

# “A Guide for the Tourist and You”

By JUNE W. KENNEDY

**ST. ANDREW'S MISSION** — Across the street from the Cameron School is the Forge Village Mission of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Ayer. In 1898 the parish of Forge Village was formed under the leadership of Dr. Endicott Peabody, founder and headmaster of Groton School. The “X” on the exterior is a St. Andrew's cross. On April 25, 1961, on the day of the feast of St. Mark, St. Mark's of the Diocese of Massachusetts came into being, continuing the history and congregation of the Forge Village Mission. This building housed the parish until 1964.

Location: 3G—Pleasant St., across from Cameron School.

## PRESCOTT HOME—FORGE VILLAGE

— This large brick-end colonial homestead was built by Captain Jonas Prescott in 1780. It boasts four chimneys with 8 fireplaces; 2 fireplaces are in the attic for the spinning in the home. There are 2 attic and 2 cellar stairways. Wide board floors grace the kitchen floor where may also be found a 14' brick hearth worn with years of use. A row of cupboards spans the hearth. The cooking fireplace handled 5' logs which were brought by oxen. Oldest living descendant of Westford Revolutionary soldier (Col. John Robinson) is Mrs. Alice Prescott Collins, who in her nineties, still resides in the home built by her great, great grandfather.

Location: 3-4G—Corner of Pine Street and Town Farm Road.

**TOWN FARM** — Beginning in 1824 the town of Westford provided an Alms-house or Poor Farm for those who could not provide their own living. “It was a productive farm versus welfare,” claim some of today's residents. Under the care of a Master and Mistress, the occupants tended the gardens and helped with chores. Many tramps sought meals and overnight lodging here. Today it is headquarters for the Westford School

Administration Offices.

Location: 4-H—Town Farm Road and East Prescott Street.

## RUSSIAN BROTHERHOOD CEMETERY

The Russian immigrants in 1918 requested and were deeded an acre of cemetery land from the town. Burial is guaranteed to all Russian descendants holding membership in the Russian People's Corporation. Older stones and markers bear Russian inscriptions; later ones are in English. The wearing of babushkas and wailing at the gravesite are customs retained from the old country.

Location: 4G—Patten Road.

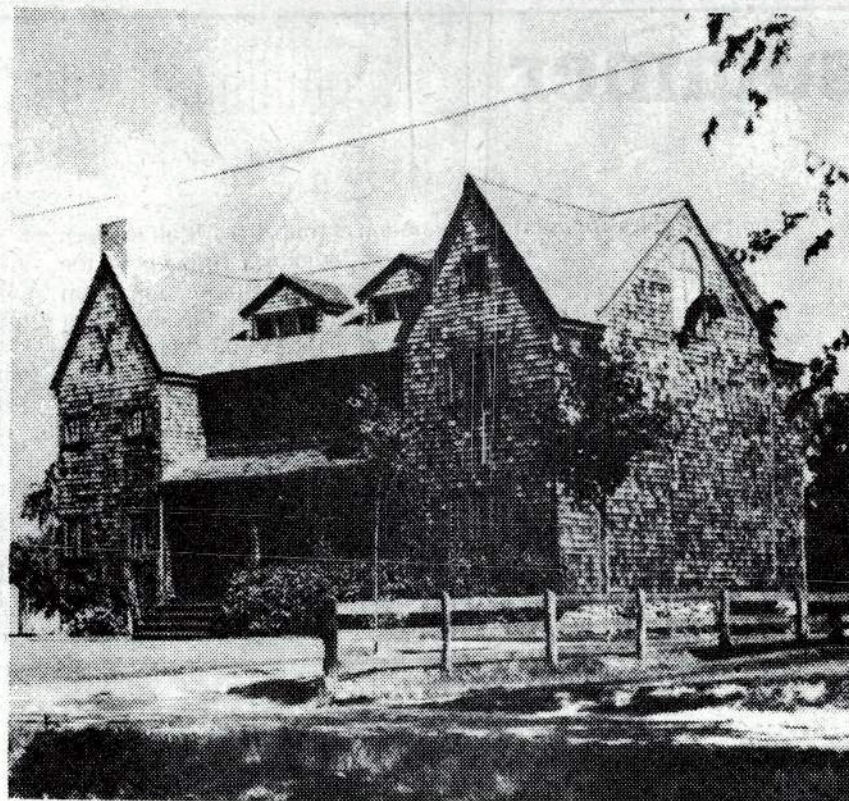
## WESTFORD ACADEMY NO. 4

This is the fourth Westford Academy building to be erected in town. Its doors of bright lavender, orange, green and yellow opened in September of 1974. The original Westford Academy bell, cast by Paul Revere in 1792 and recast in 1855 by his successor, Henry N. Hooper & Co., is on display in the foyer.

Location: 4G—Patten Road.

## WESTLAWN CEMETERY

In the center of this quiet triangular plot of land on Concord Road, the largest upright slab of gray slate marks the resting place of Col. John Robinson, local “unsung” Revolutionary hero. Nearly all historians give only the military order from Major Buttrick at Concord Bridge on April 19, 1775. “Fire! fellow soldiers, for God's sake fire!” But one historian, Robinson's great, great granddaughter, Olive Prescott, wrote: “Many and varied are the historical accounts of this first battle for freedom: the story as gravely rehearsed by Col. Robinson's children to children's children, told of the father marching side by side with Captain Davis and Major Butterick, that when Davis was shot down at his side, he shouted, “Fire! In the name of God, fire!” One of the hardest blows to come to Robinson's family that summer was the death of three young children.



**THEN—**This 1903 building, across from the Cameron School, began as the Forge Village Mission of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Ayer; later it became St. Mark's Episcopal Church. (From the WESTFORD RECOLLECTIONS SERIES)

Sarah, Betty and Mehitabel, ages 3, 5 and 8, respectively, died within 5 weeks of each other, possibly from typhoid.

The old horse mounting block in this cemetery was a landmark in front of the Prescott Garrison in Forge Village. It allowed long-skirted women to gracefully mount and descend from their horse or carriage. It now marks the Richard Prescott lot.

Also here is the monument of May E. Day who served as town librarian from 1918 to 1960. She knew every book that was in the library, had read most of them, knew which books were out and when they were due. She provided the extra service of carrying books in a satchel to those who lived any distance from the center. Always helpful and available, she kept the library opened by using a kerosene lantern during the bad ice storm of 1921 when electrical power was out for days here in Westford. A graduate of Westford Academy and Mount Holyoke College, her interest in the town and her scholarliness were assets. She was known also for her doll collection, of which she had over a thousand.

Location: 4F—Concord and Country Roads.

## COL. JOHN ROBINSON HOMESITE

It was a great loss to the town and to

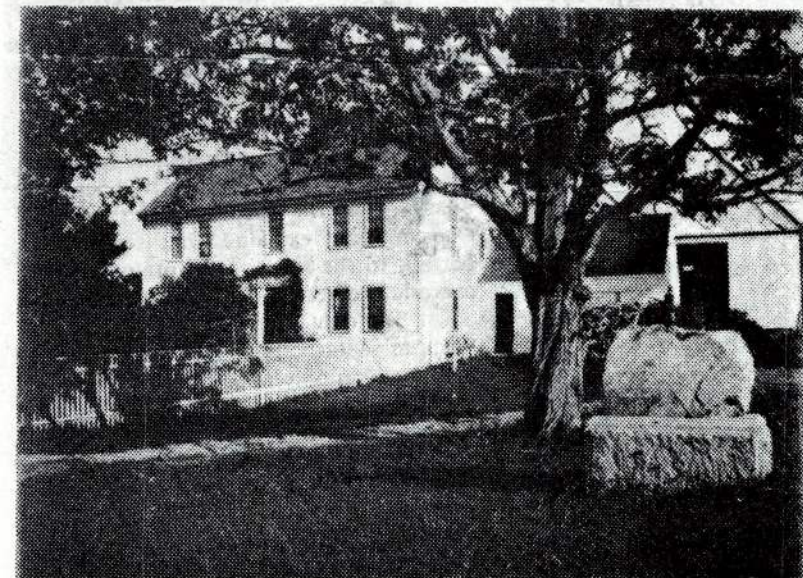
colonial history when fire wiped out the “saltbox” homestead and buildings on this property in 1937. Descendant, Olive Prescott wrote: “Often at midnight the blazing pine-knot in the wide-mouthed fireplace lighted the humming spinning wheel and click of knitting needles, where the weaver at the old hand-loom plied the shuttle with bewildering speed. There is a legend of clothing woven, cut and made in a single night for a needy soldier who was to start for the war in the early morning, and the cloth not set on the loom at sunset.”

In 1775 Robinson's daughter recalled the “hurried alarm,” the hasty departure and father's orders to have the 14-year-old lad bring provisions, which included donuts, to his men in Concord following their long march.

The quartz boulder marking the homestead was the horse block removed from his daughter's home. It was placed by the Westford Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution—Robinson Chapter. The only remaining personal memento of Col. Robinson is his metal drinking cup.

Location: 5F—Robinson Road, near Hartford Road.

To be continued



Although the house burned in 1937, a marker commemorates the homesite of Col. John Robinson of Revolutionary times. (A Day photo from the WESTFORD RECOLLECTIONS SERIES)