

A History of
Adeline P. Cole
From 1865 to 1959

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Jack E. Hauck



Adeline P. Cole

We often read about the forefathers of our society. These were the men, from an earlier time, who made major contributions to the development of a town, state or country. There are many such men, who are seen as the forefathers of Wenham.

Well, I want to tell you about a foremother, who contributed a whole lot to what Wenham is today.

You will not find, in Wenham, any stone bearing a plaque, with her name (*something that should be corrected*). There is but a brief section, in a town history book, that covers her life. A building, Cole, in Enon Village bears her family name.

Although her name may not be prominent, in Wenham's history, her many great works are all about us.

What was her name?

Adeline Philbrick Cole (08/07/1865 – 01/05/ 1959), ¹² or as those who knew her, in her later years, Granny Cole. ¹ (*Buried Dodge Cemetery, Beverly, MA.*)

Before being married, she was Adeline P. Dodge. Yes, she was yet another Wenham Dodge. Perhaps, it is well that she became a Cole, for this way, her life, of many great accomplishments, stands out more clearly.

A Teacher's Daughter

Adeline was born, in Wenham, in 1865. She was the only child of Sarah James Philbrick Dodge (02/07/1836 - 01/28/1922) and Francis Macomber Dodge (04/14/1826-02/28/1907).

At the time, the Dodge's were living at Brookby Farm, which is at the Four Corners, in Wenham Neck area. *(Since 1977, the Geikie family has lived there; prior, the Spofford family lived there. They purchased the house from the Cole family, in 1959, after Adeline died.)*¹

*(Brookby Farm got its name from the brook that runs across Four Corners and through the old Dodge property. There's no record showing a name for the brook: the Dodge house was alongside the brook, ergo the property was called Brookby. Some people remember the area as being called Pheasant Run: there once were a lot of these birds, in the area)*¹

In the early period of Wenham's history, street numbers were not used. You would just refer to Frank Macomber's, when speaking of their address.¹ Today, the address is 204 Larch Row.

Another interesting aspect, of the time, was that people did not call the Dodge's by their family name. Everyone knew that they were Dodges, so they just called them by their first and middle names, ergo Frank Macomber.¹⁵

He was the seventh child of Nicholas (*descendant of Richard¹ Dodge*) and Prudence Edwards Dodge.²⁴ He graduated from Colby University, ME, in 1852. His first job was as a teacher, at a women's seminary, in New Hampshire. While there, he may have met his future wife.⁸ In 1855 and 56, he was back in Wenham, where he taught at the Wenham Private School, located in the town Hall.³

The school was an initial effort to establish a private academy, in Wenham; however, it did not succeed. The public school system, from that time on, met the needs of most children. Those desiring a broader education, and could afford it, went to the academies, in other towns.³

Next, 1857, Frank Macomber was the superintendent of schools, in Weymouth, MA, a position he held for 4 years.

On August 27, 1862, he married Sarah James Philbrick, of Seabrook, NH. She was the daughter of John and Adeline (*Locke*) Philbrick. The Philbricks were a very prominent New Hampshire family, and reportedly the wealthiest family in Seabrook.

The newlyweds, initially, settled, in Wenham, at Brookby Farm, in the Wenham Neck area.

Perhaps "settled" is not the right term, for Frank Macomber was a very energetic person. Soon after returning to Wenham, he was elected as a Selectman: he served just one term (1863-65). He also was an overseer of the poor (*in 1692, Massachusetts created this office, for each town*¹⁰); a member of the school committee; and, before coming back to Wenham, during his time in Weymouth, a member of the 1858 Massachusetts General Court (*state legislature*).²⁶ For many years, he was the lead deacon of the Wenham Neck Baptist Church.⁸

In 1868, Frank Macomber, wanting to continue his career in teaching, accepted a position to be the superintendent of public schools, in Winona, MN, then a logging town on the Mississippi River. (*The town had been founded in 1851. In 1860, Winona had a population of 2,456, and was third largest city in Minnesota. The 1860 Wenham population was just over 1,100.*)

He enjoyed both his job and the community, as did his daughter, Adeline; however, after just two years (1870), his wife, Sarah, became homesick. She and 5-year-old Adeline moved back to the Philbrick home, in Seabrook. Two years later, in 1872, Frank Macomber resigned his position, and returned, to be with his wife and daughter, and live at Brookby Farm.⁸

(*Wenham's Frank Macomber is not the same of "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber," a Hemingway book.*)

With such an active father, as Frank Macomber, it is not surprising that Adeline would become involved, for over 60 years, in so many endeavors in Wenham, in particular, the schools and the woman's movement.

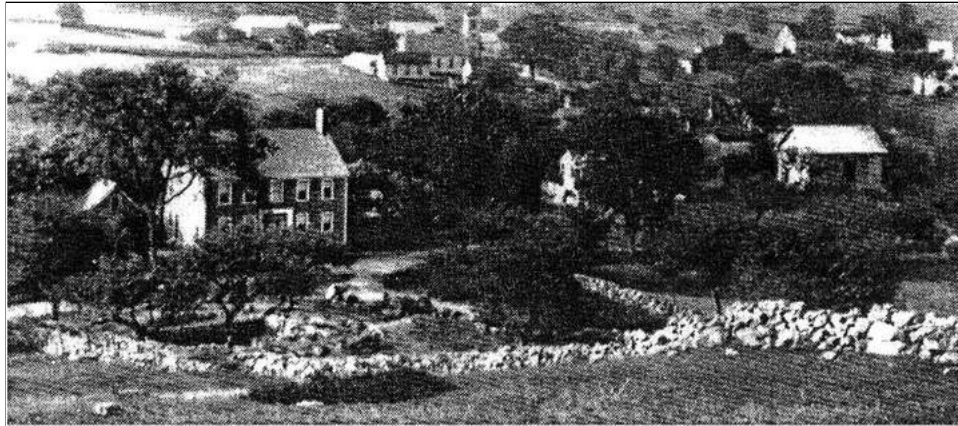
Brookby Farm ... the Early Years

Adeline, who was named after her maternal grandmother, was born in a year of great unrest in America.

That year, 1865, President Lincoln, in his second inaugural address, called for there to be "malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right, as GOD gives us to see the right."

True, the Civil War fighting had ended, but not the deep anger, between the North and South. In April, before Adeline's birth in August, Abraham Lincoln was assassinated; and, in July, four conspirators were hanged.

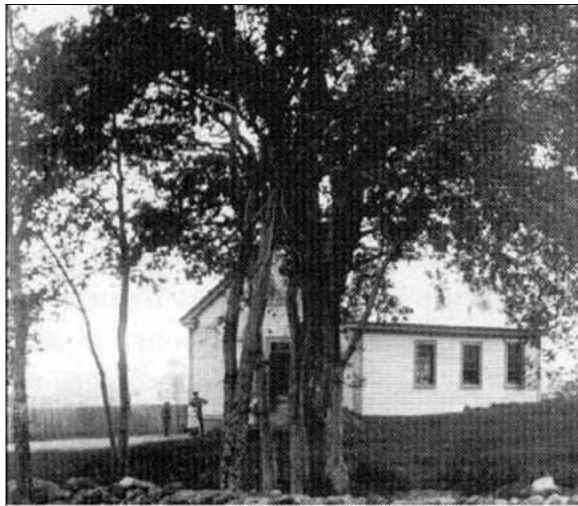
Just four months after Adeline was born, the 13th Amendment to the U. S. Constitution took effect: December 18, 1865. It prohibits slavery or any other denial of liberty "without due process of law."



Four Corners section of Wenham, in 1896. In upper center, Baptist Church and Neck School can be seen. The Coles lived at Brookby Farm , which was to the right of church. Photo courtesy Wenham Museum

Wenham's sons were coming home, and Camp Lander (*now Pingree Park*) was no longer needed. (*When the regiments left Camp Lander, in 1865, the 52 vacant buildings, used by the 5th and 48th regiments, were sold by the Government, and moved to various towns, some as private dwellings.*³)

During the Great Struggle, 130 Wenham men were in the military, including Rev. John Sewall, who served (1864) as a chaplain, for the 8th Massachusetts Regiment.³ (*A Congregational minister, he served as pastor of Wenham's First Church, from 1859-1867.*)



Adeline Cole attended the Neck School, on Dodges Row, which was the local school for the Neck and Little Com-fort children. Photo courtesy Wenham Museum

The early years of Adeline's life, in Wenham, were the beginning of the Age of Invention, generally seen as having started around 1870.

- It was possible to directly telegraph Europe, from America. Cyrus Fields, of Massachusetts, developed the first trans-Atlantic telegraph cable, which was laid on the ocean floor, in 1866.

- Letters no longer were only hand written. Christopher Sholes, in 1868, invented the typewriter.

- In 1870, a British Education Act started compulsory education, expanding elementary education for girls, as well as boys.

- Production of paper, from pulpwood, began, in New England.

- In 1874, the electric streetcar was invented, by Stephen Dudle Field.

- In 1876, Alexander Graham Bell successfully tested the telephone: “Watson are you there?”

- Thomas Edison was experimenting with the phonograph and the light bulb. Both these inventions were made public, in the 1870s.

This, also, was a time of many developments, in Wenham.

- In 1854, Wenham built its first Town Hall, apart from the church meetinghouse.

- In 1866, five new ice-houses were built to supplement the original ones. The ice business was booming. (*Unfortunately, in 1873, a fire destroyed all of the buildings.*)¹⁶

- In 1896, electric streetcars began service, in the Wenham Neck area. The service was designed to reach Ipswich. But, there was little demand, in this sparsely populated part of the town: service only lasted for a few years. The tracks were on Essex Street and Rubly Road.³

- Wenham even had railroad service. Eastern Railroad Co. extended its single line track from Salem to Ipswich.²

For a Town with less than 200 school-age children, Wenham had, in the 1860s, an outstanding education system, including five district schools.

Early Education in Wenham

There is little information about Adeline’s early years, in Wenham. However, being a teacher’s daughter, she probably received an excellent education, at school, and particularly at home.

Her first few school years were spent in Seabrook, NH.

In 1872, once again living at Four Corners, 7-year old Adeline attended the Neck School, on Dodges Row, directly alongside of the Baptist church. This was the local school for the Neck and Little Comfort children. (*Her daughter, Eleanor, also went to the school, where she signed a pledge “never to let liquor pass my lips, as long as I live.”*⁸)

Apparently, Adeline, who was brought up as a strict Baptist, did not, after being married, regularly attend Sunday services. Her daughter, Eleanor, wrote that she regularly went to church with her grandfather, every

Sunday, to hear a red hot sermon about sin. She wrote that he would put on his "Sunday best, a coat with long tails, which made him look the way I thought GOD must, with his gray beard and all." While grandfather and Eleanor were at church, her parents remained at home, in the library, reading the Sunday papers.⁸

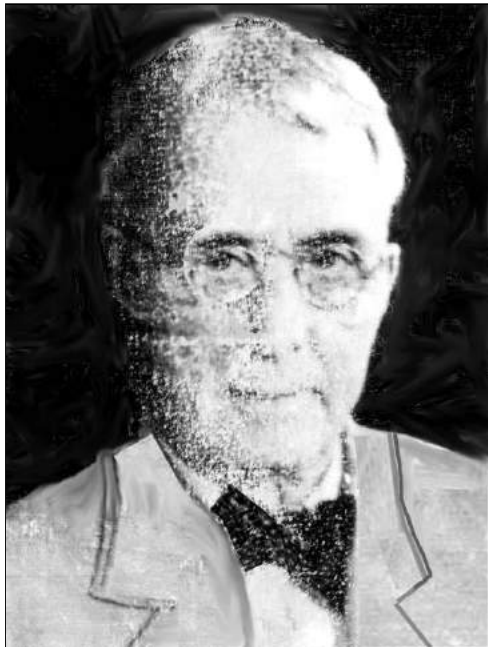
About the Neck school, Adeline later would write: "The crowded schoolroom, the limited time for each class, would not be tolerated by modern standards, yet, here again, the child, who wanted to get something from school, got it."³

(In 1930, the vacant Neck schoolhouse was sold to the Baptist Society, for \$1. The Society resold it to Arthur Leach, for \$20. He moved the building to the adjoining land of Mrs. Charles Leach; she remodeled it into a house, today 10 Dodges Row.²)

Adeline attended Beverly High School, where she graduated with high honors, and was class valedictorian.⁸

In September of 1884, at age 19, Adeline entered Wellesley College. One of the first women's colleges, Wellesley had started in 1875.¹¹ *(Did you know that Katharine Lee Bates, the author of the words to "America the Beautiful," graduated from Wellesley, in 1880?)*

The 1900 Class Record Book, of Wellesley College, reported that Adeline had been: a member of the Castilian Club; College Club, Boston;

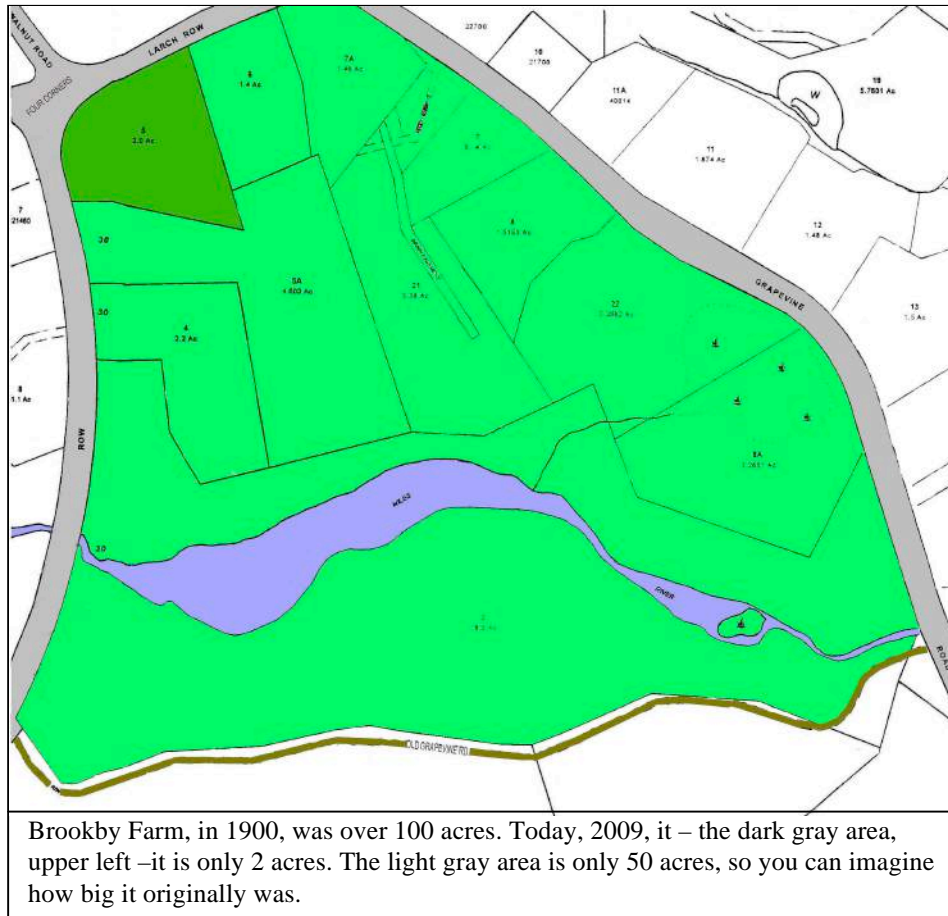


Edward (Teddy) B. Cole

Daughters of the Revolution; Brookline Education Society; Friday Club, Brookline; Village Improvement Club; she was involved in historical research, Spanish history, in particular; and an active member of a host of social-interest organizations. She also enjoyed golf and horseback riding.⁴³

Adeline did not complete her studies at Wellesley. After her sophomore year, she married Edward B. Cole (08/17/1860-??/??/19??), on June 2, 1887.

Her father is said to have been very disappointed, with her not completing college: he had hoped that she would enter, after graduating, the academic world, the



field in which he had excelled, for many years.⁸ Edward B. Cole was a graduate of Brown University.³⁵

Initially, the Coles lived in Brookline, most likely at the Aspinwall home of his parents and his birthplace. Edward (*Teddy*) B. Cole was the son of Mary Welsh Cole and Edward (*Ned*) B. Cole, a famous Marine Corps major, who was killed, in WWI.¹⁷

While living in Brookline, the Coles had two children:⁸

Their first child, Benjamin Edward II, was born Mar 20, 1891 (*died* 02/28/1974).²⁴ He married Ann Wentworth Sheafe, in 1915. They had five children:

- Ann C. Gannett (11/07/16-09/17/1997). Born in Brookline; she was a State Representative for 13th District (1969-80). A member of the House Education Committee, she helped create legislation protecting girls from discrimination, in academics and athletics. She lived in Lincoln, MA.

- Harriott C. Fox, Suffield, CT (04/25/1919 – 07/25/2009)
- Sarah Sally C. Tuckerman (08/13/1922 - 01/23/1998), Prides Crossing, MA.
- 2nd Lt. Benjamin (*Bengie*) E. Cole III (??/??/1924 - 07/18/1946)
- Eleanor C. Paine, Woodstock, VT (??/??/19?? - 04/??/2004).

Adeline's and Teddy's second child, Eleanor (06/06/1894–08/23/1996), married William Humphreys Coolidge (09/28/1892-05/30/1962), Sep 8, 1915. They had four children:

- William Coolidge, York, ME (07/11/1925 - 07/10/2005);
- Rev (*Episcopalian*) Edward C. Coolidge, Cromwell, CT (12/08/29);
- Eleanor (*Breezy*) C. Chapman (12/28/1918 - 04/16/1957); and
- Mary H. Campbell (05/29/1923 - 05/26/1982).

During their years living in Brookline, the Cole family spent their winters at their home, on Aspinwall Ave., and their summers, at a rented house, in Duxbury, MA ⁸, no doubt enjoying the shore life along beautiful Duxbury Beach.

While the Frank Macomber's were one of the more well-to-do families in Wenham, the Cole family, of Aspinwall Ave., was much more well-off, having a staff of many servants. They had a cook, waitress, nurse, laundress, coachman and gardener.



Teddy Cole was in charge of the Cole shoe business: a joint venture of his father, Benjamin Edward Cole, and Charles H. Perkins. They made custom shoes.

Yet, they were not as well-served as other families living in Brookline – such as the Joseph P. Kennedys, on nearby Beal St. Many affluent Brook-liners had more help: including upstairs butlers, serving and kitchen maids, and a groom to go with the coachman. ⁸

Return to Brookby

In 1896, the Cole family moved to Brookby Farm. They came with all their servants, all of whom were Swedes. ⁸ At the time, Frank Macomber's was a rectangular, brick, 3-story house. Within a year, the Cole's added an ell off the servant's dining room, and a large playroom, on the first floor, as well

as a large open-face fireplace. Upstairs there were five bedrooms and three bathrooms.⁸

Behind the house was a large barn, where hay and cows were kept. Soon after their arrival a riding-horse stable was built, near the barn. (*Adeline's daughter was an avid rider.*) Living quarters also were built, for a coachman and a groom.⁸ Some years later, the Coles built a greenhouse on the side of the house, for Grandmother Sarah, who loved to grow flowers.⁸

Brookby Farm, at the time, covered 100 acres (*today, 2009, it is only 2 acres*). There were cows, vegetable fields and large several fields of blueberries.⁸

The 1911 property assessment of Brookby Farms indicated the property consisted of: a 2 ½ acre lot, with a house and barn; 7 acres of tillage land; and 10 acres of pasture land. Total value was \$2,800, for which the tax was \$28.64. In addition, there was separate property owned by the heirs of Frank Macomber (*pump house and tank, hennery, 17 acres tillage land, 19 acres pasture, and 2 acres of woodland*).³² Apparently, much of the original property had been sold.

Why did the Coles move to Brookby Farm?

Perhaps, so that Teddy might be closer to the B. E. Cole & Co. Beverly shoe factory, on Rantoul Street, of which he was in charge. Teddy was in the shoe business, with his father, Benjamin Edward Cole, and Charles H. Perkins. They made custom shoes, and were the largest manufacturer of shoes, in New England.⁹

In the winter of 1899, just three years after arriving at Brookby, the Cole family briefly left Wenham. They rented a huge house, in Milton, MA (*about 10 miles south of Brookline*). However, the following spring, they moved back to Brookby Farm.⁸

The shoe business was not Teddy's sole interest. He was an avid glass-plate photographer, and a fervent mathematician. He invented a direction finder for ships: he gave the plans to a young man, who had worked with him, saying his reward was the invention's success. Another hobby was metal working, which he used to make the direction finder.⁸



Adeline Cole, circa 1897
Photo, Cole family

Adeline, as described by her daughter, Eleanor, “was also an inventor. The world was her ‘onion.’ She saw its needs, among people, and established ways to meet them. She used people the way father used tools. In so doing, she established a number of organizations, giving each one her all. When each became a smooth running organization, she placed it in cable hands, and began another interest.”⁸

Research shows that Adeline had another important capacity: she was a great funds raiser. On many of the activities to which she devoted her time, Adeline led efforts to bring in much needed finances.

Getting Around Town

Adeline was often moving about Wenham, looking for new areas, where she might help the townspeople. In the 1890s, you might have seen Adeline motoring in an electric automobile.¹

The electric vehicles were sold to upper-class customers, and were often marketed as suitable vehicles for women drivers, due to their clean, quiet and easy operation. The top speed of the early electric vehicles was about 20 mph, but distance between charges was limited.¹⁸

With the start of the 20th century, the Coles, desiring a larger vehicle with greater range, acquired a “White Steamer,” canvas topped touring car. It had side curtains, but on the dusty roads, all passengers needed to wear dusters and goggles. Teddy Cole went on trips, as far away as Canada, in the White Steamer.⁸

In 1912, the steamer, while parked and idling, in the backyard, exploded: the Brookby barns and stables were burned to the ground: fortunately, no animals died.⁸

When not exploring the bounds of Wenham and Hamilton, Adeline was at home reading the five daily newspapers that the Coles had delivered (*likely: Salem Gazette, Boston Herald, Boston American, Boston Evening Record, and New York Times*). She corresponded with many people, and often was contacted for advice and historical information. She wanted, according to her daughter, “to put Wenham on the world map.”⁸ She corresponded with dignitaries, all over the world, insisting that worldwide friendship would stop war.² (*Unfortunately, her letters are gone.*)

While she would be unable to stop war, Adeline was able to get many programs started in Wenham. The return to Brookby Farm marked the start of over 60 years of various vital ventures, for Adeline P. Cole.

Founded Herb Society

First, let's jump ahead to 1932, when Adeline was a spry 67. She, along with some of her friends, started herb gardens. For this venture, Adeline drew together her home ... Brookby Farm... and her entrepreneurial spirit.

Where did her interest in herbs come from? Wellesley College had courses on herbs and had a herbarium, which included over 160 specimens. However, during her two years, at Wellesley, Adeline did not study herbs.³⁶

Perhaps, Adeline's interest in herbs was spun off from her great interest in cooking. She was not one to make simple dishes: her recipes included many spices and herbs.¹

In 1932, Dr. Edgar Anderson, of Boston's Arnold Arboretum, received a call from a woman representing a small garden group. She wrote, "We want to do something more worthwhile than the ordinary garden club, so we've started studying herbs. Will you give us some botany lessons?"

From this small group of Wenham women began (*in 1933*) The Herb Society of America (*HSA*). (*It now has 2,300 members, worldwide.*) As Adeline wrote, this group of dedicated women envisioned reaching out to "others from throughout the horticultural world, who shared their scholarly interest, in these vital plants."

Throughout the fall and winter of 1932, the group of seven women (*Adeline Philbrick Cole, Anne Shirk Burrage, Harriet Adams Brown, Corinna Searle Mitchell, Florence Bratenahl, Ellen Greenslet and Frances Norton*) met with Anderson to study rosemary: its growing, drying and the mounting of specimens for research.¹⁹ Their meetings were held at the Wenham Museum.

In 1935, the group put together "A Seventeenth-Century Stillroom," the first herbal exhibit in the country: it won a gold medal, in the Boston Spring Flower Show.¹⁹

So, what's a stillroom?

Here's how Adeline described it, in an article in inaugural issue of *The Herbarist* magazine:⁴

"The good housewife of the 17th century was expected to be very wise in the preparation and use of the herbs she grew: in large houses, a room was set apart for the lady of the manner to carry on these house wifely arts: this room was called the still room. ... The still room was sort of a composite, partly a laboratory, a medicine closet, and somewhat a store-room and pantry.



In 1939, Adeline Cole's Experimental Plot of Sage, planted behind the house, had three long rows of the sage plants, which were said to have been "cropped for drying, each year

Its location was not fixed, ... like the kitchen or dairy, it was there, a part of every country house, sometimes even on the second floor, next to the bedrooms. But, in whatever place, ... it was here that the lady of the manor directed her maids in the composition of the laborious recipes by which she produced the domestic remedies for her household, and the poor in her parish.

The "English Housewife," written by Gervase Markham, states, "The ideal woman must be skilled in the preparation of medicines, for the health of her household. Then, she must have knowledge of all sorts of herbs, belonging to the kitchen, which skill she must get by her own labor and experience. When our English housewife is exact in these rules, she shall then she shall sort her mind to other secrets. Therefore, I would first have her furnish herself with a good still for the distillation of sweet waters. Then, she shall know that the best waters for the smoothing of skin, and keeping the face delicate and amiable are those distilled from strawberries, flowers of lilies, etc."

What was Adeline's herb garden like?

Well, it was one very big garden ... a garden that many would have called a farm. Adeline began planting her herb garden, in 1935. By the time she was done, it grew to more than 2,000 different plants. In 1966, specimens were donated to the Arnold Arboretum.¹⁹ Adeline's growery was her hide-away, from the pressures of all her other activities. It may have been her place to find inspiration; it was where she could see how doing the menial can yield outstanding results.

In a 1956 Boston Globe interview article, Adeline said, "There's a great need for a quiet time for meditation. I find, when you see things in the throes of activity, they look differently. If you can think things out in a quiet time and it gives you another viewpoint, entirely."²⁹

Vestiges of Adeline's herb gardens still remain, at Brookby Farm. Walk around the 204 Larch Row property and you will see Sweet Woodruff plants, that have clusters of small, white star-shaped blooms. It is a popular groundcover, for its striking, white-spotted green foliage.

Another remnant of Adeline's garden retreat is her work shed: it still stands, albeit a bit shaky, at 204 Larch Row. Inside the shed, on one wall, is a painted verse (*A Little Poem, author unknown*), which was so much a credo of Adeline:

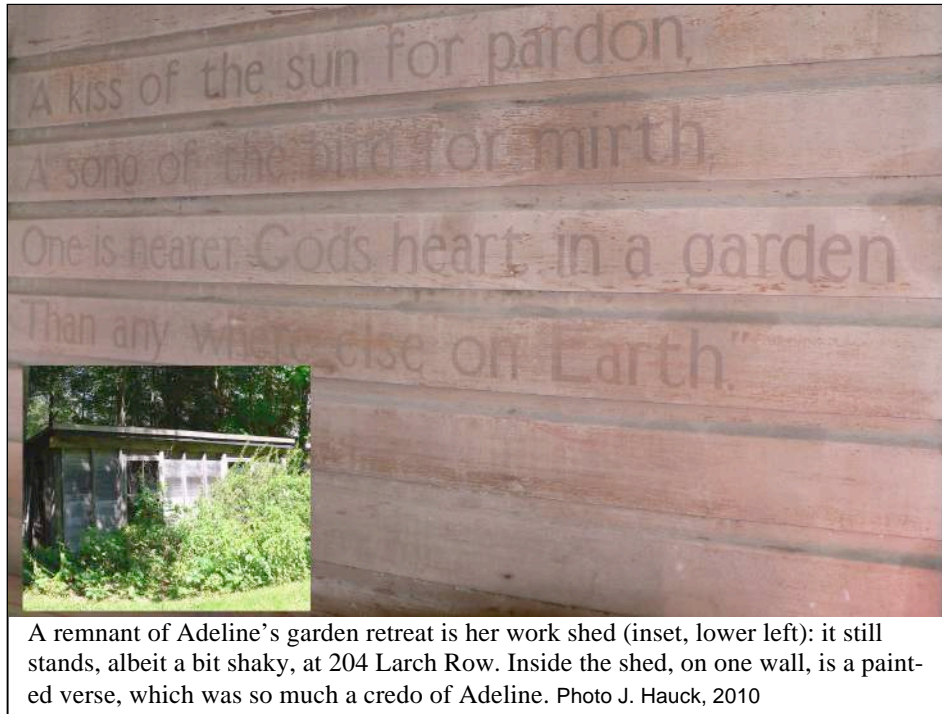
*A kiss of the sun, for pardon;
A song of the bird of mirth;
One is nearer God's heart, in a garden,
Than anywhere else on earth.*

Adeline's interest in herbs was not just limited to her expansive Brookby garden. For many years, Adeline was the chair of commercial research, for The Herb Society of America. During her tenure, the Society conducted experiments in growing scarce condiment herbs, to determine how they could be grown as commercial crops. The studies also looked at some scarce drug herbs, and improved varieties for Castor oil and sunflower oil.³⁹

Village Improvement Society

Now, let's go back to 1896, when the Coles returned to Wenham.

While at Wellesley, as mentioned previously, Adeline was a member of the Village Improvement Society Club. It should not be surprising that right off, 1896, Adeline became a very active member of the Wenham Village Improvement Society (*WVIS*).



Just three years earlier, the WVIS had been founded by her parents and a committee of five. (*Interesting that a man, Frank Macomber, was the first chair of the WVIS, which said that, "Any woman, of good repute, may become a member of this Society, by subscribing to its Constitution and By-Laws, and the annual payment of 50 cents."*²⁸) Adeline became a member of the Executive Committee, and served as secretary and vice-president, at various times. She was a WVIS member for 63 years.²⁸

At the close of the 19th century, Wenham had dirt roads and the land was quite barren of trees. For nearly two hundred years, trees were cut down, to provide fuel and building materials. Standing on Porter Street, you could see clear over to Main Street ... there were no trees, to block your view.

For many years, this barren bleak look was a major concern of the WVIS. In the original WVIS preamble, 1893, it was stated: "The object of this Society is to adorn and make more attractive the town of Wenham. To preserve its natural beauties and enhance, the same, by planting and cultivating trees, shrubs, etc. and doing such other activities as shall tend to beautify and improve its streets and public grounds."

The first work undertaken by Adeline and others was the digging up of the many weeds along the main thoroughfare, County Road (*Main St.*). This was followed by cleaning up, grading and planting the intersections of streets. These "triangles," planted with flowers, trees and shrubs, made a significant difference, in the appearance of Wenham's main thoroughfares.

Though Adeline was often seen as a prim and proper lady, she also was very willing to get right into the grimy work of these street weeding and planting projects.

However, the steadily growing number of automobiles created problems, for the triangles.²⁸ The trees and shrubs, planted in the triangles, obstructed the view of drivers. Therefore, the trees were cut down. From that time (1918), the insipid "triangles" were cared for by the town.³ (*For the most part, they now are gone: one exception being the triangle at the intersection of Cedar St. and Topsfield Rd.*)

(There are still some efforts at making the Wenham intersections attractive. For example, at the intersection of Main St. and Cherry St., there is a planter box, and there are others about town. Through donations, these dividers are planted with flowers, each year.¹)

Adeline was an enterprising person, but never for herself. Her sight was set on what might be achieved, by a group of people working together. In 1905, she wrote, concerning the WVIS: "The life of any Society depends upon the active work, which it does. To stand still is eventually to go back, and that has never been the motto - so it is well to take heed, lest we grow slothful in prosperity."

Well, Adeline certainly did not stand still. In 1917, she became a member of the WVIS Conservation Committee. She had a great love for the land of Wenham. She wrote, at the Tercentenary Celebration, "The future of the soil and land in Wenham is in the hands of the coming generations, as they take up the problems of the Fourth Century of Wenham's struggle with the land."²⁷

Other earthy projects undertaken, by the WVIS, during the years Adeline was a member were: street lights, signboards, brown-tail and gypsy moth work, as well as summer sewing schools, and manual training and sewing classes, in the schools.³

In 1914, Adeline was involved in planting trees and shrubs, at Pingree Field, which had recently been given to the town.²⁸ The field was no longer being used for polo matches.

Where did the money come from, for these street and park projects? The funds were raised by fairs, garden parties, flower shows, and similar events. When, in 1915, the WVIS annual tree and shrub budget reached \$1,500, it was evident some more permanent method had to be found.³



Today, Wenham Tea House is on Monument Street. However, the original the tea house was on Main Street. The former Hobbs harness shop was converted into a tea-room.
Photo courtesy Wenham Museum

The WVIS informed the Wenham Board of Selectmen that, "While recognizing the importance of a well-kept Main Street, to give the right impression

of the standard we try to maintain, we do feel the work should be done under the supervision of the town or street commissioner, and recommend the matter be taken to the next Town Meeting, for some action."²⁸

Not all the funds for the WVIS came from tea parties. Another source of money was profits from the Wenham Exchange.

Woman's Exchange

Adeline "conceived the plan and development of the Wenham Exchange."³⁵ As the Chair of the Exchange, for 28 years (1911-1939), she brought her instinctive ability to see things realistically and not be drawn by idealistic goals.

The Woman's Exchange movement began in 1832 and, now, is one of the country's oldest continuously operating charitable movements. Originally, Exchanges were shops, in small towns, where women could sell their home-made products, such as needlework and baked goods, on consignment. Working-class consignors often exceeded the industrial wage, by selling specialized items. Middle-and upper-class managers benefited, as well, by becoming retailing executives, a position off-limits to women of their social status.³³ (*The first Exchange, 1832, was opened in Philadelphia.*)

An early promoter of Exchanges was Libbie Custer, who called for ladies to be working women, engaged in some useful, creative occupation. "We are all working women. There's not a lady among us." (*Perhaps you know her by her full married name, Mrs. George Armstrong Custer.*)

The original aim of the Wenham Exchange was to create an opportunity of home employment, for local women. Proceeds from the Wenham Exchange were to support civic projects, educational programs and playgrounds.

A lot of community work was made possible, from the income of the Exchange. In 1914, the Exchange had a profit of \$200. Over the many years, the Exchange has made numerous contributions to the community, thus fulfilling the charter "to make the town a pleasant place, in which to live."²⁸

Tea House

The Wenham Tea House was started as a means of gaining funds for the WVIS. The first tea was served on May 29, 1912.

An early issue confronting the WVIS was whether the tea house should be open on Sundays. Some believed as it was customary for tea houses to be open Sundays. Adeline's Baptist teaching came forward. She was among those opposing the Sunday opening. She said that as an organized society, the WVIS was not free to act on individual opinions, it and could not afford to offend the sentiment of those, who might feel strongly in regard to being opened on Sundays. It was decided to vote by ballot at the next meeting. The vote was not to be open on Sundays.²⁸

Today, the Tea House is on Monument Street, about 100 ft. off of Main Street. However, the original the tea house was the former harness shop of Henry Hobbs, next to the church, which was converted into an attractive tea-room.

The hope was that passing automobiles would, with delight, see a tea-room, and pull right in. But, it did not work out that way. The tourists of those days, once they were started, kept moving, wanting to get where they were going. It turned out that main part of tea house customers – though not many in number -- were people from Wenham and nearby towns. (*In 1914, the tea house had a profit of \$150.*)²⁸

All was not lost. Gradually, more and more people came for tea and pastry delights. A need for larger quarters became apparent. The "old Tilton place," on Monument Street, was purchased (1914).²⁸ Adeline was chairman of the Finance Committee, for the new tea house. A spacious tea house was built (1915): the present Wenham Tea House. It is the country's oldest continually running tea house.

What happened to the old tea house? In 1944, it was leased to the Boy's Club (*It was closed in 1945, due to "mischievous doings."*). A year later, in 1946, it was sold to an ex-GI, who needed a house. It was moved out of town.²⁸



Wenham Museum was Adeline's second home.
Photo J. Hauck, 2009

For most people, being so involved in the WVIS, the Wenham Exchange and the Tea House would have filled their days. But, not so for Adeline. Another of her interests was Wenham History.

Historical Committee

Adeline founded the Wenham Historical Association, and served as its first president. People, of the time, use to say that she

gave birth, at age 56, to the museum. From 1907 to 1952, Adeline led the Historical Committee, which eventually became incorporated, as the Wenham Historical Association and Museum, Inc.²⁸

The Wenham Historical Association and Museum has the responsibility of preserving Wenham's records, of the today and yesterday. These records are kept at the Pickering Library, which is in the Claflin-Richards House extension of the Wenham Museum.

Perhaps, a moving force behind Adeline's lifelong involvement in Wenham's history was her father, Frank Macomber, who died, of pneumonia, in 1907. He was very proud of Wenham's history, and people often came to him for information.²⁸

In 1914, Adeline and other WVIS members considered buying the Richards House, and turning it into a museum. In 1921, the Historic Committee "invited" the WVIS to buy the Richards House (*built circa 1640*), and turn it into a small museum.²⁸ Some years later, Adeline would say, in a WVIS presentation, "The historical house was acquired to rescue it from being reduced to a second-class tenement house."³⁸

The museum was Adeline's second home. In a note to the Wellesley alumnae organization, in 1952, she wrote: "I like to be at the museum by eight, to open the mail and plan the day."⁴²

Today, the Claflin-Richards House contains three centuries of architecture, furnishings, and artifacts from different periods of Wenham's early history. There is: a First Period dwelling room; a late 17th century minister's parlor; a circa 1750 bed chamber; and a Victorian-era chamber. Furnishings include a 1724 woolen bed-rug, said to be the second oldest such rug in the U.S.²²



A bronze plaque was placed on the stone wall between the museum and the Claffin Richard's house, on Adeline's 90th birthday.

In 1935, the Historical Committee built a barn, next to the Claffin-Richards house. It incorporates timbers of the old church, on Tarr's Hill, and timbers of other 17th buildings. In 1951, the barn was named Burnham Hall (*named after Helen C. Burnham, the longest serving President of the WVIS, 1908-1945*). The barn, opened in 1952, houses tools and relics of the past, and serves as a meeting place for town organizations.²⁸

The jewel of the museum is its doll collection, which now includes about 5,000 dolls. In 1922, Elizabeth Richards Horton, a former Wenham resident, donated her "International Doll Collection," to the WVIS. Two years later, after a great amount of repair and cleaning, a portion of the Horton collection was first shown to the public, at the Wenham Town Hall. Then, for many years, the doll collection was kept in storage. It was not until 1952, when a fireproof structure was added to the museum, that the collection was put on permanent display.

(WVIS records do not include information about the acquisition of the doll collection. The reason for this may be the records, for much of the 1920s, according to Adeline Cole, were lost. In a 1956 WVIS talk, she said some of the early records, "fell from the attic, into a first floor partition, of the Tea House." There, they likely are today.²⁸)

The most complete record of the museum's doll collection is in a book, written in 1950 by Adeline: "Notes on the Collection of Dolls and Figurines at the Wenham Museum." It describes the various types of dolls, their origin and background.⁴⁴

In 1952, the museum was incorporated as a separate entity: The Wenham Historical Association and Museum, Inc. A year later, Adeline P. Cole presided, as President, over the grand opening. Also, at this time, the Pickering Library and Burnham Hall meeting room were added.²⁸

A bronze plaque was placed on the stone wall between the museum and the Claffin Richard's house, on Adeline's 90th birthday.¹²

Not even the additional time spent in developing the museum was enough to fill Adeline's work day. She also was very active in improving Wenham's schools.

Unfortunately, in 1996, the Cole plaque was removed, during remodeling of the connection between museum and the Claffin-Richard house. It was not replaced and its whereabouts is not known.

Schools

Certainly not surprising was Adeline's interest in the Wenham schools. She served on the School Committee, for over 15 years (1907 to 1922).²

One of the first developments, in which she was involved, was the opening of the Center School. The school building was erected, in 1907. Later, the barren appearance was softened by the planting of trees and shrubs, by the Village Improvement Society. The roadway through the grounds was bordered by trees, through the interest of Dr. John Phillips.³

In the early 1900s, there was a decrease in the number of pupils. Also, it was difficult to hire teachers for the three district schools. And, the Center school offered more opportunities for the students. These factors led to an attempt to transport students from the district schools to the Center School. However, for many years, parents in the districts fought the idea.

Finally, the town ran a test trial of transporting older children, at the Neck, by a horse-drawn vehicle, to the Center School. This was not successful. Then, to demonstrate that transportation could be properly done, an automobile (*station wagon*) and driver were offered to the school committee, by Adeline and Edward Cole. It showed that proper transportation could be provided, and, thus, began school busing, in Wenham. Following, the district schools were gradually closed, and the pupils taken, by bus, to the Center School.

In 1919, it was decided that a larger building was needed, due to the increased enrollment of junior high students. The next year, the town voted to, "add a \$41,000 ell, to a \$17,000 building." Close to 140 pupils were enrolled, the first year. Students were brought to the Center by school buses.

(What happened to the old school buildings? In 1911, the school building, next to the Town Hall, was leased for a Y. M. C. A. building. Later,

the building was sold and used as a garage, by William Trowt. In 1924, the old west school was moved to the rear of the Town Hall. With an addition, it became a Town Garage, at cost of \$1,700. In 1925, the east school was sold to Mrs. Abby Prince, for \$500. ³⁾

Library

The same year in which Adeline left Wenham to attend Wellesley College, 1884, the Wenham Library Association unanimously voted, "to give and transfer, to the town of Wenham, the library belonging to the 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 support the same." ³

Adeline, through her school years in Wenham, likely made frequent use of the Wenham Library Association library. With her return, she became a strong library supporter. From 1910 to 1924, she was a Library Trustee and a leader in calling for more funds to increase the number of library books. ² The early 20th century was a period of rapid growth, in book publishing. Many new publishing companies began, in America and Europe. Printing costs were low, thus making it economical to print as few as 1,000 copies of a new book.

Since 1885, the town public library had been at the town hall. It was in what had been the recitation room, of the Private School: the same school where Adeline's father, Frank Macomber, had been the teacher.

In 1915, Adeline was very interested in getting the Wenham library involved with a State program, which provided schools with a trained instructor, to teach children of the 7th to 9th grades how to use the library, and do their own library work. This connection between schools and the local library broadened the sphere of education, and brought new reasons for publishing books for research and study, by school students. ⁷

Even in her later years, Adeline was interested in libraries. She chose the books for the Timothy Pickering Library, at the museum, which opened, in 1953. At the opening, she said it was important "to make it a real source of research." ²⁹

World War I Efforts

At the end of 1917, with the involvement of America in World War I, Adeline's interests swung toward helping local families and hospitals, during these years of great need.

Adeline, a staunch Republican, was against the U.S. getting involved in the war. Perhaps her thoughts were the same as those of Eleanor Roosevelt, who said, "I cannot believe that war is the best solution. No one won the last war, and no one will win the next war."

Adeline's view on war did not blind her to seeing what was needed, on the home front. She was the chair of a canning project, during WW I. Produce, from Wenham gardens, was canned, by the thousands of jars. Volunteer labor distributed the food, to hospitals in the area.² One of the main canned items was, as Adeline called it, her "everlasting soup."²⁹ *(She never did reveal its recipe and the special spices and herbs it contained, though she was asked many times.)*²⁹



Adeline Cole corresponded with people, around the world. She wanted "to put Wenham on the world map."

The Cannery, at the garage at Brookby Farm, had morning, afternoon, evening and night shifts ... sometimes working to 1 am, preparing and canning vegetables, raised by the Service Unit of the North Shore Garden Club. A motor corps collected surplus vegetables and the products of the farmerettes, who did all the work, exclusive of plowing and harrowing.³

After the War to End All Wars

At 11 a.m., on November 11, 1918 — the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month — a ceasefire came into effect, for the "war to end all wars."

But, Adeline, then 53, did not cease in all the programs, in which she was involved, including: the WVIS, Library trustee, school committee, the Cannery, the historical committee, Woman's Exchange, Visiting Nurses, conservation committee and the Pingree Field restoration committee.

Soon after the war's end, 1920, the 19th Amendment was ratified, by 36 States, giving women the right to vote: "voting rights of citizens of the United States shall not be denied, on the basis of sex."

WVIS records, for 1912, state that Mrs. Andrew George spoke on "Reasons against Women's Suffrage." A Salem News article reported. "The majority of women, in Wenham, are opposed to suffrage, and were glad of the opportunity offered to enroll themselves in the ranks of the Mass. Society opposed to the further extension of suffrage for women."

Based on all the activities, in which Adeline was involved, it is hard to believe that she would have held the anti suffrage position. However, among her books was one (*Anti Suffrage Handbook, published in 1912, in England*) presenting positions against the 19th amendment. Perhaps, Adeline wanted to know what arguments she might face, from women and men, in her promoting the 19th amendment. There are no remaining documents, written by Adeline, showing her thoughts on the suffrage issue.

1922 was a sad year for Adeline: her mother died, at the start of the year (01/28). Both her parents now had died. According to Eleanor Cole, Grandmother Sarah "was sort of a mystery, and very remote. She had a pug dog named Pig Wig, which bit us. She loved flowers."

The years that followed ... the 1920s and 30s ... where a time of great unrest, in America. There was the great depression and, the war to end all wars was not that at all. Just two decades later, Europe was at war, once again, and this time there also was war in the Pacific.

WWII directly affected Adeline: her grandson, Benjamin Edward Cole III, enlisted in the marines; her son, Edward, was a pilot, at Norfolk, VA; her daughter's (*Eleanor*) husband, William Coolidge, was a Lt. Commander (*later Commander*), in the Navy, at the Harbor Entrance Control Post, in Portland ME; and her grandson-in-law, Thomas Gannett, was an ensign, at Newport, RI. ⁴⁰

World War II Efforts

In 1941, Adeline was a member of Wenham's Tercentenary Committee. There was another war going on, but it was felt that some form of commemoration should be made, to mark Wenham's 300th year. Two years later, at a low-key ceremony, the Committee unveiled a temporary honor roll, at the front of the town hall. ²⁵



The Hamilton-Wenham VNA played a major role in meeting the needs stemming from the 1918 flu epidemic.
Photo courtesy Wenham Museum

During the war, Adeline spent much of her time writing "Notes on Wenham History, 1643-1943." Intended to be part of Wenham's tercentenary commemoration, the book tells the story of Wenham's origins and growth. (*Just to be on the safe side, while at home, the Coles had an air raid siren placed on top of their Brookby house.*)

Adeline was a member of the War Finance Committee, which sold over \$125,000 of war bonds.²⁵ She also was a member of the Defense Farming Committee, started by Helen Frick (*she of the Iron Rail True Blue Girls fame*), which instructed women about farming.

Another activity was the Victory Garden program, of the Home Garden Committee. The Victory Garden members instructed women on the growing, preserving and canning of vegetables, fruit and spices. Over 400 Wenham homes participated in the Victory Garden program. In 1943, a group, led by Adeline, raised and marketed 18,000 pounds of dried sage (*all grown at Brookby*). In all, the Victory Garden program produced nearly a half million pounds of canned food.²⁵

After the WWII, Adeline was a member of the Publication Committee, which published the book, "Wenham in World War II:" the personal stories of Wenham's service men and women, as well as a record of the town's civilian activities.²⁵ One of the young men from Wenham, who served in the war, was 2nd Lt. Benjamin E. Cole, III, her grandson (*who died in a motor cycle accident, just after the war ended*).

Visiting Nurses Association

In 1904, Adeline founded the Visiting Nurse Association of Hamilton and Wenham. The concept of providing free nursing care to the sick and poor, who did not have access to health care, had begun in the 1880s. In particular, there was a need to address the increase in infectious diseases. Lillian Wald, a pioneer of public health nursing, said, "Society benefits, when health care is provided, in the least costly and most comforting setting -- most often the home."

The Hamilton-Wenham VNA played a major role in addressing the needs stemming from the flu epidemic of 1918. Many volunteers assisted in bringing aid to the one nurse, by driving her to visits, helping in the homes, bringing food to the families of the sick, and doing errands.

Hospitals and nurses were inadequate for the proper care of the patients; a volunteer corps in Wenham rallied with clothing, bedding and food. Emergency hospitals were established in Ipswich and Gloucester.

The Wenham and Hamilton Cannery was, then, in full operation and quickly diverted its workers to soup making. This soup was distributed daily by truck, as long as the emergency existed.

A Victory Shop was opened, at South Hamilton, by the VNA. This was a sort of clearinghouse for housewives, for instruction and conferences on the use of substitutes for the rationed white flour and sugar. Here, also, a baby clinic was held, one afternoon a week.³

As late as 1955, when Adeline was 90, she was Chair of the Board of Directors for the Visiting Nurses Association of Hamilton and Wenham. She had been involved with the VNA for 46 years.³⁷

Adeline's work with the VNA was a further example of her interest in supporting the needs of both Wenham and Hamilton. Yes, she was very proud of Wenham, but she did not limit herself to projects just benefiting Wenham. Her participation in the many World War I and II committees helped the people of both towns. She worked, along with other women from Wenham, hand-in-hand, with many women from Hamilton.

Free Hospital for Women

Adeline's involvement with the Visiting Nurse Association of Hamilton and Wenham may have had its origin some fifteen years earlier, while she was living in Brookline. In the early 1890s, Adeline was chairman of The Ladies Board for The Free Hospital for Women. The FHW Board raised funds for medical supplies, as well as other essentials, in order for the hospital to maintain its free medical services for poor women.

The FHW was founded in 1875, by Dr. William Henry Baker, when he established a hospital providing free medical care "for poor women affected with diseases peculiar to their sex or in need of surgical aid."

Through several mergers with other medical institutions, the FHW eventually became part of Brigham and Women's Hospital.

Her Writings

Adeline Cole was a prolific writer. However, little of her works remain.

Remaining are two books:

"Notes on the Collection of Dolls and Figurines, at the Wenham Museum," published in 1951. It has become a recognized source book, in the field of doll collecting.

"Notes on Wenham History, 1643-1943" tells the story of Wenham's origins and growth.

She also wrote "The 17th Century Still Room," in the initial issue of "The Herbarist, Vol I, 1935, Herb Society of America.

The Wenham Museum has many reports that Adeline wrote about projects in which she was involved.

Also remaining is a chapter about the Indians of Wenham, in the book, "Wenham in Pictures and Prose."

Her letters to and from people all around the world are gone.

Gone, also, are many of the booklets and pamphlets she wrote, such as:

The museum's collection of Indian artifacts ⁴¹

Beads, as used in religious prayers and economy ⁴¹

A follow-up to her book about dolls, and

A book about the important role of ministers, in small towns.

Adeline, the Person

So much for her accomplishments. What was Adeline, the person like?

There still are (2009) some people, who personally knew Adeline. Their memories of her are of: ¹

- A “very vibrant” woman ...
- A “brilliant motivator of people” ...
- “Not one to deny equal rights for women”
- Someone “always ready to help get things done” ...
- “Short of stature, but towering in deeds” ...



Memorial plaque placed at Tea House marking her many contributions to Wenham.
Photo J.Hauck, 2011

- “Not interested in praise” ...
- “Her way was to work behind the scenes”
- “Single-minded”
- And, “of strong opinion” ...
- “A great friend” ...
- But, “not one to get on the wrong side of”
- “Not easy to get to know” ...
- “A source of much information about the history of Wenham”
- “The uncrowned queen” of Wenham ...
- and, a person of “plain and forceful” voice.

Annie Quaker, in the book "Portable Pearls of Wisdom," wrote (*June 13, 2000*), "You can help a fellow working-woman to grow, not by solving her problems, but by supporting her, as she learns she can do it herself." My, my, how this describes Adeline Philbrick Dodge Cole's many years of service, in Wenham.

Adeline Philbrick Cole died January 5, 1959.

Her grandchild, Harriott Cole Fox, told her children that "Big Granny (*Adeline*), when climbing on a radiator, to kill a bug or get a cobweb off the ceiling, fell and broke her hip, which was the beginning of her end."

(The following is from Wenham Museum Annual Report, 1958, a year before Granny Cole died.)

"By her wisdom and vision over the years, Adeline Cole built widely assorted people into an organization, which sets Wenham uniquely apart, from most towns of its size.

She was ambitious, never for herself, but for what might be achieved. She was warmly tolerant of everything, save what was shoddy or insincere.

She loved learning, and was herself learned, yet her knowledge was flavored always with the salt of wit and good sense.

Her reverence for things of the spirit relied on no creed, and she had great understanding of other peoples, races and cultures.

The happy combination of Adeline Cole's ability, personality and long and active life, gave a continuity to her work, in the town and to the many and varied organizations, which held her interest.

Adeline Cole's influence went out, and out again, and again, to touch nearly every aspect of Wenham's civic life. Generations to come, to whom she will be a name and a legend, may well be grateful that she lived out her years, in Wenham"

Upon reading these flattering comments, Adeline might have discretely said, "As for accomplishments, I just did what I had to do, as things came along." (*Eleanor Roosevelt quote*)

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