

# Westford wanderings

By Gordon B. Seavey

**OLD VISITORS** Again the ospreys are fishing Forge Pond enroute to their usual winter southern habitat. For many years this majestic bird was not seen here only recently has it chosen to return to Westford.

This season there are three birds hovering over the pond according to Fire Chief George Rogers. He has a good observation post as he and his wife Nancy live on the eastern shore of this pretty 212 acre lake in what was once a summer residence for Abbot Worsted employees.

The osprey is also known as a fish hawk with a wing spread between 54 and 72 inches. On the endangered list it resembles a small eagle. Trigger happy hunters are warned not to shoot this valuable bird.

An osprey will perch at the top of or on an overhanging limb of a pine tree in search of prey. Or it may soar and swoop over the water in search of unlucky fish that might approach the surface.

Then a fast dive, a splash of water and if the bird's strike is accurate, back it swoops to a nearby perch. It always carries its meal in its talons, faced in the flight direction.

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**NATURE NOTES** Energetic John Gagnon, who recently retired as chairman of the assessors, is a great lover of wild flowers. As many who have taken nature walks with him will attest. He had dozens of spots unobserved by most where unusual species grow in the woods

and fields of Westford and near by.

Some interesting finds noticed on nature tours this past summer and observed on guided trips have been the cardinal flower, Angelica herb, grape fern and unusually large stands of rattlesnake plantain and autumn ladies tresses. Only last week did he pluck from his wild flower garden a smiling Canada violet.

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**OLD RELIC** Before the advent of the auto, the town owned a horse drawn hearse made available to the townspeople without cost. My mother was carried in it from the First Parish Church (where she sang many solos when alive) to Fairview Cemetery.

The sombre vehicle drawn by a pair of black horses owned by David L. Greig headed the funeral procession consisting of other carriages of friends and relatives. This was in 1914.

The Hearse was stabled in a special little white house near the entrance to the cemetery. When the glass enclosed conveyance was abandoned, Arthur Hildred bought it for storing his beehives. The hearse house was then moved to the Center opposite the town hall. It is now on the property of Mr. and Mrs. Arnold Gardner at 58 Main Street.

Incidentally, the Gardners have been working diligently for many months renovating their old Colonial homestead which housed in later years the local telephone switchboard center operated by Hilda Isles Bosworth.