



President's Overview

by John Anderson



First, let me thank everyone who responded to our annual appeal and membership reminder. We received nearly \$7,000 in unrestricted

funds. If you haven't responded, it's not too late to mail a check or membership renewal! And a big thanks to the Friends of the Library and MHSM volunteers who ran our second annual joint Trivia Night at the Medford Public Library. The Friends and MHSM each netted over \$1,000 while having a lot of fun. We also want to thank Max and Nick of Medford Brewing for supporting our events with their wonderful beers. Membership and fundraising is what keeps our doors open since we receive no direct financial support from the City of Medford. Be assured that we have plenty of worthwhile projects and will put your dollars to good use.

The Civil War photo project is entering its final phase! The digitization began on March 27, a blustery Monday morning. Three boxes from the Civil War photograph special collection were hand-delivered to the Boston Public Library and then whisked away to the Digital Commonwealth (DC) labs.

With a collection this large (3,680 photographs), DC asked to begin with a pilot project so they could plan the whole task. We delivered examples of

continued page 7

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Brooks Estates, West Medford in 1911, looking west down High Street from the depot in the foreground towards the Mystic Lakes in the distance. This painting by Bert Poole hung in George Woodland's office on High Street for many years.

Development of a West Medford Neighborhood

by Will Tenney

[Mr. Jackson] told me about a large estate in West Medford that was for sale that some real estate brokers were trying to sell him. This was the fifty acre Brooks estate. I had ridden by it many times and admired this beautiful estate with its broad fields of hay and grain; its four acres of rare trees, shrubs and flowers and shady walks; its stately mansion; stone walls lining the streets on two sides of the estate, and the Mystic Valley Parkway on another side, skirting the Mystic Lakes and River. I used to think if this estate ever came on the market what beautiful building lots it would make. ... It was always my ambition to develop a large tract of land; to lay it out, design the houses and build them, making a little community of my own production.¹

Sometimes serendipity can play an important part in discover-

ing our own history. Recently, the Society was contacted by Barry Jackman from Maine who was going through some of his great grandfather's papers and found documents that indicated involvement with the development of a neighborhood of about 300 houses

George W. Woodland at 27



continued page 2

West Medford Neighborhood *continued*

in West Medford. Certainly our interest was piqued and a date was set for him to come down from Maine to show us two volumes of his great grandfather's autobiographies. On December 27th, Mr. Jackman and members of his family joined John Anderson, Jerry Hershkowitz, Mike Bradford, and Will Tenney to introduce the Medford Historical Society to his great grandfather, George W. Woodland.

At the turn of the last century, West Medford, west of the Boston and Maine Railroad tracks, had a split personality. The area south of High Street was fully developed with tightly spaced single and multi-family residences, while the area north of High Street was still open fields, pastures, orchards, and ornamental gardens with only two houses and a few farm buildings.

Prior to 1850, the Brooks family owned most of the farmland area between Winthrop Street and the Mystic Lakes and Mystic River. In 1805, Peter Chardon Brooks erected a grand house on the west side of Grove Street, across from his father's house which was then demolished. This magnificent and manicured estate was described by Richard B. Coolidge, former mayor of Medford, in a talk before the Medford Historical Society in 1927:

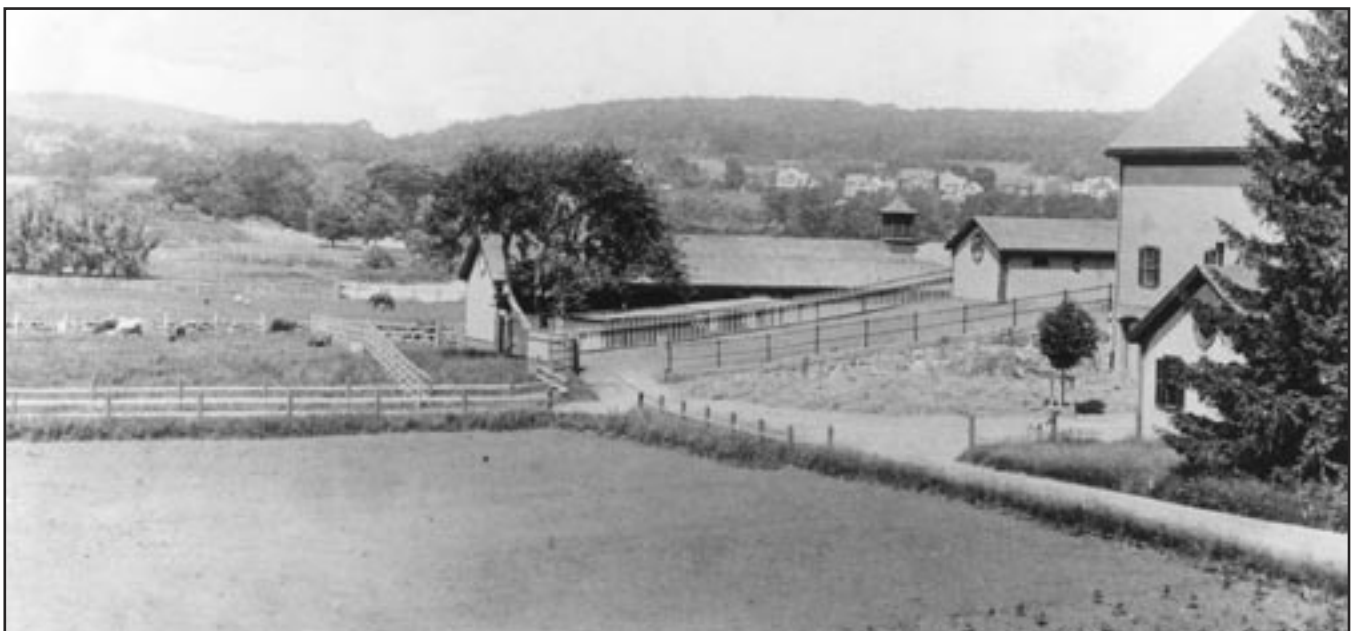
The exterior of the house was not unduly pretentious. Awnings on the great porch in the rear made it seem more festive in the summertime. ... Behind the house, in the privacy of the hedges, the garden was delightful. A little pond of perhaps a hundred feet, set in a border of stone and abounding in goldfish, made a vista immediately behind the house with a great horse chestnut tree at the end, reflecting in the spring its candelabra of white blossoms in the water beneath. One of the great features of the garden was a silver bell tree, imported from across the sea. The white

blossoms were overpoweringly sweet and hung in long festoons all over the great tree, which itself in places stretched its heavy limbs along the very grass. The blossoms were so full of bees that the tree was itself as full of their drowsy humming as of the fragrance of its blossoms. In the rear was a high brick wall, with an old-fashioned garden bed at its foot, full of hollyhocks and perennials. On the other side of this wall was an aisle of pines over a hundred feet long, under which was the largest bed of lilies of the valley. There was also an experimental garden, where Mr. Henry Brooks [great grandson of Peter Chardon Brooks] in later years grew pink and white lotus blossoms. Such was its beauty that it seemed like an act of vandalism that it should have fallen prey to new development. [This house was torn down in 1914.]²

In 1853, following the 1849 death of Peter Chardon Brooks, his son Gorham Brooks sold to Thomas P. Smith pretty much all of the land south of High Street and from the railroad tracks west to the Mystic River. Smith, a land speculator, had the idea of developing it into a new community, but his plan, illustrated on the 1855 map of Medford, was never developed. That plan had streets in a different configuration than today including two parks. War interrupted Smith's plan, and it lay fallow for nearly two decades until the boom years following the Civil War. After Smith's death in 1870, a new Plan of Building Lots comprising most of the Smith Estate (south of High Street and West of the railroad tracks) was filed with the Middlesex Registry of Deeds. Some 150 housing lots were laid out on streets pretty much as they are today.

That left the Brooks family owning land only on the north side of High Street. Peter Chardon Brooks' son, Edward, a Boston lawyer, now owned his father's house and some of his land, about 50 acres stretching from High Street and the railroad crossing west to the

View of the pasture land surrounding the Brooks estate barns and stables near High Street, looking west towards the hills of Arlington. Houses in distance are on Mystic Avenue in Arlington.



Mystic River, north to Lower Mystic Lake where Ravine Road now meets the Mystic Valley Parkway, then roughly east to the railroad tracks, and finally south along the tracks back to the High Street crossing. Following Edward's death in 1878, his son Francis Brooks, lawyer and gentleman farmer, inherited the estate and used it primarily as a summer residence.

Francis' cousins Peter Chardon Brooks III and Shepherd Brooks owned most of the rest of the land north of Ravine Road to the Winchester line where they each built their own magnificent estates.

Following the deaths of Francis Brooks in 1891 and his wife in 1892, their heirs created a trust to handle the estate. This trust was made up of Francis' eldest son, Edward Brooks (a Boston lawyer), Francis C. Welch (also a Boston lawyer, longtime Brooks family friend, and professional trustee handling the affairs of many estates), and Emor H. Harding (another Boston lawyer, family friend, and professional trustee). The Trust sold off a 31,000 sq ft parcel of land to Francis' second son Henry in 1896 to build the handsome house now numbered 34 Grove Street near his father's house.

By 1909, with all of Francis Brooks' children living elsewhere with families and houses of their own, there was really nothing holding this branch of the Brooks family to Medford. It was time to sell. And along came a man with a plan.

George Woodland was born March 3, 1867 into a devout Baptist family on a farm near Wallace, Nova Scotia, on the northern side of the isthmus connecting the mainland of Canada with Nova Scotia. His father, Robert, a carpenter and wheelwright, built the house the family lived in. When young George was four years old, a disastrous fire destroyed the house, and George watched as his father rebuilt it from the ground up, valuable lessons for a young, impressionable boy.

When George was 19, he decided to head south to the US to seek his fortune. He arrived in Boston in 1886 with almost no experience and headed to Wakefield where his father had connections since he worked there at times. He began working for builder Israel A. Parsons assisting carpenters. After working two years for Parsons, George made the acquaintance of Charles F. Boynton, a Wakefield real-estate developer who was developing a section of southern Wakefield at the border with Melrose, a neighborhood that went by the name of Boyntonville. Woodland was asked to draw up plans for a 10-room house with a round tower. Considering that he was just 22 at the time, he had learned a great deal about framing and carpentry as well as cost-estimating. He also quickly learned the business of land development. Boynton would sell him a lot and help secure the financing; George would build a house on the lot and sell it, move on to the next property, and repeat the process. "I received my business education by experience. It was a hard way but a way that gave lasting results, the same way I gained the art of drawing plans."



Francis and Louise Brooks, c. 1855

During the 1890s as well as the first decade of the 20th century, Woodland built houses in Wakefield, Melrose, Malden, Arlington Heights, and many in Winchester. During this period, he got to know Henry W. Jackson, a dealer who supplied him with doors and windows. It was Jackson who heard about a large estate in West Medford that was for sale that some real estate brokers were trying to sell him. This was the fifty acre Brooks estate. ... Mr. Jackson said if I could find someone to finance this deal he would go in with me on it. ... The estate was assessed for \$228,000. We could buy it for \$100,000 cash."³

Woodland found out from Rufus D. Kilgore, a Melrose real estate agent, that the Easthampton Savings Bank might be willing to work out a deal to finance such a large purchase. Jackson and Woodland met with Franklin W. Pitcher and Charles H. Johnson, the president and treasurer, respectively, of the Easthampton Savings Bank and an arrangement was reached. "We formed a company, taking Mr. Kilgore in with us, the West Medford Real Estate Trust."¹ On May 21, 1909, Woodland and Jackson, the Brooks Trustees and their attorney, and the bank officials and their attorney met at the Registry of Deeds in Cambridge and passed the papers on the deal.

Woodland hired Walter C. Stevens, a Melrose surveyor he had been working with for several years, to draw up a plan of streets and 298 lots which was recorded in the Registry in August, 1909. The names



Peter Chardon Brooks' house on Grove Street became the summer home for subsequent Brooks generations who lived primarily in Boston including his son Edward Brooks, grandson Francis Brooks, and several great-grandchildren.

of the streets mostly reflected the principal players in the deal: Woodland Road, Jackson Road, Kilgore Avenue, Pitcher Avenue, and Johnson Avenue. Newton Road was named for Frederick H. Newton, Henry W. Jackson's partner in the doors and windows business, Jackson & Newton. Tyler Road was named for the attorney representing the Brooks Trustees, Charles H. Tyler. Sagamore Road, as it was first called, later Sagamore Park, was named for Native American Sagamore John whose purported remains had been found near one of Francis Brooks' farm buildings around 1883. Ravine Road and Lakeview were named descriptively, and Grove Street kept its original name.

Woodland got right to work. He wanted to attract an affluent clientele to his new development. "Medford at this time was not considered a first class residential City. There were many two-family and three-deckers built there. I decided to make this estate a first class residential section, so I restricted the most of the lots to single houses, even putting the cost on them."¹ "We had to make our own way by advertising and by building restricted, substantial, conveniently arranged and artistically designed houses, selling them on the low side of reasonable prices, which we were able to do by sagacious planning, strict attention to business, long hours of unstinted labor six days a week and on holidays."³

The first house he built, on lot 198, now 19 Sagamore Avenue, was completed in December, 1909, and remained as a model house, an example of the kind of houses Woodland would build, until it was sold in 1911. "I was building houses while the streets were being built. I drew all the plans, the estimating, making out the schedules for materials, the framing and much other work on all the houses. I did the selling of the

houses, made the agreements and wrote most of the deeds and second mortgages. I was on the job eight and more hours a day every day in the week and all holidays except Sunday which I spent with my family and my church."¹

In 1911, to decorate his office on High Street, George Woodland commissioned Bert Poole, a "bird's eye specialist" painter, to paint a portrait of the development (see opening illustration). Only about twenty houses are visible, several at the intersection of High and Grove Streets, as well as along Sagamore Avenue. The three houses prominently seen on Johnson Avenue are numbers 27, 33, and 41 which were all built in 1911. Francis Brooks' mansion house on Grove Street is seen just beyond the three houses on Johnson. The building along the tracks on Tyler Avenue is a former Brooks barn.

By 1913 the development was in full gear. That year Woodland sold a large tract of lots on both sides of Kilgore Avenue, the western side of Pitcher Avenue, and along Mystic Valley Parkway from High Street to Kilgore Avenue. The deeds for many of these lots allowed for two-family houses to be built by Woodland or other carpenters he approved of including Medford's ex-mayor Lewis Lovering.

At about this time, 1913-1914, Woodland decided to tear down the old Francis Brooks house on Grove Street to make room for more house lots and to revise all the lots in the section between Grove Street and Boston Avenue, now renamed Sagamore Avenue. In the process, he enlarged many of the lots, reprofiled Sagamore Road into Sagamore Park, and renumbered all of the lots which had been altered. A new plan of lots was filed at the Registry of Deeds in October, 1914.

Through the teens and twenties and in to the thirties, the West Medford Real Estate Trust continued to design, build, mortgage, insure, buy, and sell houses in this neighborhood. In 1924, land of Peter Chardon Brooks III, west of the railroad and north of Ravine Road, was transferred to a different developer, the Brooks Estates Land Trust, Willard Welsh and Ellis L. Gates, Trustees. With this development, another 166 lots in West Medford were laid out for development.

George Woodland continued to work well into his eighties, wrote his memoirs in his nineties, and passed away in 1969 at the age of 102. The Medford Historical Society and Museum is very grateful to Mr. Barry Jackman and his family for allowing us to add copies of George W. Woodland's memoirs to our reference collection. His story adds so much to our understanding of the development of the western part of Medford.

¹ George W. Woodland. "Life of the Common Man by Decades." Self-published, 1965.

² Richard Coolidge. The Medford Historical Register, Volume XXX, No. 1, March, 1927.

³ George W. Woodland. "Miscellany." Self-published, 1962.

Medford's "Supreme Sacrifice": Our Magnificent World War I Memorial

by Dee Morris

Despite the gusts of unruly wind that caused men and women to clutch their hats tightly, spectators attending the unveiling of the "Supreme Sacrifice" monument were focused on the World War I memorial. It was in May, 1941 when almost everyone made their way to Oak Grove Cemetery's new open space carved out from land that rose about one hundred feet above Winthrop Street and Playstead Road. There, on a paved terrace surrounded by a formal balustrade, the bronze figure of a Doughboy stood atop a sphere set on a Tennessee marble and Deer Island granite shaft. With helmeted head raised to heaven, the battle-weary soldier horizontally extended his strong arms over the grave sites of fallen warriors and veterans. His tattered uniform bore silent witness to the grim conflict. Most significant was the fact that his gun remained in its holster.

The memorial offered other symbols and vignettes. Four large carved eagles supported the thirty-foot pillar with their stylized wings while an eternal flame on the front pointed to the inscription: "To the Men of Medford who made the Supreme Sacrifice." At the top of the column, a decorative band or frieze, portrayed the armed forces in action which included an image of a nurse offering water to a wounded infantryman. The names of 79 heroes were inscribed around the base. In addition, a 'treasure trove box' filled with memorabilia was hermetically sealed in the pillar's center cavity. It was a stirring moment when more than 30 veterans' organizations and many families joined in singing patriotic anthems.

Most participants were unaware that Oak Grove had been slated for a different memorial. In 1936 the W.P.A. (Works Progress Administration), a government agency funding public art among other projects, commissioned Medford's Emilius Ciampa to design the sculpture. However, the Agency rejected his nuanced interpretation of a soldier. Arnold Geissbuhler of Boston was hired to create a more warlike model. Mayor John J. Irwin vehemently objected, causing the original design to be reinstated. At the 1941 ceremony, Mr. Ciampa stepped forward to express his hope that this memorial would inspire many future generations. The sculptor's own story bore witness to his love for his adopted country.

Born in 1896 in Taurisi, Italy, Emilius Ciampa emigrated to Boston's North End along with his widowed mother and siblings. At St. Anthony's School in 1906 he overcame his inability to speak English by communicating via clever, spontaneous drawings. Within two years, he had enrolled in evening art classes at the North Bennett Street School. Sessions in other studios followed which culminated in studying at the Massachusetts College of Art.

By 1917, the young sculptor had established his own studio, but when the United States entered the Great War, he quickly registered for the draft. After serving in France as an Army camouflage artist, Ciampa reinvented himself by moving to Florida where he worked in bronze, married, and started a family. A devastating hurricane completely destroyed his uninsured property in 1926.

The decade of the 20s defined him further. Emilius, a naturalized citizen, settled in Medford and embraced important commissions. Our city is home to several. Besides the "Supreme Sacrifice", the most notable is the "Angel of Victory and Peace" (1949) who watches over the World War II grave sites in Oak Grove. Other art adorns the Chevalier Theatre, City Hall, and the Medford Public Library. He also completed many life-size portraits such as the 1978 statue of Mayor Maurice J. Tobin of Boston.

The unstoppable Emilius created beauty well into his ninth decade. A second marriage, hosts of friends, plus excursions into oil painting filled out his retirement years. In 1996, he passed away just days short of reaching the century mark. He was the last Medford veteran of the 'War to End War.' Ciampa's own monument bears witness to this great Italian-American's civic commitment. A simple comment is inscribed on the back: "His World War I and II Memorials Grace This Cemetery." The "Supreme Sacrifice" is such an important expression of our civic legacy.

Medford sculptor Emilius Ciampa's bronze statue pays tribute to WWI veterans. The battle-weary soldier extends his arms over the grave sites of fallen warriors at Oak Grove Cemetery.



MHSM Summer Events 2017

World War I Series

Summer 2017 at the Medford Public Library (MPL) and the Medford Historical Society & Museum (MHSM)

In commemoration of the centennial of World War I, this summer, the MPL and the MHSM will be offering a series of exhibits and programs on WWI. We will announce additional programs as they are scheduled. This series is funded by the Medford Arts Council, the Medford Public Library, and the Medford Historical Society & Museum.



World War I Poster Exhibit at the Library June 19-August 25 open regular Library hours

Visit the Library's new gallery space for an exhibit of WWI posters from the Library's collection. During World War I, public libraries served as distribution points for government information campaigns. In 1917, the U.S. government's public information committee formed a Division of Pictorial Publicity which issued hundreds of thousands of posters to promote various government initiatives. During the war, the Medford Public Library was a distribution point for posters, and when the war ended several hundred of them were left behind. The Library's poster collection provides a fascinating look at wartime concerns.

The posters are graphically striking many of them designed by famous illustrators. The subject matter covers a wide range of topics from recruitment to food conservation to somewhat shocking propaganda. The exhibit will feature examples of many poster campaigns.

Uniforms and WWI Artifacts from the Medford Historical Society & Museum Collection June 25-August 27 at 10 Governors Avenue, open Sundays from 2:00-4:00 PM, and by special arrangement

Many Medford men and women served in WWI. For many, this war experience was a formative event and yet, modern Medford is not aware of the scope and memory of this war. Over the last century textiles and other WWI artifacts have been donated to the collections. Each of these items tells a story.

During the summer, uniforms and other WWI items from the MHSM collections will be on display. Contact MHSM by email to arrange a special tour, at MHSqueries@yahoo.com

MHSM Joins Recipients of the 2017 Preservation Awards by NE Chapter, Victorian Society in America

Sunday, June 20, 2017 at 6:00 PM
Grace Episcopal Church, 160 High Street

The Victorian Society in America/New England Chapter, is delighted to announce its annual Preservation Awards for 2017. The City of Medford will be highlighted, beginning with Grace Episcopal Church, along with the Medford Historical Society & Museum, and the Medford-Brooks Estate Land Trust (M-BELT). For its long-standing and important role in Medford history, we will also honor the Royall House and Slave Quarters. The award ceremony will take place on June 20 at Grace Episcopal Church on High Street.

There will be a reception at 6:00 PM followed by the presentation of awards. Please RSVP to M. Clarke at cmargaret800@comcast.net if you would like to attend.

Lectures:

The Human Face of the Great War with Dan Leclerc Wednesday, June 28, 7:00 PM, at the Medford Public Library

The unprecedented and shocking human cost of World War I staggered all involved, raised doubts about dominant military strategy, and had a deep impact on culture, art, literature and contemporary geo-



MHSM Annual Meeting

Friday, May 19, 7:00 PM at MHSM.

We will mark the 100th Anniversary year of the building's use at 10 Governors Avenue by adopting the theme of the original groundbreakers, "Changing Times."

Following the meeting and special program, we will toast MHSM and cut a cake in recognition of the Anniversary.



political reality. The shock waves of this massive loss of life and collateral suffering resonates to this day. This hour-long presentation will examine the impact of industrialized warfare, the concept of total war, key campaigns and battles, life in the trenches, shell shock, frontiers of medicine and the impact of devastating sorrow and grief, then and now, and selected representations of art and literature of this tragic war.

The Yankee Division of the Great War with Dan Leclerc

Wednesday, July 5 at 7:00 PM, at the Medford Public Library

When the call went out for American boys to get ready for the great fight to save democracy in Europe in 1917, the Yankee Division was the first to be organized, the first to cross the ocean and the first to take to the battle line. In their first major action, they faced very intense enemy attacks in French towns like Apremont and Seicheprey, where they demonstrated their courage and fighting spirit in what was sometimes bayonet-to-bayonet combat, and earned a regimental "Croix-de-Guerre." In four subsequent larger offensives they faced the full force of stiff enemy resistance, costing them many casualties. This presentation will look at the highlights of the Yankee Division in action.

WWI Walking Tour, Oak Grove Cemetery Through the Lens of World War I: Stories from Our Medford Community with Medford Historian Dee Morris Sunday, September 10, 2017 at 2:00 PM.

Meet at the main entrance of the Oak Grove Cemetery, near the Cemetery Office.

This walking tour in Oak Grove Cemetery will highlight the men and women living a century ago in

the World War I era. In particular, we will focus on the "Supreme Sacrifice" which is sculptor Emilius Ciampa's homage to the fallen heroes of that conflict. This memorial features a bronze Doughboy extending his arms protectively over the resting place of many Medford veterans. Other stops include the gravesite of Ciampa, a WWI soldier himself, and the monuments of resourceful citizens coping with life on the home front.

WATCH FOR ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS AT OUR WEBSITES, www.medfordlibrary.org and www.medfordhistorical.org, and in the Library and MHSM newsletters. Updates will also be emailed to MHSM members.

President's Overview *continued*

the four general sizes of prints, and they will take them through the process from digitization to online presentation.

For a preview of what we will see online, visit digitalcommonwealth.org and click on "Collections." You will find a wide variety of materials from organizations across Massachusetts. But be careful, you can easily spend all day exploring.

Digital Commonwealth, an organization that will soon host our collection of Civil War photographs already has thousands of images online from "Abbot" to "Zeigler," including hundreds of Medford images, none supplied by MHSM as yet. (This will change!)

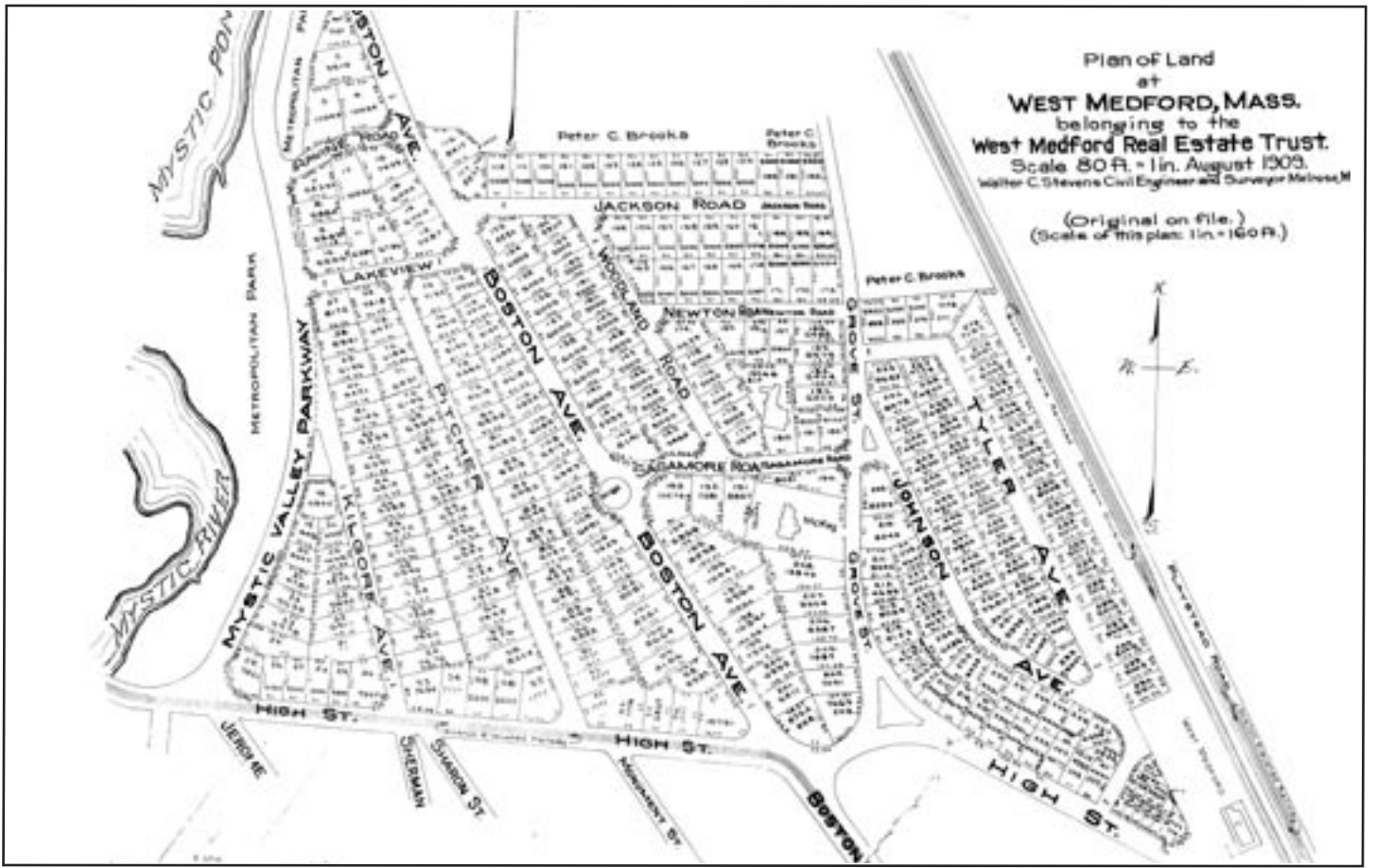
At their annual conference in Worcester, they presented a top ten list of the most searched for items in 2016, and this picture of Medford Square was number 9! It is in the Griffin Museum of Photography (Winchester) collection.

If anyone knows why this particular image was so popular, we'd be delighted to know.



You can view the image with this link:
<https://tinyurl.com/lp4ugmp>

Or just go to DigitalCommonwealth.org and search for "Medford Sq." Using the zoom feature of Digital Commonwealth, I was able to date the photo to 1937, but I won't say how in case you would like to try it yourself. Things have certainly changed in 80 years!



Your Medford Historical Society Newsletter

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