

Westford Recollections *Final*

The second printing of "Westford Recollections 1729-1979" by June Kennedy will go on sale Thursday, December 20. The author will be at the "Book-tique" that evening from 6 to 9 P.M. and again on Sunday, December 23 from 1 to 5 P.M. to autograph and personalize copies for Christmas gift-giving. Customers are advised to call or visit the "Book-tique" (692-2347) at 6 Carlisle Place, Westford, or the author to place orders. Nearly half of the second printing copies have been reserved...so hurry!

The final chapter or keeping the trail

"Fellow traveler and friend...May you keep the trail that Love has blazed!" In this final article of the WESTFORD RECOLLECTIONS - 250th Anniversary Series, I offer just a few more tales from some octogenarian friends I met along the way. Some of them, like the lifestyles they recollected, have since left us. Indeed, their folksy turn of the century yarns made "old Westford" come alive for me. I hope they did for you, the reader. Yes, a way of life has passed... "long gone is the squeaking pump at the district school, long gone is the heyday of our trains,"... but do remember that the plain everyday events of our own ordinary lives become Westford's history of tomorrow. The

mix of laughter, celebrations, storms, wars, growth, progress, joy, losses, gains, -- the many community aspirations achieved -- all are worthy of being recorded in personal diaries, photo albums, library files and attic trunks. It is my hope that some towns people will feel inspired to do just that, remembering that it is the human quality that portrays the true character and portrait of a town. Now for some tales:

Ben Pescott

"Now there was a man named Mr. Osgood. He was a Deacon in the Church up here and we knew he was a Deacon because he never would use a curse word. So one evening in the fall when it got dark early, three or four of us kids decided we'd find out if he could swear. So we went down -- wasn't too far from the house -- and sneaked up to the long barn door where they used to wheel the big hay wagons in. We got some hay, crawled in and kinda' held it up to the cow that he was milkin' so she could chew on it. Then we'd start pullin' it away. And then he'd start hollerin' at the cow. The worst we could get him to say was, "You old heathen, what's the matter with you?"

George Perkins

"You know where the Post Office is -- well, between the Post Office and the Nursing Home out in back you'll see one story of a windmill. That used to run up three or four stories high. One Sunday about five or six of



May Balch... poet, artist, author and friend to all... was wearing her high school graduation dress when she posed for this picture. (A MacDougall photo from the WESTFORD RECOLLECTIONS SERIES).

us were playing Stump The Leader. Mr. Abbot drove in just as I was hanging out on the very arm of that thing -- about 60' in the air. His son was right behind me and we were stumping the leader -- had to go round the arm and back again. 'Boys,' he said, in a very quiet voice, 'you come down! Take your time!' We came down and oh, we got a padlin', don't think we didn't. That door was

locked that very afternoon. The next morning the Harringtons were up there with hammers and saws taking the thing down. Mr. Abbot was on hand exclaiming, 'They'll never climb that again!'

Otis Day:

"I suppose folks would say the town has changed for the better, but there's a lot of things about the good old days I think is better. I don't mean I'd want to go back to all

that stuff, but I think it would be a lot better if Westford and every other town would take a step or two backwards and show a little more sense in a lot of things. Everybody's been progressin' in the last generation or two -- no end to anything -- easy come, easy go. The kids don't have to walk to school. You don't have to do this if you don't want to. If you don't want to do it, somebody'll see that you get it. My dad grew up here, next door -- was the night watchman at Sargent's Shop. He worked 14 hours a day - 7 nights a week for \$10.00 -- worked up to \$12.00 a week. Later he worked long hours at Abbot Worsted in Forge for \$14.00 a week; he rode to work on his bicycle. There was no extra money floating around, same as today. If a kid had a penny to spend, he thought he was rich; a lead pencil or a licorice stick were a treat! No, I think the morale of the country is on the skids -- and that includes Westford."

Bob Spinner:

"You lose something' and you gain something'. Compared to yesteryear, youngsters don't have anything to do. Today with both parents working, a teenager puts on the electric percolator, has electric refrigerator and oven, goes into the parlor and watches color TV. A bell rings on the stove when breakfast is ready. The Abbot Worsted Company in Forge owned our house when I was a kid. We had an old-fashioned kitchen. There was no central heating -- the black iron kitchen stove and the parlor stove were always lit. Before school in the morning, the coal hod had to be filled; there were always three or four cords of wood to be cut and put in the woodshed. When I was real young there was no electricity in town; the lamps repeatedly needed cleaning. I remember Mother baked bread -- nothing any nicer than dashing in after coasting on a Saturday afternoon and smelling four to five loaves of warm bread and the homemade baked beans. We made our own fun -- in the lake all summer; on it all winter. There was horse racing on Forge Pond with much betting by the farmers. On a brisk day a hundred to a hundred and fifty people would be skating. Today they think you gotta spend \$1500 for a snowmobile or \$500 for skiing on top of a mountain in New Hampshire. Progress! There was somethin' good before -- more conveniences now, but you pay awfully hard for them."

A poem written by a grand old Westford lady aptly expresses my own thoughts as I close this WESTFORD RECOLLECTIONS -- 250th Anniversary Series.

Wayside Greeting

Fellow traveler, and friend:

Life's many paths are crossed and crossed That we may meet and greet each other, But our way is onward and the goal unseen. May you keep the trail that Love has blazed, May Honor guide you, Happiness pursue you,

And Peace be ever at your side.

May Balch -- 1875-1961

A B C D E F G H I K L M N
O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

♥ fellow traveler & friend ♥
May you keep the trail that Love has blazed

WESTFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

Just in time for holiday gift-giving is the second printing of the hardcover book WESTFORD RECOLLECTIONS 1729-1979 by June W. Kennedy. Featured is the sampler designed by Lee C. Thurston for the back dust cover. Copies of this 128-page photo documentary may be purchased from the author or from the "Book-tique" at 6 Carlisle Place. (From the WESTFORD RECOLLECTIONS Series).