

# THE SUTTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN



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## SUTTON'S STEPPING STONES

SUTTON, MASSACHUSETTS

VOL. III - NO. I

December 1976

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### WHAT IS THE DESTINY OF SUTTON'S LANDMARKS?

#### I'VE BEEN TOLD . . .

by DONALD KING

Today with all the trucks and cars on the road, it is difficult for people under 50 years old to realize that until the late 1920s the only way to move animals from one place to another was by the railroads. If the rail lines did not run where you wanted to go, you drove the animals over the highways.

The story I am about to tell is about one of these drives, as told to me by Mr. Donald Wheeler of Douglas, Massachusetts.

The time was 1923, the month and day was not remembered except it was a weekday and it wasn't raining or snowing. The story is.....

Mr. Arthur King (my uncle), a cattle dealer in Sutton, went to a cattle auction in W. Sterling, Mass. about 12 miles north of Worcester, near where Route 12 runs today. At the auction, he bought 18 head of cattle. Mr. King then called back to Sutton to have some help sent to drive the cattle home. Two young men, Donald Wheeler and Warren Bancroft, were driven to W. Sterling by Walter King.

Some time in the afternoon they started down the road to Sutton arriving at the Greendale section of Worcester as the Norton Co. was letting out.

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#### THE ROLE OF TAVERNS IN SUTTON . . .

by PHYLLIS B. MAC LAREN

In the 18th century an abundance of local taverns and hostleries of all kinds played a vital role in the linking of Sutton to the outside world. Citizen mobility and the purveying of news depended entirely on this accommodation while one nation was striving to be born. Wrap today's hotel, postal service, restaurant, gas station, garage, and news media all in one and you come up with the hostelry. The wayside inn was essential to the healthy expansion of this great nation. Even the roads were not developed until after the settling of the tavern on the rutted, ledge restricted passage ways.

To gain his license, the innkeeper was judged by a board of his peers, and strict rules were laid down for him by the governing body of the town. Often he was a leader in his church and an office holder.

He also ran a taut house and a stable. Travelers by stage or by private conveyance expected a well bred and gracious host, a sufficiently stocked tap room, and a burning fire about which they could gather with their counterparts for relaxation after hours of travel. The groaning board was sought out 24 hours of the day and sleeping rooms, though

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## HISTORICAL SITE INVENTORY SURVEY . . .

by MALCOLM PEARSON

An active committee partially completed this project last year but confronted with the Bicentennial Celebration taking precedent during 1976, temporary postponement became necessary.

That committee, many of whose members were involved with Bicentennial work, will in the near future begin a new effort to finish the inventory. New instructions and additional sites will be included, such as archaeological ones. A recent communication from the Mass. Historical Commission has some interesting information which will be of interest to persons concerned with the inventory.

The Tax Reform Act of 1976 included the following: Section 2124 provides for "5 Tax Incentives to encourage the Preservation of Historic Structures;" Amendments to the Internal Revenue Code in sections, i.e., a) allows for a 60 month amortization deduction of rehabilitation costs for a National Registration property used for a taxpayer's trade or business, b) disallows a deduction for demolition costs of a National Register property, c) limits depreciation to the straight line method of any structure built on the site of a National Register property demolished after June 30, 1976, d) allows accelerated depreciation for a substantially rehabilitated National Register property, e) allows a charitable deduction for the contribution of a preservation or conservation restriction of 30 or more years duration or of a remainder interest in real property granted to an organization for conservation or preservation purposes.

Information for applications for Grants-In-Aid has been received from the Mass. Historical Commission. These new tax provisions do not specifically apply to the private property owner. However, there are beneficial

aspects in National Register status of a building, area or site that protects the owner and they will be discussed in the next issue of the "Bulletin."

Naturally 1976 has stimulated a response to historical preservation and the local Commission will cooperate in this impetus of civilian encouragement.

Recently, Ms. Christine Boulding, Preservation Planner for the Mass. Historical Commission, toured Sutton with three members of the Sutton Commission in a review of Sutton's historical heritage. She expressed pleasant surprise in being shown many points of interest, especially the Blacksmith Shop owned by the Sutton Historical Society.

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### I'VE BEEN TOLD (Cont'd)

There were about 30 streetcars lined up to carry the Norton help home. Needless to say, the police weren't happy to have cows and streetcars mixed, so the cattle had to be driven in to the New England Fairgrounds.

After the traffic cleared, the boys renewed their drive down through Lincoln Square, down Summer Street through Washington Square by Union Station, down Millbury Street to Millbury and on to Sutton. How would you like to make a drive like that?

As a young boy, I made the drive from Millbury with 50 or more head. As I remember the cattle ran through gardens and backyards, and one even ran up a set of stairs to the 2nd floor of a house on West Main St., Millbury. No dogs were used, only young men who were good fast runners.

More next issue.....

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Please submit formal papers, written memories, old photographs, letters for publication, and your ideas for future articles for your Bulletin to the Editor in care of the Sutton Historical Society.



## TAVERNS (Cont'd)

often overcrowded needs must be available. Hardened postriders and the knights of the whip expects the service of groomsmen, stable boys and blacksmiths. The stable had to be run as expertly as the house. An improperly cooled and stalled horse, or one underfed or slovenly shod, could spell disaster on the journey scheduled for the morrow.

The innkeeper could be relied on for guarding the private life of citizens; paper being hard to come by, he was the relayer of verbal secret messages and a provider of private quarters for the military. A judge often held court in his house. Town Hall there was none, the Meeting House held sacred.

Within my possession is a copy of the Bond placed upon one of my ancestors who owned a public house. We talk lightly of Blue Laws today. They were mighty serious business during the years of our country's beginnings and are exemplified within this Bond. Had he not kept to the letter of this legal document, he'd have been given a whack at cooling his heels in the local gaol.

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### "THANK YOU, ARTHUR POPE"

We would like to thank you for being the founder of our Bulletin and its first editor. It was hard work laying out the foundation for our first attempt at printing an historical newspaper. We hope we can carry on in the way you laid out for us to follow. Thank you for everything you did for the Bulletin.

Carilyn Philbrook, Editor, and  
the Sutton Historical Society

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Founder-Arthur K. Pope  
Editor-Carilyn E. Philbrook

## MODERN PROGRESS FOR OLD DATES . . .

by HAROLD L. PHILBROOK

The Sutton Historical Society recently made house date markers for Sutton residents who wanted them.

The markers for houses built before 1800 were offered without charge to the owners. A charge of \$5.00 each was paid by those having newer houses desiring the markers.

These markers are made of anodized aluminum numerals on a black background and will last almost indefinitely.

Our thanks go to Malcolm Pearson who engineered this project, and to Rae Johnson and Donald King who helped in the layout and development of the markers.

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All persons who love the town of Sutton and who wish to see its historical character preserved are welcome to become members of our active and growing society by submitting the application below.

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To: The Sutton Historical Society  
Mr. Keneth Hoover, Treasurer  
Box 127  
Manchaug, Mass. 01526

I/We are interested in joining  
the Sutton Historical Society.

[Check one of the below]

Family membership at \$5 per yr. \_\_\_

Single membership at \$3 per yr. \_\_\_

Junior membership at \$1 per yr. \_\_\_

[under 18 years of age]

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[Signature]

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[Please Print] Name

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Address

Please make checks payable to the  
Sutton Historical Society

Dec. 1976

## WEST SUTTON SCHOOLHOUSE DISTRICT . . .

by SHIRLEY M. NELSON

The schoolhouse was built in 1818 and originally stood near the cemetery on Boston Road.

In the late 1880s the school was moved on logs by horses to its present location on Central Turnpike in W. Sutton. It remained in continuous use as a school until 1943. In 1947 the late Richard E. Nelson bought the school. Mr. Nelson, his wife Anna and their daughter Shirley worked continuously the summer of 1947 to make the school livable. During October they moved in from Worcester.

Mr. Olson, while courting his future bride was guest soloist at the West Sutton Community League meetings at the school back in the 1930s.

The late Professor Walter N. Waters (father of Mrs. Dorothea W. Moran of Waters Road) was at the piano leading the community sing. Professor Waters was then organist at St. Patrick's in New York City and for the summer months he, Mrs. Waters and Dorothea would return to their home in West Sutton.

Like most district schools, the building had 2 traditional front entrances the boys and the girls each with cloakroom. The girls' entrance to the school is now used as a front door and the boys' entrance had been replaced by two windows. Two large granite steps formerly placed in front of the entrances now form a stoop outside the front door.

The following are a few of the last teachers at the school: Living - Mrs. Chester Olson, Mrs. Frank Freeland, Mr. Donald Schwab and Mr. Burton Clark; deceased - Miss Lucy Waters Phelps and Mrs. Charles Plummer.

There are many folks still living in W. Sutton and its vicinity who share Shirley's fond memories of school days and Community League activities at the school. The school is very dear to Shirley, for it was here in 1930 at the age of 5 she entered the first grade. At that time little did she know the one room schoolhouse on the hill would someday in the distant future become her home.

From  
Sutton Historical Society  
Box 127  
Manchaug, Mass. 01526

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