

# A refresher course stirs sluggish memories

By Gordon B. Seavey

Each Thursday, this newspaper brings you the current events of our community to be recorded later down the line into what we have come to know as Westford history.

If not recorded in the printed word, these exact dates and details are soon forgotten.

This is a test of your memory of events gone by, some that seem only yesterday, others that only grandparents might remember, or even farther back, events taken from dusty or faded records.

Here are some items, some trivial, others most important, that have occurred over the years right in your back yard. Test your memory -- you'll probably say, "It couldn't have been that long ago!" Shut your eyes and think!

The simple but dignified Colonial home of Col. John Robinson (the Westford military hero who led 130 local minute-men to Concord Bridge in 1775) burned to the ground in 1937. A hefty stone marker shows the location on Robinson Road. Further down the street is the Rob-

inson Elementary School, when was it built?

The Jack Abbot mansion, a white landmark at the Center of town, was demolished in 1942. It had 18 rooms, eight marble fireplaces, a formal garden, a tennis court -- and its own water system provided by a windmill. The present post office is on this location -- but that, too, will move to another location as history and time march on, hand in hand.

The ornate spire on the Roudenbush Community Center collapsed with old age during a storm on April 4, eight years ago. This was the second building to house the school established in 1792. The present Academy complex is the fourth, located on Patten Road, and we'll let incoming freshmen tell us when that was erected. Incidentally, Patten Road was named after farmer Rufus Patten, not the famed World War II General Patton. Watch that spelling!

## More Recollections

A committee of old Academy grads was formed in 1942 to ob-

serve the 150th anniversary of the venerable old school. Few of these members are now living but for the record here is the complete list, led by Hon. Herbert E. Fletcher as chairman of the trustees and George A. Drew as general chairman.

Others included Edward A. Fisher, Harold W. Harrington, Harriet Sargent Hildreth, Ailister F. MacDougall, Pamela "Daisy" Precious Perry, Elva Rollins (that stalwart long-time secretary of the Alumni Association), retired Principal William Roudenbush, Gordon B. Seavey and William R. Taylor.

The Academy trustees already have started plans to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the school in 1992.

At the junction of Westford, Groton and Tyngsboro stands a rough hewn granite post marking the point on Millstone Hill where the three towns meet. It is due north from Forge Pond. Here the officials from each town meet on occasion to see that the boundary is still there and daub it with a painted date just to prove that no one had moved it since the last official visit.

Millstone Hill probably re-

ceived its name because from the sizeable amount of granite outcroppings someone quarried a millstone to be installed in a crude mill along a stream in the area.

Along came MIT in 1964 to build Haystack Observatory to pioneer radar studies of the moon, Venus, Mars and Mercury and the outer space. The giant equipment (golf balls, dishes, etc.) can be seen for miles around.

From outer space a few months ago, the space shuttle zoomed through the ionosphere over the Millstone Observatory and burned its engines to release exhaust fumes and water vapor. This permitted B.U. astronomers to observe and locate an "ionospheric hole".

Chemical reaction caused the ions and electrons to recombine and disappear, forming the "hole." This experiment has the scientists enthused as it had been planned for nine years. Westford comparatively is a small community -- but just think, the space shuttle found us!

*Gordon Seavey is a Westford resident and frequent contributor to the Eagle.*