

# Westford Wanderings

By GORDON B. SEAVEY

A group of young local matrons, with some of their offspring, enjoyed the experience of ringing a very special loud welcome to the homecoming hostages from Iran on the previous Monday. Crowding into the lower level of the bell tower of the First Parish Church on the Common, each took a turn pulling on the sturdy rope which swung the heavy bell 60 feet up in the tower.

They were not the first however of a long line of bell ringers to send the resonant sounds over the hills and valleys of Tadmuck Hill.

Old records indicate that Ebenezer Stone was paid one pound in 1765 for ringing the meeting house bell the year past. The first bell, weighing about 550 pounds, was an event of some

significance to the citizens. Its glad peals were to call them to the house of God and its solemn tolling was to announce the passing of many a soul from earth to heaven.

In recent years the bell was tolled announcing the deaths of President Woodrow Wilson and Abiel J. Abbot, head of the big mill complex of that name along Stony Brook Valley. It was also tolled in remembrance of all those who had passed on when Westford observed the 250th anniversary of its founding, last autumn.

In a joyous welcome at the ending of World War I the bell thundered out across the Common nearly all day and night. It also heralded closer ties among the villages into a closer Westford United.