



THE

# CHRONICLE

QUARTERLY

Volume 8

No. 3

September 1989

Published By The  
Weston Historical Society

THE  
EDITOR'S  
EDGE

## TIS' WONDERFUL

We really had planned to have a thinner issue of the CHRONICLE QUARTERLY this quarter, but with so much planned in the way of activities for this fall, we had to get this important information to you. We will remind you again of the events thru articles in the newspapers and another mailing from the Society. Read all about it — on the inside.

What all these programs do is to bring a little of Weston's heritage and a touch of fall to the Coley Homestead, which we hope you will take advantage of, with your family and friends. Come, visit with us, on these two, fun filled, weekends. Have a wonderful time!

Herb Day - Editor

## CURRENT EVENTS

### ANNUAL MEETING TO BE HELD IN NOVEMBER

The Annual meeting of your Society will be held on November 9, 1989 at the Norfield Parish Hall at 8 p.m. Nomination and election of new Trustees for 1990 will be conducted. Mrs. Linda Martin, Program Chm. has an exciting program planned. Kevin McClellan, Professional Appraiser and Auctioneer will speak to us about how a layman can evaluate a true antique and how to choose an appraiser if you are sure you have a real treasure. Each person is invited to bring one of their own treasures and Kevin will appraise them. The evening will start our with light refreshments at 7:30. We would like you to attend and bring a friend.

### QUILT SHOW AND ANTIQUE AUTO SHOW

Our plans for the Quilt Show and the Antique Auto Show are now in their final stages. In case you missed our CURRENT EVENTS letter, the show will be held September 29 and 30, and October 1, from 11 am til 4 p.m.

We will be displaying quilts in the barn. We will also be serving a light lunch, chaired by JoAnne Seestrom, we will also have a bake sale, chaired by Linda Martin.

While this is going on in the barn, in the Coley house will be quilt demonstrations by members of the "Connecticut Cornerstone" Quilt group. Helen Whitten will be selling her antique quilts, quilting items, and notions sold by The Family Album, Simply Country, and Contemporary Quilting.

On Sunday, we will have a display of antique cars on the Coley Homestead property. The cars will represent the evolution of the auto from the Ford MODEL T to cars from the '50's.

Norm Perry, who is in charge of the auto show, needs interested people to serve on the committee for the Sunday event.  
If you are interested, call Norm  
277-5579

All in all, it will be a busy and exciting weekend. We hope that you will be able to attend. If you wish to help us in any way, please call Bobbie Suratt at 227-1287 or Karin Giannitti at 762-9208, or any of the chairpersons.



# PICTURE QUIZ



## CAN YOU NAME THIS?

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

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

The picture in the last issue was of the Middle school, located behind the Norfield Congregational Church. It is now part of the Parish Hall, and is called the Banks room, in honor of Willis and Florence Banks, brother and sister, who were long time members of the church, and were teachers in this one-room school house. The Middle school closed on the early 1930's when the Hurlburt school opened.

A few people asked "isn't that the old school house behind the church," but nobody sent an answer in.

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## ITEMS FROM THE ATTIC

These pictures are of several items found in the attic of the David Dimon Coley house. Some of the items of the family they came from.

The most interesting item is the thirteen-star (and stripes) flag. It is made of linen. You can see that some of the stars are missing. The dye used for the blue field has preserved the linen, but the stars which are of undyed linen, did not last very well. We have been in touch with the Smithsonian institution to determine how old the flag is and how to preserve it. They sent some information on preservation of old cloth, but were not able to help us with the age of the flag without seeing it, we plan to send them a picture. The flag was found in an old trunk along with some ticking.



The second item is a jig saw, operated by a foot pedal. There is no name of a manufacturer on the item; however, there is patent date of October 24, 1876. This item will be placed in the proposed Jim Coley work shop when it is set up in the carriage shed.

The next item is an old Oliver typewriter. This probably dates from Cleora Coley's time and might have been used by her in her early years.



The chair is the next item. It appears to be hand made and is similar to other chairs we have been given, which were in another Coley house in Weston.



# THE FIRELANDS

The term "Firelands" refers to land set aside in the "Western Reserve" to compensate many of southern Connecticut's land owners who were burned out of their homes and shops by the British during the Revolutionary War.

Connecticut was not the theater of any great campaigns or battles; however, it did supply a great quantity of food and supplies to the Continental armies and Militia when stationed in Boston and New York and when Washington's armies overwintered in the state.

To reduce the flow of goods from the state to the troops, the British repeatedly tried to destroy the spirit of the Connecticut people while also destroying the supplies. They made several strikes against mainly coastal towns, although, they did march on Danbury to capture a munitions supply. When they struck, they also burned many of the homes and business' in the town. Hence, New London, Groton, New Haven, Fairfield, Norwalk, and other towns were burned, some more than once. Fairfield was burned on July 8, 1779. In Fairfield alone, records indicate that the following were burned:

- 97 houses
- 67 barns
- 48 stores
- 2 school houses
- 1 country house
- 1 meeting house
- 1 Episcopal church

In addition, some 20 houses were damaged. The total value of the losses was 33,467 British pounds. The people who suffered these losses were called the Sufferers. There were 269 people with claims. They petitioned the state for some material recognition of their claim for relief.

While we do not have any proof that any homes in Weston were burned by the British, the names of many of the Sufferers from Fairfield reads like an early tax roll of Weston: Beers, Couch, Bradley, Godfrey, Morehouse, Rowland, Sturges, Wakeman, Burr, Gould, Perry, Banks, Gray, Squire, Cable, Thorp, Osborn, Hide, Hull, and Coley. (The reason the names are familiar is that these people were given land in the long lots in the early 1700's. These long lots became the towns of Weston and Easton in 1787 and 1835). Their losses were calculated in monetary terms and ranged from a few shillings to over 100 pounds.

However, Connecticut had no means to pay the claims of the Sufferers other than to quit claim them land in the Western Reserve, which was land claimed by Connecticut in the early years of the Revolutionary War and located in what is now Ohio, and a portion of western Penn.

Before the land in the Western Reserve could be claimed, the land had to be surveyed and the title to the land, from the Indians, cleared. This was finally accomplished by 1818, although, some towns were established earlier. A large majority of the early settlers of the Firelands were of Connecticut birth, thereby giving a fixed and homogeneous look to the population. This was further evident in the names chosen for the towns established in this area. In Huron county, the town were:

Norwalk	1810	Fairfield	1816
Lyme	1811	Norwich	1816
New Haven	1811	Wakeman	1816
Townsend	1811	Fitchville	1817
Ridgefield	1812	Clarksfield	1817
Sherman	1812	Greenwich	1817
Bronson	1814	Hattland	1817
New London	1815	Richmond	1825
Peru	1815	Ripley	1825

In Erie county, other towns with familiar names were established:

Danbury	1808
Portland	1808
Groton	1809
Berlin	1810

But not all the original sufferers made it to the Western Reserve. By the time the land was available, it was 28-33 years after the British fired the towns in the Revolution. Some had died, others were too old to move and many had disposed of ever receiving anything and had sold their rights to the land. Others lost their land because they could not afford the taxed levied to pay for the purchase from the Indians. In the end, most of the Firelands passed into the hands of a comparatively few. Two who bought much of this land were Samuel Rowland, who gave land, on February 2, 1785, for the second Congregational church in Weston, and Thaddeus Burr, who gave the land six months earlier on October 16, 1784 "For a place of parade to do Military Duty on and build a Meeting House and School House thereon, as the People Shall think proper." The residents of Norfield used Burr's land to conduct militia drills and used Rowland's gift for the meeting house (Fifty years of so later, the church was moved and rebuilt on the land that Burr had given for this purpose and the second church location was used for the parsonage).

None of the old records we have been able to find list families who did make the long journey from Connecticut to the Firelands, we feel that not many did move, since most had either lost or sold their rights to their Firelands grant. Most of the settlers of this area of Ohio were from other states.

We are indebted to Bob Turner, of Weston, who brought back information on the Firelands from a trip he made to the Firelands museum. We also received valuable information from the Firelands Museum in Norwalk, Ohio, and from the Research Dept. of the Fairfield (Conn.) Historical Society and Museum.

# WESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S FIRST ANNUAL SCARE FAIR

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OCTOBER 21 — 10-4    OCTOBER 22 — 12-4

FEATURING OUR FIRST SCARECROW CONTEST

CALLING ALL ADULTS, CHILDREN, GROUPS, BOY SCOUTS, GIRL SCOUTS, ETC

COME JOIN THE FUN!!

Create your own scarecrow — release all your creative talents,  
use whatever you like to create a bird-chaser with a difference!

If you have any questions, call Pietra Knaus 222-7485

## THREE CATEGORIES TO ENTER

### 1. Traditional Scarecrow

Use materials that have been  
used on scarecrows for  
centuries — but be creative!

### 2. Contemporary Scarecrow

Not necessarily a scarecrow —  
a creative work — give a “new”  
look to the garden!

### 3. Scarecrow Whirligig

This scarecrow can make  
noise or have moving parts —  
the ultimate bird chaser!

All entries will be judged and prizes awarded. So mark your calendars, bring the children and grandchildren for face painting, pumpkin decorating, apple cider (made the old fashioned way), and to see all the pumpkins for sale.

\$5.00 REFUNDABLE ENTRY FEE  
TO BE RETURNED AT THE TIME  
YOU BRING YOUR SCARECROW  
FOR DISPLAY.

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SCARECROW CONTEST ENTRY BLANK

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

GROUP NAME (IF ANY) \_\_\_\_\_ CATEGORY (1,2,3) \_\_\_\_\_

I WOULD LIKE TO ENTER THE SCARECROW CONTEST. PLEASE SEND ME THE LIST OF RULES AND SET UP TIMES. THANK YOU.

PLEASE MAIL BEFORE OCTOBER 1 TO WHS, P.O. BOX 1092, WESTON, CT 06883

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## THE WESTON WOODS CHILDREN CARAVAN

As an added attraction, the Weston Woods Children's Caravan will be at the Coley Homestead, during the SCARE FAIR DAYS, showing a series of their films for kids. They will have scary stories, classic stories, and stories for all.

## MEMBERSHIPS

If you did not receive the September newsletter you are not a current member of the Weston Historical Society and this will be your last mailing from us, due to rising costs of printing and processing.

We hope you will take this opportunity to renew your membership. We have a very exciting year planned and would like you to be part of the festivities. Use the Membership form to the right, or a copy, to renew or start your membership.

We have received a return membership card from an individual Senior, without their name and address. If you have recently paid your dues and did not receive your September "Current-Events" newsletter — you may be this person. Please call the Coley house — 226-1804 and leave your name and address — thank you.

## CHRISTMAS AT THE COLEY HOUSE

The dates for the third annual "CHRISTMAS AT THE COLEY HOUSE" are December 8, 9 and 10. Watch the mail and the local papers for further news on this beautiful event.

## THE CIDER MILL SHED UPDATE

The ball is in our corner at present, although we feel we have been served a curve. With all we have given to the Historical District Commission, they still want more — an architect's site plan showing the shed in perspective to the other buildings. We are in the process of getting this drawing done so the commission can see what we have been able to see for more than a year. Meanwhile, the cider press et al, sit out on the parking lot under blue tarps, which are fading and probably will need to be replaced before winter.

## IN THE NEXT ISSUE CURRENT EVENTS

ENTRIES FROM DAVID PLATT'S LEDGER  
FIFTY YEARS OR SO AGO  
PICTURE QUIZ

## Items From The Attic Cont'd.

The last item in the collection is a marble-top commode or wash stand. We have not dated this, but it appears to be from the late 1800's.



We have found a number of papers which have not all been examined and cataloged yet. Many of these papers are deeds to property the Coley's bought over the years.

## WESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

### 1989-90 Membership

Please ( ) increase ( ) continue my membership for the April 1989-March 1990 year.

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Sustaining \_\_\_\_\_  
\$5 \$100

Indiv. Senior \_\_\_\_\_ Patron \_\_\_\_\_  
\$10 ea. \$250

Indiv. \_\_\_\_\_ Benefactor \_\_\_\_\_  
\$25 \$500  
Couple/Family \_\_\_\_\_ Business/Corp. \_\_\_\_\_  
\$50 \$50

( ) I would like to participate in upcoming events.

Member Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Does your Company Match your Gift? If so, please send in a form.

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