

MEMORIES

Remembering talented brothers from a prominent Westford family

(A native of Westford now residing on Depot Street, Gordon B. Seavey, 83, is the retired publisher of the Belmont Citizen.)

By GORDON B. SEAVEY

WESTFORD — Seldom does a small community lose two outstanding citizens within nine days. This happened in 1935 when Charles O. Prescott and his brother, Albert, died.

Both confirmed bachelors, they died while on vacation, Albert in Fitzwilliam, N.H. on July 26; Charles on Martha's Vineyard on Aug. 4.

They were highly-respected members of one of Westford's oldest families. John Prescott came to the Nashoba Valley in 1643, settling in Lancaster. His son, Jonas, took up residence in the Forge Village section of town around 1710 as a builder of forges at the head of Stony Brook, an outlet of what is now Forge Pond.

The sons of Edward Prescott, Charles and Albert were brought up in the 1808 homestead built by their grandfather, Abram Prescott, in Forge Village, near the Groton line.

Both attended Westford Academy, Charles graduating in the classical course and Albert the Latin/scientific course.

The Edward Prescott family moved to Westford Center where they purchased the 21 Main St. colonial property called "Mille Fleurs," which was built by a relative, Avery Prescott.

One of the town's showplace residences, it is now owned by Mrs. Lowell Chapin.

Charles the educator

During his studies at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, "Charles O," as he was known to townsmen, taught for a year at Parkerville district school.

After receiving his degree at MIT in 1884, he served as an assistant in the Institute's chemistry department.

Travel was difficult and financially impossible for most Westford people, but Charles O. was given the opportunity to escort a young man from the Midwest around the world.

After teaching in plush private schools, he took a sabbatical year in Germany in 1900, studying at University of Berlin while living with a German family.

His activities in Westford were many. When his father died in 1905, Charles took over his spot as a trustee of Westford Academy, a post he held until his death.

Following in the footsteps of his ancestors, Charles served as treasurer and as a member of the standing committee of the First Parish Church.

He also served on the board of trustees of the J.V. Fletcher Library and for 12 years, "gave thoughtful and intelligent service" on the Westford School Committee.

For many years, Charles was a director and treasurer of the Westford Water Company. I recall, as a small boy, handing money to him for my father's periodic water bill, and also delivering groceries to him from the Wright & Fletcher store.

Charles was a quiet, dignified person who liked people. He was a gentle, distinguished gentleman.

Albert the musician

Albert chose the life of a musician. He had a fine bass voice and studied in Boston under noted teachers, including Benjamin Lang, organist at King's Chapel.

For many years, he had a studio in Boston where he taught both vocal and instrumental music; and for a brief period, a studio in Lowell.

Concert work and teaching kept him busy, but he also found time to contribute his talents in Westford. I remember him performing at many affairs, as a soloist and in a quartet.



'Mille Fleurs,' colonial property on Main St. in Westford, built by Avery Prescott.

It was common during that era ('20s-'30s) for people with special talents to sing at weddings and funerals, and at major functions. My mother, who had a strong contralto voice, would pair up with Albert quite often.

During World War I, Albert worked in the interests of French Relief, forming a branch in Westford with Miss

Sarah Loker, a past president of the Tadmuck Club.

After their mother died in the mid '20s, the Prescott brothers made their home on Pinckney Street in Boston, but continued to be frequent visitors to Westford and Forge Village.

Both are well remembered, and their ashes lie in the family plot at Fairview Cemetery.