

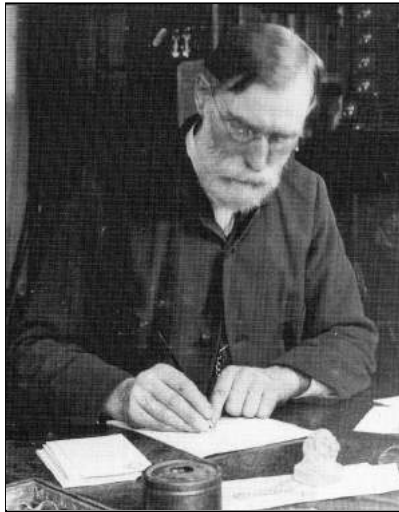
A History of
Wellington Pool
From 1831 to 1911

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Jack E. Hauck



Wellington H. Pool

Without question, the most prolific writer in the history of Wenham was Wellington H. Pool. In his beautiful script are written: Wenham Town Records, from 1870 to 1906; Wenham's First Church Records, from 1870 to 1907; several books; a complete record of the people buried in Wenham's cemetery, up to 1882; In addition, he wrote: A History of the Wenham Post Office, in 1898; A History of the Civil War Monument, in 1878, and The Homestead Miscellany Notebooks, in 1891.

The 1912 Wenham Annual Town Report, in a tribute to the recently deceased Pool, states, "His record of the meetings and the transactions spread over our books are models of legible writing and painstaking accuracy and it would be difficult, in all the many pages, to find a misspelled or misplaced word."⁹

Born in Gloucester

Wellington H. Pool was born on Jul. 5, 1831, in Rockport (*Gloucester*), MA. His parents were Col. William and Sophia (*Tarr*) Pool. Col. Pool was an admirer of the Duke of Wellington. According to a Pool descendant, a photo of the Duke, on the back side was inscribed, "Wellington named for him." Wellington pool had a brother, Calvin W., and a sister, Sophia.¹

Col. William Pool, born Mar. 16, 1796, received his rank in the Revolutionary War. He was an officer in Massachusetts Second Regiment, First Brigade, of the Second Division.¹

Following the war, Col. Pool was a school teacher. Later in life, he became a farmer, and surveyor. He was Rockport's first Town Clerk, after it was set off from Gloucester, in 1840, and continued to hold the office for twenty-nine years. His son, Calvin, succeeded him.¹

From 1850 to 1856, Col. Pool was a Special Commissioner of Essex County. He was a member of the School Committee for many years and the secretary of the Congregational Sabbath-school, for twenty-five years. During the War of 1812, he began as a private, and subsequently received a land-warrant, for his services.¹

Col. Pool died Nov. 3, 1871.¹

John Pool, Wellington's great-great-grandfather, was Rockport's second permanent settler. Caleb Lufkin, a great-grandfather, was a soldier in the Revolution. Deacon Abraham Pool, Wellington's grandfather, was a leading citizen of Rockport.¹

Wellington's mother, Sophia, born Sep. 15, 1796, was a daughter of Jabez Tarr and a descendant of the first Rockport settler, Richard Tarr. Jabez Tarr was a soldier in the Revolution, and as a member of Capt. John Row's company, fought at Bunker Hill, and took part in the siege of Boston.¹

At 12, Came to Wenham

In 1843, William Pool sent Wellington Pool, twelve at the time, to Wenham, to be an apprentice to Master Shoemaker Joseph Cook. Shoemaking was the principal industry of the town.¹

Cook's shop was on The Way to Salem Village (*now Maple Street*).²⁵

Pool learned the shoe making trade, at the time when the prepared stock was purchased from a leather factory and the shoe made in a little shop, called a ten-footer. These shops were scattered over different parts of the town.⁹ In 1850, there were 132 shoe makers in Wenham.¹⁰ A decade later, 1860, Wenham had more than 170 shoemakers, master shoemakers, apprentice shoemakers.¹¹

Apprenticeship was a common practice of the time. By training children in a trade, apprenticeship added to the skilled labor force. Also, it supplied masters' workshops and households with additional labor. Two types of apprenticeship developed side by side: voluntary, where the child and his parents or guardians entered into the agreement on their own initiative, and compulsory, where orphan or poor or neglected children were bound out by the authorities.²

Voluntary apprentices normally served for seven years. Boys were apprenticed between ten and fourteen years of age and served until they were twenty-one. The mutual obligations between master and apprentice were formalized in an indenture, signed by both parties before witnesses, and subsequently registered in court.²

The apprentice generally lived in the master's household. The master took on the responsibility for the apprentice's material and spiritual welfare, and was empowered to enforce his rules.²

While several apprentices did live with the Cooks, Pool did not live with there.¹² For quite a long time, he lived with Jason and Dolly Bickford Clark, on Main Street (*today 153 Main St.*).¹¹ Jason Clark, a wheelwright,¹⁰ was a cousin to Wellington.³²

During his apprenticeship, Pool went to school in Rockport, and for two winter school terms in Wenham, attending the schoolhouse, at the back edge of the common, next to Enon One Fire Wagon garage. Later, he went to a private school in Rockport, for about three terms.⁴

Pool completed his apprenticeship in 1850. He continued working for Joseph Cook. However, shoemaking underwent major changes in the 1850s, when machines began to be used. This eventually led to the end of the small ten-footers, and the emergence of shoe factories.

With this change, Pool found work at a shoemaking factory in Beverly. He continued this work until 1876.⁴

Town Clerk for 36 Years

In 1870, Pool was elected town clerk of Wenham. The year previous, 1869, his brother, Calvin, was elected as the town clerk in Gloucester. Both followed their father's lead.¹

At the time, Wenham's population was just under a thousand: 985.

The selectmen, in 1870, were: John Genteel, William B. Morgan; Samuel Porter. During his 37 years as the Town Clerk, Pool would work with 43 different selectmen.

Pool succeeded Joseph Cook, as the 43rd Wenham town clerk. Judging by town records, prior to his becoming the Town Clerk, Pool was not very active in the town. A likely factor in his being elected was his excellent penmanship and that he had the support of Cook, who also wrote very clearly.¹⁶

It appears that Pool enjoyed being town clerk and that his service was appreciated by the town,



Pool's town clerk office was in a former ten-footer shoe shop, that he named "The Hollyhock." (1910)
Photo courtesy Wenham Museum

for he held the position until 1906, when he decided not to run for re-election.
⁹ William Porter followed Pool as the town clerk. ¹⁷

Pool's "office," as town clerk, was in a former ten-footer shoe shop, which he named "The Hollyhock." The building still stands at the rear of the house at 153 Main St., in which he resided with the Clark family. No information has been found for why Pool chose the name "hollyhock."

Witnessed many developments

As town clerk during the later part of the 19th century, Pool witnessed many major events in Wenham.

- In 1869, the clock in the meetinghouse belfry was given, as a gift, to the town. The clock had been installed in the belfry two years earlier. With this addition, the old practice of the church bell being rung at noon and 9:00 p.m. ended. Many people in Wenham were not happy with the loss of the bell announcing the hour. ⁴

For Pool, the elimination of ringing the bell to signal the hour did not affect his tolling of the bell for Sabbath services.

- In 1870, the Boston & Maine Railroad built a railroad line extension to Asbury Grove from the Hamilton-Wenham station.

- In 1871, at the corner of Main Street and Friend Court, the Wenham Cooperative Union erected the Union Block building. Started by Dr. John L. Robinson, it was a place for local merchants to conduct their businesses at a single location convenient for customers. In effect, the Union Block was an early type mall. It cost \$10 to open a shop at the Union Block. ⁴

- The following year, in 1872, the Eastern Railroad completed a branch track from Essex to the Wenham Depot at the Hamilton town line. That same year, a second track was laid to Ipswich, making this the main line on the Eastern Railroad. Soon after, the line was extended to Newburyport. ⁴

- In 1873, Gage, Hittinger and Co. acquired the ice business on Wenham Lake. At the time, this was the largest business in Wenham. From 1860 to 80, the company harvested, from Wenham Lake, 30,000 tons, annually, on the average. ¹⁴

- In 1875, the selectmen had Pool copy the 1695 to 1743 town vital records of births, deaths and marriages. Copying the records, which were scattered and many pages having faded and difficult to read, was suggested by Pool. He was paid \$50. ³⁰

- In 1879, the Civil War Monument was erected. Pool was a key figure in having the monument built, and as secretary wrote all the records, which he put together in a book.

- In 1884, Charles W, Batchelder, inserted an article in the town warrant "to see what action the town might take to induce businesses to come to Wenham." New businesses would bring jobs. But, business did not come and Wenham remained a small, residential town. ⁴

The only major business to be announced in 1884 was the morocco leather factory, begun by town residents Austin C. Patch and Amos Gould. They built their new factory, on Elm Street, in 1886.⁵

- By the mid 1880s, Wenham was being visited by many people from other towns in Massachusetts. The Asbury Grove Methodist camp ground, in Hamilton, brought a lot of business to Wenham. Pleasant Pond was a summer vacation area.

- In 1885, the Wenham public library opened, thanks to a gift of over 700 books previously owned by the Wenham Library Association.³ At the 1885 Wenham Annual Town Meeting, Library Association members Wellington Pool and Elbridge Porter offered the books to the town.

- Also that year, in September, Wenham selectmen received a petition from the Naumkeag Street Railway Co., for the laying of tracks from the Beverly line to Wenham Depot. The proposal was quickly accepted.⁴

The completion of the first section to the corner of Arbor and Main was soon followed by extending the line to Wenham Depot, at South Hamilton, and on May 26, 1886.⁴

Pool was not involved in bringing the streetcar service to Wenham; however, he was a frequent user of the service, making many trips to Salem to the Registry of Deeds and to the Probate Court to research Wenham history.

- In 1886, Stephen Currier opened a hotel, "Enon Hotel," at the corner of Elm St. (*now Main St.*) and Friend Ct.⁵ Wenham, with the street car service and summer vacation visitors.⁵

- In 1887, Wenham started its third fire company. It had 40 members and Otis Brewer was the foreman. Since then, there has been no interruption in the existence of Wenham's fire department. Pool was not involved with the fire company, but, somewhat of a firebug, he often could be seen in the area of fires.

- In 1889, a Baptist Church was formed in West Wenham, the Mapleville Chapel Association. The meeting house faced Maple Street and was next to the west schoolhouse.⁴ Pool made no comment about this event, other than to record, as church clerk, the names of the Congregational church that were dismissed to join the Baptist church.

- Also in 1889, the town sold the land on which the historic Hugh Peter's Hill stood, next to Wenham Lake. The railroad company leveled the hill and built a rail spur to the Boston & Main Railroad line.³ Several prominent people voiced their objection to the sale, but Pool was not one of them.

- In 1890, Pool was very involved in having a large commemorative boulder, with a bronze plaque, placed near Wenham Lake to mark where Peter's Hill had stood. The plaque read, "This stone marks the site of Peter's Hill, on which about the year 1638, Reverend Hugh Peter, pastor of the church in Salem, preached the first sermon in Wenham." The committee in

charge of the project included: Herbert Porter, Wellington Pool, and Benjamin Conant.²⁸

The Peter's Hill celebration was the lone joyous event that year. By a state act in 1893, the Salem and Beverly Water Board took the Longham Basin to create a pond to supply more water to its Wenham Lake reservoir.¹ Wenham suffered a loss of 800 acres in the Neck area to the Board. Not only was land taken for the creation of the Longham pond, but farmers in the area lost 20 acres of cranberry meadows that were one Longham meadows. At Wenham Neck, one bog annually produced 100 barrels of cranberries, which were sold in Boston.³

- In 1896, horse-drawn streetcars gave way to electric cars. The electric cars required laying of new tracks, erecting overhead-electric wires and elimination of the need for the car-barns at Main and Arbor.⁴

- In 1899, the Wenham Country Club opened on Main Street. Rev. Turk was the first president. Pool was not asked to be the secretary: Louis Dodge was selected.⁴ Pool was not a member, for he had very little time for playing golf, with his many town and church activities.

In 1900, Wenham's population was 847. It had been just over 500, in 1800.

- In 1904, the church conveyed its parsonage property, behind the town hall, to the town. The parsonage was torn down.⁴

However, with the sale of the parsonage, a problem arose. The church's agreement with their pastor, Rev. Dr. Eaton, called for him to have free use of the parsonage. At a parish meeting, held on Sep. 18, 1905, a committee reported on the selection of a suitable lot of land for building a new parsonage, on a lot on Arbor Street, owned by the Boston and Northern Street R. R. Co. The lot was the back section of the previous street car-barn lot.

A year later, church members learned that the cost to build the new parsonage would be \$4,500. The initial parsonage plan was revised, in order to reduce the cost. A new parsonage was built, in 1906, at 10 Arbor St. It cost about \$3,000.²²

Up to 1908, the Wenham town seal indicated the incorporation of the town was May 10, 1643. This was the day of the commencement of the "General Court of Elections." On that date, it was proposed that, "Enon shall be called Wenham." However, Sep. 7, 1643 was the date on which the act of incorporation was passed. Thus, upon petition of town clerk Wellington Pool, the town voted, in 1908, to change the date on the seal to Sep. 7, 1643.⁴

Town House Janitor 24 Years

In 1878, Pool became the janitor for the town hall, then called the town house. He replaced Joseph Cook.

Prior to becoming janitor, Pool had been doing carpentry and maintenance work at the town house for many years.

Church Parish Clerk 37 Years

Wellington Pool became the parish clerk for the Wenham First Church in 1869.²¹ Succeeding Samuel Porter, he held this position until 1906, when he declined re-election.²² Albert Wesley Dodge was elected the next parish clerk.²³

In 1906, having served, with "conscientious fidelity and painstaking care," the Wenham Congregational Parish Society for 37 years, Wellington Pool resigned as clerk.⁴

Thus, Pool resigned both as town clerk and parish clerk at the same time. The combined volume of his performing these two duties is astounding. He devotedly served two masters for nearly four decades.

Pool became a member of the Congregational Society in 1856:²⁴ at the time Rev. Jeremiah Taylor was the pastor. Just 13 years later, when Rev. William R. Joyslin was the pastor, he was appointed the church parish clerk. Being both church and town clerks was not unusual, since both church and town operations were held, for the most part, by church members.

(Note: the Wenham First Church had two clerks: a "church clerk," who recorded church board meetings; and a "parish clerk," who recorded church annual and special meetings.)

Pool's church records have the same excellent hand-writing that marked the town records that he wrote.

Samuel Porter was the previous parish clerk. His hand writing also was very clear and the records were thorough and seldom showed any corrections.

While there was stability in the handling of church records during the years that Pool held the position, there was instability in the pastor's position. From 1869 to 1906, the Wenham First Church had 10 different pastors. Of these, 3 served less than 3 years.

During his 37 years as the parish clerk, Pool wrote about many major church developments.

Some open seating came to the Wenham First Church, in 1869. On Apr. 20, of that year, the church "Voted that the Parish pews in the church be made free for one year, and that all persons disposed to make any of their pews free, will hand the numbers of the same to the Parish Committee and that the Parish Committee post up a list of the numbers of the pews made free, in the entry of the Meeting House."^{??}

Yes, there officially was open seating in the Wenham meeting house, but many families continued to consider their former pews still were where they, and they alone, were to sit on Sundays.

In 1878, Pool collected and took charge of the books – 29 - that had been left by former pastors. At the annual parish meeting, Apr. 2, 1878, Pool pro-

posed, and the church approved, the donation to the Congregational Library of Boston, all the books, which formerly constituted the old Parochial Library of Wenham. There was one condition: each and all of the books were to be kept and preserved for use and reference.”²⁰

In December 1879, Wellington Pool wrote, “For several years past, I have had frequent occasions to examine the records of the church to obtain information upon various matters ... The first volume particularly is both ancient and valuable, although some portions of it are now missing. To prevent, in some measure at least, still further loss of it, by the ravages of time, I felt prompted to undertake to make a copy of it, which was accordingly commenced in the Spring of 1877, since which time I have worked upon it, as time and opportunity would allow, until it is now completed and bound up in a very substantial manner in wolf Russian leather, cloth sides.” He presented the fruit of his work to the church.²⁶

At the 1906 Annual Parish Meeting, Dea. Nathaniel P. Perkins, proposed and the church approved his motion recognizing Pool’s service as the parish clerk: “Our fellow member, Wellington Pool, having after a term of thirty-seven years declined re-election to the office of parish clerk, it seems fitting that we should place on record some expression of our appreciation of his long and valuable service and it is therefore voted that we the members of the Congregational Society of Wenham will ever hold grateful remembrance the conscientious fidelity and painstaking care with which he has performed the duties of the above office.”²³

Not only was Pool a long-time Parish Clerk, he also was one of the longest serving church sextons. He served the Wenham Congregational Parish Society from 1876 to 1908.⁷

Another of Pool’s many services to the church was his being a member of

have been credited to other fellows, feeling that said records should be thorough
by revised, and being desirous of obtaining the assistance of the Soldiers Monument Committee to aid in said revision, the subject was proposed to them
To which they cheerfully responded, that they were willing to spend as much time as may necessary to make said revision.

Voted: on motion of Henry Hobbs to adjourn until next Monday evening at half past seven o'clock.

Wellington Pool,
Secretary.

Wellington Pool’s handwriting was very legible.
Source Wenham Town Records

the choir. The church choir consisted of Dolly Clark and my mother, Mary Ann Leach Batchelder, both who sang nearly 50 years, and George Morris, Charles Merrill, George Alley, Ivory Quimby, and Wellington Pool.³⁵

Above all, Pool was a faithful attendee at Sunday church services. On Sunday Feb. 18, 1900, there was a major snowstorm. Church sexton did not ring the church bell, but he was one

of only four people to come to the church. They gathered about the organ and sang hymns, prayed and said the Lord's Prayer.³⁶

Civil War Veterans Association

The Civil War began in 1861. In April of that year, President Lincoln called for volunteers to preserve the Union. Eventually, 131 men from Wenham volunteered. Pool was not one of those that volunteered.

However, following the war, through his very active participation in activities related to the veterans, he was made an honorary member of Wenham Veterans Association. He marched along with the veterans on Memorial Days to the cemetery, where he read the names of the sons of Wenham who died in the revolution, Spanish American War, and the war of rebellion.³¹

Pool's greatest contribution was in the town's erection of a monument to honor its Civil War veterans.

At the 1871 Annual Meeting of the Wenham Congregational Parish, held on April 4, members granted to the town the privilege to erect and maintain a Soldiers' Monument, on the Park belonging to the Parish.³³

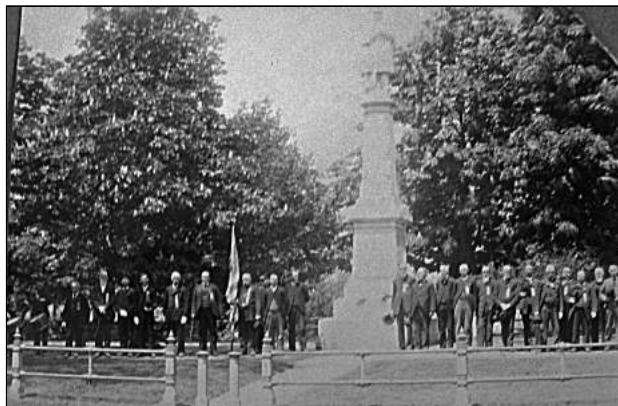
The town appointed a Monument Committee to develop a design and a plan for erecting the monument. Committee members were: George E. Norris, Chairman; Dr. John L. Robinson; Wellington Pool, Secretary; Simeon Dodge, Jr., Abbott Johnson, William F. Trowt, John I. Durgin, and Solomon E. Kimball. Their first meeting was held Wednesday evening, Mar. 13, 1878. There were fifty four more meetings.³⁴

Seven years later, 1878, a marble monument, surmounted with the figure of a soldier, was erected. Twenty-five feet high, the monument is made of granite, quarried in Mason, NH, and the statue was made by Alexander McDonald.⁵

In 1887, nine years after erection of the monument, Wellington Pool, Secretary of the Monument Committee, wrote a detailed, 258-page accounting of the monument's history.

Justice of Peace

Beginning in 1875, he was a justice-of-the-peace. In this capacity he could perform civil ceremonies, including weddings, witness documents, and take oaths. There are no records indi-



Each year on Memorial Day, Pool read the names of the sons of Wenham who died in the revolution, Spanish American War, and the war of rebellion.
Photo courtesy Wenham Museum

cating when he ceased being a justice-of-the-peace.

His records as a justice of the peace could not be found.

As justice of peace, Pool helped many veterans apply for pension benefits,⁹ by assisting them complete the form requesting their benefits and mailing the form to the government. The form was not complicated, but many of the men could not write and/or did not understand or recall what information the form required. He also helped with follow-up forms that had to be completed.

The pension act of Jul. 14, 1862 (*12 Stat. 566*) increased pension rates and provided potential eligibility for pensions to every person in military or naval service since Mar. 4, 1861, their widows and orphans, and for dependent orphan sisters. By Nov. 15, 1862, 10,804 applications had been received, but only 685 had been granted, because the pension process relied upon the Adjutant General's Office and the Navy Department to confirm details of death or disability for each application.²⁷

Altered over the years, the 1862 act was the foundation of the Federal pension system until the 1890s. By it, only those soldiers whose disability was "incurred as a direct consequence of . . . Military duty" or developed after combat "from causes which can be directly traced to injuries received or diseases contracted while in military service" could collect pension benefits. The amount of each pension depended upon the veteran's military rank and level of disability.²⁷

Pensions given to widows, orphans, and other dependents of deceased soldiers were always figured at the rate of total disability according to the military rank of their deceased husband or father. By 1873 widows could also receive extra benefits for each dependent child in their care.²⁷

In 1890, a major revision in the pension act occurred: the Dependent Pension Act. A result of lobbying by the Grand Army of the Republic, this statute removed the link between pensions and service-related injuries, allowing any veteran who had served honorably to qualify for a pension, if at some time he became disabled for manual labor. By 1906 old age alone became sufficient justification to receive a pension.²⁷

As early as 1862, there were "erroneous impressions" of "serious obstacles, and the interposition of needless and burdensome formalities, in the prosecution of a just claim for a pension." The pension commissioner believed that "any claimant of ordinary intelligence and education can on applying directly to this office for forms and instructions suited to the particular case, establish his claim, and secure its prompt administration, without any other aid than that which will readily be given him by the magistrate before whom his declaration is to be executed. Nothing is required of the claimant which is not necessary and, in most instances, conveniently obtainable."²⁷

Claimants wanted swift action. A major complaint of veterans was the failure of the pension commission to answer promptly "letters of inquiry."²⁷

As for himself, Wellington Pool never married.

Undertaker for 26 Years

Little information remains about Wellington Pool's 26 years as Wenham's undertaker. Annually, from November 1876 to April 1902, the selectmen appointed Pool to be the town's undertaker.

His being the clerk for both the town and the church brought him into contact into contact with the relatives of those who had recently died.

In the 1700s and 1800s, the town operated a horse-drawn hearse service. From 1825 to 1849, the hearse was stored in a small barn on the town common, across from the meetinghouse. It may next have been stored at Demsey's blacksmith shop, on Main Street, for it was there that Pool had his undertaker business.

Being in the cemetery quite often, Pool began to record the burial sites and tombstone inscriptions in the old burial ground portion. He also reset stones that had fallen or were not upright. His records are the only documentation of many burial sites on which the tombstones no longer can be read or even remain.

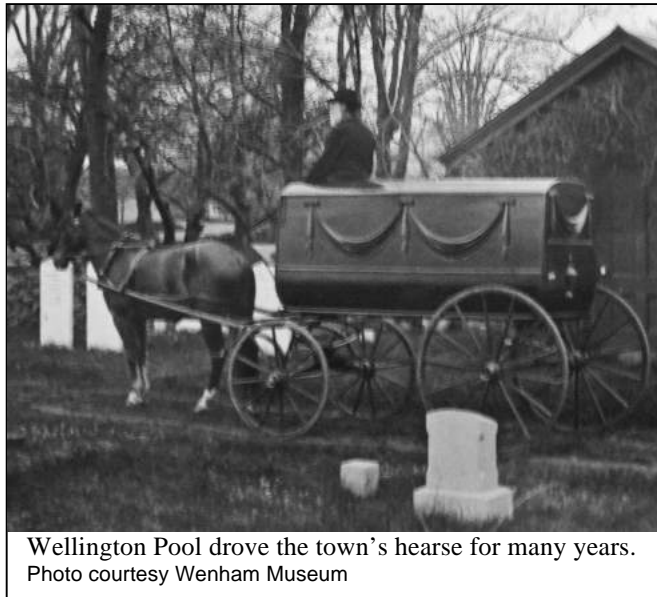
In 1882, Wellington Pool copied the inscriptions in the burying-ground. He found the fragment of a stone bearing the date of 1686. The oldest stone now readable, in part, is dated 1706, marking the grave of Sarah Fairfield, Wife of Walter² Fairfield. One of the oldest readable burial stones is that of Thomas Ffisk, who died in 1723.³

The Essex Institute published his articles on the inscriptions on grave-stones in the Wenham cemetery and on the Dodge burial ground: "Inscriptions from the old burying ground in Wenham, compiled by Wellington Pool, 1882."

Librarian for 15 Years

Pool for many years was very involved in various Wenham libraries.

His earliest experience was with the *Wenham Parochial Library*, the earliest library in Wenham, of which there is any sort of record. The inscription in the books remaining is the only evidence that such a library existed. The books appear to



Wellington Pool drove the town's hearse for many years.
Photo courtesy Wenham Museum

have been in the custody of the pastors until 1870, when Wellington Poole took charge of them, twenty-nine in all.¹

The books were all of a religious nature, and all published in the 17th century, from 1601 to 1682. One book bore the inscription, "Gift of Rev. Samuel Gerrish, 1724." Pool recognized their historical and sentimental value.³

When Rev. Will C. Wood came to Wenham in 1870, he, not wanting to occupy the parsonage, the parish clerk, Wellington Pool, collected and took charge of such books as were left there by former ministers. The question arose as to what disposition should be made of them. Several propositions were considered, and finally, at the annual parish meeting, Apr, 2, 1878, on motion of Pool, it was voted unanimously, "To donate to the Congregational Library of Boston, all the books, twenty-nine in number, now in possession of this parish, which formerly constituted the old Parochial Library of Wenham, upon the condition that each and all of said books shall always be carefully kept and preserved for use and reference in said library."

In 1857, a private library, called a "Social Circle," was formed. Woodbury P. Conant acted as the librarian. Meetings were held at member homes, where books were discussed and distributed for reading.²⁹

A year later, on Nov. 16, 1858, the Circle became the Wenham Library Association. Officers were: President, Benjamin C. Putnam; Vice President, Abbott Johnson; Secretary and Treasurer, Myron O. Allen; Librarian, Joseph Cook; Committee, Samuel Porter, Solomon Kimball, L. Dodge.³ Pool was a member of the Association. Books were stored at the town hall, in the selectmen's room.²⁹

Eventually, the Association's library grew to over 700 volumes.

On Dec. 16, 1884, Association members unanimously voted "to give and transfer to the town of Wenham the library belonging to this association, upon the conditions that the town shall keep the same for a free public library, and annually make a sufficient appropriation to maintain and increase the same."²⁹

At the 1885 Wenham Annual Town Meeting, Wenham Library Association officers Wellington Pool and Elbridge Porter presented the matter to the town voters.¹⁷ The town accepted the gift upon the terms proposed by the Association.⁵

The Association's books were, generally speaking, in fair condition. They included: about 60 history books; 65 biographies; about 50 travel and exploration books; 13 theology books; 10 books about agriculture; 10 poetry books; more than 250 books of fiction; 40 books of miscellaneous content; and about 150 books and publications dealing with State and National government, as well as agriculture, commerce and education.⁷

Benjamin H. Conant, the famous local photographer, was the librarian and continued in that position until his death in 1921.

Historian

Through his interest in the town's early history, Pool became one of the best authorities on location of land and houses and the owners thereof.

He encouraged his friend and neighbor, Benjamin Howe Conant (1843-1921), to photograph buildings, sites, and people in Wenham and Hamilton. Conant amassed a collection of nearly 6,000 glass plate negatives.

Pool's Homestead Miscellany Notebooks contain copies of deeds and wills made during many visits to the Registry of Deeds and to the Probate Court in Salem, from 1886 through 1891. In all his notebooks, in addition to deeds, wills, and genealogies, are assorted items, ranging from Wenham events, such as the many fires, to which Enon #1 responded.

Major fires were:

- In 1849, fire destroyed Squire Thorn's barn, nearly opposite the engine house. This was the barn belonging to Squire Thorn's (*Dodge*) old tavern estate and standing just back of the town pump.
- Also in 1849, fire leveled Deacon Nathaniel Kimball's barn burned, and killed 24 head of cattle and a horse.
- In 1859, the Baptist Meeting house burned about midnight, the school house near was scorched.
- In 1862, fire destroyed the barn and shed belonging to Amos Gould. Soldiers from Camp Lander assisted the fire company.
- In 1869, there were several large fires, during the first year that Pool was the Town Clerk. The Trowt two-story dwelling house, three barns and carriage houses perished in flames. Also that year, fire destroyed Franklin Hadley's house, shed, barn and wheelwright shop, and a separate fire destroyed the "Green House," a hotel owned by William H. Bryant, on the east end of the Common, and other buildings.
- In 1870, there were two major fires. Fire leveled part of the old Friend house on Arbor Street, which had been moved from Main Street (*now The Maples*) to make room for the Kemble mansion. The post office at John A. Putnam's store burned along with a barn and shed, a small dwelling-house, and the large barn and sheds standing nearby.
- In 1873, the Gage, Hittinger and Co. ice factory burned to the ground.
- In 1878, the Abraham A. Fiske shoe manufactory was burned. Wind carried burning shingles and cinders directly on to the buildings on the other side of the road a little further down belonging to Geo. W. Dodge and John Meldram, and also across to the buildings on Larch Row, and to Henry Patches.
- In 1889, the Ober House on Cherry Street, which had stood for over 200 years, was destroyed by a fire, only the chimney was standing.
- In 1903, the Rev. Antipas Newman house, later known as the Tilton house, was destroyed by fire.

Politics

Two key issues directed Wellington Pool's choice of a political party: anti-slavery and the power of Congress over that of the President.

He joined the Whig party. The Whigs supported the authority of congress over the presidency. The Whigs, in the northern states also were strongly anti-slavery.

At the Wenham Annual Town Meeting, March 4, 1912, it was said Pool that he "was a man of decided conviction and always tried to exert his influence in the right direction and in favor of the measures and reforms which tended to the betterment and general well being of the community and he had a good command of language and when he spoke in public made his subject of very plain and easy to be understood by those who listened."⁹

His first presidential vote, 1852, was cast for General Winfield Scott, a strong anti-slavery candidate. Democrat Franklin Pierce won the presidency.

Pool joined the Republican Party at its organization in 1854. He was a member of the Republican Town Committee, and was its secretary.¹

In 1856, for President, Pool voted for General John C. Fremont, the first candidate of the anti-slavery Republican Party.¹ Democrat James Buchanan won the presidency.

In 1901, Pool, as a Republican, represented the Beverly-Wenham district in the legislature. He was appointed a member of the Committee on Towns.⁹

Pool served only one year.

Member of many associations

Pool was a member of:

The Freemasons Lodge in Wenham;

The Alexander Hamilton Council, No. 10, Order of United American Mechanics; an organization against the hiring of cheap foreign labor and to patronize only "American" businesses."

The Aggressive Lodge of Good Templars, Beverly; a temperance organization. (No references to Pool having a problem with alcohol have been found. It may be that he attended the meetings in support of friends. There also are no references to Pool being a member of the Crystal Lake Lodes of Good Templars that met at the Bryant Hotel, in Wenham.)

The Essex Institute of Salem; a literary, historical and scientific society. It maintained a museum, library, historic houses; arranged educational programs; and issued numerous scholarly publications. In 1992 it merged with the Peabody Museum of Salem to form the Peabody Essex Museum.

The Society of Colonial Wars in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; a historical society dedicated to gathering and maintaining documents relating to Massachusetts involvement various in wars in the 1600s;

The Massachusetts Society of the Sons of the American Revolution; a historical, educational, and patriotic society, incorporated on Jan. 17, 1890, in Connecticut, and later chartered by the United States Congress on Jun. 9, 1906. Before then, a number of state societies, including Massachusetts in 1889, were formed.

The Massachusetts Society of the War of 1812: A historical society established to gather and maintain documents concerning Massachusetts participation in the War of 1812.¹



Pool graveston in Wenham Cemetery.
Photo Jack Hauck

Died in 1911

Following church service on Dec. 10, 1911, Wellington Pool became ill. He had sung, as usual, in the choir. He died the next day, according to his doctor, of "acute indigestion."

The church held a memorial service on Dec. 14. The meeting house was "filled to the utmost at his funeral service on the 14th conducted by the Rev. W. S. Eaton, a former pastor. In speaking about Pool, Rev. Eaton said, "I had the privilege and honor of receiving him into its fellowship. ... My feeling is that he was as honest as was Lincoln, as faithful to his trusts as was David Livingston*, and as upright and honorable in his dealings with others as was the great Sir Walter Scott."⁷

Stores were closed and schools dismissed. Flags were displayed at half-staff. As the procession made its way from the church service to the cemetery, "the church bell, to the call of which he had so faithfully responded for many years, tolled the sad story of his departure."⁴

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* David Livingstone, a Congregationalist medical missionary with the London Missionary Society and an explorer in Africa.

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