



**FISHER FAMILY MEMORIALIZED** as bulk of estate of late Frederic A. Fisher is left for Westford Academy scholarships. Seven members of the Alvan Fisher family of five boys and four girls pictured here (left to right) are John, father of the donor, Ruth, Clara, Edward (Pete), Adaline, Lila and Fred. Tom and Alec were missing when photo was taken in 1940. (Photo loaned courtesy of Gordon Seavey)

# Sizeable addition to WA scholarship fund honors Fisher family

By GORDON B. SEAVEY

WESTFORD — The Westford Academy scholarship fund is expected to receive the largest contribution in its nearly two centuries of service to its graduates when the estate of the late Frederic Alec Fisher is settled.

A member of an old Westford family, Mr. Fisher died last August at his home, leaving the bulk of his estate to the trustees. They are instructed in his will to establish a scholarship fund to be known as "The Fisher Family Fund."

Mr. Fisher, a strong exponent of proper English grammar, asked that the scholarship be given to a graduate, or graduates, who have "achieved a grade of excellence in the study of the English language."

A 1923 Dartmouth graduate, the donor received his LLB from Harvard School of Law in 1926. He was a resident of Portland, Oregon, for 16 years where he was a junior member of a large law firm. He was a member of both the Massachusetts and Oregon Bar Associations. For several years Mr. Fisher was in Washington, affiliated with the U.S. Department of State, assigned to Cuba.

He came to Westford as a permanent resident of 1949, making his home at 14 Depot Street. He became the town's accountant and clerk for the selectmen. Mr. Fisher was a World War II veteran.

## Old Family

Mr. Fisher intends to memorialize his family, starting with his grandparents, Alvan, who was a wholesale cattle dealer and farmer, and his wife, Amanda (Tower) Fisher. They lived at 3 Depot Street in the old Croft homestead (built prior to 1730) and now known as Running Fox Farm.

There were nine children in the family and all were graduates of Westford Academy. John was chief engineer for a Connecticut power company. He was the father of the donor of the scholarship fund. Frederic was a judge in the Lowell District Court and his brother Edward was well remembered as town clerk and moderator as well as an attorney. Both were long-time Academy trustees. Thomas was director of the old Lowell Manual Training School. Alec chose to run the old homestead.

The sisters were Adaline Kirtledge Buckshorn, Clara, a law librarian in Lowell, Lila, a teacher; Ruth, the first principal of the Frost School when it opened in 1908, and who later taught in Providence. Last of her generation, she died in 1978 at the age of 102.

Most members of the family spent summers for many years as a group in three cottages at Forge Pond. All were highly respected.

Chosen to make the announcement of this generous gift for the trustees was Allister F. MacDougall. He will be 90 on July 18.

has been a trustee for 46 years and a past president, and a long-time friend of the family.

## Largest Gift

When the will was probated, the trustees were especially enthused about the gift. With increasing demand on their funds and with little coming into their treasury until only recently to build up their investments, Mr. MacDougall said that this large addition is most welcomed. He added that he hoped others would consider making memorial gifts.

Principal William C. Roudenbush revived scholarship gifts in his will in 1967, and in recent years there have been additions in varying amounts, including funds from the defunct Nabnasset Boosters Club, the Seavey Communications Award, and the Hildreth, Hall and Peterson families.

Mr. Fisher's widow, Vernita Bronson Fisher, died four months following his death. The estate provides for 15% of the residue to go to her side of the family, the balance to the Academy trustees and eventually to students specializing or adept in English.

Executors of the will are A. Dana Fletcher, treasurer for the Academy Trustees, and Attorney Edward L. Monahan of West Chelmsford, a long-time friend of the donor.

## Watch Funds

The duties of the trustees,

since the private academy became a public high school in 1905, are confined mostly to supervising the various funds which have accumulated since the founding of the old academy in 1702 as one of the earliest secondary schools in the country.

Auditor Alan W. Bell reported that these funds at current market value totalled \$477,000 as of May 22. Income from the investments was sufficient to provide \$12,000 in scholarships to students graduating this week, plus \$7,900 for special gifts of media and computer equipment to the school for general student use.

A special committee on finances supervises the investment portfolio which is periodically analysed by one of the larger national investment houses.

The Board of Trustees has a membership of not more than fifteen. In years past, this has consisted of prominent area people, all men. Recently the trend has been to tap graduates of the Academy for the post and now there are also three women members in the group.