

Westford Minutemen to host historic family day program

By GORDON B. SEAVEY

WESTFORD — Musket fire, martial music, costumed dancers and old-time crafts will be mingled with the sounds of country living this Saturday as the Westford Minutemen host a family day honoring the birth of Colonel John Robinson, the community's Revolutionary War hero.

Events will take place from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on historic Westford Common, in the First Parish United church hall and in the J. V. Fletcher Library. Such Colonial trades as gunsmithing, carpentry, tinsmithing, blacksmithing and wheelwrighting, wood-carving, pottery and silver-smithing will be demonstrated.

Minuteman Allister F. MacDougall will display farming tools of the past while ladies in costume will demonstrate rug braiding and hooking, candlemaking, spinning and weaving, needlework, quilting and scrimshaw, the engraving of small objects such as shells and ivory. In addition, there will be an exhibit of primitive, quilting, theorem and tole paintings.

Local Minutemen will give musket demonstrations from 10 to 11 a.m. while their Concord colleagues will present a program of early music from 11 a.m. to noon, following which representatives of the National Park Service in Lexington will present a unique feature, two views of the skirmish at the North Bridge. One dressed in the colorful British uniform of the time will explain General Gage's side; the other, in local costume, the Colonists' concern.

A SKETCH WRITTEN for the Bicentennial observance by Mrs. Virginia Kimball will be re-enacted in the parish hall at 1 p.m. Lynne Whitlock, a Westford Academy sophomore, will direct the play which features a cast of seven, ages 9 to 15.

Entitled, "A Day for



Bronze marker on common

... marks site of assembly of Westford Minutemen for march to Concord Bridge in 1775 and focal point of Robinson family day celebration Saturday.

Doughnuts," is covers an anecdote in the life of the Robinson family when father, upon receiving a startling message from Lexington that the British were on their way to Concord, left hurriedly without waiting for the 130 Westford men who were to follow in the early morning hours of April 19, 1775.

Before mounting his horse, the farewell to his wife was a request to "call up the girls and hired servant and cook all the provisions you could...and send them by the 14-year old lad on horseback to Concord."

According to his great, great granddaughter, Olive Prescott, who wrote in 1896, "the boy took a goodly supply of substantial food that would bear a quick horseback ride. A bushel of doughnuts had an

honorable place in that out-of-doors lunch in Concord." This is the theme of the sketch.

Minutemen and their partners from Dedham, in costume, will perform old time dancing to the familiar tunes of the period on the common at 2 p.m. and 3 p.m.

A SPECIAL DISPLAY of Colonel Robinson artifacts, including the two ounce tin mug which he carried throughout the Revolutionary War, will be on display at the Fletcher Library. "Twice filled" with rum was part of each soldier's rations. Library visitors will also have the opportunity to view a current exhibit of old documents, broadsides, handbills and 19th century tax scales which are presently cased in glass on the basement floor.

Historical films, carefully researched and produced at Colonial Williamsburg, will be shown at 11 a.m. on the cooper's craft, the art of making barrels, tubs and casks; and at 3:45 p.m. on basket-making and blacksmithing.

The Westford Historical

Society will hold a bake sale; and the Book and Thimble Club will serve refreshments, including mulled cider, doughnuts and pound cake made in the old-fashioned manner.

A number of athletic events are planned for youngsters.

Known as "Colonel John Robinson Day," a similar event last year drew hundreds to the center of Westford, established in 1729, which will soon observe its 250th birthday.

Robinson was born on July 24, 1735, and attained the rank of lieutenant colonel in the local militia, part of a regiment of Minutemen commanded by Colonel William Prescott at Bunker Hill.

LT. HERBERT Sallet of 29 North Hill Road is again heading the committee which includes Elwin Bagley, Theodore W. Engle, George Shepherd and Donald Sousa and which has arranged the day's program.

In the event of rain, activities will take place Sunday.