleaned inside. We will have an opening in conjunction with a barn museum opening.

HISTORICAL BRIEF

In the early days of Weston, swine were allowed to run loose if they had a ring in their nose after they were ten weeks old. There were pounds around town where strays could be held for their owners. At the corner of Langner Lane and Georgetown Road, there are a number of large stones that once enclosed a pig pound. This was where the old Hurlbutt School drive used to go off Route 57. There was an opening like a small cave in the stone wall. It is said that a gentleman who lived further up Newtown Turnpike sometimes couldn't make it all the way home from Westport some nights so he would crawl in there and continue on his way the next morning!

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 foot warmer or foot stove. Hot coals or a small hot brick was placed inside. These were used to keep your feet warm when you were riding in a buggy. They were also used in the house during very cold weather. Mr. Fred Hanford and Mrs. C. P. Smith sent in the correct answer.

NEXT ISSUE

- Coley Farm Museum
- Historical Notebook
(Weston's schools)
- A Historical Brief
- Picture Quiz

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WESTON'S HISTORY GOES TO SCHOOL

During the past school year, several WHS Trustees have been bringing Weston History to the students of the Hurlbutt second and fifth grades.

The fifth grade students were given a bus tour of Weston and a tour through the Coley Barn Museum. Mrs. Lou Harper and Mrs. Sylvia Bowles were the tour guides.

A number of historical items from the museum were taken to the second and fifth grades in five separate occasions in a "show and tell" session. Apple juice and cookies were served. The cookies were Colonial gingersnaps made from an old recipe. Copies of the recipe were printed and given to the students.

The trustees who made this program happen are Mrs. Marian Stoff, Mrs. Barbara Van Suetendael, Mrs. Doris Rickerick, Mrs. Lou Harper and Mrs. Sylvia Bowles.

Here is the recipe for the Gingersnaps:

COLONIAL GINGERSNAPS

Mix thoroughly

- ¾ cup butter or margarine
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 egg
- ¼ cup molasses

Sift three times

- 2½ cups flour
- 1 teaspoon ginger
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- ½ teaspoon ground cloves
- ¼ teaspoon salt

Add to first mixture and mix well. Make balls. Dip in granulated sugar. Flatten on greased cookie sheet. Bake at 350° for 10 minutes.

PLEASE NOTE

The annual meeting of the Weston Historical Society will be held on October 26 at the Norfield Church Parish Hall at 8 p.m.

Weston's Historical Notebook

Our bus tours of Weston have included several stops at sites of several mills and factories which provided many manufactured farm and household items to Weston residents. These included axes, wagon's wheels, buttons as well as flour and lumber.

One area we have not visited is Newtown Turnpike. Along this road, south of Norfield Road, David Platt had his axe factory and grinding shop. (His house was on Norfield Road near Newtown Turnpike). This picture shows his shop in the early 1900's along the mill stream.



19th CENTURY VEGETABLE COOKING

In the early 19th century, most cooking was done in an open fireplace in kettles suspended from pothooks and cranes. Foods were most often boiled. Baking was accomplished in three ways: in a wood-fire brick oven; or in a cast iron kettle covered with coals, called a Dutch oven; or in a tin reflector oven placed in front of the fireplace. Frying was an awkward procedure, carried out by piling coals under a three-legged frypan called a spider. Ham, turkey, mutton and bag puddings, as well as vegetables, were boiled. It must be added that boiling food in iron kettles greatly discolored the vegetables and in some cases imparted an unsavory flavor. Cooks were advised to use tin, brass or tin-lined copper utensils to preserve the flavor and color of fresh vegetables.

Recipes or "receipts" as they were called, provided some interesting insights into the menus and tastes of the 19th century. But lest it be presumed that a recipe printed in a book made it a common dish, be reminded of the number of recipes in a modern cookbook that are never used.

By the middle of the century, the huge open fireplace had been replaced by a cast iron stove, much smaller in size than the later cast iron range. Flat-bottomed pans replaced the round-bottomed footed kettles. Frying pans became popular and baking could be done daily with the convenient stove oven.



Weston Historical Society

Founded in 1961

P.O. Box 1092, Weston, Connecticut 06883

To: The Members of the Weston Historical Society

From: The Trustees

This letter reviews the attempt being made by the Society to attain certain variances to the zoning regulation to permit the continuous operation of the Coley Barn Museum. Your trustees strongly feel that there has been (and is) considerable misunderstanding about what we asked for in our application to the ZBA.

Initially we wished to refurbish a room in the barn to give us a heated room to hold trustee meetings, to have craft demonstrations and shows (in cold weather), and to have a safe temperature-controlled room for Society records.

We were advised that we would have to apply for zoning variances before work could start because the property was not zoned for a museum.

We applied for several variances on April 4, 1982, and because of several errors in the application were asked to return in May (1982). This was done with a revised application that clearly presented our request to the ZBA. These requests included: the use of one access until we could (financially) put in a second access; certain setbacks for parking and driveway; and permission to have a tenant in the house.

There were several objections raised at the first hearing by nearby residents. These included objections to the greatly increased parking, noise and light of a large number of cars which would be too close to adjoining property; and to the idea that a second access to the property from Highacre Road would be potentially dangerous when all the cars exit from the large meetings we allegedly have planned. This last objection was followed by a written threat to the Society and to the Town if any mishap occurs, which is directly (or indirectly) attributable to the access road.

These objections were based on misunderstanding as to what the Society was asking for.

The Barn Museum is presently open only four to five times per year or on special request. Because there is no heat in the barn, craft demonstration, small special exhibits, and Trustee meetings cannot be held. We also do not have a suitable room for these meetings. This was the reason for the initial building permit request and the subsequent appearance before the ZBA. We do not plan to have large meetings in the barn or the house because there is not enough room. Our annual meeting, and other Society meetings where the public is invited, will still be held at the Norfield Parish Hall.

The ZBA, after four to five months of deliberating, suggested that the Weston Historical Society employ the service of an attorney, who they felt could speak for the Weston Historical Society in a language they could understand.

We obtained the services of Attorney George Guidera, who proceeded to clarify the situation to the ZBA. The ZBA asked that the Weston Historical Society request be resubmitted with the site plan incorporating the variances desired by the Weston Historical Society. This was done in February, 1983. In May, Attorney Guidera was notified by the ZBA that if the Weston Historical Society would make certain changes in the site plan and agree to certain other conditions they would approve the use of the Coley property as a Historical Museum.

The site plan changes called for eliminating the second access from Highacre, doubling the screening (trees) at the rear of the property, no flood lights, no parking within 100 feet of property lines, and widening of the present entrance off Weston Road to two lanes. Further requests were that the Weston Historical Society be limited to two meetings/month with a maximum of 40 people and meetings only between the hours of 9:00 am and 10:30 pm.

The Trustees feel that some of these conditions are too restrictive and may be beyond the jurisdictions of the ZBA. In addition, the widening of the entrance to Weston Road needs the approval of the P&Z, the Historic District Commission, and possibly the State Highway Department.

We have not yet responded to the ZBA. We do expect to meet with them in September. We have made application to the P&Z for the parking area permit. They will give us their comments in September also.

We are sorry that this whole process has taken this long (and maybe longer). The delay has prolonged the implementation of ideas we have for the Weston Historical Society and the Coley Museum.

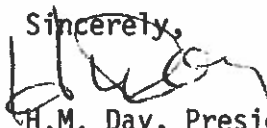
The passing of Mrs. James Coley in February has thrown additional financial responsibilities on your Society. The upkeep of the house will involve expenses which will have to be offset by renting the house as soon as it is cleaned out. A security system will be installed for fire and burglar protection.

The Trustees of your Society have over the years been dedicated to providing Weston with a viable Historical Society commensurate with our financial ability. We will continue to expand our services to the members and to the Town. We hope you will support us in our endeavors, including the present confrontation with the ZBA.

The Coley property is an ideal piece of property for an Historical Museum and for the home of your Society. Mr. & Mrs. Coley must have realized this when they gave their farm to the Society.

We need the help of the members of this Society, and the help of the Town, to make their dream come alive.

Please plan to attend our annual meeting on October 26 at the Norfield Church. We will have a speaker and refreshments will be served.

Sincerely,

H.M. Day, President for the Trustees

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HIGHLIGHTS

- Presidents Corner
- Barn Update
- Historical Notebook
- Picture Quiz
- Historical Briefs