



THE CHRONICLE QUARTERLY

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THE EDITOR'S EDGE

ROADS

The first settlers in Connecticut settled close to the shore and along navigable rivers. Travel by boat was easy compared to carving roads out of the forests and traveling at a snails pace.

But roads had to be built to get into the interior of the country. This happened in Weston in the mid 1600's as travelers moved north and west and farmers developed their lands, including the long lots that made up all of Weston.

It took a lot of hours and hard work to keep the roads passable.

In this issue we present an article on one road—Godfrey road. In future issues we will discuss other roads and how the dirt roads were kept in traveling condition.

Memorial Day

As this is written, we pause to remember all the veterans of all wars who gave the supreme sacrifice. Men and women from Weston fought in all the wars the United States has been involved in, and a number of them did not return. Some day we will research this and bring you articles on these wonderful people.

Herb Day
Editor, The Chronicle

FARMING ON GODFREY ROAD

Along Godfrey road last fall we noticed an old shed set back several yards off the road surrounded by trees. It appeared to be in the path of a new development (road) which was just getting underway. We explored and found the shed contained several old farm implements. These included:

- A mold board plow
- A single cut disc
- A sickle bar mower
- A John Deere manure spreader
- A hay loader (made by Dain manuf. co)
- A bed roller (for smoothing out plant beds)

Further inquiry lead us to Mr. Leon Lachat of West Godfrey road, who had owned this farm equipment. It was now owned by Mr. Bill Howlett of Easton who is the developer of this property. We approached Mr. Howlett with the idea of giving these farm implements to the Historical Society to which he readily agreed, if we removed them as soon as possible.

We enlisted the help of the Selectmen's office and the willing and able Road dept. Some of the implements, including the manure spreader and hay loader were too large and too broken to warrant moving. We selected the moldboard plow, the single disc, and the sickle bar mower. These were moved by the Road Dept. to the site where the post office will be and will be put on display in this area when the site is fixed up.

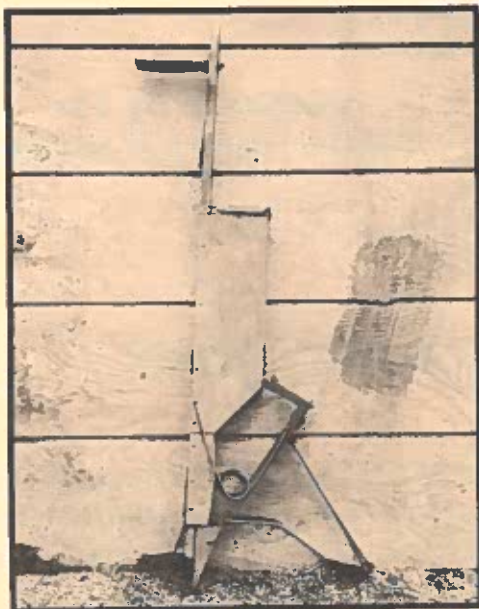
This farm property was sold to make room for the Merritt Parkway which was built in the early 1930's.

We then talked to Mr. Lachat, who had owned this equipment. He told us his father had farmed in Westport along Weston road just north of the Merritt Parkway in the area known as Silverbrook. In 1923 he took over part of what was the winter shelter for the Barnum-Bailey circus, which extended from this spot east to Easton Road. It had been known as Holcom park. His father farmed here until 1933 when they moved to Weston.

(Continued on inside back page.)

PICTURE QUIZ

Can you name this?



If you can name the item in the picture, send your answer, your name to:

The Editor
The Chronicle
P.O. Box 1092
Weston, CT 06883

LAST ISSUE'S QUIZ

The item in the last Chronicle was a bull snap, used to help lead and handle a bull. We received three correct answers; from Mr. Gerhard Hoelter, Dorothy Sherman, and Ray Fitch. Ray sent along a note stating that "it was snapped in the nostril of the bull and was usually on the end of a pole; it enabled one to handle the bull. The pole would keep the bull from attacking the handler. This was used when the bull didn't have a ring in his nose."

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WESTON'S ANNUAL REPORTS

We have received a number of the Annual Reports of the Town of Weston from 1908 thru 1958 (a total of 20 reports). Enough of the early years are included to give us a picture of how things were then. These reports were given to the Society by Charles McCullough who had received them from Miss Florence Banks. The reports through 1916 were called "Annual Report of the Selectmen, Treasurer, and Health Officer of the Town of Weston with list of registered dogs, for the year ending September 15th." Starting with the 1917 or 1918 report, the name was changed to "Annual Reports of the Town of Weston."

The early reports contain orders issued by the Selectmen. These are essentially a list of the work done by the residents for the town and the monies paid for their services. Here are some of the orders and other reports:

1908

Order No.

127	To Wm. Robinson for planking bridge	\$ 1.00
130	To John M. Lockwood for road contract	\$230.00
13	To Charles M. Morehouse for plank for Forge Bridge	\$ 40.87
17	To Wm. Osborne for planking Forge Bridge	\$ 2.00
20	To Wm. Sherwood for 9 days work with team on state road	\$ 36.00

The reports also list receipts:

Rec'd from Theodore Baker on account of sheep killed by his dog (Baker owed \$7.00 but only paid \$5.00 at this time. The sheep were owned by John Lockwood)	\$ 5.00
Rec'd from State Controller, bounty on twenty four foxes killed in Weston. This bounty was paid to the residents who shot the foxes.	\$ 24.00

1910

The town debt was \$8563.00 at the end of 1910. This was owed to nine residents. The balance in the treasury was \$230.85.

Bounty was collected for seven foxes \$ 7.00

1911

Twenty one foxes killed and bounty paid \$ 21.00

1914

Paid to Joseph Bulkley for iron for Forge Bridge \$ 7.55

Most of the orders were for work done to keep the roads up. The work was done by residents who generally kept up the roads near their homes and farms. The reports list the use of teams (horses or oxen) up until 1924.

(Continued on inside back page.)

WESTON'S HISTORICAL NOTEBOOK

THE SIXTH CROSS HIGHWAY

The sixth cross highway (the present Godfrey Rd.) was the sixth road north, running east and west across the long lots. These roads gave the landowners easy access to their property rather than going across private land or back to Long Lots road in Westport.

Godfrey road was probably settled by the Godfrey family well before the Revolutionary War. It became home to many of the early settlers in Weston. Jan Spiess wrote a short story about Godfrey road which was published in *Vogue Magazine* during World War II. It was republished in a collection of short stories called *Vogue's First Reader*. We reprint this article for your enjoyment. Since WWII, many families have lived on Godfrey Rd., and moved; new homes have been built and some have been moved or added on to. We hope you have the opportunity to travel it some time and view the old homes. The entrance to Devil's Den and the Godfrey Pond is along Godfrey Rd. The lower end of this road was cut off when the reservoir was filled. It had continued down into Valley Forge.



Above: Levi Squires home as it looks today.
Right: The barn at the modern farm.

WAR ON OUR ROAD

JAN SPIESS

OUR ROAD was founded by the family Godfrey in pre-Revolutionary days. A stone's throw beyond the green-shuttered, white Colonial house that was the Godfrey master house, there are a stone well, two lilac bushes, and a doorstone, all that remains of the original Godfrey house. In the original house, the famous Gold Dragoons once met under the aegis of Colonel Gold during the years 1775-1779. Today the Gold Dragoons are again forming as a home defense unit to patrol the roads leading to the new dam and to assure enemy parachutists of an unhappy landing. If those first Gold Dragoons still meet in the early shades of evening, they must wonder at this new war. . . war the hard way, war from the skies.

Every American war has been on our road. . . Godfrey Road. The Revolutionary, with a Connecticut Yankee pitchforking a Hessian officer down our road. The War of 1812 that a Godfrey captained. The Civil War with a bugle boy from the road writing letters home. The war that had a slogan, "Remember the Maine," and yellow fever that laid a soldier from our road to rest far from home. World War One saw a Major from our road decorated in France. The road is at war again.

It is a different road now from the road that heard the creak of cart wheels turning, the lowing of cows being brought back from pasture, the not infrequent click of deer's feet, or bark of foxes. It is two and a half miles long, bisected by a highway, but still scarcely more than a rutted country lane, still wearily plodding to a hilltop, gaily dipping into an orchard, turning a cold shoulder to a brook that approaches it too closely.

It is a road of old houses, trees old enough to have great-grandchildren, gardens that bloom from May to October. It is a road of neighbourliness, of serenity, of peace. But it is a road girded for war again, ready to preserve its right against the invader, an all-out road in this war for democracy. A road that a man in Australia thinks of when he thinks of home; a road that is home to a war correspondent, an artist who does war posters, a cartoonist who shows his opinion



of the war to hundreds of thousands of readers, a manufacturer who turned his factory to war production, English refugees, French refugees, a man who organizes entertainment for the Army camps, women who are knitting, defense workers, a man who has two sons at some far-flung fronts. It's war for every man and woman on our road.

It is a different war for each of them. To begin with, there is the farmer on our road, the old-timer. His grandparents lived on the road, his father and mother lived there, and he has lived there all his life. If a human being can be called a root in the sense that he belongs where he is, then Levi is a root of New England. . . a root of our Connecticut road. It must have a special meaning for him, the meaning that a river has for a man who spends all his life sitting on the bank observing life flowing past him, not intrinsically related to it. Levi is not intrinsically related to the people on the road because they are city people transplanted to the country. Not for them the deep knowledge of the season's changes, the earth's yielding, the patient planting. His blue eyes, set in furrows, see clearly what is hidden from them; but because these new people have come to his road, they are his charges.

He is a true native of New England, kindly, simple, good, and wise, and all those other things they say about New England, too. Shrewd, hard-bitten, fearless, the best friend a man could have, the worst enemy. But the newcomers are his friends. He chops wood for them, digs out their wells, and ploughs their fields. He brings them Yule logs at Christmas time, medicine when they are ill, tears when they die. He is the personification of the road, and now that the road is at war he chops more wood (for we face an oil shortage on the road), he farms longer hours; if he could be, he is kinder. If catastrophe came to our road, we would all instinctively turn to him.



The Godfrey master house was built in 1790. It is guarded by two huge maples that wear the conventional wreath of robins' nests in their hair, but that is as far as they allow the conventions to disturb them. Their limbs are set in foreboding gestures toward the north from whence the hurricanes come, they refuse to donate sap for any purpose whatever, and they encourage violets and daffodils to blossom close to their tired, old roots.

The house, rechristened Fox Pass, is gracious, set in flower-beds and lilac bushes. A small orchard is part of its war effort. The farthest flower-garden has become a kitchen-garden with strawberry plants, and vegetables. The vegetable-garden has been doubled in size, and the chicken-house is in process of becoming a one-room residence . . . a self-sustaining unit for the duration. The little house will be heated with wood (cut on the place), and the root cellar and pantry shelf (filled with canned goods from the summer garden) will supply all the necessary food except meat.

In the small house across the road, the air-raid warden, once a famous actress, gives almost full-time to her job. It is full-time there on the road, for the sound of the siren is apt to be lost unless one attends it carefully. And there is endless checking of water facilities, sand buckets, general articles needful in case of fire, for the road has no Fire Department, but a small volunteer unit that would have to go where the danger was greatest.

Next on the road is a huge modern farm with refrigerator plants, a magnificent root cellar, hot-houses, horses and cows. Due to the labour shortage, the whole family spends the weekends and vacations, planting, pruning, weeding. The war has a special meaning for them, with a young son hurrying toward the Air Force and spending his last civilian days for the duration taking rocks out of the hillside garden, setting plants in place, tend-



ing the cold-frames.

Beyond the big farm and across the road from it, there is a French Provencal cottage that has made itself very much at home on the New England road. It has graciousness and charm and the first daffodils that bloom in the spring. No one knows why they bloom there first, but they may have some reason of their own. Perhaps they learned a wayward efficiency from the master of the house. He is meeting the war problem by putting into effect his Work Simplification plan, which will increase war productivity by fifty per cent. This plan is already in use with DuPont, Vultee Aircraft, Republic Steel, and others. But it is hard to believe that sheer efficiency makes daffodils bloom a week ahead of time. Perhaps the stone wall they grow beside is warm.

Two Englishwomen have made a practical, self-sustaining farm of their home. They have chickens, a vegetable-garden, berry patches, and, last year, they raided their beehives for eighty pounds of honey. This year, they think the bees are aware of the sugar rationing and will double their output. Honey for defense, a motto on our road. One of the sisters was a V.A.D. in the last war and is hostess to homesick English sailors. "Funny, this seems like home," one of them told her. "Not funny," she retorted, "this road goes winding back a long ways. The Godfreys came from England, my boy."

The road dips down a steep hill and crosses the highway where the mailboxes wait for mail from places the mailman can't pronounce. The censor has stamped the letters. They are so precious that the hand that reaches for them trembles with eagerness, with joy. Johnny is a long way from Godfrey Road, but he hasn't forgotten a single thing, not the neighbours, or his pet horse, or the pies that ma bakes on Saturdays. What's the war about? About getting it over with and getting home to the road. "I have a picture

of you folks in front of the house tacked up in my tent. It sure looks great." Tents in a row under a stabbing sun, mail-boxes in a row on a peaceful country road, but the distance between them is only as long as it takes to say, "There's a letter from Johnny." Yes, in the house back of the mail-boxes, there are two sons in the service. . . a soldier and a sailor. When it's over, they'll both claim they won the war. . . well, what's an Army without a Navy, and vice versa?

In the old house across the brook, there are two small children. Their father hasn't seen the baby. He writes from Australia, where he is a war correspondent. He writes publicly about the war and privately about the baby and about his three-year-old son and about what joy it will be finally to be coming home. His wife is organizing a special fire brigade, volunteers from the 5:31. She is also responsible for a plan to double up on trips to the station, trips to town, general conservation of tires and gasoline.

In what was once the little white schoolhouse, a war correspondent from Berlin has written his book, *Strategy of Terror*. He is now attached to Colonel Donovan's staff, engaged in sending war news, authentic war news, to Europe by short wave. His wife, who came from Europe with him, whose family are in Switzerland now, says, "I'm ashamed to have so much to eat. My mother has so little." She will be a citizen soon, and then she can do even more war work than she is doing now. She works in her vegetable-garden a great deal. She has even learned not to shrink when the planes pass overhead.

The house at the top of the road, the last house on the road, is set in gardens and orchards. Two small boys and a dog run



Left: The Englishwomen's house. Middle: The house across the Brook. Above: The little schoolhouse.

through the grass, and in the big studio their father draws his strip cartoons of family life as they live it. "Thad" and "Boopy" are excellent models of what boys all over America are thinking and doing in these days of the new war. They are a little more serious than they were last year. They know more words, more names on their maps. They would rather be at home than any place else, because suddenly that house with protective wings outspread has become precious to them. They explain what they feel when they say, "We listen to the English kids broadcasting to their mothers and fathers back in England."

In spite of the way that the lives of the road go beyond it to wars on other continents, to war as it is fought in our own nation's capital, to war as it stems from our own great cities, the life of the road itself makes the war a practical issue. Conservation is a byword; more than that, it is a by-product. What was once discarded is saved; every hand turns to making the most of what there is. One trip

to town, in one car, suffices where before cars hummed casually over the road. The road turns out full force for town meetings to put down any hint of useless expansion, to suggest more general ways to conserve. During canning season, the women will share, not recipes alone, but the fruits from their orchards and berry patches, the vegetables from their gardens, the chickens that can be canned against winter needs.

Our road is a country road, remote from city activities, but it is not an escapist's road; it is a peaceful road, but it is a road at war, too. It does not say this is the first war for democracy or the last war for freedom—it says I saw war on the ground, muskets and bluecoats; I saw war at sea, war between brothers, war to end wars, and now I'm seeing all-out war. Back of every soldier is his family, back of every soldier is the road he left waiting for him to come marching home. That's always been the end of war, it will always be the end of war, the long march home to your own road.

Coley Homestead update

The trustees have been busy reviewing bids submitted for various projects. These include the renovation of the kitchen, the building of a driveway, and the purchase and planting of a hemlock buffer along the west property line. We hope to see the results of this work before summer is over.

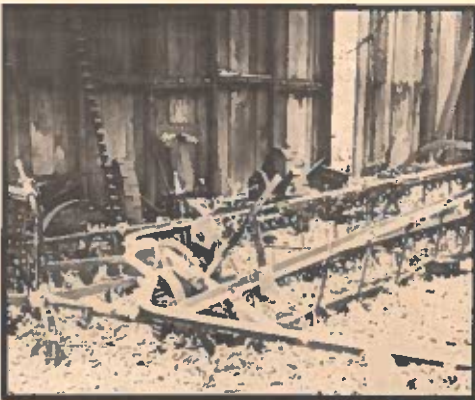
Post Office Move

As of this writing, the post office is up on dollies and ready to be moved to its new home. It will be moved over to a site just north of where it will eventually rest until a foundation can be built. Then it will be moved back on its permanent location.

Quilt Show

Watch for information on our first Quilt Show to be held in September.

(Continued from front page.)



Left: Mr. Lachat's farm equipment.

They settled on west Godfrey and Mr. Lachat farmed here until 1965. (He still mows the pasture.) The farms in Westport and Weston were primarily dairy and chicken farms. Mr. Lachat told us that the farm implements were bought in 1927 from a supplier in New Canaan to replace the equipment used by his father and probably his father before him.

(Continued from second page.)

In the 1925 report there is an entry for road work 8½ days with a tractor \$136.00. Also Irving Patchen—1¾ days with tractor—\$28.00

The 1924 Report has an article by the School Supervisor, Mr. F.W. Knight, where he pleads for improvement in the school system in Weston. He urges the voters of Weston to push for a Central school where students could be taught more efficiently and effectively.

The total expenditure for the school system in 1924 as reported by Willis Banks, Secretary, was \$8968.05. \$3900.00 of this was paid to five teachers for the school year.

We will bring you more facts from these annual reports in future issues of the Chronicle.

NEXT ISSUE

The Dirt Roads Committee
Post Office Update
Harvest Time
Fifty Years Ago

THE

CHRONICLE

QUARTERLY

A PUBLICATION OF THE WESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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THIS ISSUE

Weston Town Reports
Godfrey Road, The Sixth Cross Highway
Picture Quiz
Old Farm Equipment
Post Office
Coley Homestead Update