



THE

CHRONICLE

QUARTERLY

Volume 8

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Weston Historical Society

THE EDITOR'S EDGE

DON'T CUSS THE RAIN!!

I know, we have seen more days of rain than we have of sun; but the rain is what keeps Weston green (chlorophyll green, that is). The early mill owners would welcome the rainy spring, because it would keep their mill ponds full and allow them to run the mill for a longer period of time in the summer. And mill time was money to them. The fact that someone else could do the milling cheaper and faster became the end to an era in Weston and other New England towns. Too bad we don't have one of these mills working now, they would sure have the water, and I am sure the miller would be happy to explain how his mill works to all Weston's children, no matter how old we are!

Herb Day - Editor

CURRENT EVENTS

CIDER PRESS SHED

The Historic District Commission has denied our petition to build the shed on the Coley Homestead for the cider press. They state that the reason was because of scale. We are not sure exactly what they mean, since they did not explain their reasoning. We have formed a sub-committee of the Trustees to pursue this further, with the Commission, to see if some middle-ground solution can be found to resolve this situation, before taking some other course of action.

CRAFT DAY AT THE COLEY HOUSE

A good time was had by a few. Because of a lack of interest, two of the hands-on craft demonstrations had to be cancelled. The quilt class was held, with about six people present to learn how to begin to make a quilt.

SENIORS PICNIC IN JULY

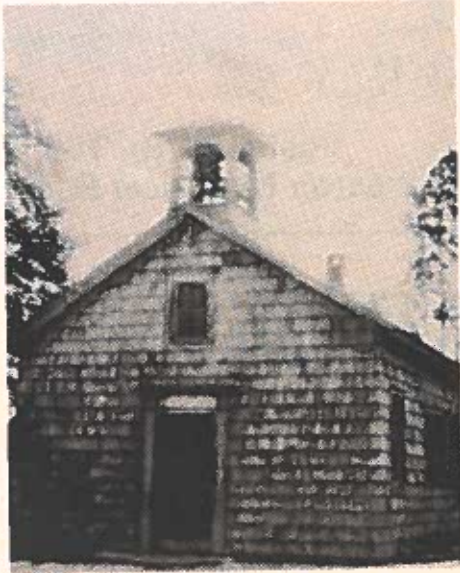
The annual Seniors picnic will be held on Wednesday, July 12, 11:00 a.m., on the Coley Homestead grounds. Invitations will not be sent out. This event is open to all Seniors living in Weston, or who used to live in Weston. An announcement will be made at the weekly Seniors luncheon at the Norfield Church on Wednesday, however, if you are a senior citizen who does not plan to attend the Wednesday luncheon, check the local paper in early July for further details. Some entertainment is planned. If you are planning to attend, please call Mrs. Barbara VanSuetendahl — 227-0907; or Mrs. Marion Boike — 222-0102, so we know that you are coming.

FLYING THE AMERICAN FLAG — PROPERLY

This is not really an historical item since flying the Flag is an on-going practice, but we have noticed that the US Flag is flown incorrectly by some of our Weston citizens. We are talking about those instances when it is displayed other than from a staff. When the Flag is suspended over a sidewalk, the Flag should be hoisted out, union first, from the building. When the Flag is hung on the side of the house or on a porch, the union should always be in the upper left corner as you face the house. In other words, as a visitor would see it from the street or driveway.

When the Flag is flown across a street, the union should be suspended vertically with the union to the north in an east-west street, and to the east in a north-south street.

PICTURE QUIZ



CAN YOU NAME THIS BUILDING?

If you can tell us where this building is, send your answer and your name to:

THE EDITOR
THE CHRONICLE
P.O. BOX 1092
WESTON, CT 06883

THE ITEM IN LAST ISSUE is a bog or sod shoe for a horse. They were worn over the horses feet to help them walk on marshy fields when cutting salt hay, etc.

Several answers were received, but they were wrong, maybe if we had a picture of two or more, the right answer would have been sent in.

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WESTON'S HISTORICAL NOTEBOOK

MERWINS CIDER MILL

The exact history of Aspetuck corners, located on the border with Easton is not know by us yet. We have been trying to piece some of it together, but have too many holes in our research to present a good story. So it will have to wait for another time.

We do know that Bert Merwin built a mill on the west side of the Aspetuck river sometime in the late 1800's. He had worked in the cider mill and store owned by Dave Gould, which was on the east side of the river. Dave Gould lived in the big house on the hill on the road to Greenfield Hills. His mill was struck by lightning and burned down about 1895.

Bert Merwin had a turning mill, making handles for the many axes forged in the foundries on the Aspetuck and Saugatuck rivers in Weston. When these foundries closed because of severe competition from foundries further south, he turned to making wooden toys, hence the name THE WESTON TOY COMPANY, which was on the building for many years. He also had the cider mill, using the latest in cider presses. Some of our senior citizens remember farmers taking their apples to this mill, as well as to several other mills in Weston. The picture shows the farmers lined up by the mill, to have their wagon loads of apples made into cider. In Horace Coley's Diary, he makes reference to the fact, that on October 20, 1901, he got his cider apples together and went to B. Merwin's cider mill and made 140 gallons and paid one cent per gallon. He probably had to give Merwin some of the cider also, in partial payment.

We do not know why Merwin closed his toy company, but it may have been partly due to the influx of cheap tin toys from Japan in the 1930's. His health may have been a factor also. He did close down in the early 1930's and the building remained closed until it was torn down last year. Most of the milling equipment had been removed over the years.

When the mill was started, the water power from the Aspetuck river was used to turn the wood milling equipment and the cider mill. In later years, the gasoline engine was used. We hope to get this engine running again to power the cider press. If not, we will use the larger engine from the Lockwood saw mill which we have in the carriage house.



THE CLERGY OF CONNECTICUT IN REVOLUTIONARY DAYS

The Tercentenary Commission of the State of Connecticut issued, in the early 1930's, a series of some sixty small pamphlets designed to inform the people of Connecticut and others, as many of the features as possible of the history and life of Connecticut as colony and state.

This 32 page pamphlet was written by Alice Mary Baldwin and published in 1936 by the Yale University Press. It was number 56 in the series.

We are pleased to bring you excerpts from this pamphlet.

"The story of the nonconformist clergy of Connecticut in the American Revolution is a dramatic tale of men who were convinced of the eternal righteousness of their cause, who knew their power and believed in their responsibilities — men whose lives were inextricably woven into the life of their community whether in peace or war, and whose knowledge, convictions, and acts were of great significance in those days of conflict.

To understand the part played by the ministers one must turn back on hundred and sixty years to a Connecticut of about seventy towns and villages ranging in population from two or three hundred to five, six, or seven thousand, a large number having less than fifteen hundred inhabitants. Its people were for the most part farmers, its roads were poor, books were hard to obtain, and newspapers were small and published weekly in three or four towns only.

Theology and the church were then of far greater importance in the life of the average man than today. Every village or, in the large town, every parish had its meeting house, and the people were taxed for its support and for the support of the minister who was chosen, according to the law of the colony, by the voters of the town rather than by the church members. The great majority of the people were Congregationalists, or Prebyterians, as they were sometimes called.

The choice of a minister in those days was a serious matter. At his installation he was given a home and land, received a salary, small though it often was, and sometimes, in addition, a sum of money to induce him to settle. Each parish took its time about selecting its pastor, minutely investigated his life, character and training, carefully tested his theology, and was deeply concerned over the method of his ordination and installation.

Whether approachable and beloved or cold and formal, as were some of the clergy, the minister was a man of consequence, not only in his own town but in the broader affairs of the colony as well. The ministers then, influenced the lives of their people and the life of the colony in many ways, but they were certain of their teachings which especially prepared their people for the Revolution and for the framing of new governments. They taught the meaning and sanctity of the constitution and that an unconstitutional act was null and void — that men are born equal and have a natural right to liberty and property that cannot constitutionally be taken away from them, that society and government are formed by the common consent for the good of the people.

When the difficulties with England began, the attitude of the clergy was of great moment, and this fact was recognized by friend and foe alike. They had an incomparable opportunity to influence public alike. They had an incomparable opportunity to influence public opinion, especially in the smaller towns. Both the assembly of Connecticut and the congress of the United Colonies called upon them to use their pulpits as a means of stimulating and unifying the people.

Down at Lyme, a small but unimportant town, Stephen Johnson was minister from 1746 to 1786. Writing under the pseudonym of 'Addison,' Johnson sent his first article secretly to the NEW LONDON GAZETTE and it was published on September 6, 1765.

It is the most critical season that ever this Colony or America saw, a Time when everything dear to us in this world is at Stake . . . By the essential, fundamental Constitution of the British Government, no Englishmen may be Tax'd but by his own Consent, in Person, or by his Representative — Privileges exorted by the brave People of England from their Monarchs by slow Degrees, and the effusion of Rivers of Blood.

He suggested scattering pamphlets by the thousands throughout the country and in England, Ireland, and even France.

In North Haven there was Benjamin Trumbull, whose home was open to friends and strangers, and who was widely known in the colony. His most famous sermon was that of April 12, 1773, at which he argued the right of Connecticut or of any state to have its officers chosen from among its own citizens, and dependent for their salaries upon their fellow citizens alone. In 1775, the story goes, Trumbull descended from this pulpit on Sabbath morning, turned up the leaf of the communion table, and invited his people to enlist. Forty-six responded to his call. In 1777 he again helped the recruiting, and the must roll is in his handwriting.

James Dana of Wallingford was also a man of influence. In his election sermon of 1779, he pleaded for simplicity of manners, and advised the magistrates not to govern too much. 'There was never a sounder maxim than lately advanced by a worthy prelate: THE ART OF GOVERNMENT CONSISTS IN NOT GOVERNING TOO MUCH.'

Ebenezer Baldwin of Danbury and Samuel Sherwood of Norfield (now Weston), were of special service in arousing western Connecticut. Several of Baldwin's sermons were published, among them one to the freemen printed in September, 1774, as an appendix to Sherwood's Fast Day sermon, delivered in August. In November 1775, Baldwin preached at Danbury a sermon in which the war was declared just and not to be compromised without loss of civil and religious liberty. In this sermon he envisaged an America grown in two hundred years to one hundred and ninety-two millions, a great and mighty empire founded on principles of liberty and freedom such as the world had never seen.

He became chaplain to a regiment made up of largely of his own people and died a few months later from an illness contracted in the army. Sherwood, his friend, continued his labors to such good effect that it became too dangerous for him to sleep in his own home, and he was given a guard of Continental soldiers to protect him from the Tories and British.

When Col. Benjamin Tallmadge and a regiment of cavalry visited his church one morning while the arrival of Cornwallis on the American coast was hourly expected, Judah Champion of Litchfield prayed:

Oh Lord, we view with terror and dismay, the approach of the enemies of thy Holy religion; wilt thou send storm and tempest, and scatter them to the uttermost parts of the earth; but, preadventure, should any escape thy vengeance, collect them together again, Oh Lord, as in the hollow of thy hand, and let thy lightning play upon them.

Nathaniel Roberts of Torrington must have startled his congregation when he prayed, 'Great God we pray thee remove that Lord North from office, by death or otherwise.'

Because of their fervor and influence some of the clergy won the special hostility of the Tories and British. Among them were Samuel Sherwood of Norfield, Noah Williston of West Haven, Hezekiah Ripley of Greens Farms, Nathaniel Bartlett, of Redding and Andrew Eliot of Fairfield.

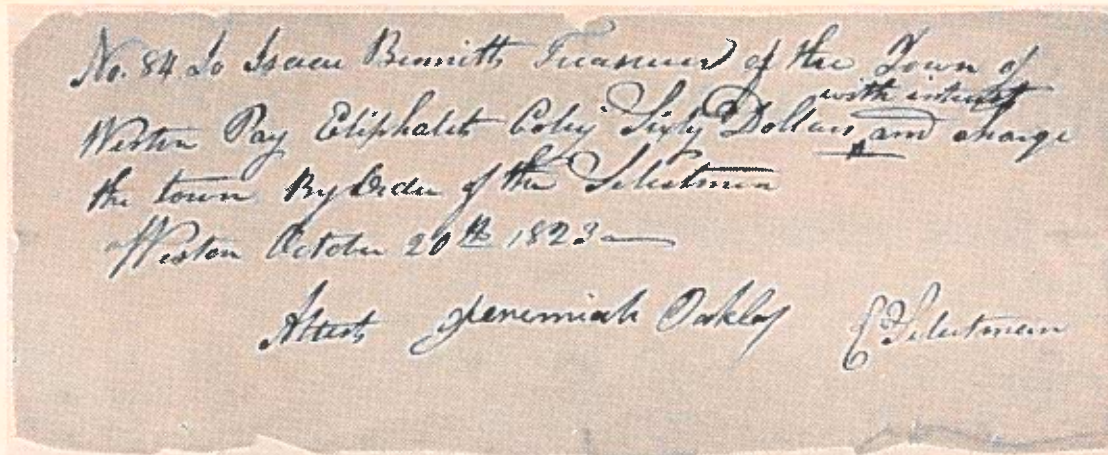
The ministers of Connecticut played a leading role in the days of the American Revolution. The motives back of their actions were complex and are not always easy to determine. All the evidence goes to prove, however, that the larger number, including the most influential, were animated by a deep-seated conviction that England was acting unconstitutionally and that it was their special business, as students and teachers of government and of the Bible, to clarify the issues and present the underlying principles and good government so clearly that even the uneducated might understand.

The clergy of Connecticut (including Sherwood of Norfield), and of New England helped to determine the success of the Revolution and to write deep upon the hearts and minds of the people its Revolutionary philosophy and a lasting faith in constitutional government as the guardian of their dearest and most sacred rights."

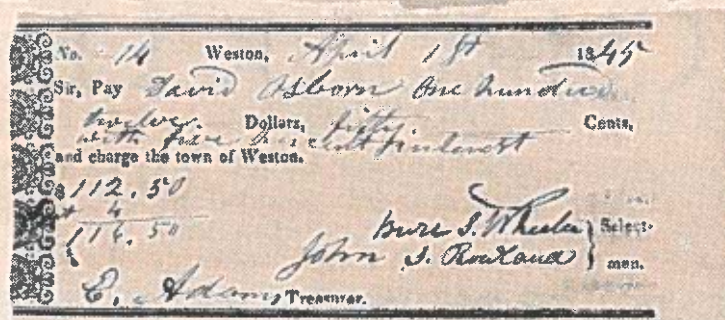
FIFTY YEARS (OR SO) AGO

TOWN ORDERS

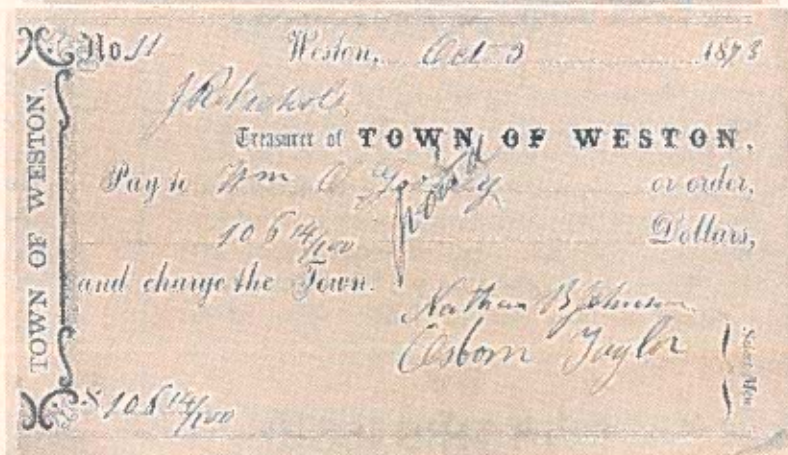
TOWN ORDERS WERE REQUESTS TO PAY THE BEARER A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF MONEY FOR WORK DONE BY THE BEARER FOR THE TOWN. THEY WERE GENERALLY WRITTEN BY THE FIRST SELECTMAN AND DIRECTED TO THE TOWN TREASURER TO PAY. THE THREE ORDERS SHOWN BELOW SHOW THE PROGRESS FROM A HAND WRITTEN ORDER IN 1823 TO A SIMPLE PRINTED FORM IN 1845, TO A Fancier FORM IN 1873. SOME ORDERS MIGHT SHOW THE WORK DONE FOR THE MONEY. IN MOST CASES, IT IS FOR WORK DONE ON THE ROADS.



No. 84 To Isaac Bennett, Treasurer of the Town of
Weston Pay Eliphahet Coley Fifty Dollars ^{with interest} and charge
the town by Order of the Selectmen
Weston October 20th 1823
Attest Jeremiah Oakley } Selectman



No. 14 Weston, April 1st 1845
Sir, Pay David Osborn One hundred
Dollars, ^{with interest} and charge the town of Weston.
112.50
+ 4
116.50
D. Adams, Treasurer.
Nathaniel Wheeler } Selectmen
John S. Rowland }



No. 11 Weston, Oct 3 1873
Treasurer of TOWN OF WESTON.
Pay to Wm. C. Gayles or order,
106¹⁴/₁₀₀ Dollars,
and charge the Town.
Nathan B. Osborn }
Osborn Gayles }

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THE FIRELANDS
CURRENT EVENTS
HOUSE PLAQUE ISSUED
THINGS FROM THE COLEY ATTIC

WESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY TRUSTEES

Mary Alden	Glenn Major
Ann Chapman	Linda Martin
Herb Day	Gene O'Hare
Marie Golden	Mary Lou Perry
Linda Guidera	Gary Samuelson
Evelyn Kerin	Marge Schnieder
Pietra Knaus	Joe Spetly
Barbara Van Suetendahl	

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