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# Crazy Amos and his horn

By Gordon B. Seavey

All the activities around Westford's greatly expanded Fletcher Library memories of times past long before 1895 when the library was first built.

It stands on the site of the Wright-Bancroft house, a very pretty Colonial of early construction. But the house's colorful garden and picket fence belied the fact that it was once the center of an evangelical uproar, the Millerites.

The believers felt the Day of Judgment was near at hand, and when the proper signal came, would rise into Heaven...and thereafter would live happily with all sorts of material wealth.

Therefore, they were prepared to give away all their wealth or sell them in the certainty they would have no further use for them.

Evangelist Edward Miller named the day as March 30, 1843, but when nothing happened, advanced it to April 3. The believers had gathered at the Wright-Bancroft house which faced the Common well prepared for the event. Dressed in white robes and Bibles sold by Miller, they were singing hymns and praying...when a trumpet blast sounded from the upper end of the Common.

Greatly excited in the anticipation of a quick trip to Heaven, they found only a local character named Crazy Amos awaiting them. Some more toots on his horn, and then he bellowed, "You are all fools! Go home and plant your potatoes...Angel

Gabriel won't do it for you!"

This story has hung around for a century and a half. Samuel Law Taylor, whose amusing statements often appeared as written in the local Westford *Wardsman*, in 1911, sent this item to the publisher:

"I recall the annual Millerite camp meetings near Burge's Pond and they had a chapel near Nutting [North Burying Ground] Cemetery in a house [then occupied by Ernest Dane].

"The refusal to harvest the autumn crops, in which the overseers of the poor interfered, the selling and giving away of all property, and congregating at one house and awaiting marching orders from the Lord, who has been detained on more important and sensible business and hasn't got around yet...the camp meetings gathered every extreme of belief and conduct, like in many respects the old-time military muster.

"The exhortations were terrifically, inspiringly loud. But here, as elsewhere, it gradually diminished in volume to a polliwog peep."

When growing up, I would sometimes hear a person referring to a section in town named "Heathens Corner". I finally realized it was a section of small homes at the four corners where Main Street and Providence Road cross. Perhaps someone can refute me on this location.

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