

Westford native son Otis Day named Kiwanis' 'Man of Year'

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Sun Correspondent

WESTFORD - A native son and member of an old Westford family, W. Otis Day will be featured in the annual Kiwanis Club Apple Blossom Parade tomorrow as the club's choice for "Man of the Year."

Annually the service club honors an outstanding local person who has served well his or her community through the years.

Born in 1891 on his father's farm, the Day homestead built prior to the Revolution at the crossroads of Graniteville and Cold Springs roads, Day is one of the real "old-timers" in this rapidly expanding community.

As a youth, he attended the Sargent School in the Graniteville section of the town. With boundless energy, at 16 he established a milk route in that village and nearby Forge Village, peddling milk from house to house at 5 cents a quart.

Raised poultry

One of four from a family of farmers, he attended Massachusetts "Aggie" for the dairy program. His interests soon changed to the poultry field, a profession which bloomed in this area before the '20s.

He converted the dairy barn to poultry rearing, improved his original strain of Rhode Island Reds and was soon recognized as a professional in the field.

For several years, he participated in an international egg laying contest. One year, one of his birds set a production record of 336 eggs in 365 days.

He aided and encouraged youngsters in town with their 4-H Club programs. One of his pupils bragged that Mr. Day had a hen that laid two eggs in one day. Impossible, said Miss Edna Cutter, a veteran lady farmer and well-known in Dracut, as she conferred with a doctor friend. With Otis' affidavit plus the bird at \$2 as living proof, the 4-H member proved the fact - and the enterprising youth made \$8 on the deal, less car fare.

To collect, he transported the proud feathered creature by street car, making four changes, to Miss Cutter's home outside of Lowell. Almost sufficient time for the bird to lay another egg!

Day's skill in poultry management was recognized in 1924 by the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture with a gold medal for excellence in poultry breeding.

Long hours on the farm did not exclude Day from serving his community. He was a selectman at the time of the first Apple Blossom Festival and also a member of the finance board for a number of years. During World War II, he was a member of the Selective Service Board.

A sturdy six-footer, Otis was always interested in baseball. With a brother-in-law, Roy Kaiser as catcher, he formed a pitching team that was "feared" among the adjacent town teams. His side usually won in the married vs. singles games played on Whitney Playground.

For many years he has been badly crippled with arthritis. This has not hindered his in-

terest and hobby in raising and training homing pigeons. The longest distance his birds have raced is from Chicago to their home cote in Westford. He is a charter member of the Spindle City Pigeon Club.

When he married a local girl, Alice V. Swanson, they built their present home across from the old homestead at 51 Graniteville Road. Otis and Alice have two children, a daughter Avis, and a son, Roger, who lives on the old farm. There are four grandchildren; Mrs. Laura McCusker, Brian, Philip and Jeffrey Day; and a great-granddaughter, Melissa Erin McCusker.

Recalling old times

At 92, Otis is one of the few remaining old-timers of his generation. Proud of his heritage and his town, he likes to tell stories of ice fishing and harvesting, driving produce teams to Faneuil Hall Market in Boston, and tilling the land of his ancestors, many of whom lived in the vicinity of the old West Burying Ground on Concord Road.

At one time, the Days owned the Col. John Robinson farmhouse and land in the vicinity of Westford Academy and the Robinson school.

A sister was the late May E. Day, librarian at J. V. Fletcher Library for many years.

As a substantial citizen, highly respected in the community and a friend to all, W. Otis Day deserves the Kiwanis Club's special award and recognition, "Man of the Year."