



WESTMINSTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Spring 2015

THE UPTON FAMILY IN AND AROUND WESTMINSTER

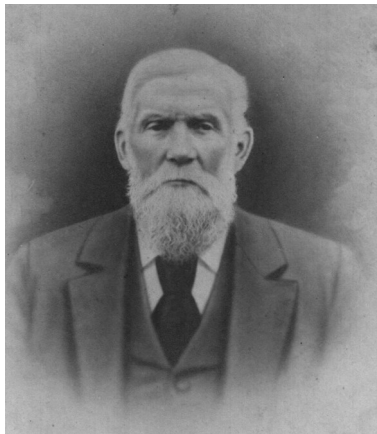
We welcome a guest author, George C. Upton, who is a member of the Upton family for whom the Upton School in Westminster is named. He currently lives in Glastonbury, Connecticut.

This is a story about my Upton family from its earliest immigrant to America to the last Upton resident of Westminster, Massachusetts.

About thirty years ago I learned of possible family records in the history room of the Gardner Library; so I began a quest to find out more about my ancestors in the Westminster area. I soon learned of the existence of other records and launched an interest in my family history that continues to this day in my retirement.

At the battle of Dunbar, Scotland in 1650 forces led by Oliver Cromwell defeated an army of Scots and took many prisoners. Most of these were soon released but others were marched about the country, becoming a security risk and expensive to keep. The English authorities decided to auction off these men as indentured servants that could be shipped off to the new colonies. Some of these were sold to two partners in the Company of Undertakers of the Iron Works in New England, John Beex and Joshua Foote, who took 150 men for their enterprises in Lynn, Massachusetts, later known as the Saugus Iron Works and sometimes called "Hammersmith".

In November of 1650 these men embarked on the ship Unity from London,



Charles Upton—1821

a voyage to Boston normally taking about six weeks. As they were prisoners they were probably not treated well and some died on the trip. On arrival about sixty-two were sent to Lynn, the rest went to a sawmill in Maine or were sold to local residents for their term of service, about seven years.

The first indication that any of the Upton family was involved in these happenings is found in a list of thirty-seven Scots at the iron works in November 1653, on which is found the name of one John Rupton. Somehow this prisoner's name became John Upton. There are records dating from 1658 that John Upton bought land in what was then Salem but now is part of Peabody.

He added additional land to several hundred acres total, and apparently lived and farmed on it while raising his family. John died about 1699 and left his property to his sons, one named William whose son and grandson also were named William; the last living from 1729 to 1790.



*Sarah Amelia Hager
of Westminster*

This last William had a son named John who eventually moved to Fitchburg, Massachusetts about 1780 and became a store owner. He had a son named Joseph who was a carpenter and became the father of Charles Upton, who married Sarah Amelia Hager of Westminster and moved there with her about 1850. Charles was a stone and brick mason but also maintained a home and small farm in property on Bacon Street. He was a member of the Board of Selectmen in 1859 and 1860, a teacher of singing and the leader

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**2014-2015
OFFICERS, BOARD MEMBERS**

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Vice President
Clerk Wayne Klemetti
Treasurer John Bowen
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At Large Betsy Hannula
At Large Tom Marien

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Assistant Treasurer Michelle Valentino
Curator Betsy Hannula
Genealogy Researcher Darlene Johnson
Historian Patricia Lasky
House Director Rob Johnson
Newsletter Editor Patricia Gendron
Registrar Joan Longcope

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

MEETINGS

Meetings are held September through June on the 2nd 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 9:00-11:00 am and 7-9 pm, and Fridays 9-Noon.

MISSION

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



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

April 7, 2015

Dear Members and Friends,

The birds visiting my birdfeeder tell me it is spring, but it is still cold and windy outside as I write this letter. The snow has melted enough so that the fishing derby sign located on the front lawn of the house could be removed along with a few left over fish. Despite all the snow covering the lakes and ponds, the fishing derby committee had a successful day. Thank you to David Cormier, Linda Landry, Melody Gallant, Steven Jarvenpaa and Rich Daniels for their efforts in making this a fun day for children and adults.

The date for the Upton Building Fundraiser Tea is May 16. The Tea Committee had warm thoughts about flowers, sunshine and tea cakes when we were mulling ideas for a theme and decided upon English Country Tea. Come and enjoy!

The date for the Tour and History of Crocker Pond by Tommy Torrans will be Saturday, May 9th at 10 am. Our Annual Perennial Plant Swap event will be June 6th.

If you have visited the historical society recently, you will notice that the front office has been reorganized. The Administrator/Reception desk has been moved near the door and the file cabinets have been moved to the other side of the room. It's a bit more welcoming!

Thank you to everyone whose efforts helped the Society to remain open this winter – including hired professionals who shoveled the walkway, raked the roof of snow, chopped ice off the eaves and repaired frozen pipes.

Sincerely,

Roni Beal
President

DO YOU HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT WESTMINSTER'S HISTORY?

Or do you know something interesting to add to Westminster's history? We are interested in learning about it, and we will be pleased to include it in our newsletter! Perhaps you know something about a house in your neighborhood, or want to know if some local tales are true. Let's find out! Give Heather a call in our office for details.

CURATOR'S CORNER

The Historical Society's mission is to save and share Westminster's history. In order to do that, we accept donations related to the history of Westminster so they can be preserved for future generations. This is a big responsibility and we thank the persons who share in this responsibility by giving items for the collections.

Bette Roy: book A Finnish Homestead: 46 Bacon Street

Anita Dube: set of town reports and Oakmont Regional High School yearbooks her husband Jack received during his time on the School Committee

Betsy Hannula: items from World War II used by her parents, Lempi & Wilho Aalto, Girl Scout items, set of books on the early history of Finns in the United States, school photos, trunk and chair made in Westminster

Brenda Malloy: photos taken at celebration of hearse house at Woodside Cemetery

Michael May: three class photos

Purchase: Poorhouses of Massachusetts

Arthur Michellini: collection of books on early American history

Flea Market donation: collection of books on making Colonial doll furniture

There is no monument dedicated to World War II veterans in Westminster. Very few of these veterans are now left to tell their story. This is one important reason that we should make every effort to save what information and materials we have from these brave men and women so we can tell some of their stories to our children and grandchildren.



This cup and water canteen were used by Lempi Tuomi

who was an Army nurse during World War II serving in the Pacific in New Guinea. The pillow cover here is a reminder of the United States troops who fought in the Pacific.



HOUSE AND GROUNDS REPORT

Like many older homes, the house on 110 Main Street had its share of problems this past winter. Most of the problems were resolved by removing the snow and ice from the roof and keeping the walkways clear. Because of ice dams there were leaks in the fireplace room ceiling. The ceiling will require repairs along with a roof inspection.



How deep was the snow?

UPTON UPDATE

With the winter of all winters upon us this year, we did not venture into the Upton building very often. The Upton Building Committee did meet this winter to deliberate about the roof. It was recommended that the cupola be taken down and be replaced with an identical one. It was also suggested that the old one be placed on the front lawn of the Society at the beginning our campaign to raise funds. Wait for it!

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of the Universalist Church choir. A director of the Westminster Bank in 1892, he died in 1897. His brother was Edwin Upton, a colonel in the militia who organized the 25th Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteers and led them into battle in the Civil War.

Charles' son George Clinton Upton was born in West Fitchburg in 1847 but moved to Westminster at the age of three with his parents. He married Abbie S. Brown of Gardner on December 10, 1872 after living in Gardner from 1866 on. After positions there at the Derby-Knowlton Company and John A. Dunn Company, he became a bookkeeper at the chair manufacturing company of Heywood-Wakefield and advanced to the positions of cashier by 1900 and paymaster by 1905. George and Abbie had a son Edwin, who married Carrie Holden of Westminster. This couple lived awhile in Gardner but moved to Westminster where my father George Calvin Upton was born in 1902, probably at the Charles Upton house on Bacon Street.

George Clinton Upton died in 1906 leaving a considerable estate earned from his employment and investment in the Heywood-Wakefield company. His widow Abbie was left enough money to live comfortably at their home on Pleasant Street in Gardner, and he apparently left funding for the Upton School to be built in Westminster.



The Upton School when first built in 1912

My father moved to Gardner to live with his grandmother and attended Gardner High School, graduating in 1922 before she died that year. Dad then studied at Norwich University in Vermont for a while before deciding to go to New York City to look for a job in the new technology of radio. On his way by train he suddenly decided to stop off in Stamford, Connecticut where a friend lived. He liked the town and stayed there for life, working at various employments in radio and electrical manufacturing; and married my mother in 1929. I was born in Stamford, attended local schools and met my future wife Melinda, marrying in 1954 after Korean War service in the U.S. Army. In 1966 I moved my family to Glastonbury, Connecticut to further my career in Hartford as an engineer with the Connecticut Department of Transportation.

Dad and I took occasional trips to Gardner and Westminster where we always stopped in Westminster at the Woodside Cemetery where his grandparents George Clinton and Abbie S. (Brown) Upton and great grandparents Charles and Sarah are buried. Sometimes we also drove to the top of Mount Wachusett where he used to hike with Boy Scouts from Gardner, and then have lunch at the Old Mill Restaurant. After he passed away in 1982 Melinda and I made many trips to the area to continue my research into the historic Upton family.

Over the years I learned a lot about my ancestors and their families who traveled all about the United States. Some of my cousins were General Emory Upton from the Civil War, Francis Upton who worked with Edison in developing the electric light, and George P. Upton of Chicago who wrote books on classical music and even the great Chicago fire. But I had much more interest in learning about the Worcester County area.

On one visit to the Woodside Cemetery with Melinda we found there were a few unused burial sites in the Upton plot and thought about where we will have our final resting place. Since I had learned so much about my ancestors I decided to try to use the sites for us. The arrangements were made with the cemetery management and shared with a funeral home in Glastonbury that would handle arrangements on our passing.

Melinda began to have heart problems in 2008 that continued through 2011, and she passed away as 2012 began. We had 57 wonderful years together, raising two children and spending much time with our two grandchildren. Her interment was in the Upton plot next to my reserved site. The Upton family will always have a presence in Westminster, and we will be a part of it.



The Upton Memorial in Woodside Cemetery

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

The Westminster Historical Society has some great programs coming up for this spring. Join us and bring your family, friends, and neighbors!

Saturday, May 9th at 10 am - Tour and History of Crocker Pond by Tom Torrans. Meet at the Crocker Pond parking lot off South Ashburnham Road. Wear clothes and foot gear appropriate for the weather!



Saturday, June 6, 9 to noon, Annual Perennial Plant Swap on the front lawn at the Historical Society. This is a time to separate perennial plants from your garden and swap them for new plants from someone else's garden.



Tuesday, June 9, 7pm Juhannus Celebration at the Farmers' Cooperative Building, located on Leominster Street. This year's program is "Famous Finnish Foods and How to Make Them." We will have local Finn cooks and bakers demonstrating with recipes, and lots of finished products to try. Everyone is invited to celebrate the onset of

summer with us!

Saturday, September 12: Westminster Garden Tour

Save the date for this Fall Tour of local gardens. Details will follow in the next newsletter.



POSTCARD BOOK

Do you have some old postcards of Westminster? Do you like looking at old postcards, imagining what our town was like one hundred years ago when everyone sent postcards as notes to their friends and families?

You may be interested in joining this group! We are documenting all the old postcards in the Historical society collections first. Next we will be looking for other persons' postcard collections. Do you know of anyone with some old Westminster cards? We will decide which ones to include in a book of postcards to be printed in the future for the Historical Society. We hope to sell this book in the Gift Shop.



It's been fun trying to figure out exactly where some of these old photo postcards were taken. This one is fairly easy. The old brick store with the Baptist church next door are still pre-

If you'd like to join us, we're currently working on Mondays 7-9 pm, Tuesdays 1-3 pm and Fridays 9-Noon. Just give Betsy Hannula a call at 978-874-0430 or email her at BetsyHannula@gmail.com or just show up at one of these meeting times. We'd love to see 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 Heather 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.
- Putting data about items into a computer database.
- Helping with newsletters and brochures.

Please send form to:

Westminster Historical Society, Membership Committee, P.O. Box 177, Westminster, MA 01473.



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	65.00
<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	20.00
<u>Montachusett Memories</u>	35.00
<u>Olin Warner, Sculptor</u> , by Hyson	4.50
<u>200th Anniversary of Westminster</u> ,	5.00
<u>Wachusett Gatherings</u> , by Sinclair (softcover)	20.00

Other

Wachusett Mountain charcoal drawing	60.00
Calligraphy sampler	12.00
<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
<i>Downtown Westminster 1831</i> by Peckham	30.00
Postcards	3/1.00
Children's books	7.95
Tobacco Shed pottery	priced as marked
Westminster tapestry wall hanging	35.00

FISHING DERBY 2015



Jarrod Hart with Third Place Perch

We had more than enough ice for our Third Annual Ice Fishing Derby, which was held on February 7, 2015 at the Westminster Historical Society “headquarters”!

Thirty-nine adults and thirteen children 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



Connor Linnus with First Place

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, Steven Jarvenpaa and Rich Daniels. We’re all looking forward to our Fourth Annual Ice Fishing Derby in February 2016!

pickerel, plus an extra incentive for bringing in the first fish in each category.

Not to be outdone, children who also won in each category were given a trophy for first, second & third place. Blue, green & red trophies were made by Westminster’s own John Caisse of World Class Trophies, who engraved



Connor Hart with First Place Perch

them with the year and the Society’s name and topped them with a gold fish.

The top three adult and child winners were displayed on our custom made signs on the front lawn. There was a nice crowd that afternoon, both inside and outside of the house, as anglers from all over

YOU’RE INVITED TO HELP!

Planning for the future is an essential task of every organization, and the Westminster Historical Society is no exception.

We will embark on this important journey this year by first examining who and what we are as an organization, and then asking the important questions, what should we be doing and how should we be doing it?



In order to really understand what our members, our community leaders, and the community we serve (in Westminster and beyond) want us to do, we will be sending out surveys to all interested persons. We hope you will take this opportunity to let us know what things are im-

portant to you.

Are there workshops you would like to have us run? What kinds of activities would you like to see take place? Are you interested in more family programs? Is local history important to you? Would you like to know more about Westminster natives who have gone off to other places and done really interesting things? We’ll be looking for your input!

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMING



Colter Gervais-Charon with bass

Westminster Historical Society
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DATES TO REMEMBER

Saturday, May 9th, 10 am, Tour and History of Crocker Pond with Tom Torrans
Saturday, May 16th, 2—4 - English Country Tea
Saturday, June 6, 9 - noon - Perennial Plant Swap
Tuesday, June 9, 7 pm - Juhannus Celebration
Saturday, June 20, 8 -2 - Town-wide Yard Sale.

Articles for the next newsletter in June are due by May 1.

TOWN WIDE YARD SALE JUNE 20

Saturday, June 20, 8— 2 pm, will be the 8th Annual Town-wide Yard Sale. In Westminster. Registration forms and map details are located on the website and the Historical Society Facebook page. Registration forms will be available in the box located outside the front door at 110 Main Street. This has become a fun event for the whole town, for those setting up sale tables and those from other towns coming to see what's for sale!



SPRING TEA FUNDRAISER MAY 16

Saturday, May 16th , 2—4 pm, will be our third annual spring tea fundraiser to support Upton Building expenses. It will again place at the Society house which will be beautifully decorated for the occasion. This year's theme is English Country Tea, with sweets and savories served. It will be a fun event for mothers, daughters and granddaughters. And, men



are also welcome to join the tea party! Seating is limited, so we encourage people to make reservations by May 11. Information is available on our website at WestminsterHistory.com and on our Facebook page or call 978-874-5569.