

FOLLETT NURSERY
WM. FOLLETT, PROP.
NURSERY STOCK, LANDSCAPE GARDENING
VALLEY FORGE ROAD, WESTON
R. D. WESTPORT, CONN.
TEL. WESTPORT

The Chronicle Quarterly

Weston Historical Society

Spring 2004

Volume 25 No 1

FOLLETT NURSERY

Home occupation in Weston has long been a staple of our community. Two hundred years ago your neighbor might have been a cobbler, a toll taker, or the local store keeper and postmaster with his living quarters above the store. In 2004 your neighbor might be a lawyer, an accountant, or a massage therapist with living quarters in another part of the home.

One such home occupation was Follett Nursery, nursery stock, landscape gardening, Valley Forge Rd., Weston, proprietor, William Follett. In a "Parish Family Profiles" given to us by William's daughter, Ethel, it was stated that Bill came from England to the United States in 1913 when he was 23, but returned to England when World War I began. He fought in the battle at Loos, and was wounded at Manetz Wood. By 1920 he was back in the U.S. for

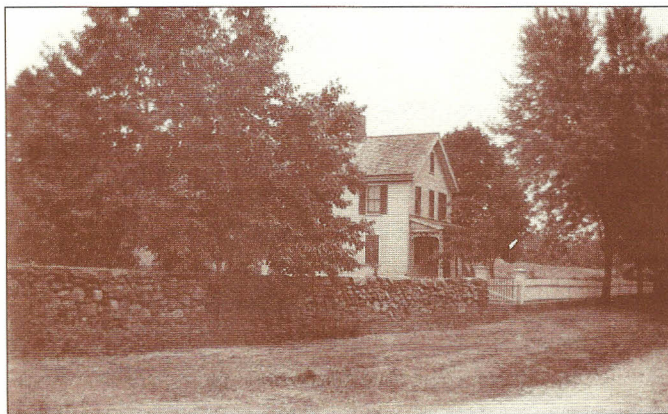
good and in 1935 encouraged his love Evelyn to come here as his bride.

Early on Bill worked on the J.B. Duke estate in New Jersey, then on to Round Hill in Greenwich. From 1923 to 1932 he was manager of Henry Wild's Nursery in Norwalk. In 1927, he purchased the house and 20 acres on Valley Forge Road and started his own business there in 1932. Although the property was not in the best of condition, Bill turned the area around the house into a blooming flower and vegetable garden, as well as planting rows and rows of bushes, trees, and perennials on the rest of the property for sale to his neighbors in Weston and surrounding towns. Beginning in 1945, he also lectured during the winter months to garden clubs throughout Connecticut on the subjects of Pruning, Perennials, Vegetable Gardening, and Flowering and Berrying Shrubs.

Mr. Follett and his wife Evelyn worked the land for themselves, having fresh produce during the warm months, then canning or freezing for the winter months. There would be beans, peas, corn, spinach, tomatoes, parsley ("large enough to cover the top of a peach basket"), shallots and onions dried in the attic, melons during the month of August, Chinese cabbage, lettuce, rutabaga, winter beets and carrots, tomatoes, root crops stored in sand in an unheated basement, including parsnips and leeks that stayed in the ground until very late in winter.

In an article published in the Town Crier from Sunday August 9, 1964, Mr. Follett declared that the trick to a beautiful vegetable garden was in planning the whole area before starting. This eliminates unused space. He offered plans for gardeners using his own garden as a guide.

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The Follett home and Nursery on Valley Forge Road near the corner of Old Redding Road.
1927



Looking down on the Follett home
from Old Redding Road

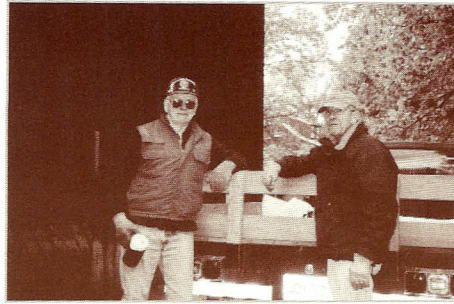
FIELD TRIP TO THE COLEY HOUSE

The second grade classes at Hurlbutt Elementary School study the history of Weston each year. Over the last several issues, culminating with the current issue, we have shown you the art work and stories of the children in Mrs. Larabee's second grade class. This past fall our very own trustee, Judy Albin, had a great idea for the children of the entire second grade. After speaking to teachers and society members it was decided to bring the students to the Coley House for stories, instruction, and hands-on activities showing life in Weston 150 years ago.

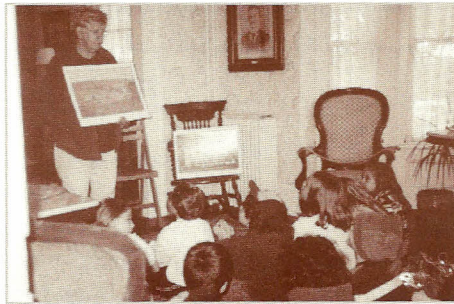
Each class was brought to the Coley Homestead and then split into three groups which rotated around three stations. Group one would visit the barn where Ernie Albin and Charlie McCullough, with the help of Tom Studwell, would show the children various farm equipment in our museum. The students watched a machine taking corn kernels off the cob, used a two-man saw to cut a slice of log, and operated a grinding machine powered by foot pedals.

Group two would come to the kitchen where Peg McCullough would share with the children various kitchen utensils, compliments of Gayle Beyea, that were used many years ago, including an apple peeler/corer, different graters,

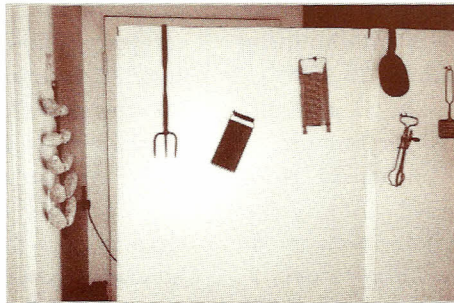
wooden spoons, and even an old fashioned mouse trap (quite a hit with the children). Mrs. McCullough would then make oatmeal raisin cookies with the kids. Each child was able to add



Charlie McCullough and Ernie Albin getting ready for the 2nd graders to come to the barn for demonstrations and hands-on activities with the old tools.



Judy Albin showing Hurlbutt's Second Graders a picture of the Morehouse Farm in 1850's

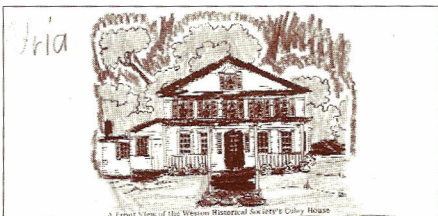


Some of the old kitchen implements shown to the students, courtesy of Gayle Beyea

L-R: a corn dryer, a fork, 2 graters, wooden spoon, old egg beater and soap holder

ingredients and stir.

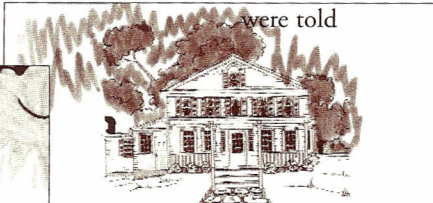
Group three would go with Judy Albin and Nancy Lack to the front parlor where Judy would show the children pictures of the Morehouse property from 150 years ago. Judy's husband, Ernie, is the great great grandson of Ebenezer Morehouse. The children



Dear Coley House volunteers, Thank you for telling us how to bake the cookies. It was fun. I might ask my mom if she can bake those cookies. Thank you for letting us touch the gold nugget. Was it really real? Do you know how much gold nuggets there were? The tools were really cool. I liked the ice pickers. I also



liked the saw for cutting the wood. I hope we get to come back soon! Love, Adria



Dear Coley House volunteers, Thank you for the cookies and for letting us touch the gold nugget. Thank you for reading the story to us. From Alexandra

how Gold Rush money had been used



Dear Coley House volunteers, I loved the barbe. Sailing was cool. My favorite tool was the ice pick. Love, Max

FOLLETT NURSERY

continued

Folks could order the particular varieties that he recommended, with planting dates, proper spacing rows, whether seed or plants are placed out, good variety names, succession of sowing, and what is very important, locations of similar types of plants. He even made room for cut flowers – they belong too.

Although Evelyn's life in England had been filled with traveling and an impressive knowledge of church architecture, she took happily to her home on Valley Forge, raising two children, cooking, sewing and handling Bill's vast produce from the garden. Despite long hours spent in the garden, Bill was an air-raid warden in World



William Follett tending his corn
1975

War II, served as treasurer of the PTA, was on the Board of Education, a director of the Weston-Westport Red Cross, chaplain of the Norfield Grange, and Treasurer of the Emmanuel Church where he also served as a Vestryman, and on the Cemetery Committee. He and Evelyn were official greeters and Evelyn was on the Altar Guild and served a long time as Choir Mother to the adult choir.

When Bill was in his eighties, you might think that he slowed down a

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HENRY WILD'S NURSERY

W. FOLLETT, Manager
*Growers of High Grade Fruit, Shade and Ornamental Trees, Roses, Vines, Etc.
Landscape Gardeners—Estimates Given
Evergreens a Specialty*
BOSTON POST ROAD BETWEEN NORWALK AND WESTPORT
NORWALK, CONN.

Oct. 1931.

Estimate of Material and labor for Weston Town Hall
and Community Green as per plan.

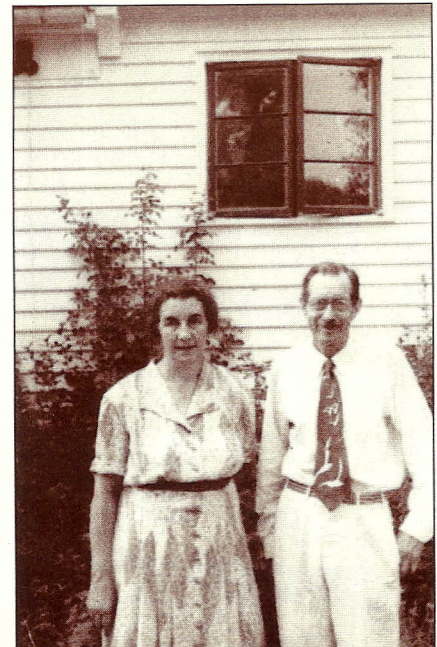
	ft.		
2 Pink Dogwood 5 - 6 @ 8.			16.
1 Hemlock 5 - 6 x 4 - 5			5.
6 Juniper pfitzeriana 3 - 4 spd. @ 5.			30.
1 Norway Spruce 7 - 8			<u>6.</u>
		57.	
231 Flowering & Berrying Shrubs and Vines (varieties and sizes as per key to plan)		186.	186.
Planting above Trees, Shrubs, and Vines, after the ground has been cleaned (approximate price)			75.
Digging, Transporting, and Planting items # 1 - 5 incl. 177 Trees and Bushes. (approximate price)			<u>182.</u>
			\$500.00

bit. Not a chance. During the growing season, Bill would have breakfast at 7:30, work in the garden until noon, have lunch and back out to the garden until 5:00. After dinner, he would be found back out in the garden until 9:00. Evelyn took care of all the produce, as well as a magnificent flower garden, and there were large lawns that needed caring for. The vegetable garden measured a mere 100' by 100'. Bill was also teaching

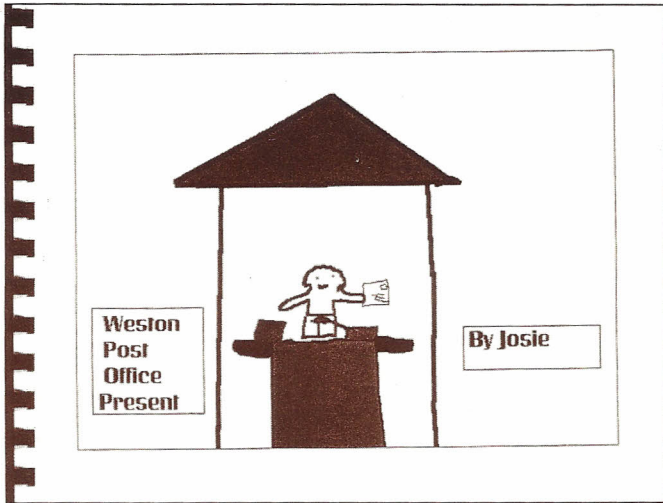
apprentices where, when, and how to plant. His most important advice was "No chemicals, and No Shirking."

This was truly a thriving home occupation which gave great pleasure not only to Bill and Evelyn, but to many families in Weston. Whether it was a question of what plant to put where, the best fertilizer, when to plant seeds, how to get rid of a woodchuck, or any other question about gardening the answer was "Call Mr. Follett and he could come up with a quick-witted and sure-fire cure."

Ed note: Our thanks to Ethel Follett for sharing this chapter of Weston's history with us and all the wonderful photos. Ethel lives in a beautiful home in Woodbury, and it was a pleasure getting reacquainted and sharing stories of her father and their beautiful home.

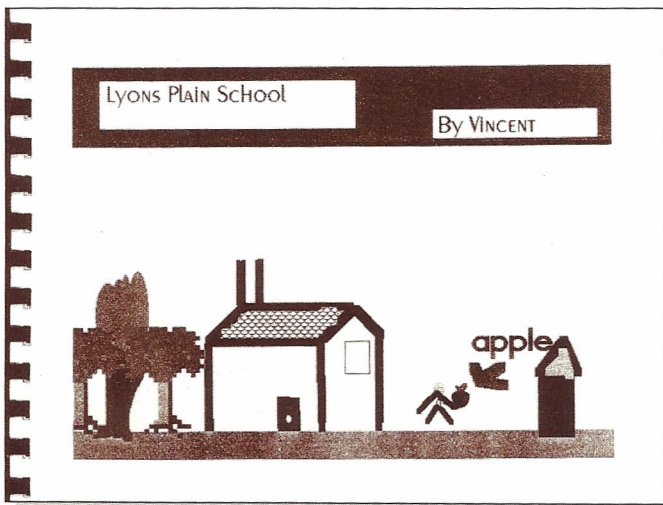


Bill and Evelyn Follett at home - 1952
on Valley Forge Road



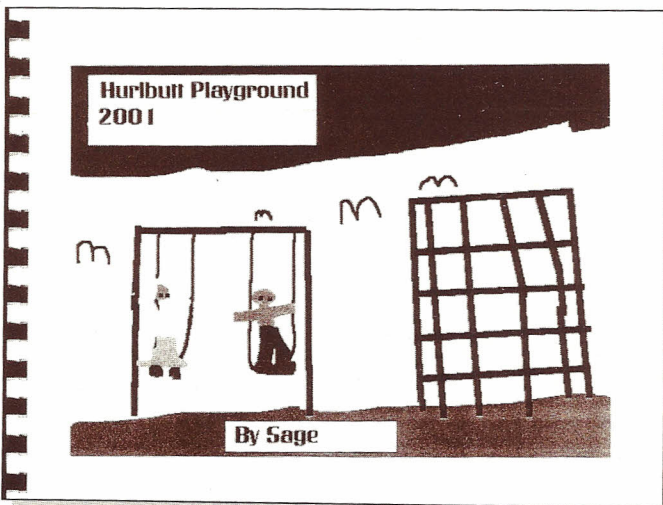
Illustrated and written by Josie Harris

The Post Office in Weston Today
 By Josie
 Do you think the post office looked like this in the 1800's? Well it didn't. It looks different. It used to be made out of wood but now it is made out of bricks. They used to drive horses and buggies to the post office, but today we drive cars. The old post office is still here. But now they use modern machines and the mail is delivered quicker. Today planes and trucks are used to make it quicker to get mail.



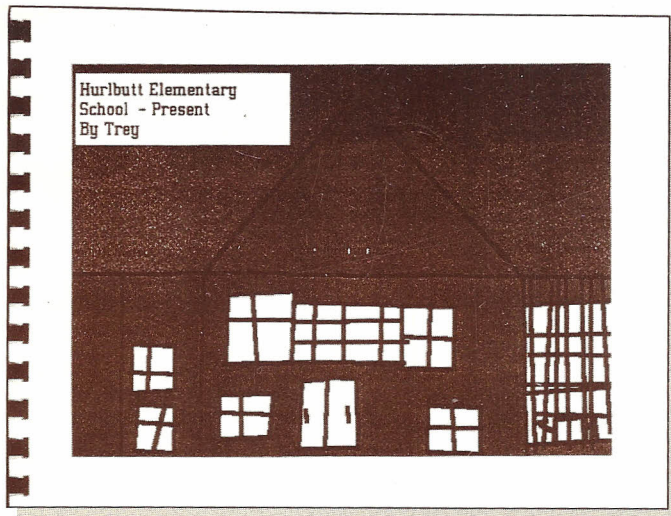
Illustrated and written by Vincent Simboli

Schools in the 1800s
 By Vincent
 Let's go back 200 years in time to find out how education was taught. Close your eyes... Here we are! 163 Hurlbutt School Road. Lets look in the window. Ouch! My ears hurt! This must be why they call it a 'blab' School. Wait! The teacher is saying something!
 "Oh class, get out those Arithmetic books, it's time for math!"
 "Aw, man...Gosh!"
 Those children must not like Arithmetic! They seem to be moaning and groaning. Maybe it is just because they can't concentrate! You know, I think we should go home now. Let me set this thing back to 2002... O.K. we're back!



Illustrated and written by Sage Ratner

Hurlbutt Playground 2001
 By Sage
 "Chatter, chatter, chatter," went the kids as they were laughing and playing on the playground. Back when the kids were in the one room schoolhouse, they did not have a playground like we have today. They just ran on the fields. Today we have several playgrounds so kids can play on them. I bet the children in the 1800's would have loved the playgrounds we have today, don't you?



Hurlbutt School 2001
By Audrey and Trey

What if you were in a one-room schoolhouse, how would you feel? We bet that wouldn't feel so good because hundreds of years ago you had to be in a room with people of all ages and it was noisy! Today, we are lucky that we have a big school and children of the same age are grouped together in classrooms. It is more organized. We have gyms, playground, a cafeteria, a South house, North house and an East house. We also have a Middle school and a High school. We have so much more than we had so many years ago. We work hard to keep this school standing!

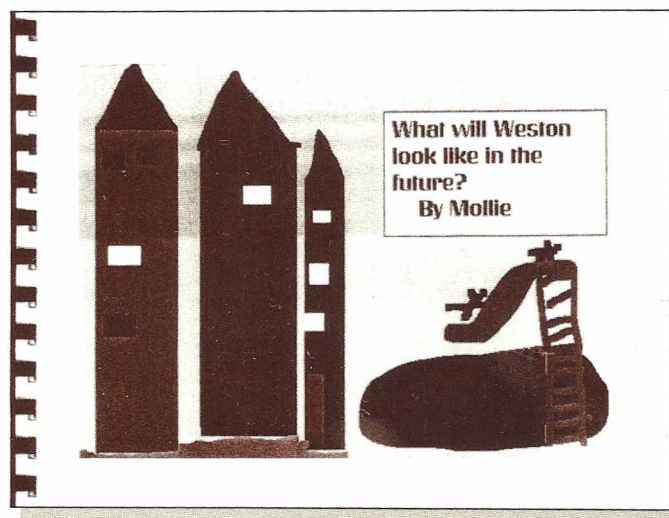
Illustrated by Trey Nandori and written by Audrey Goettl and Trey Nandori

Presented by

Mrs. Larrabee's Second Grade

With this issue we share the last of the children's drawings and text from "Weston Past and Present", a multi-media presentation done by Mrs. Larrabee's Second Grade students from Hurlbutt Elementary. The children created this booklet during the 2001-2002 school year, spending several weeks doing research and learning about our community. Much of the information was taken from our own website.

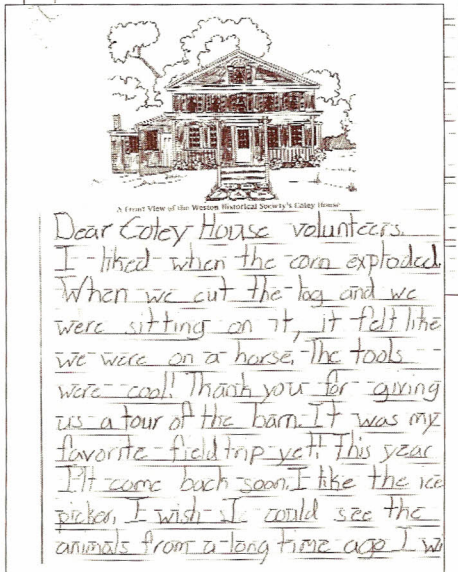
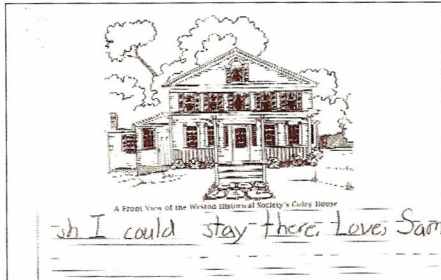
This last group of pictures depicts Weston's schools from the past, the present, and the future. The students said "We hope you like our presentation. We bet you'll learn something too." We have certainly enjoyed all the pictures and the text to go with them and yes, we did learn something. Thanks to all the students and teachers that made this possible.



Illustrated by Mollie Cahillane

FIELD TRIP

continued



to build the house and the students were then shown a real gold nugget that Ernie had found in the attic of his home. The children thought this was impressive. Judy then showed the students a picture of Carrie Morehouse, a daughter of Ebenezer. She then passed around the blouse that Carrie was wearing in the picture with the same pin at the neckline.

They were shown a picture

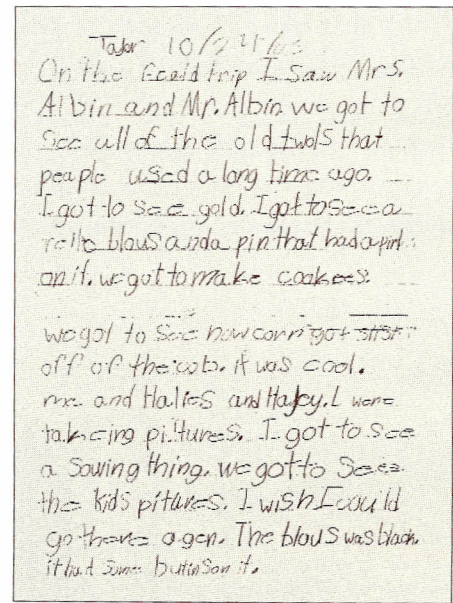
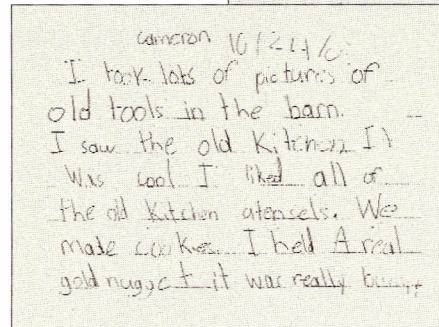
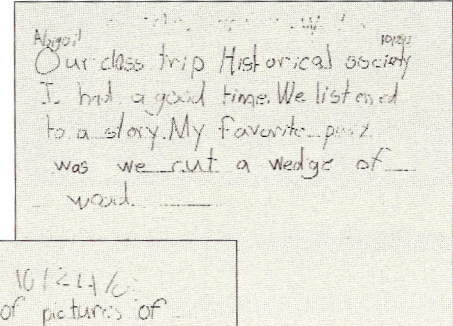
of the Gilbert & Bennett School in Georgetown and were asked to describe the differences between this school and Hurlbutt Elementary. Nancy Lack then treated the children to a story about a boy named Charles, and his Big Hat.

Before they left the parlor they were given packets with puzzles and math problems which appeared on the back of seed packets. The children were also given a one-year special membership to the Historical Society which they could use for our events during the year.

Seeing the children's smiling faces and hearing them talk amongst themselves was proof that all four mornings were a smashing success. Each child was excited about some aspect of the trip and we would like to share some of their comments with you. Judy did a fabulous job of organizing this field trip which will become part of our educational service to the community. Thank you Judy, Ernie, Peg, Charlie, Nancy, and Tom. **GREAT JOB!**



Karin Giannitti (left) and Peg McCullough (right) help the students mix ingredients for old fashioned oatmeal raisin cookies.



The Chronicle Quarterly

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STATE HISTORIC SITE

“The State Register of Historic Places is an honorary designation established by the General Statutes, which outlines the responsibilities of the Historic Preservation Council. Although the designation does not prevent a property owner from demolishing an historic resource, the State Register guides local officials, state agencies, and the general public in identifying historical buildings which merit preservation.”

Thanks to the hard work of our Trustee, Bob Regan, we are excited to announce that we have been selected to be on the State Register of Historic Places. Bob wrote to the council at the end of last year and sent our brochure, a booklet that he created called “The Coley House, Historical Details,” and other pertinent information. At their February 4, 2004 meeting, the Coley House was added to the Register. This designation allows us to apply for national designation and with it possible grant monies.

We are all very excited about this news and we cannot thank Bob enough for his efforts in making this possible. Thank you!



The Coley House Historical Details

The Society has just published, *The Coley House Historical Details*, a 45 page illustrated guide to the architectural features of the house.

It includes photographs from the Society’s archives and discussion of various additions over the years.

It is available at the gift shop.

Letter from the Editor:

Every day we all are in contact with people who provide us with various services. Sometimes in our busy lives it is difficult to find that person who goes the extra mile to make their job extraordinary. We have found just such a person in Diane Irvine who works for Custom Printing & Graphics. After the help that I had with this publication moved from Weston, I was pretty lost about artwork and the placement of articles and pictures. Now I put all that I have in an envelope and virtually drop it in Diane’s lap. She is the person responsible for making our publication look, what I think is very special.



I would like you to know a little bit about Diane. She shares our love of history and we often spend time chatting about some historical event, and she has even lent me some books about historical times. Diane was born in Tennessee but was raised in New England; Watertown, MA, Ridgefield, CT, Southbridge, MA and Winchester, MA. As an adult she has lived in New Haven, CT, Torrington, CT, Tolland, CT, West Willington, CT, Allentown, PA and Shelton, CT. Moving around has given her the opportunity to learn each local history.

Diane says her grandmother kindled her interest in history. As a child she remembers her grandparents helping to start the Deer Isle, ME Historical Society when they retired to their summer home of many years on the Island. Local history and family history were often dinner table discussions in their home. The furniture, household items, and decorations were passed down from generations before and all had a story to tell which intrigued and entertained Diane as a child. A quote from her step-great-grandmother often recited and lived by was “Nothing is too good to be used and nothing is too used to be good.”

Although she feels that the entire staff should be thanked, a special thank you belongs to Diane. She is always gracious about the mess I give her and helps me immensely. My thanks to Diane, Dick, Tim, Al, John and Donald for making my job so easy and for always going the extra mile.

The Weston Historical Society
Chronicle Quarterly

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In our last issue we ran a column about remembering things past. Jacqui and Lee Schneider sent us a list of things that they remember from not so long ago. See if you remember:

10¢ movies	Saturday night baths
13¢ a gallon gasoline	Goulashes with buckles
5¢ bread	Oleo made with color pellet
10¢ for a man's haircut	Old radio shows
NO Sunday movies	First TV
Serials at the movies before the show	5\$ candy bars
Two hours to place long distance phone calls	Dixie cups with lids having movie star pictures
Party-line phones	Free china or glassware
\$450 for new Dodge or Plymouth	night at the movies
Roller and ice skates strapped on your shoes	Hand pumped gasoline