

Florida's allure is nothing new

By Gordon B. Seavey

Local "snowbirds" are preparing to or already have left for the Deep South to avoid this area's somewhat harsh winter climate. Florida seems to be their goal

Some will make the Sunshine State thier permanent residence. Others will stay as long as their vacation money holds out, others, until the first robin leaves for North

This is nothing new for Westford folk. More than a century ago, persons left the quiet life of this old Colonial town for an adventurous new one which might bring them fame and fortune

Indeed to some, this was so. Harrison Reed in 1876 at the age of 63 became the governor of the state. The folks back home were amazed but populationwise, Florida was just coming into its own

Then there were the Atwood brothers. Not satisfied to raise fine fruits and milk cows any longer on the family farm at Concord Road (Route 225) and Hildreth Street, they too, headed south leaving thier maiden sisters (always called "The Atwood Girls") at home. The men left behind one of the most productive farms in town

The boys all landed in Daytona, Florida. Edward, a graduate of the Academy and Dartmouth practiced medicine; William was a pharmacist and also city treasurer

That's what one might call success in a short time

It was boom-time in Florida. A Florida developer attempted to entice the trustees of Westford Academy to invest some funds into property in that vicinity, but "prudently" the answer was a strong "No!"

Should they have been so prudent?

Gordon Seavey is a Westford native and is a frequent contributor to The Eagle