

HISTORY

The Wayland Garden Club was founded in 1922 by Mrs. Hazen Clement. It was one of the earliest clubs in Massachusetts during the garden club movement that began at the turn of the century. Many of the 22 charter members were summer residents of Wayland (population 1,935 in 1920) who were attracted by the town's rural, unspoiled atmosphere. For many years, the Club's meetings were scheduled from May to October, the summer growing months.

In 1927, the Wayland Garden Club joined the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts, which was formed that year. The Federation required its member clubs to keep written records and to have formal annual meetings. Hence, our books of minutes begin with a meeting on May 19, 1927 at the home of Mrs. J. Sidney Stone, the first recorded President, with 17 members present. The records show a civic and social concern on the part of its members that continues to this day. In 1928, the Club voted to supply weekly flowers to the library (Miss Margaret Wheeler, the town librarian, was a charter member), a practice that continues. About 1930, the Club began sending Flower Mission Baskets of fruits and vegetables to the Robert Gould Shaw House, a neighborhood settlement house in Boston. A member would meet the 10:20 train each week to deliver the basket to the conductor. This custom continued until 1951 when a change in the train schedule ended the practice.

During World War II, the members provided Christmas and Easter decorations for Camp Devens in Ayer. In the 1940s and 1950s, the Club made monthly flower arrangements and holiday decorations for a nearby veterans' hospital and retirement home.

Civic beautification and conservation have always been a high priority for the Club. Our records show numerous donations

over the years.. In 1971, the Club guided Wayland to become the first town in the state to take over the State Recycling Program.

Two significant efforts to beautify the town were the creation of the Sanctuary and improvements to the Mill Pond skating area. The Sanctuary is the Club's name for the land and pond area that lies between the two entrances to the Town Building. In the 1950s, the Club raised more than \$5,000 to turn these two acres of muddy swamp into a wildlife sanctuary and wetlands arboretum. Dredging began in 1961, and the planting of nearly 400 trees and shrubs began the following year. The Club's award-winning project preceded the State Wetlands Protection Act, but the interests protected under the state law are much the same as the Club's original forward-looking intentions, particularly provision of wildlife habitat. The maintenance of the sanctuary and creation of scenic vistas and trails - within the state wetlands law parameters - in concert with the Wayland Conservation Commission continued to be an important priority for the Club.

The Mill Pond dredging project was undertaken in 1974-75. The pond was filled with weeds and sludge and was no longer a desirable skating area. Garden Club members worked hard to get the town to approve funds for dredging the pond. Members later installed lights and a shed at the pond.

Over the years, the Club has continued to support a wide variety of Town groups and projects. In 1995, the Club contributed \$2000 towards the Town's purchase of the Paine estate, so that much of the land would remain undeveloped. Members of the Wayland Garden Club coordinated with members of the Wayland Business Association and the Woodridge Garden Club in beautifying Town land in trafficked areas. The Club dedicated memorial funds in memory of deceased members of the Club to plant and maintain the herbal garden at the Grout-

Heard House Museum. For many years, the Club has decorated the Grout-Heard House Museum in early December to start the Holiday season.

The Garden Club continues to be active in the community. Each year two members make an arrangement for the Museum of Fine Art Boston's "Art in Bloom" celebration, an exciting use of our creative talent. In 2000, we held an "Arts and Arrangements" program for public enjoyment at the Wayland Free Public Library, featuring art work from Wayland Public School pupils for all to enjoy.

Throughout the years we have held both flower shows and garden tours. In 2003, the Club held a judged flower show at Traditions of Wayland, featuring customs and traditions of our Commonwealth.

In 2009, the Club was pleased to welcome many new members who had formerly formed a Woodridge Garden Club. In the past the Woodridge and Wayland Garden Clubs had served Wayland as partners in various projects including annual holiday decorations at the Grout-Heard House Museum. This tradition continues as one Garden Club.

In 2014, to the delight of the Wayland community, we held our first plant sale alongside the Friends of the Library's Book & Bake Sale. In 2015, we repeated the plant sale, participated in the Worcester Art Museum's "Flora in Winter", initiated a scholarship for a graduating Wayland High School senior and decorated a room for the holidays at the Wayside Inn. In 2016, 2017 and continuing in 2018, the plant sale, Flora in Winter at the Worcester Art Museum, the Wayside Inn decorating and the scholarship became annual traditions.

We can look back on our accomplishments with pride. Our members have shared their passion for conservation, horticulture and artistic use of plant material with both the

membership and the larger community. We collaborate with other garden and horticultural groups in the community. We donate flower arrangements to the Wayland Free Public Library weekly as well as assisting the Friends of the Wayland Free Public Library by tending the Friends' garden during the summertime. We hold Garden Therapy programs for seniors. In our December workshop meeting, the club makes wreaths and decorations for public and historic buildings in town. We maintain planters at our public and historic buildings and also tend several sites in town during the course of the year including the Wayland Settlement sign on Boston Post Road and the newly planted (2018) Pollinator Garden next to the Depot. Much of this work has been enhanced by the 2018 generous donation of well over \$2,000 from the Wayland Beautification Committee to continue its work in our Town.

In 2017, we were recognized by the Massachusetts Legislature and by the Massachusetts Federation of Garden Clubs for 90 years of vitality. The Club looks forward to many more years of education, service and leadership.

