



WESTMINSTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

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March 2013

ANCESTORS

By Pat Gendron

Some families, like my husband's, have written histories of their ancestors. Sometimes, the family members were born, lived, and died in the same town in the same country. Homes were passed down from one generation to the next. It is not unusual to see parents and grandparents, aunts and uncles, and cousins living in the same house or in close proximity.

While incomplete knowledge of the world kept some of us rooted to the land, some adventurers took up the challenge and sailed the ocean to discover new homes. Those brave individuals packed up possessions and moved across oceans to establish settlements.

My ancestors emigrated here, as probably yours did since you live in America. Modern families do the same. Not in tiny ships, not traveling for weeks over hostile territories in wagons, or not by foot carrying their belongings—they use U-Haul or Allied Van Lines. Families today are pressured to move just as families were pressured to move in the 1600s. In those days, it was probably to gain religious freedom. Perhaps today's pressures are to get an education, or to make money, or to be independent. What these pressures do is distance us as a nation. In this distancing ourselves from our relatives, we have sometimes lost the thread that connects the generations.

It occurred to me when I was writing Christmas letter 2012 that the members of my family who could



Samson W. Lunn

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NEW IMMIGRANTS BECAME SOLDIERS IN THE CIVIL WAR

By Mark Landry

Even new immigrants became soldiers in the Civil War. Our WHS Veterans researcher, Mark Landry, has gained some interesting insight as he learned about this month's Civil War soldier, Patrick Kelly, and the part he played in saving his adopted country. It would be an interesting research project to find out how Irish immigrants fared in Westminster and how they practiced their religion, including burials upon death. (As you may recall, Tom Scollay was buried in the Catholic cemetery in Fitchburg and Patrick Kelley was buried in the Catholic cemetery in Gardner.)

Patrick Kelley was born on Christmas day in 1840 in Ireland to Luke and Catharine Kelley. He and his family settled in Westminster just prior to the outbreak of the Civil War. When the war began, the man who Patrick worked for back in England offered to pay his passage back to England but Patrick told him, "No, if I had found the country prosperous I would stay and as long as I find it in trouble, I will go ahead and help my adopted country in a good cause."

Patrick enlisted on October 1, 1861 at the age of 20, helping fill Westminster's quota. His occupation was listed as a laborer and was single when he signed up for a term of 3 years. He was officially mustered into service in Boston on December 13, 1861 to Captain Goodhue of the 28th Massachusetts Volunteer Regiment of Infantry. Patrick became a private in Company H of this unit. During this time, the Irish immigrants in America were discriminated against as being inferior to those in society who were already established. This issue prevailed in the military as well. The vast majority of boys in the 28th Massachusetts as well as the 9th Mass. Infantry were Irish, but they were proud of their regiment's identity and this pride helped their units bond.

The 28th Mass. Infantry made its way down into

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**2012-2013
OFFICERS, BOARD MEMBERS**

<i>President</i>	Roni Beal
<i>Vice President</i>	Beth Bowen
<i>Clerk</i>	Joan Longcope
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<i>House Director</i>	Ken Marien
<i>Housekeeper</i>	Christy Lombardo
<i>Newsletter Editor</i>	Patricia Gendron
<i>Registrar</i>	Joan Longcope

If you've ever had an interest in being on a committee or the Board, we're looking for additional members. Call Liz to talk about it.

MEETINGS

Meetings are held September through June on the 3rd Tuesday at 7 pm at the House, and are free and open to the public.

HOUSE & GIFT SHOP HOURS

The Historical Society House is open Mondays 7-9 pm and Fridays 9-12 Noon. and other times by appointment.

MISSION

The Westminster Historical Society's mission is to save and share Westminster's past.



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends of the Historical Society,

The winds of change passed through the Society this February when Janice Swenor resigned her position on the board and I agreed to fill in the vacancy until the end of the year. The Board of Directors is most grateful to Janice for her contributions to the Historical Society. We also welcome Stephanie Boucher and Beth Bowen as At Large Board members. Beth is stepping into familiar shoes, and Stephanie has quickly become familiar with the important work going on with the Collections Committee, as well as the Flea Market and Christmas Open House.

This winter was cold enough to hold an Ice Fishing Derby. We were delighted that so many people participated in the derby. We hope to hold an ice fishing class for children next year along with the fishing derby. Thank you to everyone who helped to make this event a success. In addition to ice fishing, we had an excellent On the Road program in January, hosted by Joyce and Lloyd Hannula. Their Power Point presentation about their trip to Egypt was very entertaining and educational.

The Upton Building Committee is continuing its work with the architects planning for the first phase of our renovation efforts. The Society is applying for a matching grant for these renovations through the Massachusetts Historical Commission, to which Betsy Hannula has been dedicating her time and energy. The Capital Campaign is working hard on raising the matching funds for this project. Hopefully we will be able to see the start of our renovations in late autumn.

On Saturday, March 16, you are invited to Ed Snyder's house to watch maple syrup being made. There is a delicious treat in store for those who attend this event – vanilla ice cream with fresh maple syrup.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I thank all our all members for your support and encouragement.

Most sincerely,
Roni Beal
President

*Have you ever thought about naming the
Westminster Historical Society
in your estate plans?*

CURATOR'S CORNER

Thank you to the following people for donating items for the Historical Society to save for the future:

Stephanie Boucher: Old Mill display plate

Kevin Byron: glass plate negatives

Eileen Goguen: Atlas of the World

Betsy Hannula: school books used in Westminster

Ann Honkonen: Roper family archives

Marilyn Hyson: Gage family documents

Patricia Lasky: reading book used in Westminster

Jessica Leger: new Town Hall information



Old Mill display plate donated by Stephanie Boucher, whose mother worked as a waitress there for years.

(Continued from page 1)

Virginia and was involved with some skirmishes until it saw heavy action at the second battle of Bull Run. Patrick was promoted to Corporal. They also fought at Chantilly and at the bloody battle of Antietam, MD. During the battle, Patrick was wounded in the shoulder and sent to a hospital for a few days. He returned home on a furlough to convalesce but before he fully healed, he insisted upon returning to his regiment against the advice of a surgeon saying, "I can load and fire again."

He rejoined the 28th and followed them into action at Chancellorsville, VA in May of 1863. They were also in action on the second day of fighting at Gettysburg on July 2 where they charged into the famed wheat field driving the rebels back and capturing many prisoners. Before they could celebrate, they were pushed back through the wheat field firing volleys all the way. They lost 107 men out of the 224 they had brought into battle. One of those casualties was Patrick who was shot through the face, causing instant death. His body was returned home and buried in the Catholic Saint John Cemetery in Gardner.



EXHIBIT CASES DONATED

We received a fabulous donation from the Museum of Our National Heritage in Lexington, Massachusetts this winter. They were giving away a dozen exhibit cases of several sizes that we could have for free.

They were making two of their exhibit halls into offices and no longer would need them. We were so lucky to get them! Phil Young master-minded the trip



The exhibit cases arrived at Upton School where they'll be stored until needed.



Phil Young brought one of the cases into the building.

in getting them from there to here, along with his truck and the help of Eddie Hannula and Ken Marien. They are now safely stored in the Upton School until we need them.

CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE A SUCCESS!

We tried something different at our Christmas Open House this year, and were happy with the results. About 30 donated wreaths—each decorated with a different theme, hung in the building and people put raffle tickets into containers for their choice. Every wreath was one of a kind, and the winners were thrilled to have some thing special for their Christmas decorating. We're going to repeat the idea, except possibly sell them outright. Be sure to join us to watch this new idea grow!



In addition, we hosted our first ever Members Night on the night before the Open House. With the fireplace going and wine and appetizers for everyone, members had first pick at purchasing items in the Gift Shop and the Vintage Christmas Rooms at ten percent off, it was a delightful evening! One more reason to be a member! Please join us as we celebrate all the wonderful things happening at the Society!

(Continued from page 1)

have told me the histories are all dead. My mother passed away on Christmas Day 2011, and my Aunt Doris died in March 2012. They were the last of the Lunnns. The last McGee of that generation died in 2010. A cousin asked me to tell the stories of the war (As my father would say, "The big one, WWII.") and the uncles' roles. Why me? Oh, yes, at 67, I am now the oldest of the line for two families, the Lunnns and the McGees. My husband is lucky to have several elderly members of his family still alive and able to recall ancestors. So he started with his book about his ancestor Nicholas Gendron who came to the new world in the 1600s as the first doctor to Canada. Then he called an aunt to fill in gaps for his mother's side. I had a few documents, the Internet and a story told to me by my aunt. As a Christmas present to each other, my husband and I joined "Ancestry.com".



Etheline E. McGee

First of all, if you are at all competent on the computer, the site Ancestry.com is very easy to manipulate. One enters his/her name, parents' names, and grandparents' names. I had my Grandmother Hattie M. Lunn's birth certificate which names her parents Fred A. Maynard and Isabel M. Haskell living in Dracut, Massachusetts, and my Grandfather Samson Lunn's death certificate which names his parents Benjamin H. Lunn and Edith Gee of Canada...so much for having data. My father's parents were Francis and Teresa (Stowell) McGee of Lowell, Massachusetts, both of whom I



Hattie M. Lunn

am still researching because very soon the line goes to Ireland and there are so many Patricks, Michaels and Bridgets, etc. Naturally, I did the easy one first. My aunt on the Lunn side told me we were related to someone famous from Massachusetts. I looked at the Haskell ancestry. It seems that Isabel Maynard, who went by Bell, was the daughter of Harriet Haskell, who was the daughter of Abel Conant. OK, so you can see why I got excited. The name Conant rang a bell. I had been to Salem and seen the statue. Abel was born in 1784. His father Abel was born in 1755 and was a member of the

Hollis, New Hampshire regiment which fought at Bunker Hill. Abel was the son of Josiah Conant whose father was Roger Conant from 1668. Lot Conant was Roger's father. However, the big discovery was that Lot Conant was the son of Roger Conant, born in 1592, and an official of Salem, my 8th Great Grandfather. Roger did not come over on the *Mayflower*, by the way. History has him arriving in 1624 or thereabouts on the *Ann*. So here is the ancestry: I am the daughter of Etheline E (Lunn) McGee, who was the daughter of Hattie M (Maynard) Lunn, who was the daughter of Isabel (Haskell) Maynard, who was the daughter of Harriet (Conant) Haskell, who was the daughter of Abel Conant, who was the son of Abel Conant, who was the son of Josiah Conant, who was the son of Roger Conant, who was the son of Lot Conant, who was the son of Roger Conant who was born in England in 1592 and came to America in 1624.



Roger Conant of Salem

I have a grandson who likewise has notable genealogy. Not only is he related to Roger Conant on his mother's side, but also other famous individuals on his father's side. Ollie's aunt told me that she is a member of the DAR, so I knew that at least one member of his ancestry fought in the American Revolution. But his grandfather thought that one of his ancestors came over on the *Mayflower*. So I did some research on the VanTuyls. Thomas VanTuyl, born in 1802 somewhere in Ohio, married Orpha Doty who was a direct descendant of Edward Doty, born in 1598. Edward Doty was a servant to passenger Stephen Hopkins on the *Mayflower* and even signed the *Mayflower* Compact. There were two VanTuyl brothers Otto and Aert who were pirates in 1695 and spent time on Madagascar. They did, however, rejoin the legitimate navy and come back to America. At 5, Ollie liked the story of the pirates best, especially the part about



The Mayflower

being on Madagascar. Maybe Ollie and I can write a book about pirates. Don't burst my bubble by telling me that "Ancestry.com" isn't accurate. Let me revel in the possibility!

WESTMINSTER GARDEN CLUB CONTRIBUTES TO SCHOLARSHIP TEA AT FITCHBURG ART MUSEUM

A few members of the Westminster Garden Club joined the Laurelwood Garden Club of Leominster in the Fourth Annual Scholarship Tea fundraiser held at the Fitchburg Art Museum on Saturday, January 26. (Oakmont Regional High School students are included in the scholarship award program.) Each committee selected a theme to decorate their table. The Westminster Garden Club's was "Night at the Opera."

There were seven tables in the room, each seating eight people. The table decorated by Roni Beal, Karen Sargent, both of Westminster, and Janet Sponagle of Harvard, had a black table cloth, topped with a white square tablecloth, white napkins and white china with a red rose



Janet Sponagle, Roni Beal and Karen Sargent

on each plate. Tea cozies were designed for two tea pots to carry out the "Night at the Opera" color theme of black, white and red. A cast iron centerpiece held red roses, white snap dragon, green and silver ornamental berries and replicas of the Sydney Opera House on each side of the arrangement. In the center of the floral arrangement was a treble clef, handcrafted in copper by Doug Sargent. The floral arrangement was placed on a round mirror with silver confetti. Four champagne flutes were placed upside down on the table around the mirror, holding flameless candles fashioned into black top hats. Silver ornamental berries were placed inside the flutes.

Other tables had themes such as "Doll Tea Party", using two American Girl Dolls with their own tea set; "Portrait and Flowers" that displayed a painting of pink flowers and bouquets of pink flowers; "Garden Party" table used china and tea pots with flowers and a beehive in the center. Every table was unique and reflected the talents of the ladies who decorated the tables.

A TRIP TO THE PYRAMIDS ON THE ROAD TO EGYPT

The Society's "Road Trip" programs have become a popular venue during the winter months. Joyce and Lloyd Hannula love to travel to exotic places, and they are happy to share their adventures with other people. This year's trip was to Egypt.

The Hannulas and their fellow travelers rode in a bus with an armed guard to all their destinations. Their pictures of the pyramids were spectacular, but what made their trip unique were the stops to visit local farmers and markets. Their tour group ate many of their meals with local families.

Farm homes have open rooms on the roof where the family members sleep to keep cool during hot weather. They paint the walls blue to deter flies from bothering them.

When the presentation ended everyone was asking about the next Road Trip. As Lloyd said, "One program a year."



Joyce in Egyptian costume

DVD ON CIVIL WAR FOR SALE

If you're interested in learning more about men from Westminster who were in the Civil War you will want to see the DVD that Mark Landry created. It's entitled "The Soldiers of Westminster, Massachusetts at the battle of Antietam September 17, 1862." The 53 minute long DVD actually covers the Civil War from its beginning in 1861 through the Antietam battle, the bloodiest battle ever fought on American soil.

The Union Army Regiments described in the DVD include the 2nd, 15th, 21st, 28th, and 61st and the men detailed are William Eager, Henry Partridge, Asaph Rice, Nathan Howard, Edward Kendall, Francis Nichols, Lyman Nichols, Thomas Scollay, Lowell White, Prescott Osborne, Washburn Laws, Frank Tucker, Patrick Kelly, and Lieut. Col. Miles.



This is a lot of great Civil War history for a donation to the Historical Society of \$11 (\$10 plus \$1 shipping). Just send in your request with a check to the Historical Society and we'll send a copy to you.

MEMBERSHIP

If you're not yet a member, please consider joining today. It's easy. Just fill out the form below and send it along with your check to the Historical Society. Your membership support is essential to us.

Thank you if you have already renewed their membership this past year. If you are unsure of your status, just call Liz at the office (978-874-5569). You will want to be a member in order to take advantage of the ten percent discount on all items in the Gift Shop! If you are 75 years of age, your membership is free!

WESTMINSTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name _____
 Address _____
 Phone _____ Fax _____
 e-mail _____

Individual	\$25
Family	40
Senior (over 65)	15
Contributing	50
Friend	100
Honorary (over 75)	0

All members receive a 10% discount in the Gift Shop.

Please contact me about volunteering. These are some of my interests:

- Sorting, cleaning, and cataloging items.
- Helping with newsletters and brochures.
- Putting data about items into a computer database.

Please send form to Westminster Historical Society, Membership Committee, P.O. Box 177, Westminster, MA 01473.

FISHING DERBY 2013

Our First Annual Ice Fishing Derby on February 2, 2013 at the Westminster Historical Society was a great success! Eighty-two people signed up to fish, which could be in any Massachusetts pond or lake open to the public. Cash prizes were given out to first, second & third place for the largest bass, crappie, perch, and pickerel, plus an extra incentive for bringing in the first fish in each category.



Steve Jarvenpaa weighed and measured a fish caught at the WHS Fishing Derby.

A demonstration inside our 110 Main Street location was also offered to anyone new at the sport. We're hopeful to inspire a whole new generation of fishermen!

The top three winners were displayed on our custom made sign on the front lawn throughout the day. There was quite a crowd that afternoon, both inside and outside of



Winning fish were hung on our Fishing Derby sign in front of the Westminster Historical Society house..

the house, as anglers from all over the area brought in their catch to be weighed and measured.

A big thank you goes out to the expert fishermen who helped us out at Derby Headquarters: David Cormier, Ron Chevarie and Steven Jarvenpaa!

We're all looking forward to our Second Annual Ice Fishing Derby in February 2014, when we'll be adding prizes for children as well!

FLEA MARKET SEASON COMING

If you're doing spring cleaning and need to get rid of things in your house, you are welcome to drop off items in the Historical Society barn for our Flea Market. Please bring things in boxes with covers since we do stack them, and we would appreciate it if you put anything broken right into the trash. Your unwanted but usable items can be valuable to us! Thank you.



Beekeeping in Westminster: Tuesday, May 21, 7:00pm. Bees are critical for flowers and vegetable fertilization all over the world. Beekeeping expert Phil Young will talk about the fascinating lives of bees and how they share information about where the best flowers are and how they make their honey. He will have a slice of a hive with live bees for your inspection.



TOWN WIDE YARD SALE DATE SET



Put June 15 on your calendar for the Historical Society Town Wide Yard Sale. The Society is pleased to see that the day for the Sale has become a lovely town event! And, if you're a family that wishes to participate in the sale, be sure to contact the Society

before June 7 in order to get on the map. And, the rest of us can enjoy the bargains on our way around town!



Plant Swap. Saturday, May 18th from 9-12Noon. Come and swap your perennials for another gardener's leftovers plants. Make a donation and pick up some plants to start your new garden. There is something new to learn about

plants from our gardeners every year!

Juhannus, Tuesday, June 18, 7pm.

We are remembering the men and women who were members of the Westminster Farmers Cooperative and served as sailors, soldiers and nurses during World War II. If you have information about these brave persons, please contact us.



WISH LIST

Metal cabinet for storing paint in the cellar
Storage shed for outdoor equipment

WESTMINSTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY GIFT SHOP

When looking for a unique gift for birthdays, anniversaries, and other holidays or special occasions, be sure to browse the WHS Gift Shop. Whether shopping for yourself or someone on your gift list, you are sure to find the perfect gift here. The Gift Shop is open on Mondays from 7-9 pm and Fridays from 9 until noon and other times by appointment. Members receive a 10% discount on all purchases.

Books

<u>Cemetery Inscriptions</u>	25.00
<u>History of Westminster</u> , 1832 by Hudson	5.00
<u>History of Westminster</u> , 1893 by Heywood.	96.00
<u>History of Westminster 2008</u> by WHS	95.00
<u>History of Westminster</u> , by Tolman	20.00
<u>Homestead Heritage of Westminster</u> , by WHS	25.00
<u>Images of America</u> , by WHS	19.99
<u>Olin Warner, Sculptor</u> , by Hyson	4.50
<u>200th Anniversary of Westminster</u> ,	5.00
<u>Wajusett Gatherings</u> , by Sinclair (hardcover).	30.00
<u>Wajusett Gatherings</u> , by Sinclair (softcover)	20.00

Tapestries

Cotton afghan in green, navy, burgundy	45.00
Tapestry wall hanging	35.00

Other

<i>New Wachusett Mountain</i> charcoal drawing	60.00
Calligraphy sampler	12.00
Cross stitch sampler Kit "Mosman"	36.00
<i>Cracker Factory</i> print.	45.00
framed pen & ink of <i>WHS house</i> by Santora	28.00
Map of Westminster 1855.	6.00
Notepaper Westminster scenes, pkg.12	3.50
<i>Downtown Westminster 1831</i> by Peckham	30.00
Postcards	3/1.00
Children's books	7.95
Paper dolls, Assorted	5.00
Tobacco Shed pottery	priced as marked
Tote Bags	priced as marked

Westminster Historical Society
110 Main St., P.O. Box 177
Westminster, MA 01473

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DATES TO REMEMBER

Hearth Cooking Sat. April 13
Mother's Day Tea, Sun., May 12.
Plant Swap. Sat., May 18th
Beekeeping, Tues., May 21
Town-wide Yard Sale, Sat. June 15

WACHUSETT MTN SKI TICKET PROGRAM

If you're taking advantage of the beautiful spring time skiing at Wachusett Mtn, remember that you can get \$5 off your ticket price by buying your ticket on line at [www. Wachusett.com](http://www.Wachusett.com) before you go. Click on the word "coupon" and insert this code "HISTSOC."

FUN AND FOOD FUNDRAISERS

Fun and food. What a combination! We think so, and we're hoping you think so too. The Historical Society is beginning a new series of fundraisers to support the basic operating costs of the Upton School during the capital campaign and the period of renovations. The events are all focused on food, and the first two events planned are quite different from each other!

If you'd like to take part in either event, register with the Society at 978-874-5569 or email at WestminsterHistory@verizon.net. These would be two great opportunities to get together with friends. Hope to see you!

HEARTH COOKING Saturday, April 13 at the home of Betsy & Eddie Hannula

Want the unique experience of cooking your meal at a fireplace as in Colonial times? Here's your chance! Bake a ham, create a soup, make corn



bread, churn your butter, bake a pie and finish it off with coffee made from freshly ground coffee beans roasted over an open fire. You can do it all or you can just watch the fun. All ages welcome. This event is limited to 12 guests, so early sign-up is requested. \$50 per person or \$45.00 for WHS members.

MOTHERS DAY TEA Sunday, May 12 at the Historical Society House



You will feel special at this Mothers Day Tea designed with treats in mind for every guest. The Historical Society will be gorgeously decorated for this occasion and we know every person will enjoy the extra attention!

Enjoy savory and sweet delicacies along with tea (and coffee too). Think about celebrating with a loved one in your life at this beautiful time of year. Men, women, and children welcome. Seating will be limited, so make your reservation early. \$25 per person or \$23.50 for WHS members.