

Westford Wanderings

by

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Wandering about town, many of the street signs give a brief history of the folks who lived here generations ago.

Just to name a few of the old families whose only recognition today are their names engraved on slate, marble or granite in the cemeteries - and on street names - they are

Abbot (with only one "i"), Chamberlain (but the original family spelled it without an "i"), Patten (not related to General Patton and therefore spelled with an "e"), Tenney Road after a family long gone from town, Vose and Griffin Roads are solid examples. Of course, there are more

And there are the usual streets named after trees, from ash and elm to willow

Then there are road signs which point the way to other communities, such as Littleton, Acton, Concord, Groton and Chelmsford.

Ponds come into the program, too, with Nabnasset, Long Sought For and Burge (note that this is not Burgess), for street names. Stony Brook is not spelled with an "e" The old Indian name for "Nab" appears to be Nubanussuck, much more difficult to spell.

And finally, we come to Snake Road, improperly so-called for years. It was not because someone at sometime killed a large snake along the way, but because this very old road winds in and out among the eskers and moraines formed by the glacier 15,000 years ago.

The proper name for this highway, which has been somewhat uncurved over the years, is Powers Road. It connects Littleton Road (Route 110) with Great Road (Route 119) and Concord Road (Route 225) crosses it. The earliest settlers landed in this area.

Walter Powers came from Concord in 1694 to settle with his family in the vicinity of Nashoba Hill, which the Littleton-Westford line neatly divides. He purchased the eastern quarter of Nashobah Plantation which had been set aside by Rev. John Elliot in 1654 for the local Indians, a program that failed within a few decades

The greater part of Littleton, a tract of about four miles square (although the Groton-Littleton line is only three miles long), was this old Indian town. There were probably only a dozen Indian families during this period.

The map of Westford, drawn in 1730, shows that Walter Powers had a homestead near Nashoba brook. It is hoped that sometime the street sign that now reads "Power Rd." will be spelled correctly

When Westford had about three thousand people, everyone just about knew everyone else, and people found no difficulty in locating residences.

Now, with a population nearing 14,000 and 250 streets criss-crossing all over the map, it is good to have the street signs and the houses numbered. Great credit for this clarification must go to Norman E. Day who has worked on the project for many months.