

Westford panel clears up "altered" historical facts

By GORDON B. SEAVEY

WESTFORD — Because of the significance of the bicentennial period of the country, the Westford committee points out several minor historical facts that have been altered or misconstrued over the years, or even as of today.

One of the town's earliest and most illustrious families is that of John Abbot, born in Billerica in 1713 and who came to Westford as a youth and joined the church in 1735. He is the forebear of the many Abbots who were to follow and it is to be noted that the name is often misspelled with two "t's."

The Abbots have been prominent as teachers, town officials, lawyers, mill operators, senators and judges. John B. Abbot of Hopkinton, N.H., today is a trustee of Westford Academy. The new middle school has been named after the family.

And then, there is Burge's Pond, which is frequently misspelled as "Burgess." John Burge came to Westford via Chelmsford from Weymouth. A son, Josiah, was born in 1696. He owned much land acreage, perhaps as high as three hundred acres, in the Stony Brook area, and lived on Cold Spring Road. The pond, which bears his name, is spring-fed, only 22 acres, but rather deep. It lies to the north of Stony Brook and because it is owned completely by East Boston Camps, the public rarely has the opportunity to see its natural beauty.

Fifty years ago it was a popular spot for local boys to "skinny-dip" in the summer; in the winter, its clear water made excellent ice, harvested by Wallace Johnson and peddled all over town, as many as five wagonloads on a hot summer's day.