

## WESTFORD TOWN FARM

Prepared by Marilyn Day

Very earliest records are missing at this time, but from the *History of Westford* by Rev. Edwin Hodgman, p. 155, it lists Paupers as of March 8, 1799. Benjamin Foster, Samuel Craft, Jeremiah Temple, Elizabeth Keyes, Elizabeth Wilson, Patience Fish, Margaret Craft, Thaddeus Read, Sarah Hildreth, Widow Mary Barrett, Widow Thankful Read, and Nehemiah Fletcher, Jun.

In 1824 the town bought the property of John Read's farm for \$2500 to serve as a poor farm.

The first "Master" was Jonathan Hosmer followed by Otis Haywood. (Hodgman, p.178) The deed was transacted May 12, 1824 (and recorded June 7, 1824). It included "Land and buildings westerly part of Westford containing 170 acres more or less... It being the same premises including other lands conveyed to me by John Prescott by deed of June 23, 1818." (Westford Book/deed book 11, p. 650).

"On the first day of November [1824] they [Eliakim Hutchins, Samuel Richardson, Zaccheus Read and John Abbot] made two reports, one in regard to stocking the farm, and one comprising "Bye-Laws, or Orders and Regulations of Westford Workhouse." (*History of Westford*, p. 179). This document is in possession of the Westford Town Hall.

On July 30, 2002, Earl Carter from Groton brought two journals of the Westford town farm and gave them to the Westford museum. He had acquired them from a yard sale. These journals are dated 1828 and 1829 are accounts of things bought for the farm beginning with March 10, 1828 thru Feb. 1845. The other journal is 1829 to 1833 and lists accounts by vendor.

The 1819 Revolutionary War Pension application papers of Jonas Kemp of Westford give us the names of the Overseers of the Poor in 1819 as Saml Wright, Jr., Imla Goodhue and Thomas Hildreth. These three were also five of the selectmen that same year.

In 1837 the town built a new building on the same site by Daniel W. Hartwell. (p181). The master at this time was Mr. Parker.

On April 3, 1837, it was voted to choose a building committee of five persons to superintend the building of a poor-house (Hodgman, p. 181). That committee consisted of Abram Prescott, Levi Heywood, Asia Nutting, Samuel H. Nichols and Horatio Fletcher. They recommended a house 39' by 40', two stories high, with buttry and well-room in the shed. It was built in the summer and autumn of 1837. The contractor, Daniel W. Hartwell, failed to finish it by October 20, the agreed-upon time. The committee was instructed by vote of November 13, that they superintend the finishing of it and settle with Mr. Hartwell as they thought fit. Hartwell had agreed to build it for \$2400, but the committee allowed the additional sum of \$37.40 and finished it at a total expense for the

house and shed of \$3002.45. On April 2, 1838 the overseers were authorized to buy new furniture for the house.



TOWN FARM, WITH VIEW ACROSS STONY BROOK MEADOWS.

The center of the Town in the distance.

Picture from page 57 of the "Souvenir Booklet of the Dedication of the J.V. Library," dated 4 June 1896.

Keepers of the Town Farm:

- 1839, 40?      1839, Poor House Building Committee: Samuel Fletcher, T.P. Wright, Samuel H. Nichols.  
In 1840, Theodore Wells was paid \$2.33 for visits and medicines  
In 1840, Samuel Fletcher was paid \$4.75 for "bringing back N. Pierce and hiring farmer." [This is Gilbert Farmer]
- 41, 42      Gilbert Farmer
- 44      W. S. Nutting "Wages for one year \$225."
- 45      Solomon Nutting (probably)
- 46, 47      Not listed
- 48      Solomon Nutting (from Receipts & Expenses of the town)
- 49      Solomon Nutting
- 1855      Willis Wilder (from census)
- 59, 1860      George Reed
- March 5, 1861 - April 1, 1862      N. P. Chase
- April 1, 1862 - April 1, 1863      N. P. Chase
- 1865      Ward Coburn (from census)
- April 1 1868 - April 1 1869      Ward Coburn
- 69      John L. Morrill
- 71      J.R.Bagley. John R. Bagley was paid for services as Master of the Almshouse, from April 1, 1870 to April 1, 1871. (p. 28, 1872 TR)

75, 76, 77        D.W. & Arvilla Smith  
 1878, 79        J. H. Bradley  
 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 87 Henry D. Pierce (family in 1880 census at farm)  
 1888            Superintendent of Repairs on Highways and Keeper of the Almshouse -  
                   Henry D. Pierce  
 1889            Henry D. Pierce  
 90, 91, 92       Henry B. Ruiter (Henry Riuter was listed as a Farm Laborer at the town  
                   farm in the 1880 census)

In 1883, there was an expense of \$2.50 for bed bug poison.

1845, Paid Town of Wilmington, for supplies furnished Samuel Hildreth, while sick with small pox.

Names

March 10th 1827  
 John Pushee and his wife  
 Henry C. Pushee  
 Betsy Pushee  
 Almira Pushee  
 Gilman Pushee  
 Eleazer Blood and his wife  
 Ephraim Spaulding and his wife  
 Jonas Wright  
 William Reed and his wife  
 Thomas Richardson  
 Hartwell Kemp  
 Calvin T. Cummings  
 Wid. Adams  
 Wid. Hildreth  
 Ann Hildreth  
 Patty Cummings  
 Wid. Farwell

April 28, 1828        Luther Hunt this day died at the poor house.\* [Death not in Westford  
 VRs. Was he the Luther Hunt, b. 4 Nov 1795, s/o Simon and Lydia Hunt?]  
 Dec 3, 1828        Mrs. Sally Dudley died aged 65 [recorded in Westford VRs as  
 “\_\_\_\_\_, wife of John, Dec. 3, 1828”]  
 January 6, 1829      Widow Ruth Hildreth died aged 89  
 April 24, 1829      Jonas Wright Died Aged 70 [born Westford 6 Feb 1759, s/o Thomas and  
 Elizabeth (Parker) Wright.]  
 July 17, 1829        George Reed died aged 34 [July 16 in Westford VRs]  
 Jan 6, 1831        Ephraim Spoilding Died Age 64 [Jan. 5 in Westford VRs]  
 Jan 11, 1831        Elizabeth Adams Died Age 95 [recorded in Westford VRs as “\_\_\_\_, Mrs.,  
 pauper, Jan 14, 1831”]

May 29, 1831 Wid. Mary Farewell Died Aged 86 yrs [recorded in Westford VRs as  
 "Farwell, \_\_\_\_\_, Mrs., pauper"]  
 Jan 1, 1832 Amaziah Hildreth Died Aged 63

Names of the persons belonging to the poor house Feb 24, 1832

Eleazer Blood and wife	2	Joshua Abbot Jewett	1
John Pushee	1	John Dudley	1
Widow Wright		Mary Hildreth	1
1		Almira Pushee	1
Widow Spoulding	1	Gilman Pushee	
Abel Brown	1	1	
Thomas Richardson	1	Rebecca Chandler	<u>1</u>
William Richardson	1		18
Abigail Richardson	1		
Hannah Richardson	1		
Joseph Patten	1		
Patty Comming	1		

June 27, 1832 Hannah Spalding Died Aged 78 yrs [recorded in Westford VRs as "\_\_\_\_,  
 Mrs., pauper"]  
 July 21, 1832 Eleazer Blood Died Aged 88 yrs [Westford VRs give Elazur, July 20]  
 August 28, 1833 Lydia Blood died aged 76  
 Sept 18, 1833 Amas Prescott died [sic Amos]  
 Dec the 1, 1833 Widow Wright Died [recorded in Westford VRs as "\_\_\_\_, Mrs., pauper,  
 \_\_\_\_\_, 1833."] Westford deaths: Wright, Rebecah, formerly w. James Fletcher,  
 Dec. 1, 1833, a. 83y. (b. 1750) Jonas Wright, m. 17 Sep. 1783, wid. Rebecca  
 Fletcher. Luther, their son, b. 7 Nov. 1793 at Westford.  
 Dec 22, 1833 William Pool Died Age 24  
 Feb 2, 1835 Charles Reed Died Age 49  
 June the 20, 1835 Abel Brown Died \*  
 Sep 1835 Rebeckah Chandler Died [recorded in Westford VRs as "\_\_\_\_, Mrs.,  
 pauper, Sept. \_\_\_\_\_, 1835"]  
 Feb 15?, 1836 Elzina Read Died [recorded in Westford VRs as "Alzina, pauper, \_\_\_\_\_,  
 1836."]  
 Feb 21, 1836 Hannah Richardson Died [Westford VR add: "d. Thomas, deceased, bur.  
 Feb. 23, 1836"]  
 May 13, 1836 Nancy E. Read Died [Westford VRs: "\_\_\_\_\_, [pauper. P.R. 2.] ch. Peter,  
 bur. May 14, 1836"]  
 September 6, 1836 Mary Jane Read Died [is this the record in Westford VRs as "\_\_\_\_\_,  
 [pauper, P.R. 2.], ch. Peter, bur. Sept. 3, 1836"]  
 Sept 11, 1837 Edward Jenkins Read Died \* [see p. 309 in Westford VRs]  
 Sept 15, 1837 Betsey Parker Read Died [is this the record in Westford VRs as "\_\_\_\_\_,  
 [pauper. P.R.2.] 3d ch. Peter, bur. Sept. 17, 1837 [a. 10m.]]  
 Jan 9, 1838 Lydia Chandler died [Westford VRs give death date as Jan. 8] Luce rec says  
 age 70.  
 March 6, 1838 Widow B. Hildreth died [Westford VRs state "\_\_\_\_\_, wid. Benj[ami]n,  
 pauper, \_\_\_\_\_, 1838 [bur. Mar 8]

Names of persons belonging to the poor house Jan 1, 1838

Amos Hadley	Polly Hildreth
Elihu Reed	Rebecca Patch
Thomas Richardson	Abigail Richardson
John Robertson	Lydia Chandler
William Richardson	Nancy Henderson
John Dudley	Betsey Hildreth
David Dutton	Olive Reed
John P. Hildreth	William Reed
John Keys	Levi Reed
Ephraim Reed	Sarah E. Henderson
Joanne Clater	
Betsey Wright	

July 22, 1838      Abigal Richardson died [Westford VRs say "Abigail, [pauper]. P.R.2], bur. July 23, 1838" Luce rec. calls her Nabby.

Nov 18, 1838      Mrs. Aseneth Goodhue died [Westford VRs say "[Asenath, w. James [pauper], Nov. 18, 1838, a. 53y]

Names of persons belonging to the work house Jan, 1, 1839

Amos Hadley	Rebecca Patch
Elihu Reed	Nancy Henderson
Thomas Richardson	Harriet Reed
John Dudley	Silvia A. Reed
John Robertson	Nancy Reed
John Keys	Sarah E. Henderson
Peter Reed	Margaret Prescott
John T. Hildreth	Gilman Pushee
Samuel Dexter	William Reed
William Richardson	Levi Reed
Joanna Clater	Franklin Prescott
Betsey Wright	

Names of persons belonging to the poor house Jan 1st 1840

Amos Hadley	John Green
Elihue Read	Peter Read
John Dudley	John Green Jnr
Thomas Richardson	Asa Green
John Keyes [d. 1846 P.R.2.]	Levin Reed
William Richardson	Joanna Clater
John P. Hildreth	Mary Perry
John Robinson	Rebeckah Patch
Samuel Dexter	Betsy Wright
Joseph E. Banister	Nancy Henderson

Nancy Pierce  
Harriet Read  
Hannah Dutton  
Martha Green  
Olive Read  
Silvia Read  
Martha J. Read

Sarah E. Henderson  
Sarah E. Green  
Margaret Prescott  
Betsy Hildreth  
Lydia Read

- Jan 1840 Joseph E. Banister died Jan 24<sup>th</sup> [Westford VRs say “\_\_\_\_, Mr., pauper, \_\_\_\_ , 1840.”]
- 1840 John Green died January 30<sup>th</sup>
- 1840 Peter Reed’s child born Aug 14<sup>th</sup> [See Peter Reed’s child below]
- 1840 Aug 29<sup>th</sup> Elihu Reed died Aug 29<sup>th</sup> [Westford VRs say “Elihu [pauper. P.R. 2], bur. Aug. 30, 1840”]
- 1840 Peter Reed’s child died Sept 12<sup>th</sup> [Westford VRs say “\_\_\_\_, [pauper. P.R. 2.], ch. Peter, bur. Sept. \_\_\_\_ , 1840”]
- 1840 Nancy Pierce died Sept 18<sup>th</sup> [Westford VRs say “Nancy, pauper, \_\_\_\_ , 1840”]
- March 20<sup>th</sup> 1841 Lydia Reed Died [Westford VRs say “Lydia, pauper, \_\_\_\_ , 1841, a. 92y.”]
- 1841 John Robinson died Sept the 25<sup>th</sup> [Westford VRs say “John, \_\_\_\_ , 1841, a. 72y.] He was not indicated pauper status in town or Luce records.
- 1842 Thomas Reed died Dec 17<sup>th</sup> 1841 [Westford VRs say Thomas [s. Samuel. p.r. 1.] , Dec. 17, 1841, a. 63y.]
- May 24<sup>th</sup> 1842 John P. Hildreth died May 24<sup>th</sup> [Westford VRs say “Hildreth, John Parker, unm., laborer, consumption, May 24, 1842, a. 37y]
- Oct 13<sup>th</sup> 1842 Betsy Boynton died [Westford VRs say “Betsy [pauper. P.R.2.], consumption, Oct. 13, 1842, a. 60y.]
- Nov 1<sup>st</sup> 1842 Sarah Charles died [Westford VRs have two entries “Sarah, palsy, Nov. 1, 1842, a. 55y.” Also, “\_\_\_\_, Mrs., pauper, \_\_\_\_ , 1842.”]
- Dec 5<sup>th</sup>, 1842 Amos Hadley died [Westford VRs say “Amos, Dec. 6, 1842, a. 72y”] Who is “Hadley, Peter [pauper. P.R.2.], \_\_\_\_ , 1842” in Westford VRs? “Amos Hadley, brother of Jonas, was sent back to Westford [from Mount Holly, VT] in 1804 to be supported by the town. He was in some way disabled, perhaps by lameness, and unable to work” (Hodgman, p. 168).
- June 28<sup>th</sup> 1843 John Dudley died [Westford VRs say “\_\_\_\_, Mr., pauper, \_\_\_\_ , 1843”]

In the 1843 timeframe, Dorothea Dix was making her appeal to reform the almshouses. At the same time she was in Westford, there are records of Hervey Backus Wilbur, another reformist, also in town. Wilbur went on to found an Institution for Idiots in Barre, Mass. and also “New York Asylum for Idiots” at Geddes, NY, as they were so inelegantly called. According to Heli Meltser, Dix’s description of the Westford poor farm at that time was not very complimentary.

**Mr. Charles Sumner says (in the Boston Courier) that 'from the correctness with which Miss Dix has described these four (Sudbury, Wayland, Westford and Groton) almshouses, which I have seen, leads me to place entire confidence in her description of the other eight.'**

From the Berkshire County Whig, 1843-03-02, Vol. 2, Iss: 52,p. 2.

Names of persons supported in the Poor House in the years 1843-4

John Dudley	Miss Debora Wright
Thomas Richardson	Mrs. Betsey Wright
William Richardson	Miss Hannah Dutton
Calvin Green	Mrs. Nancy Henderson
Peter Read	Miss Martha Cummings
John Douty	Miss Betsey Hildreth
Samuel Dexter	Miss Olive Read
John Green	Miss Olive Read
Levi Read	Olivia A. Read
Franklin Prescott	Nancy Read
Jonathan Buffam	Sarah E. Henderson
Robbert Wilkerson	Martha J. Read
Sylvester Patch	Mary A. Kidder
Albert Green	Margaret Prescott
Warren Green	
Mrs. Mary Perry	
Mrs. Joanna Clater	

Names of persons who have received aid out of the Poor house during the year 1843-4

\*Sylvester Patch

Mary Patch            in Groton

Children of {Patch

Sylvester {Patch

Betsey Kemp of Littleton

Ebenezer Wright    }

Betsey Wright        }in Lowell

Jane Wright            }

Martha Wright        }

Jacob Read            }

Rachel Read            }

Samuel Read            }of Tyngsboro

George Read            }

Merrick Read            }

Mary Read                }

Nancy Read              }

Eliza Read            }  
One infant child       }

Micah P. Newton of Marlborough  
Mary Green In Dracut & in Lowell & in  
                                  house of correction

\*Albert Green         } in Dracut and  
\* Warren Green        } in Lowell

Almira Kemp in House of correction in Boston

Sally Green of Carlisle

--- Kemp in Townsend  
          Jonas Kemp's wife

Patty Dutton in Westford

Adam H. Cogswell funeral expence  
                                  in Concord

Aaronett Read in Wilton, N.H.

\* Sylvester Patch, Albert Green, Warren Green and Mary Green have been helped both in  
and out of the Poor-house.

Sept 7, 1844 Mary Perry died Sept 7, 1844

Feb 11, 1845 Thomas Richerdson Died Feb 11th 1845

May 3, 1845 Arronett Read died [note: Westford VRs calls him Erenet] Luce give age as 29.

Names of persons supported in the Poor House in 1844-5

Thomas Richardson

William Richardson

Calvin Green

Peter Read

Samuel Dexter

John Green

Levi Read

Sylvester Patch

Mrs. Joanna Clater

Mrs. Deborah Wright

Mrs. Betsy Wright

Miss Hannah Dutton

Mrs. Nancy Henderson

Miss Martha Cummings

Miss Betsy Hildreth

Nancy E. Henderson

Merritt Read

Nancy Read

Martha J. Read

Feb 25, 1846 Roscoe Vernon Kidder born

Names of persons in the Poor House Nov 1st 1845

William Richardson  
Calvin Green  
Peter Read  
Joanna Clatter  
Deborah Wright  
Betsy Wright  
Hannah Dutton  
Nancy Henderson  
Betsy Hildreth  
Matilda Prescott  
Josa Munway

March 15, 1846 Betsey Wright Died [Westford VRs say "Betsy [w. Asa, pauper. P.R.2.], old age, Mar. 24, 1846, a. 83y. [a. 84y. P.R.2]

Feb 6, 1847 Matilda Prescott died [Westford VRs say "\_\_\_\_\_, w. Isaiah, pauper, \_\_\_\_\_, 1847" in Westford VRs, p. 305] Luce Rec says "Mrs. Isaiah Prescott (Pauper)"

Names of persons at the Poor house Nov 1st 1846

William Richardson  
Calvin Green  
Peter Read  
Joanna Clatter  
Deborah Wright  
Hannah Dutton  
Nancy Henderson  
Betsy Hildreth  
Matilda Prescott  
Clarisa Kidder  
Samuel Dexter  
Rebecca Patch  
Roscoe Vernon Kidder

March 31, 1847 Joanna Clater died [Westford VRs say "Joanna, wid. [w. Jacob, pauper. P.R.2]., d. Ebenezer and Joanna Fletcher, old age, Mar. 30, 1847, a. 91y. 9m. 12d. [a. 94y. p.r.2.]]

Oct 9, 1847 William Richardson died [Westford VRs say "William, unm., pauper, s. Abijah and Elizabeth, Oct. 9, 1847, a. 65y. 2m. 25d.]

Oct 26, 1847 Patrick Clary died \* [Westford VRs "Surnames Missing includes "\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, Irishman" pauper, \_\_\_\_\_, 1847"]

Nov 26, 1847 Deborah Wright died [Westford VRs say "Deborah, pauper, \_\_\_\_\_, 1847."]

Mar 11, 1848 Partrick Oharrar died at the poor house \* [Westford VRs, "Surnames Missing includes: "\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, "Irishman," \_\_\_\_\_, 1848."]

Nov 27, 1848

Patty Dutton died [Westford VRs say "Patty, unm. [pauper. P.R.2.], old age, Nov. 29, 1848, a. 96y.](She is "Martha," b. 1761, d/o Benjamin and Mary (Rumrill) Dutton. See Hodgman p. 445)

Names of persons at the Poor House Nov 1st 1848

Calvin Green  
Peter Reed  
Samuel Dexter  
Hannah Dutton  
Betsy Hildreth  
George W. Sears  
James A. Lane  
Lucy M. Lane

Names of Persons at the Alms House Nov 1st 1849

Calvin Green  
Samuel Dexter  
Peter Reed  
Hannah Dutton  
Betsy Hildreth  
George W. Sears  
James A. Lane  
Lucy M. Lane

June 28, 1850

Hannah Dutton Died [Prescott transcript of Westford Deaths: "Hannah, 47y. d. 27 Jun 1850, b. Westford, but no entry, but prob. d/o Thomas & Hannah (Twiss) Dutton. Disease of heart"]

Number of persons at the Poor House Nov 1, 1850

Calvin Green  
Samuel Dexter  
Peter Reed  
Betsey Hildreth  
Nancy Henderson  
George W. Sears  
James A Lane  
Lucy M. Lane  
Rachael Stevens

Nov 25, 1850

Samuel Dexter died

Names of persons at the Alms House Nov 1851

Calvin Green  
Peter Reed

Jonas Kemp  
Rachel Stevens  
Nancy Henderson  
Betsey Hildreth  
George W. Sears  
James A. Lane  
Lucy M. Lane

On Jan 22, 1852, Mary Hallgate came to the poor House  
Jan 23, 1852            Eliza Hallgate born  
Mar 5, 1852            Mary Hallgate & her two children Ellen and Eliza Hallgate left the  
poor House

Names of persons at the Poor house Nov 1, 1852

Calvin Green  
Peter Reed  
Rebecca Patch  
Rachel Stevens  
Betsy Hunstable  
Nancy Henderson  
Betsey Hildreth  
James A. Lane  
Lucy M. Lane

April 2nd 1853            Peter Reed died

Names of persons at the Poor house Nov 1, 1853

Calvin Green  
Amaziah Kemp  
Phineas Nichols  
Abel Cory  
Thomas Kemp  
Samuel Richardson  
Rebecca Patch  
Rachel Stevens  
Betsy Hustable  
Nancy Henderson  
Betsey Hildreth

Names of persons at the poor House Nov 1, 1854

Calvin Green  
Amaziah Kemp  
Abel Cory

Samuel Richardson  
Rebecca Patch  
Rachael Stevens  
Betsey Hunstable  
Nancy Henderson  
Betsey Hildreth

June 3, 1855            Nancy Henderson died

Names of persons at the poor house Nov 1, 1855

Calvin Green  
Amaziah Kemp  
Abel Corey  
Samuel Richardson  
Rebecca Patch  
Rachael Stevens  
Betsey Hunstable  
Betsey Hildreth  
Jeptha R. Reed

Nov 29, 1855            Jephthah Reed died  
May 4, 1856            Mrs. Rachel Stevens died

Names of persons at the Alms House Nov 1st 1856

Calvin Green  
Amaziah Kemp  
Abel Corey  
Silvester Patch  
Proctor Kider  
Rebecca Patch  
Betsey Hunstable  
Betsey Hildreth

Names of persons at the Alms house Nov 1, 1857

Rebecca Patch  
Betsy Hildreth (should this be Hunstable?)  
Betsy Hildreth  
Samuel Richardson  
Calvin Green

Deaths of the year 1857

Aug 4 Betsy Hunstable Dide to day Aged 84 yrs

Oct 4 Amaziah Kemp Died Age 70

Names of Persons at the Almshouse Oct 1st 1858

William Mears  
Sylvester Patch  
Samuel Richardson  
Betsy Hildreth

Deaths at the Poorhouse in 1858

Feb 12 Rebecka Patch Died Aged 90  
Aug 18 Betsy Hildreth died Aged 62 yrs [not in Westford VRs]  
Sept. 4 Calvin Green died Aged 83 yrs [Prescott transcription "b. Carlisle]

Names of Persons at the Almshouse Oct 1st 1859

Wm. Mears  
Betsy Hildreth  
Timothy Smith  
Walter Scott

Deaths at the Poorhouse in 1859

July 1st Sylvester Patch Died Aged 51 yrs  
Nov 1st Timothy Smith Died Aged 70 yrs [Prescott Transcription "syphillis"]

Names of Persons at the Almshouse Oct 1st 1860

William Mears  
Samuel Richardson  
Betsy Hildreth  
Walter Scott

Deaths at the Poorhouse in 1860

April 8 Joseph Hildreth Died Aged 50 yrs

Names of Persons at the Almshouse Oct 1st 1861

William Mears  
Abijah Reed  
Samuel Richardson  
Susan Pike  
Betsy Hildreth

Deaths at the Poorhouse in 1861

July 2            Edward Richardson Died Aged 47 yrs  
July 3            Sarah Prescott Died Aged 64 yrs

Names of Persons at the Almshouse Oct 1st 1862

William Mears  
Abijah Reed  
Sam'l Richardson  
Susan Pike  
Betsey Hildreth

Names of Persons at the Almshouse Oct 1st 1863

William Mears  
Abijah Reed  
Ebenezer Tidd  
Betsey Hildreth

Deaths at the Poorhouse in 1863

March 31st     Susan Pike Died

Names of Persons at the Almshouse Oct 1st 1864

William Mears  
James Kemp  
Betsey Hildreth  
Mary Elizabeth Cowdry

Inside back cover of town farm book:  
Names and Ages of persons in the workhouse  
Westford, December 20, 1828

Widow Elizabeth Adams	Born March 2	1736	age 92	
Widow Ruth Hildreth	Born January 15	1740	88	
Eleazer Blood	Born July 16	1744	84	
Widow Mary Farewell	Born November 12	1744		84
John Pushee	Born August 15	1748	80	
Hannah Spoilding	Born July 25	1754	74	
Lydia Blood	Born June 8	1757	71	
Jonas Wright	Born February 6	1759	69	
John Dudley	Born October 3	1764	64	
Ephraim Spoilding	Born February 28	1767	61	
Hannah Richardson	Born nobody knows when			
Abigail Pushee	Born May 19	1786		42

George Reed	Born August 19	1795	33
Abel H. Kemp	Born February 7	1808	20
Luther Wright	Born July 2	1810	18
Martha Commings	Born January 10	1810	18
Henry C. Pushee	Born June 15	1815	13
Calvin Commings	Born January 4	1816	12
Betsy Pushee	Born July 17	1820	8
Lucy Campnell	Born May 18	1816	12
Almira Pushee	Born November 13	1822	6
Gilman Pushee	Born February 17	1826	2
William Richardson	Born		
Martha Jane Read	Daughter of Peter Read		
Born August	the 10 1839		
Gilman Pushee	born		

1855 Westford Census Town Farm: Willis Wilder, age 52, keeper. His wife was Laura, age 53, children: Charles W. 18, farming, and Harriet J., 16. All born in Vermont.

Name	Code	Age	Occupation	Born
Rebecca Patch	Pauper	87		MA
Betsey Hunstable	Pauper	83		MA
Rachel Stevens	Pauper	88		MA
Calvin Green	Pauper	80		MA
Abel Corey	Pauper	73		MA
Amaziah Kemp	Pauper	63		MA
Nancy Henderson	Pauper	50		MA
Betsey Hildreth	Pauper	40		MA
Samuel Richardson	Pauper	50		MA

1865 Westford Census Town Farm: Ward Coburn, age 52, born at Tyngsboro, MA, keeper and Sybil E. Coburn, age 49, born at Hollis, NH, was listed as the matron.

Name	Code	Age	Marital Status	Born
Ebenezer Tidd	Pauper	78	W	Westford
William Mears	Pauper, \$	73	W	Westford
Abijah Reed	Pauper	58	S	Westford
Samuel Richrdson	Pauper insane	58	S	Westford
Samuel Hoyt	Pauper	44	M	England
Betsey Hildreth	Pauper	73	S	Westford
Elizabeth Cowdrey	Pauper	33	W	Scotland
Mary E. Cowdrey	Pauper	4		Nashua, NH
Anna R. Cowdrey	Pauper	3		Nashua, NH

\$ Can read, not write.

Names and ages of the paupers in the Alms-House, February 6th, 1869

Name	Age
Betsy Hildreth	58
William Mears	78
Abijah Read	61

Ebenezer Tidd	82
Samuel Richardson	61
Frederick Bishop	13
Isaac Scott	21
Alden H. Woodward	22
Charles F. Peckins	10
Frederick H. Peckins	8
Mary E. Cowdry	9
Anna Cowdry	7

1880 Census lists: Henry D. Pierce as Superintendent, his wife, Mary, age 39 as Keeping House. The census also listed two daughters, M. Jennie Pierce, age 14 and Nellie M. Pierce, age 5. All were born in NH, as well as Mr. and Mrs. Pierce's parents.

Name	Marital Status	Age	Birthplace	Occupation	Father's Birthplace	Mother's Birthplace
Arni Sargent	S	23	Can	Farm Laborer	Can	Can
Henry Riuter	S	22	Can	Farm Laborer	Can	NY
Betsey Hildreth	S	73	MA		MA	MA
Amos Hildreth	S	72	MA		MA	MA
Pamelia Kendall	W	96	MA		---	---
Eunice Fletcher	W	78	MA		MA	MA
John P. Green	S	54	MA		MA	MA

In 1892, Edward Prescott was paid for expenses incurred in burying Esther Robbins who died at the town farm 6 Jan. 1892. In 1893, S. M. Hutchins was paid \$2.50 for digging grave for Mrs. Robbins. There is no record of her burial location in Westford cemetery records.

In 1894 the inmates were:

Name	Age
John Green	75
James McManus	51
George O. Wright	
F. W. Howe	82
Abby J. Howe	67
Patrick O'Toole	87
Catherine O'Toole	93
Margaret O'Brine	60
Edward E. Holt	80
Caroline A. Perham	70

Inmates in 1896:

Name	Age
John Green	76
James McManus	52

George O. Wright	65
Patrick O'Toole	88
Catherine O'Toole	94
Margaret O'Brien	61
Edward E. Holt	81
Caroline A. Perham	71
Thomas Carney	84

Inmates in 1897:

Name	Age
John Green	78
George O. Wright	67
Catherine O'Toole	96
Margaret O'Brine	61
Edward E. Holt	81
Caroline A. Perham	71
Thomas Carney	84

Inmates in 1898:

Name	Age
John P. Green	79
Catherine O'Toole	97
Margaret O'Brine	64
Edward E. Holt	84
Caroline A. Perham	74
Thomas Carney	87

In 1898 the town appropriated \$2,000. to build an ell to the Town Farm, with lock-up (p.51 yr end. 1899)

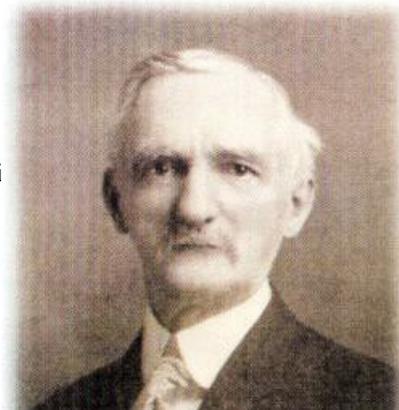
Inmates in 1899:

Name	Age
John P. Green	80
Catherine O'Toole	Age about 100
Margaret O'Brine	Age about 65
Edward E. Holt	85
Caroline A. Perham	75
Thomas Carney	Age about 88

1900 town report, p. 42, General Expenses: H. M. Francis<sup>1</sup> was paid for plans and specifications for the ell at alms house. \$93.75.

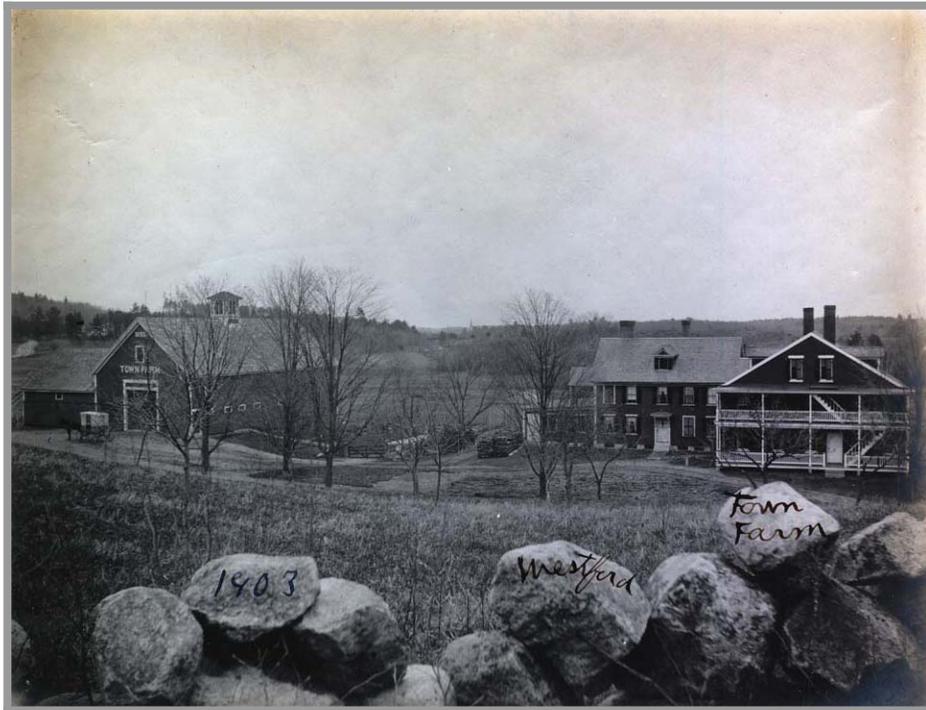
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<sup>1</sup> H. M. Francis was a noted architect from Fitchburg. He was the archi second Westford Academy, now the Roudenbush Community Center.



(Photo of H. M. Francis  
from <http://fitchburghistory.fsc.edu/Page5.htm>)

Year ending March 1, 1900. A new ell for the Almshouse has been finished. A woodshed and ice house have been built, mainly from lumber from the old ell. Running water was added. Agreed to pay the superintendent quarterly instead of annually. Legal proceedings were begun against Louisa Leland. (p.65)



Quincy Day photo

Inmates in 1900

Name	Age
John P. Green	80
Catherine O'Toole	100
Margaret O'Brine	about 66
Edward E. Holt	85

Caroline A. Perham	75
Thomas Carney	about 89
Joseph D. Wilkinson	81

<b>1900 Federal Census Name</b>	<b>Relationship</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Where Born</b>
Balch, Samuel H.	Head	45	M	New Hampshire
Balch, Ella	Wife	41	M	New Hampshire
Balch, George M.	Son	12	S	New Hampshire
Felch, Lizzie	Servant	30	S	Massachusetts
Stiles, Fran	Servant	21	S	Canada
O'Toole, Kate	Inmate	101	Wd	Ireland
O'Brien, Maggie	Inmate	67	S	Ireland
Perham, Caroline	Inmate	74	Wd	New Hampshire
Holt, Edward H.	Inmate	86	W	England
Cowdry, Lizzie <sup>2</sup>	Inmate	40	S	New Hampshire
Green, Thomas F.	Boarder	75	S	Massachusetts
Carney, Thomas	Boarder	90	S	Ireland

Inmates as of Feb. 1, 1901

Name	Age
John P. Green	81
Catherine O'Toole	101
Margaret O'Brine (sic O'Brien)	about 67
Edward E. Holt	86
Caroline A. Perham	76
Thomas Carney	about 90
Joseph D. Wilkinson	81
Mary Elizabeth Cowdry	42

1901 A steam heating appartus was added.

1902 Persons supported at Town Farm:

Name	Age	Admitted	Discharged
John P. Green	74		
Catherine O'Toole	about 102	Dec. 14, 1893	
Margaret O'Brine	about 67	Dec. 14, 1893	
Edward E. Holt	87	Jan. 8, 1894	
Caroline A. Perham	78	Jan. 23, 1894	
Thomas Carney	about 91	Jan. 31, 1877	
Joseph D. Wilkinson	83	Feb. 20, 1899	
Mary Elizabeth Cowdry	43	Feb. 24, 1900	
True A. Bean	79	Apr. 26, 1901	
Varnum T. Fletcher	59	Mar. 28, 1901	
Elizabeth Lord	35	Jan. 29, 1902	

<sup>2</sup> Her name was misinterpreted as "Rowdrey" in the census

Elbridge Reed

July 21, 1901

Sept. 1, 1901

1902, the Overseers expressed their appreciated for his gift to the Town Farm from Mr. Abiel J. Abbot for a copy of Drake's *History of Middlesex County*.

1903 Expenses: Catherine O'Toole, widow of Patrick, died on April 17, 1902, age 102, and \$20 was paid for her funeral.

1903. A fire escape was added.

Name	Age	Admitted	Discharged
John P. Green	74		
Catherine O'Toole	about 102	Dec. 14, 1893	died Apr. 17, 1902
Margaret O'Brine	about 68	Dec. 14, 1893	
Edward E. Holt	87	Jan. 8, 1894	died Apr. 28, 1902
Caroline A. Perham	79	Jan. 23, 1894	
Thomas Carney	about 92	Jan. 31, 1877	
Joseph D. Wilkinson	84	Feb. 20, 1899	died Feb. 5, 1903
Mary Elizabeth Cowdry	44	Feb. 24, 1900	
True A. Bean	80	Apr. 26, 1901	
Varnum T. Fletcher	60	Mar. 28, 1901	
Elizabeth Lord	36	Jan. 29, 1902	
Ellen McCarty	about 70	July 21, 1901	Sept. 1, 1901

\$22.50 was paid for funeral expenses for J. D. Wilkinson who died Feb. 5, 1903. He was killed by his room-mate Varnum T. Fletcher (see article in Physicians of Westford)  
In 1904, S.H. Balch began receiving pay as Constable, \$68.13; and on account insane, 7.50.

Persons supported at the Town Farm year ending March 1, 1904

Name	Age	Admitted	Discharged
John P. Green	76	Dec. 21, 1839	
Thomas Carney	about 93	Jan. 31, 1877	
True A. Bean	81	Apr. 26, 1901	
Caroline A. Perham	80	Jan. 23, 1894	
Varnum T. Fletcher	61	Mar. 28, 1901	
Mary Elizabeth Cowdry	44	Feb. 24, 1900	
Elizabeth Lord	37	Oct. 22, 1891	
Ellen McCarty	about 70	Oct. 16, 1902	Dec. 1, 1903
Louisa Leland	83	Dec. 25, 1903	

In 1905 S.H. Balch received \$9.00 as constable.

Persons supported at Town Farm, year ending March 1, 1905

Name	Age	Admitted	Discharged
John P. Green	77	Dec. 21, 1839	
Thomas Carney	about 94	Jan. 31, 1877	
Elbridge Reed	78	Apr. 10, 1904	
True A. Bean	82	Apr. 26, 1901	
Caroline A. Perham	81	Jan. 23, 1894	
Varnum T. Fletcher	62	Mar. 28, 1901	
Asa Dearborn	about 80	Apr. 18, 1904	
Alice Jackson	59	June 4, 1904	
Mary Elizabeth Cowdry	46	Feb. 24, 1900	
Louisa A. Leland	84	Dec. 25, 1903	Apr. 22, 1904
Louisa A. Leland	84	Dec. 22, 1904	

Persons Supported at the Poor Farm year ending March 1, 1906.

Name	Age	Admitted	Discharged
Thomas Carney	about 95	Jan. 31, 1877	
Elbridge Reed	79	Apr. 10, 1904	
Varnum T. Fletcher	63	Mar. 28, 1901	
Asa Dearborn	about 81	Apr. 18, 1904	
Alice Jackson	60	June 4, 1904	
Caroline A. Perham	82	Jan. 23, 1894	
Mary Elizabeth Cowdry	47	Feb. 24, 1900	
Fidelia Clark	83	Nov. 9, 1905	
Sarah J. Ingalls	43	Mar. 22, 1905	
Louisa A. Leland	85	Dec. 22, 1904	May 13, 1905
Louisa A. Leland	85	Jan. 21, 1906	

Year ending 1906, \$27.90 was paid out in funeral expenses for True A. Bean.

In 1907 there was an expense of 20.12 for Telephone.

Persons supported at the Town Farm, year ending March 1, 1907

Name	Age	Admitted	Discharged
Thomas Carney	about 96	Jan. 31, 1877	
Varnum T. Fletcher	64	Mar. 28, 1901	
Asa Dearborn	about 82	Apr. 18, 1904	
Caroline A. Perham	83	Jan. 23, 1894	
Mary Elizabeth Cowdry	48	Feb. 24, 1900	
Sarah J. Ingalls	43	Mar. 22, 1905	

94, 95, 96. 97, 98, 1899, 1900, 01, 02, 03, 04, 05, Samuel H. Balch

Persons supported at the Town Farm, year ending March 1, 1908

Name	Age	Admitted	Discharged
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Varnum T. Fletcher	65	Mar. 28, 1901
Caroline A. Perham	84	Jan. 23, 1894
Mary Elizabeth Cowdry	49	Feb. 24, 1900
Sarah J. Ingalls	45	Mar. 22, 1905

Asa Dearborn, age 80y 3m 11d, son of Asa and Irena (Chase) Deaborn, died 19 May 1907. The town paid \$31.50 for his burial. He is interred in Strangers Row, Fairview Cemetery, Westford.

Yr. ending Feb. 1, 1909

Persons supported at the Town Farm, year ending Feb. 1, 1909

Name	Age	Admitted	Discharged
Varnum T. Fletcher	66	Mar. 28, 1901	
Caroline A. Perham	85	Jan. 23, 1894	died Apr. 19, 1908
Mary Elizabeth Cowdry	50	Feb. 24, 1900	
Sarah J. Ingalls	46	Mar. 22, 1905	
Peter Lord	84	Aug. 13, 1908	

Caroline A. Perham, age, 84y, 4m, 16d, widow of Allen R. Perham, died 19 Apr. 1908. The town farm paid \$30 for her burial.

Expenses in 1908, in 1909 report, included \$30 for fire extinguishers, and \$12.50 was paid to the Westford Water Co. \$37.70 was spent to connect the water supply.

Persons supported at the Town Farm, year ending Feb. 1, 1910

Name	Age	Admitted	Discharged
Varnum T. Fletcher	67	Mar. 28, 1901	
Mary Elizabeth Cowdry	51	Feb. 24, 1900	
Sarah J. Ingalls	47	Mar. 22, 1905	
Hiram W. Leland	62	Apr. 22, 1909	Jun. 8, 1909
Hiram W. Leland	62	Dec. 30, 1909	

In the time frame 1909-1910, the first record of Dr. C. A. Blaney attending patients at the poor farm is recorded. The expense was for \$13.75.

Mary E. Cowdry, dau. of George & Elizabeth (Crawford) Cowdry, d. 13 Nov 1929, age 71y, 1m, 4d. She is interred in Strangers Row, Fairview Cemetery, Westford.

Mary E. Cowdry's funeral was mentioned on p. 3 of the *Lowell Sun* on 15 Nov. 1929. "Funeral services for Miss Elizabeth Cowdrey were held yesterday afternoon at the Westford Home. Rev. Roger M. Garland, pastor of the Methodist Episcopal church of Graniteville, officiated, under the direction of Undertakers David L. Greig and Son."

Inmates names were no longer listed after 1910. The Acts of 1910 explain the reason: "Chapter 412, Section 1. No city or town, and no department or official of any city or town in this Commonwealth, shall publish in any annual or other report for general

distribution to the public, or to the citizens of any city or town, the names of persons assisted in any way by the poor department of any city or town, or the names of any persons receiving aid under the provisions of Chapter seventy-nine of the Revised Laws and Acts in amendment thereof and in addition thereto, residing in such city or town.

Section 2. This act shall take effect upon its passage.

Approved, April 16, 1910.”

However, the 1910<sup>3</sup> Census had the following listed:

<b>1910 Federal Census Name</b>	<b>Relationship</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Where Born</b>
Boynton, Edson G.	Head	42	M	Massachusetts
Boynton, Cornelia A.	Wife	45	M	Massachusetts
Moody, Orrin	Hired Man	35	M	Mew Hampshire
Moody, Addie E.	Servant	22	M	New Hampshire
Leland, Hiram W.	Inmate	62	Wd	Massachusetts
Ingalls, Sarah	Inmate	47	S	Massachusetts
Cowdry, Mary	Inmate	51	S	New Hampshire
Fletcher, Varnum T.	Inmate	68	M	Massachusetts

<b>1920 Federal Census Name</b>	<b>Relationship</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Where Born</b>
Ripley, Charles	Head	49	M	Massachusetts
Ripley, Mary	Wife	40	M	Massachusetts
Ripley, Ethel	Daughter	19	S	Massachusetts
Leland, Hiram	Inmate	72	wid	Massachusetts
Cowdry, Mary	Inmate	61	S	New Hampshire
Ingalls, Sarah	Inmate	57	S	Massachusetts
Hildreth, Frank	Inmate	56	wd	Massachusetts

<b>1930 Federal Census Name</b>	<b>Relationship</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Where Born</b>
Maynard, George E.	Head	53	M	Vermont
Maynard, Carrie E.	Wife	56	M	New Hampshire
Maynard, Thelma	Daughter	10	S	New Jersey
Alcome, Howard	Lodger	16	S	Canada-English
Ingalls, Sarah	Inmate	68	S	Massachusetts
Reed, Florence*	Inmate	45	Wid	Massachusetts
Cummings, Roy	Inmate	68	S	Massachusetts
Guertin, David	Inmate	48	M	Connecticut

\* Florence Kate Mason was born in Groton, 28 April 1884, daughter of Frank and Catherine (Dallendorf) Mason. She married in Westford 20 Aug 1914 to William Reed. They had four children. The last one was

<sup>3</sup> Ancestry.com

born 16 March 1923 and the father, William Reed, died 12 Aug 1923. By 1930, Florence was living in the poor farm. Her children were in the Fernald School in Waltham. In 1949, Florence was still listed as a resident at the poor farm. In 1957, the Westford city directory listed her as “Mrs. Florence Reed, wid. of William,” living at the Westford Rest Home.

<b>1940 Federal Census Name</b>	<b>Relationship</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Where Born</b>
Boynton, Edson - Overseer	Head	41	M	Massachusetts
Boynton, Cornella	Wife	45	M	Massachusetts
Leland, Hiram W.	Inmate	62	Wd	Massachusetts
Ingalls, Sarah G.	Inmate	47	S	Massachusetts
Cowdry, Mary E.	Inmate	61	S	New Hampshire
Fletcher, Varnum	Inmate	68	M	Massachusetts

During 1911, there were expenses for an addition to the barn which came to \$211.31. It included windows.

Best estimate of inmates in 1911 would be: Varnum T. Fletcher, Mary Elizabeth Cowdry, and Sarah J. Ingalls.

3 Feb. 1912, Westford *Wardsman*, “The board of overseers of the poor have received the resignation of Mr. and Mrs. Edson G. Boynton as master and matron of the town farm after seven years of capable service, to take effect April first. Mr. and Mrs. Boynton succeeded Mr. and Mrs. S. H. Balch, and they have always maintained the same excellent standard of efficiency in caring for the place and the inmates. The state inspector of almshouses has always reported this as one of the best cared for in the state.”

In 1913, due to an unexpectedly heavy crop of corn, a new silo was erected. Now they could store enough ensilage to last through the winter. The cost for the silo was \$178.09.

1915 - “An unexpected amount of outdoor relief made it necessary for us to exceed our appropriation... Anticipating a large amount of outdoor relief during the present year, and, in view of the fact that the ell of the Town Farm House requires reshingling, and a new bathroom for the inmates seems necessary, we are asking for a larger appropriation than has been usual during the past few years.” (year ending 1915, p. 79)

1916 - One inmate died during the year. Lucy Tobie, age 83y, 8m, 17d, dau. of Richard & Betty (Arnold) Tobie died 2 Aug. 1916.

1917 - During the past year fire caught on roof of Town Farm house, estimated loss, \$125. Insurance Company demanded fire-proof shingles or better protection from sparks of passing trains. There has been paid to Town Treasurer on account of insurance \$125.00; and on account of sale standing pine timber \$2,875.

One inmate died during 1917, Nathaniel W. Wood, age 62, died 17 Oct. 1917.

1919 - “At the last Annual Town Meeting the Town voted to authorize the Overseers to change the name of the Town Farm. After due consideration the board decided to change

the name Town Farm or Poor House to Westford Home.” A new boiler was installed this year. The old one was 23 years old.

1922 - Repairs: Several rooms inside the Almshouse were refreshed by papering, painting, and whitening. This work was done by the superintendent. At a special Town meeting, held July 7th, the citizens of the Town voted to appropriate the sum of \$3,000 to be expended to construct a barn at the Westford Town Home. The bids came in over \$3,000 so the Overseers then purchased all material and contracted for the labor to construct the barn.

1923 - When we consider our situation three years ago, with nothing left of the Home Farm barn and contents but a pile of debris and ashes, and part insurance, it is with pleasure we present to the people of our town the condition at the present time of what seems to us as in the line of prosperity. The implements and stock were replaced, and the property protected by insurance.

1924 - The buildings have been wired and electric lights installed. New toilet in basement of the house. Drinking bowls for the cattle installed in the barn, and above all, a picturesque weather vane placed on top of cupola. The cottage (red house so called) has been thoroughly repaired and now occupied by a mother and four dependent children. The upkeep and care of Home and inmates by the Matron is of the best. Same can be said of our Superintendent.

1925 - There have been two deaths of inmates. For the past two years a mother and four dependant children (feeble mind) - have been given support outside of the Home, three oldest of these children have been admitted to the School for Feeble Mind at Waverly. The mother and youngest child is now at the Home, this child will also be admitted to the School soon as eligible by age. From further reading it becomes evident that the Kendalls do not plan to return in 1926. “Mrs. Kendall has been kind to the inmates, used proper discipline, Economy of Expenses, Sanitary condition of the Home. We hardly know where we can equal her as Matron. Mr. Kendall has given good-satisfaction as Superintendent, upkeep of the farm product of farm and dairy, we consider quite pleasing.”

1926 - The outside of the House was given two coats of paint. Wesley O. Hawkes, who served on the Board of Overseers died this year and was very much missed on the board. We have retained Mr. and Mrs. Henry H. Pillman as Superintendent and Matron for the coming year. Chas. A. Blodgett, Chairman; Perley E. Wright, Secretary; Edson G. Boynton, Overseers.

1928 - During the year, lightning rods were installed on the buildings at the Westford Infirmary. Also a silo has been erected.

1930 - It was deemed necessary to change superintendent and matron and Mr. Bert Brown and wife were hired. They come well recommended, he as farmer and herdsman and she as matron... The cattle have been exchanged and added to until they are

producing quite a flow of milk at the present time. We have taken two boarders from other towns which helps the income.

1931 - Whenever it was possible those aided were required to do some sort of work and several other departments of the town received extra work in this way. The entire inside of the Infirmary was painted and papered, a new poultry house was built, the pasture was cleared of brush and about 70 cords of wood were cut. The general condition of the milk business has been such that very little profit has been made from this source. An article has been inserted in the Town Warrant to see what action the town will take on disposing of the cattle and other personal property in order to reduce the expenses.

1932 - The cost of our Outside Aid has increased on all sides... Over 80 families have been helped during the past year not including those aided by the Community Chest... The Red Cross donated 1000 bags of flour together with large quantities of cloth and clothing. p.78.

In 1935, Article 8 on the Warrant stated: "To see what action the Town will take relative to letting, or otherwise providing for the use and occupancy of the Town Infirmary, and for boarding, or otherwise making provision for the care of those falling in need of assistance.

1937 - The Board of Public Welfare was dealt a severe blow by the sudden death of Michael McGlinchey who had served capably as Welfare Agent for several years.

06, 07, 08, 09, 10, 11, 12      Edson G. Boynton

Obituary: April 6, 1943. Edson G. Boynton, for many years a resident of this town, died Monday at the Lowell General hospital, after a brief illness. Mr. Boynton was superintendent of the town farm for several years. He was prominent in Grange work and was master of Westford Grange at one time. At the time of his death he was a member of the executive committee, the literary and the ways and means committees. (*Lowell Sun*)

Obituary: Edson G. Boynton, a life-long resident of Westford and prominent in town affairs over a long period of years, died yesterday at the Lowell General hospital, aged 74 years. During the greater part of his life he was an orchard-owner in Chamberlin road, Westford. (*Lowell Sun*)

In 1941 or '42 the town farm in Chelmsford was closed and 2 (possibly 4) residents were transferred to the Westford town farm.

### **The Barn at the Town Farm**

The barn at the town farm was built in 1893 (see date in old photos)  
Fire: "1920 Dec 6, - Barn at Town farm. Total loss. Value, \$6,000. Insurance, \$1,900. Value, contents, \$4,300. No insurance. Total loss. Fire was undoubtedly set." (Westford Town Report, year ending Dec 31, 1920: Fire report, p. 50)

## BARN DESTROYED BY FIRE

### Thirteen Head of Cattle and Three Horses Lost in Westford Fire

The large two-story barn of the Westford town farm was burned to the ground early this morning and 13 head of cattle and three horses lost as the result of a fire which the authorities of the farm believe was set.

The fire was discovered shortly after 3.30, but had made such headway that it was impossible to enter the building to rescue the stock. A large amount of hay and grain was consumed by the flames.

At times the fire threatened four other buildings which make up the town farm group but the Westford fire department succeeded in saving them by wetting them down. According to the authorities of the farm, there was no oil or other material in the building which might cause combustion, and it is believed that the blaze was the work of an incendiary. An investigation will be made.

*Lowell Sun*, 7 Dec. 1920, front page

“At a Special Town meeting, held July 7<sup>th</sup> [1922], the citizens of the Town voted to appropriate the sum of \$3,000 to be expended to construct a barn at the Westford Town Home. Under the direction of the Overseers of the Poor, bids were called for, the Overseers of the Poor reserving the right to accept or reject any or all bids. Four bids were received and all were rejected because they exceeded the appropriation. The Overseers then purchased all material and contracted for the labor to construct the barn which has been completed according to specifications.” Westford Town Report, year ending Dec. 31, 1922.

In a phone interview with former chief, George Rogers, he said that the Selectmen turned that whole property over to the Westford Fire Department after it closed as the town farm. The Fire Dept. was only interested in the barn as a training site. So they demolished the new barn around 1970 and had it in a pile to burn and someone beat them to it. So around 1970/71 is when it was demo'd. Said the Fire Dept. had more room than it needed so they let the Police Dept. use space and they had a dark room in back for a while.

“On November 16, 1952, fire damaged part of the house. This will be renovated during the coming year.” (Westford town report, y/e Dec 31, 1952, p. 63)

The newspaper article from the front page of the *Lowell Sun* of 17 Nov. 1952 is at the end of this document.

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Through 1908 the title was Superintendent of Almshouse

13, 14, 15, 1916 Harvey W. Barnes

1918 Charles S. Ripley, Superintendent of Town Farm (no Lock-up position)

19, 20, 21, 22, Charles S. Ripley

Charles Titus Ripley, d. 17 Feb. 1941.

Obit: Charles Titus Ripley, for the past 25 years a resident of Westford, died last night at the Lowell General hospital after a brief illness.

He was born in Dorchester, Aug. 26, 1870. He was educated in the schools of that city and was graduated from the Dorchester high school. Mr. Ripley went to Holliston to make his home, then to Harvard. He was the son of Eliab and Fanny Littlefield Ripley, and was married in 1899 to Miss Mary Pattee of Harvard.

Mr. Ripley was superintendent of the town farm in Harvard for two years and left there to come to Westford, where he served as superintendent for six years, moving to Westford Center 18 years ago. With his family he lived in an apartment in the Hamlin house and recently bought the present home in Hildreth street.

Mr. Ripley was an attendant of the Union Congregational church and at one time was a member of the State Guard. He is survived by his wife, Mrs. Mary A. Ripley; a daughter, Mrs. Austin D. Fletcher, both of Westford; a son, Edward A. Ripley of U.S.S. Puerto Rico; a sister, Mrs. Robert McKenzie of Cambridge; three grandsons, a granddaughter, and several nieces and nephews. (*Lowell Sun*)

Obituary: Mrs. Mary A. Ripley. On Sunday, January 17, 1971, a resident of Westford for over 60 years died at the Hallworth House, Providence, R.I. after an illness of one month. She was born in West Groton on February 28, 1879, the daughter of Horace Barrows and Abbie Ann (Wood) Pattee. On October 11, 1899, at Harvard, Mass., she was married to Charles Stevens Ripley. From that union a daughter Ethel M. was born in 1901, and in 1920, they adopted a son, Edward A.

In 1917, Mr. and Mrs. Ripley moved from Harvard to Westford to become Supt. and Matron of the Westford Town Farm, which positions they had for nearly five years. Following the death of Mr. Ripley in February, 1941, Mrs. Ripley worked for 12 years at the Old Ladies Home in Lowell.

Mrs. Ripley was long an active member of the Westford Grange and in 1963 was awarded her fifty-year pin. She was preceded in death by her husband and by her daughter Ethel (Ripley) Fletcher, wife of Austin D. Fletcher of Westford. She is survived by her son Edward of Chelmsford, Mass.; a sister, Mrs. Frank Blair of Hudson, Mass.; four grand-children, Rev. Canon C. R. Fletcher of Providence, R.I., A. Dana and Harold Fletcher, and Mrs. Lawrence R. Smith all of Westford; and 13 great-grandchildren.

Burial services for Mrs. Ripley were held at St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Westford, on Tuesday, January 19, with the rector, the Rev. William Mawhinney, officiating. Burial was in Westlawn cemetery, Littleton. (*Westford Eagle*, Jan. 28, 1971)

23, 24, 1925 Herbert M. Kendall  
1926 Henry H. Pillman  
27, 1928 Charles D. Felch  
1929 George E. Maynard  
30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37 Bert G. Brown – Superintendent of Westford Infirmary

**“Hearing.** A hearing took place on Thursday evening in the town hall before the board of public welfare, who asked Bert G. Brown, superintendent of the infirmary, to appear and explain why the expenses of the town farm had increased during the past year, and to ask for his resignation at this time because of this. At a recent meeting of the board a vote of 2 to 1 decided this step. At the hearing on Thursday evening which lasted from 7.30 until 12.30, Mr. Brown was able to explain this matter to the satisfaction of the members and they found no other cause against him. John A. Kimball, a member of the board, rescinded his vote and the matter will be dropped for the present. Mrs. Brown attended the hearing with her husband, who has been superintendent of the infirmary for the past eight years, and she has served as matron during this time. The action of the board of welfare was a surprise to many of the citizens who feel that the farm has improved under Mr. Brown's term of service. The yearly appraisal took place last week and the reports of the general condition there, care of the inmates and also the property were of the highest order. (*Lowell Sun*, 1937, 1938?)

38\* 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48 Leo J. Connell

\* the Title was Superintendent of Westford Home

\*Up through 1938, there were two distinct positions: (1) Superintendent of the Infirmary and (2) Keeper to the Lockup. After 1938 the title was combined into one position - Superintendent of Westford Infirmary, Keeper of the Lockup.

After Bert Brown left Westford, “He accepted a position as supervisor at the Shirley Industrial school.” (Bosworth articles, June 27, 1938)

“June 21, 1938: Mr. and Mrs. Leo J. Connell were appointed superintendent and matron of Westford infirmary at the meeting of the board of public welfare on Monday night. They will replace Mr. and Mrs. Bert G. Brown and begin their work June 27. Mr. and Mrs. Connell are natives of Westford and live in the firehouse cottage on Boston road. Others who applied were: Charles S. Ripley, a former superintendent, Fred Rogers, Walter Gee of Groton, Wilfred Gileanus and William McCarthy of Graniteville.” (Bosworth)

“June 29, 1938. Mr. and Mrs. Leo J. Connell, new superintendent and matron of the Westford infirmary, moved Tuesday. Chief Alonzo H. Sutherland of the Westford fire department stated last night that while there were several applications for the fire house cottage, nothing would be decided until the meeting of the engineers on July 11.” Mr. and Mrs. Leo J. Connell (Hilda Bosworth articles) They began their new duties June 27, 1938. “Mr. & Mrs. Harold E. Wright entertained their drivers, wives and friends Sunday afternoon at a farewell party for Leo J. Connell, who resigned his position after 18 years

of service with the Wright Trucking Co., to take up his work as the superintendent of the Westford infirmary.

Mr. & Mrs. Leo Connell resigned in April 1949. (Westford Town Report for the year ending December 31, 1949, p. 76)

<b><u>1949 City Directory</u></b>
<b>Name</b>
Warren, Elmer
Reed, Mrs. Florence
Lord, Howard
Glines, Frank
Forson, Anthony
Erikson, Mary
Bridgeford, Wm. Farmhand/resident
Alice Morton, helper

49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 1957, 58, 59 Maurice B. Rooks,<sup>4</sup> Superintendent of Westford Infirmary, Keeper of the Lockup. (In 1960, 61 Mr. Rooks was the janitor at the town hall).

As an aside: Maurice and Gladys (Crocker) Rooks had a son, Carlton Rooks, born at Fitchburg, Mass., 4 Dec. 1926, who died at Littleton, Mass., 1 April 2019.

“At the Westford Infirmary, new safety signals were installed as recommended by the Department of Public Safety.” Report of the Board of Public Welfare, Reginald Blowey, Samuel A. Richard, William C. MacMillan. (Westford Town Report for the year ending December 31, 1955, p. 79) Salary for the Superintendent and Matron that year was \$1,903.92.

“At the Westford Infirmary, necessary repairs were made and five of the rooms were redecorated.” Report of the Board of Public Welfare, William C. MacMillan, Samuel A. Richard, Reginald Blowey. (Westford Town Report for the year ending December 31, 1958, p. 68)

<b><u>1957 Street Directory</u></b>
<b>Name</b>
Wheeler, Clifford
Osman, Nels

<sup>4</sup> Maurice and Gladys (Crocker) Rooks had a son, Carlton Rooks, born at Fitchburg, Mass., 4 Dec. 1926, who died at Littleton, Mass., 1 April 2019. Carlton’s obituary is carried at the end of this document.

“On April 3, 1959, the last patient at the Westford Infirmary was transferred to the Tewksbury Hospital and the home was officially closed. The remaining cattle were disposed of in September. Until other arrangements are made, Mr. and Mrs. Rooks will remain at the home as Caretakers. It is hoped that in the spring the main house can be painted and necessary repairs made to part of the roof. Signed: Samuel A. Richards, Reginald Blowey, William C. MacMillan, Board of Public Welfare.” (Westford Town Report for the year ending Dec. 31, 1959, p. 55)

“The Town Farm was painted this year and is being kept in good condition.” Signed: Reginald Blowey, William C. MacMillan, Samuel A Richards, Board of Public Welfare. (Westford Town Report for the year ending Dec. 31, 1960, p. 56)

The town farm was next used by the Westford Fire Department. In 1970, the Administration Offices of the Westford School Department made their move into the old Poor Farm. The Administrative offices remained in the building until the summer of 2003. As of Nov. 2003 the buildings are unused. “The Office of the Superintendent of Schools, originally in the high school until forced out to make way for increased student enrollment Sept. 1969, once again packed for a move from leased quarters at 54 Main Street to the recently abandoned Roudenbush School....The central office was opened for business as usual Monday, Jan. 26. This moving experience served the administrative staff well when the time arrived for the third move to 35 Town Farm Road, permanent quarters, hopefully, the third move in a year's time.” (Year end. Dec. 31, 1970 Westford town report, p. 159)

The George Rogers fire station was added to the property in 2000. The early town farm had 170 acres. Several acres were taken to build the Day School. Today, in 2002, there are still 5.95 acres associated with this property.

On 14 March 2008, the property was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. See <http://mhc-macris.net/Details.aspx?MhcId=WSR.32>

*The Memorial to the Legislature of Massachusetts 1843*, by Dorothea L. Dix.

When Heli Meltsner came to visit at the museum last week, she got to see Westford's and Littleton's poor farms. She then sent me an article written by Dorothea Dix (Here's a good website: <http://www.dhhs.state.nc.us/mhddsas/DIX/dorothea.html>) in the Old South Leaflets, Vol VI, p 15: Memorial to the Legislature of Massachusetts 1843.

"Westford . Not many miles from Wayland is a sad spectacle; was told by the family who kept the poorhouse that they had twenty-six paupers, one idiot, one simple and one insane, an incurable case from Worcester Hospital. I requested to see her, but was answered that she "wasn't fit to be seen. She was naked, and made so much trouble they did not know how to get along." I hesitated but a moment. I must see her I said. I cannot adopt descriptions of the condition of the insane secondarily. What I assert for fact, I must see for myself. On this I was conducted above stairs into an apartment of decent size, pleasant aspect from abroad, and tolerably comfortable in its general appearance; but the inmates - grant I may never look upon another such scene! A young woman, whose person was partially covered with portions of a blanket, set upon the floor; her hair dishevelled; her naked arms crossed languidly over the breast; a distracted, unsteady eye and low, murmuring voice betraying both mental and physical disquiet. About the waist was a chain, the extremity of which was fastened into the wall of the house. As I entered, she raised her eyes, blushed, moved uneasily, endeavoring at the same time to draw about her the insufficient fragments of the blanket. I knelt beside her and asked if she did not wish to be dressed. "Yes, I want some clothes." "But you'll tear 'em all up, you know you will," interposed her attendant. "No, I won't, I won't tear them off"; and she tried to rise, but the waist-encircling chain threw her back, and she did not renew the effort, but, bursting into a wild, shrill laugh, pointed to it, exclaiming, "See there, see there, nice clothes!" Hot tears might not dissolve that iron bondage, imposed, to all appearances, most needlessly. As I left the room, the poor creature said, "I want my gown." The response from the attendant might have roused to indignation one not dispossessed of reason and owning self-control."

\* not found in Westford published vital records

Deaths found in Cemetery Records of persons from the town farm

A Register of the Dead Buried in the East Burying Ground by Levi Snow, commencing April 17, 1835. This continues through burial records by Samuel L. Hutchins through 23 Dec. 1880. These records were transcribed by William B. Prescott. Notes added by Mr. Prescott are preceded by (#).

Page 74: July 6, 1878. Ervin, son of John S. Brawn (# John Ervin Brawn, d. July 5<sup>th</sup>, aged 2 yrs 6 mo.) was deposited in Town tomb Aged 2 4/12 yrs. From Westford Farm. \$1.00

Nov. 11, 1878. Ervin, son of J. S. Brawn was removed from Town tomb and buried in the center of the lot S. of Smiths to digging grave \$1.50.

*Obituary for Carlton M. Rooks*

December 4, 1926 - April 1, 2019

Westford, Massachusetts | Age 92

Loving Husband, Father, Grandfather, Great-Grandfather and Proud Captain of the Westford Fire Dept.

Carlton M. Rooks, a long time Westford resident passed away peacefully on Monday morning, April 1, 2019 at the Life Care Center of the Nashoba Valley in Littleton. He was 92 years old.

Carlton was born in Fitchburg on December 4, 1926, a son to the late Maurice and Gladys (Crocker) Rooks. After high school, Carlton honorably served his country in the US Army and attained the rank of Corporal during the Korean War. It was also during this time that he met his wife, Helen and the couple were married on November 2, 1952 in Groton. Carlton and Helen settled in Westford where they remained and raised their family.

Carlton became a staple in the Westford community. In addition to being a 45-year veteran and Captain of Company 3 in Forge Village, Carlton served in many other capacities in town including Westford's Tree Warden and Water Commissioner. Carlton was an avid outdoorsman. In his spare time Carlton enjoyed hunting, though he would admit he was never very good at it. Additionally he enjoyed fishing, gardening, and spending the summers at his camp in Lincoln Maine.

Above all, family was paramount in Carlton's life. In addition to his loving wife of 66 years, Helen, Carlton is survived by his sons; Robert and Richard Rooks, his grandchildren; Robert Rooks, Jr. and his wife Erica, and Rebecca Louh and her husband Steven as well as 2 great-grandchildren. He is further survived by his sisters; Beverly Dearth and Karen Ann Rooks. Carlton is sadly predeceased by his brother, Warren Rooks, Sr.

Family and friends can gather to honor and remember Carlton for a period of memorial visitation on Saturday afternoon, April 13, 2019 from 2:00 PM until 3:00 PM at the Badger Funeral Home, 347 King Street, Littleton. His services will be held in the funeral home at 3:00 PM and interment will be private.

Source: Badger Funeral Home



**WESTFORD INFIRMARY GUTTED BY FIRE**—Shown above is the main building of the Westford town infirmary after it had been gutted by an early-morning fire yesterday. Eight elderly and ill patients had to be rescued over ladders by the superintendent of the farm as flames raced through the hallways. Damage was estimated at \$20,000 and the entire Westford fire department fought for several hours to save the all of the building and a nearby farm building.

*Lowell Sun*, 17 Nov. 1952, front page and p. 3

continued on next page

# Fire Guts Main Building at Westford Town Infirmary

Eight Aged Patients Led to Safety Over Ladders by Superintendent at 3.30 A. M.

(Special to The Sun)

**FORGE VILLAGE, Nov. 17**—The main structure of the Westford Infirmary, owned by the town of Westford since 1824, and originally the John Reed place, on Town Farm road, was gutted by fire yesterday, at an estimated loss of \$20,000. Only the outstanding work of the superintendent, Maurice B. Rooks, and his son, Warren, 22, saved the eight ill and elderly patients from injury or death.

At 3.30 a. m. William Bridgeford, aged 57, a patient, called Mr. and Mrs. Rooks when he was awakened by the heavy smoke, which filled the three floors of the building. Mr. Rooks gave orders to the patients to remain in their rooms and then he and his son removed them to safety through the windows.

Mrs. Florence Reed, aged 68, became confused and wandered into the hall outside her room, where she received second and third degree burns on her face, neck, head and arms. She was taken to the office of Dr. Cyril A. Blane, Westford, who gave her first aid and then ordered her removed to the Lowell General Hospital in the Westford ambulance.

### Break Window

It was necessary to break an upstairs window to remove one patient who was unable to open his window from the inside, because of his confusion and fright. The others were able to cooperate with Mr. Rooks and his son and were carried to safety down the fire escape and through the front door.

The Forge Village, Graniteville and Westford companies responded, and the work of saving the ell of the building, where the superintendent and his family live, and the barn, with 20 head of cattle, was carried on under the direction of Edmund D. Rogers, the fire chief, and Harold E. Wright, the assistant chief. A company from Groton remained at the Westford fire station to take care of any other emergencies.

Mr. Rooks was severely cut by glass when he was attempting his rescue work and Floyd Alderich, a member of the Graniteville company, also received cuts from glass. Both required medical aid.

The men patients, William Bridgeford, 57; Nels Osman, 85; Anthony Forson, 64; and James Lauren, about 60, were removed to the Farris Memorial hospital.

Continued on Page Three

# Town Farm Hit By Fire

Continued from Front Page

Lowell. Mrs. Maria Erickson, 85, was taken to the home of relatives, and Mrs. Reed to the hospital. Mrs. Catherine Hill, 69, and Clifford Wheeler, 62, remained at the infirmary.

### Starts in Dining Room

The fire, of which the cause has not yet been determined, is believed to have started in the patients' dining room on the first floor. Although the building has a central heating system, a small stove is kept for emergency use. Mrs. Rooks, the matron, who served the patients supper, stated that there had been no fire in the stove during the evening. Only the brick walls of the main building kept the fire from reaching the ell of the infirmary, occupied by the superintendent, although the family dining room, which is next to the room where the fire started, is badly damaged by water and smoke. The fire worked up along this wall, burning the entire three floors of the main building. The damage to the furniture and clothing of the patients has not been estimated, although this will be largely from smoke and water.

### Loss Covered

William L. Wall, chairman of the board of public welfare, said the loss was believed to be covered by a blanket insurance held by the town on all its property, and it is estimated that the town will receive 80 per cent of its loss to repair the building. The Westford infirmary, well equipped and showing a financial profit, to the town, is generally believed to be a more economical way of taking care of the town's patients than boarding them elsewhere. Patients from other towns are boarded here also.

Mr. Wall said that the town would hire an appraiser to protect its interests. In behalf of the board, Mr. Wall expressed the appreciation of the work done by Mr. and Mrs. Rooks and their son, Warren, and also to the men of the fire department. Mr. Rooks also wanted to thank the firemen for their assistance.

Coffee was made at the town hall by James L. Knowlton and served to the firemen who remained on duty throughout the night. A large crowd gathered at the time of the fire and all through the day, people came to view the damage.

Lowell Sun, 17 Nov. 1952