

# Minot's Corner dates to 1700s

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Contributing reporter

Business activity began to expand a few years ago in the Minot's Corner region of Westford, the area started to take on the name of "Four Corners," possibly following the name of a prominent gasoline station at the junction of Boston and Littleton Roads. This was heresy, according to a group of 100 women, who signed a petition to keep the old historical name of Minot's Corner. Hall to the power of women's lib, the old name remains.

The busy crossroads shows on a map of 1730, and because Major Jonathan and Esther Minott lived on the north corner folks began to designate this intersection as Minot's Corner, shortening the spelling by one "t."

Minott led one of the Westford Companies during the Revolution and his son, Joseph, was killed at Bunker Hill on June 17, 1775.

He is buried in Fairview Cemetery, not far from the town tomb. Times were hard after the Revolution, so when his sister, Joanna died March 9, 1780, at the age of 17, the family erected a single slate marker for the siblings.

The bronze marker at Minot's Corner designating the spot of the original homestead and depicting this historical item, erected by the Westford Minute-men, has mysteriously disappeared. Stolen - or hopefully in storage while construction in that area is taking place.

Always known as the "town clock", this timepiece in the tower of the old meeting

house at The Common, was the gift of John Abbot in 1837. A member of one of the "first families" in town, he procured the works from Willard of Upton, one of the famous clock makers in the country.

In making the gift, however, old John stipulated that if the clock should ever be neglected, it would revert back to him or his family. The clock is still in its original location.

Huge weights on long chains dropping down the steeple, powered the clock mechanism and also the clapper that struck the time of day on the 1,200 pound bell in the belfry. The sexton would have to wind up the weights each week, much in the same manner as we wind our hall clocks.

The clock is now electrically controlled, that mechanism the gift of A. Mabel Drew in memory of her parents.

With their stern, Puritanical background, it was many years before the townspeople allowed music in the meeting house. In 1824, however, the bass viol (cello) finally came into use in worship. Who played it, or was the owner, we don't know, but this instrument was chosen because its pitch conformed more to the voices for community singing.

Rev. George E. Downey explains that the viol, played pointing skyward, was "OK" but the violin, under the chin, was used for dancing and symbolized the devil. Should the musician play the violin resting on his knee and pointed heavenward, this just might be "OK", too.