

No Flag on Common pole on Patriot's Day

By GORDON B. SEAVEY

WESTFORD — Unable to loosen snagged halyards, the national emblem was not raised on the Common on Patriot's Day by the two volunteers who customarily attend to this duty

A hangover from the Great Blizzard of February, the ropes were hopelessly entangled in the tops of the nearby maples when the fierce winds loosened them from their usual mooring and flung them upwards 40 feet into the overhanging branches

Clayton Dearth, who takes great pride in the care of the historic common, attempted to snare the extended ropes by flinging other ropes into the trees. It was to no avail

Accordingly when the grass gets firmer, the Fire Department with their new extension power ladder will make the attempt. In the meantime, Austin D Fletcher and his brother-in-law, Charles Colburn, who take care of raising and lowering the flag daily, weather permitting, will have to idly stand by

If the 130 Westford men, led by Col John Robinson, who left for Concord Bridge on April 19, 1775, from the common were alive today, they would probably not understand the attempted flag raising ceremony. The first flagpole, of white pine, was not erected on the triangle until Civil War days. And now, the modern fiberglass pole, 60 feet high, placed in position during the Bicentennial, just couldn't take the rigors of a New England blizzard.