

# Historic local family passes into memory

By GORDON SEAVEY  
Sun Correspondent

WESTFORD - For 250 years and 10 generations, the name Abbot has been synonymous with Westford history.

Abbots have served since 1735 as town clerks, militia men, attor-

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## Westford

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neys, selectmen, industrialists and, almost always, on the Westford Academy board of trustees.

In recognition of the family's role in the town's development, the middle school at 25 Depot St. was renamed the Abbot Middle School in 1973. With that, the town guaranteed that the Abbot name will live on.

But the last living Westford Abbot, Natalie Baron Abbot, passed on Sunday at the age of 85 following an extended illness. She was the widow of Edward M. Abbot, who died in 1958.

The Abbots are perhaps best known in Westford as the founders of the Abbot Worsted Mills in Graniteville, where wool was spun into worsted yarn for the textile industry.

Established by Abiel J. Abbot, the Graniteville mills eventually expanded to Forge Village, Brookside (now known as Nabasset), and Lowell.

Abiel Abbot's son, Edward, Mrs. Natalie Abbot's late husband, became president of Abbot Worsted, and is still remembered by many townspeople.

Mrs. Abbot continued the family tradition of involvement in the community as a 60-year member of the Tadmuck Club.

She was also a life member of the Vesper Country Club, a member of the Lowell General Hospital Ladies' Auxiliary, a Gray Lady, and a member of the Paint and Powder Club.

The Abbot generations in Westford began on May 5, 1713, with the birth of John Abbot, son of Deacon Joshua Abbot of Billerica. John built his home in Westford center in 1735 near the common and the present location of the Westford Post Office. He was a school teacher, and acted as town clerk for many years, as well as serving as selectmen.

A son, also named John, was a second lieutenant in Capt. Oliver Bates Company (the original Westford Minutemen) during the North Bridge skirmish with the British in Concord. A founder of Westford Academy and the Social Library, he also served as town clerk and treasurer.

Later Abbots included prominent attorneys, a judge, a state senator, teachers, a president of Stony Brook Railroad, and a minister.

Most were either officers or trustees of Westford Academy. As a grand master of Royal Arch Chapter of Masons, the Hon. John Abbott, born in 1777, assisted by General Marquis de Marie Joseph Paul Yves Roch Gilbert du Motier Lafayette, laid the cornerstone of the Bunker Hill Monument in 1825.