

The following article, written by Mrs. Jeanne Howes of Weston, appeared in *The Weston Forum* December, 1987. Part II will be featured in this issue of the *Chronicle* with Part III in the next issue. Part I appeared in the Winter 1996 issue.

A SPECIAL CORNER OF WESTON

By Jeanne C. Howes

(PART TWO)

The Swedish immigrants who settled in the northwest corner Weston were not only hard-working, but also deeply religious people. Keeping the faith brought from their homeland, they met in each other's homes to read the Bible on Sundays. Together in 1899 they built the Swedish Covenant Church on the Weston-Redding line, and Pastor Anders Nordlund, an early pastor who arrived in 1889, served the little congregation until 1942. This attractive building at the head of Covenant Lane was sold 10 years ago and is now the home of a private family. The parsonage built on Maple Street still serves to house the present minister, Rev. Gordon Miller, whose flock now worships in Wilton.

For many years services were conducted in the Swedish language. Retired Town Clerk Gertrude Walker, then Gertrude Quist, remembers her confirmation lessons were all in that language. It was a strict and sober Bible religion, but also a place of neighborly exchanges in choir groups, Ladies Aid and even lawn parties on Midsummer's Day.

Another Swedish custom was revived when Pastor William Holmberg was in charge -- the celebration of St. Lucia Day in early December. One year pretty blonde Shirley Pearson wore the crown of candles in her hair as she and her attendants carried in trays of fresh baked buns with their wonderful aroma to serve the congregation. The late Elisabeth Borgeson of Maple Street would bake these special buns spiced with cardamom and sprinkled with pearl sugar for the St. Lucy Festival held annually at the Wilton church.



Young girl portraying Lucia at the celebration of Lucia Day in early December.



Old School - Georgetown circa 1910. Situated on top of hill at the corner of Rte. 107 and Rte. 7. The school is no longer there and much of the hill was blasted for the Walbaum's Shopping Center.

JULOTTA (SWEDISH CHRISTMAS)

Highlight of the church year was the Christmas celebration called Julotta. Days in advance, housewives bustled about ordering and preparing the lutefish and other Christmas specialties. On Christmas Eve families gathered for the "white meal" consisting of lutefish, potatoes, lumpa, and a rice pudding flavored with almond or cinnamon.

The children heard marvelous tales from the grandparents about the "Tomptra," trolls similar to our Christmas elves who make the toys, and the Julbocken, a goat, not a reindeer, who delivered the gifts.

After the presents, usually home-knit scarves, mittens, sweaters or socks, a simple toy and an orange, the children were tucked into bed. Everyone had to get up real early for the 6 A.M. service.

Cozy in their new winter clothes, family joined with family walking up the snow-covered road to the church. Helen Rosendahl (former Town Clerk) remembers the excitement as a child coming out into that cold crisp air while the stars still glittered in the dark sky. For Louise Jacobson there was a sense of wonder, for they seemed to her like the shepherds of old walking under the stars towards the Christmas miracle.

The Samuelsons of Meadowbrook Lane remember the small boxes of candy with a string handle they received when leaving the church. Later, at home, there were baskets heaped with "Aunty buns" baked by their Aunt Hulda, and hot coffee on the stove for visitors. Also the Samuelson boys remembered to hang a sheaf of wheat outside for the birds.

SCHOOL DAYS

Until the Hurlbutt elementary school was completed in 1932, most of Weston school children attended one room schoolhouses. But as early as 1916, children living in the Georgetown section of Weston were privileged to attend one of the most modern grade schools of the period.

The Gilbert and Bennett School, built through the generosity of the factory owners, was a model school for the community. It contained eight separate classrooms, an auditorium, kitchen, and cafeteria, a principal's office and rooms equipped for manual training and domestic science. Built on one level for safety reasons, each room had its own exit door. There were neat inside bathrooms and a spacious playground.

As the children came from three different towns, administration posed a problem until the General Assembly in 1919 created School District 10 to embrace parts of