

A prophet's vision unclear

By Gordon B. Seavey
Staff Correspondent

When Rev. Edwin R. Hodgman, author of "History of Westford, 1659-1883," was a principal speaker at Westford's 1876 Centennial exercises, he did a bit of prophesying.

He pictured for his audience that in the next century there would be "one or more fine summer hotels, somewhere on the west end of Main Street, of course, to which the elite of Boston, New York and Graniteville resort to spend the warm season." Mountains in Southern New Hampshire could be seen in the distance.

A century of summers have come and gone, and no summer vacationland. In the meantime, many local families built summer cottages (called camps) on ponds nearby, particularly Forge and Nabnasset.

Hodgman spoke of "two lines of horse-cars of the most approved pattern run every 15 minutes to stations on the Stony Brook and Nashua & Acton railroads." This never came about.

Furthermore, when better transportation finally arrived, the street car line from Brookside to Westford Common was never a paying proposition. The Nashua & Acton railroads, which had two stations in Westford (but few passengers or freight), was called the Red Line because its rails soon became rusty.

Hodgman evidently wished to give another name to the Common, to be called after a prominent family, Abbott Park. It is still the Common.

Did this distinguished orator realize then that "Three strikes....and you're out!"

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