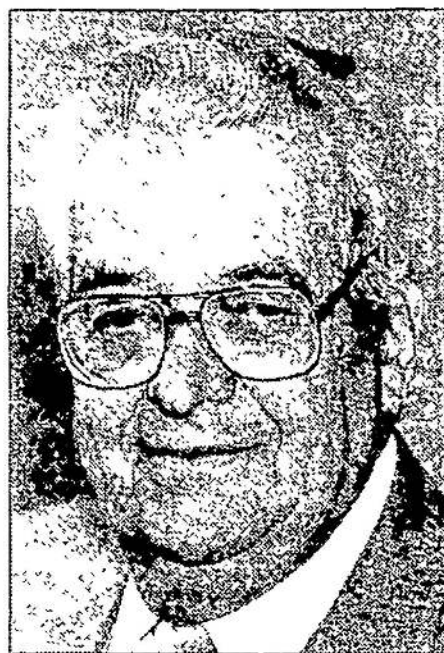




Charlotte P. Greig



Gordon B. Seavey

## MEMORIES

# Past Westford treasurer and tax collector was wise manager of money

*A native of Westford now residing on Depot Street, Gordon B. Seavey, 83, is the retired publisher of the Belmont Citizen.*

By GORDON B. SEAVEY

WESTFORD — It has taken many years for men to accept the fact that women, in many cases, make better financial managers than males.

This fact was proven by the career of Charlotte Prescott Greig, a quiet, dedicated woman who became Westford's town treasurer and tax collector in 1929 during the rough times of the Great Depression.

This was not her first town position, however, as she was appointed acting town accountant during World War I while Harold W. Hildreth served in the Armed Forces.

Compensation for her services, for a long time, was set at \$500 a year. Even this salary suffered a 10-percent reduction when all town employees were forced to take a cut during the Depression years. Greig also served as clerk for such "New Deal" agencies as the WPA and ERA.

Greig worked alone in what is now the Town Clerk's office in Westford for the next 33 years, often carrying material home to process on nights and weekends.

At the time of her retirement in 1962, the salary had reached \$3,380 per annum, and some one and one-half million dollars of town funds were passing through her able hands.

Duties of the past treasurer-tax collector were pretty much the same as they are now: Collect funds owed the town, keep financial records, review employees time slips and make out payroll checks, and arrange temporary loans with the banks.

It was always said that Mrs. Greig fought to "get the last dollar for the town."

During the duration of her service, Greig watched the town's population double, triple and quadruple from slightly over 3,000. She was re-elected each time, usually

without opposition.

Following retirement from public service she found life "a bit dull," but managed to keep busy tending her rose bushes, large garden and lawn around her white cottage on Main Street overlooking the Robbins Hill fire tower in Chelmsford and parts of Billerica.

Greig was a great collector of antiques, including pewter, silverplate of the Gay '90s period, glassware and miniature lamps. In addition, she was an avid reader and dabbled in oil painting.

Mrs. Greig once traced both sides of her Yankee ancestry back to England.

On her paternal side, John Prescott landed in Boston in 1640, and his youngest son, Jonas, a blacksmith by trade, settled in Groton, becoming one of that town's largest landholders.

Following the re-settlement of Groton following its destruction by the Indians in 1676, he built mills and a forge in Forge Village (then a part of Groton). For the next 160 years, descendants of Jonas managed the forge company.

On the maternal side of the family tree there was Robert Fletcher, who settled in Concord in 1630. When Greig's parents, Noah Prescott and Frances Tower married, it linked the Fletchers and Prescotts.

Greig was born on April 24, 1886, and graduated from Westford Academy, Class of 1904 (which numbered 13). After studying at Colby College in Maine, she became the sole teacher at Sandown, N.H. grade school for a year.

At the beginning of each term, the school shifted to a different location as students came from long distances and these moves equalized traveling distances for all.

The following year, she returned to Westford and attended Lowell Commercial College, studying bookkeeping, typing and shorthand for two years.

Charlotte Prescott Greig passed away on New Year's Day in 1968 at age 81.