

Mr. Wenham

Albert W. Dodge

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Jack E. Hauck



Tree Warden, 2005.
Photo Dodge family

Albert Winslow Dodge

Albert Winslow Dodge has led a full and long life caring for the arboreal environment, the education of children, local government and his family.

Known to most people as Albie, but preferring to be called Al, his life spans almost a hundred years. Nearly, all these years being spent in the town he loves, Wenham, MA. He saw the town grow from one with about 1,000 people to one with nearly five thousand. Remaining quick of mind through his life, he is a walking history book of the town's growth.

From childhood, Al had a strong interest in trees. This likely came from his father's and grandfather's working in the arboreal field.

When he became a father, Al had a strong interest in schools. He and his wife, Betty, wanted their three children to receive a very good education, at local schools.

From his experience in developing a regional school system, Al's interest expanded into town government, where he participated in one of the most active periods of Wenham's development.

Then, having lived through a great many years of life in Wenham, Al became well-known for his knowledge of Wenham's history.

Born in Wenham

On May 31, 1914, Albert Winslow⁽²⁾ Dodge was born at the home of his mother's parents, Fred and Alice Stanton. He was named after his paternal grandfather, Albert Winslow.

His father, Wes Dodge, had a tree service company in town: the A. W. Dodge Tree Company. His grandfather cared for the grounds of the Higginson estate in Wenham.

When Al was three, 1917, his father, 2nd Lt. Albert Wesley Dodge, left to fight with the American Army, in France. Lt. Dodge returned in 1919, when WWI ended.

While his father was away, his brother, Ralph died, during a flu pandemic. Also, another brother, Carlton Tyler Dodge, was born.

Initially, after Wes Dodge was back in Wenham, the family lived at a house on Friend Ct., across from the Stanton's. Later in 1919, Al and Carlton moved, with their parents, to a home at 80 Rust St., in South Hamilton.

Wes immersed himself in resuming the A. W. Dodge Tree Co. There were four Dodges to feed and provide for.

The A. W. Dodge Tree Co. quickly became very successful. In 1923, Albert Wesley Dodge received an offer that he could not refuse. The F.A. Bartlett Tree Expert Co. offered to buy his company. Not only did he receive a good sum for his company, but he also became Bartlett's regional vice president, for New England, working out of the company's Cambridge office

In the summer of 1924, the Dodges moved from their home on Rust St.

They went back to Wenham and purchased a house at 27 Arbor St.



Stanton family house on Friend Ct.,
1893. Photo Dodge family



Wes Dodge house, Arbor St., 2010.
Photo Jack Hauck

which was at the end of School Street. Al's room was on the second floor, at the back, looking out onto the woods. Here, he could quietly go to sleep close to the tall trees and hear the soft rustle of the wind blowing through them and the chirping of the tree frogs.

It was at this house that Al planted his first tree, a Red Pine. When he was about twelve, his dad brought home a great many seedlings about a foot high. Carlton and Al planted them around a glacial sink hole, at the back of the Arbor Street property.

A benefit for Al living on Arbor Street was that he had just a short walk to and from the Center School.

In 1926, twelve-year old Al and eight-year old Carlton were presented with a sister, Dorothy Alice, who was born on Sep. 10. On July 25, 1928, there was a second sister, Blanche May. On Jan. 9, 1930, another brother joined them, Donald Lovelace.

Al was the big brother to his two brothers and two sisters. With his father traveling as much as he did, being the big brother was more than just an honorary position. It meant that Al was to be a greater help to his mother, in caring for his siblings.

Until he was twelve, all that Al had learned about the outdoors – the subject of his greatest interest - had been through his own personal experiences, and lessons from his father. More formal teaching certainly would be necessary, if he was to echo what his father and grandfather believed about the outdoors, and trees, in particular.

Such teaching began when Al joined the Boy Scouts of America, in 1926. A Scout he would be, for the next four years, but a scout in heart and deed, he would be for the rest of his life. Troop 1 met at the Wenham First Church chapel.

In 1929, Al Dodge earned the Eagle Scout Badge, the first to do so, in the Wenham Troop #1. In order to qualify for selecting an Eagle Scout project, the candidate must first have earned twenty-one specific merit badges. Then comes the opportunity to try to earn the Eagle Scout Medal.

In 1928, after completing the ninth



Boy Scout, 1928.
Photo Dodge family

grade in Wenham, Al began high school, in Beverly. Wenham had an arrangement for its 9th grade-school students to attend Beverly High School for three years, or go to the high schools in Salem or Hamilton. Beverly High School, then, was at Gloucester Crossing.

At Beverly High School, the Wenham contingent of twenty-four students was a very small part of a large community of over 1,000 students. The first thing the Wenham students realized was that their Wenham teachers had prepared them very well.

One of the Wenham students traveling to high school in Beverly was Betty Wallis, who would eventually marry Al. The Wallis family had lived in Wenham for about ten years. Betty Wallis had also graduated from Center School. Al knew her during those years and often rode the same trolley to high school. However, Betty only attended one and half years at Beverly High School. For the second half of her junior year and her senior year, she went to the high school in Evanston, Illinois. Her father, George Wallis, was transferred to Evanston, IL.

After relocating to Evanston, the Wallis family returned to Wenham for the summers, to their home at 187 Main St. They rented the house next door, 185 Main St.



Betty Wallis, 1935, at Smith College. Photo Dodge family

In 193⁵, while Al was working in Boston he met Betty Wallis and they began dating. On Jan. 3, 1938, Albert Winslow Dodge and Betty Perkins Wallis were married, in Boston, at the King's Chapel of the First Church.

In 1940, Al and Betty returned to Wenham. They moved into her parent's home, at 187 Main St.

In early 1941, Al was a co-organizer of the Hamilton Company of the Massachusetts State Guard.

With the U.S. being at war with the Axis, Al resigned his commission as a 1st Lieutenant in the 15th Co., Massachusetts State Guard, to enter federal service. He entered active duty as a private in the U. S. Army, on October 12, 1942. He was sent to Camp Croft, SC, and assigned to the 31st Infantry, for seven-weeks of commando training. He completed the basic

training, however, failed to pass the physical examination, which eliminated him for overseas duty. He chose to leave the army, and was honorably discharged on February 22, 1943.

Tree business

Then, it was back to Bartlett Tree. Al's father needed workers.

Two years later, Dec., 7, 1945, the Dodges had their third child, Susan Elizabeth.

After about two years being back with Bartlett, Al's father suggested that he consider leaving the company to start a tree service business.

In 1944, Dodge Associates began. For possible customers, Al called and visited people at large estates, in Wenham and surrounding towns. He also contacted former customers of A. W. Dodge Tree Company. The start was slow, for there was a war going on, and money was tight.

The following year, 1945, Al's father said good bye to Bartlett Tree, and joined Dodge Associates.

One of Dodge Associates first major accounts was the Massachusetts Electric Company. The work was for the clearing of branches from areas around transmission wires.

With the business growing, Dodge Associates acquired more equipment. Al and his father began looking about Wenham for a site, where Dodge Associates might build a large garage and work shop.

They settled on a piece of property at the Hamilton end of Wenham, which was off of Main Street and backed on to the railroad line. The location was good, being a short way up the street from his home and current business office.

The site was cleared of trees and shrubs and a single-story, cinder-block garage, office and repair shop was built. Dodge Associates was now at 268 Main Street.

Father and son were a great team. However, in September 1956, Albert Wesley Dodge died.

Tree Warden

In 1944, wanting to get better known around Wenham, Al ran for Tree Warden. He was defeated. He ran again,



1942, Pvt. Dodge at Camp Croft, SC, 31st Infantry.
Photo Dodge family

the next year, and this time was elected. He took over from John Luxton.

In his first year as Wenham's Tree Warden, Al was paid \$10.

Because of the limited available funds, most of what the Tree Warden did each year was to remove dead and damaged branches from trees, raise limbs on trees along roads and clear branches from street lights.

From the beginning, Al pushed hard for the town to plant more trees, and often with success. Over the years that he was the Tree Warden, there is not a street in Wenham, on which Al did not plant a tree. As Tree Warden, Al was involved in the planting of over several thousand trees.

The 1960s were especially active in planting trees, with two or three dozen trees planted every year. A peak year was 1964, when almost four dozen trees were planted.

Where did money come from for planting trees? There were some generous people in town, who donated money for tree planting. Sometimes, the donations were a few hundred dollars, there were some who gave a thousand, and one year, someone donated \$5,000.

The utility companies donated many trees. For the most part, these trees were to replace trees that either had to be removed for utility lines, or that had been killed by leaking gas lines.

Many of the years, Al took money out of his own pocket to get work done. The tree budget always is at the bottom of priorities, for the town.

Tree planting may have moved ahead in 1963, but a halt came to Albert Winslow Dodge being Wenham's Tree Warden.



Left to right, Al, Win and Wes Dodge, 1945. Photo Dodge family

In September 1963, Al resigned as Wenham's Tree Warden. Al's resignation was brought about by a law enacted earlier in the year: the Massachusetts Conflict of Interest Law.

Albert Winslow Dodge, Tree Warden for 18 years, resigned his post, because of his "conflict of interest" with the Dodge Associates.

All during the time that Al was the Tree Warden, he used the equipment and workers of Dodge Associates to get the work done. The town had no equipment, nor any trained workers. Certainly, Dodge Associates did not make any money on doing the work.

For the next five years, Warren Parsons remained the Tree Warden.

During these years, he hired the services of Dodge Associates, to do all the pruning and planting of trees in Wenham. In no year did the total cost for repair and removal of trees, and the planting of new trees ever exceed \$1,700. During this time, over one hundred trees were planted.

In 1969, Albert Winslow Dodge, was re-elected Tree Warden. The way was cleared, for his re-election, when in the proceeding December, Al sold Dodge Associates to Carpenter and Costin Landscape Management, of Swampscott, MA. The two remain lifelong friends.

Al stayed on as Wenham's Tree Warden until 2004, when he decided not to run again for the position. Pierre Erhard was elected.

Church efforts

Al never was much involved in church activities. As he said, "If you heard me sing, you would know why I wasn't in the choir."

As a young boy, Sundays were always started by his family attending church. They sat together in the same pew.

In 1929, at age 15, Al became a full member of the First Church.

One of Al's biggest efforts for the church was when he was a member of the 1948 church pastor search committee. At the time church membership was low and the committee hoped to find a dynamic leader. The committee recommended the hiring of Rev. Dr. James King. Sep. 1, 1948, the church agreed and Rev. King became pastor of the First Church in Wenham, Congregational. He served the church until August 1953. Joseph Harrington wrote of Rev. King that because of his "enthusiasm and fine ministry, we can credit most of the momentum of the church at present."

In 1952, Al worked with Rev. King in the building expanded teaching facilities for the Sunday school program. The chapel building behind the meetinghouse was raised to be level with its floor and a basement was built beneath. A year later, the expansion was completed.

Ten years later, 1962, the area below the meetinghouse was excavated to create an undercroft. Al described this effort saying, "We found huge granite blocks that had to be carefully removed without having the building shift or coming down on us. We got the job done, but it sure wasn't easy."

Building a high school

In 1957, the Beverly School Committee informed the Wenham's School Committee that in September 1961, Beverly High School could no longer accept any students, from Wenham.

No longer was there a question of should Wenham merge. There was no choice, but to merge.

Joe Harrington, the Moderator, asked Al to be a member of the committee that was to investigate the possibility of a regional high school.

Harrington likely chose Al, because he knew, that through Dodge Associates business and his being the Tree Warden, Al was in contact with a lot of people, whose property might be considered for building a high school.

The task presented to the Wenham Regional School Committee was going to take a lot of investigation, involve a lot of people, and require those involved to give a lot of time to make the committee's thorough recommendation to the selectmen.

Most importantly, Al knew that the work assigned to the committee concerned one of Wenham's most important obligations, the education of our children.

The Wenham Regional District School Committee began, in July 1957. The first action of the committee was to meet with Hamilton's Regional School Committee, and prepare an agreement for the establishment of a Regional High School. At a meeting with Hamilton's Committee, the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District Planning Board was created.

The first action the Board was to name the school district, "The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District." It was decided that the regional high school was to include the freshman, sophomore, junior and senior classes. The other schools, in the two towns, would be used for grades up to the 8th. There was no talk, at the time, of also merging the other grades.

The Board planned for the regional high school to open in September 1962. Meeting this date would eliminate the need for double sessions, in the Hamilton High School, and provide a high school for Wenham students, who no longer would be accepted by Beverly.



187 Main St., Dodge family home from 1940 to 1997. Photo J. Hauck, 2010

The Wenham School Committee had to make arrangements for the town's high school students, for one year. Beverly was willing to continue all students, in 1961, which were enrolled in the fall

of 1960. Thus, it was the class of forty-one pupils entering the 10th grade in the fall of 1961, who were directly affected.

The people in Wenham wanted the high school to be in Hamilton. The people in Hamilton wanted it to be in Wenham. Neither town wanted to give up a large area – fifty or more acres – that would yield no tax income.

It was decided that the location of the new high school had to be within a two-mile radius of the Hamilton-Wenham Railroad Station.

To search for a place to build the regional high school, a Site Committee was appointed, of which Al was a member.

Committee members considered over a hundred and fifty sites, in the two towns. It didn't take long for them to cut the list down to just twenty sites.

In March 1960, the Committee selected the Weldon property, on Bay Road, Hamilton. The sixty acres of land were acquired seven months later, on October 28, 1960.

Al knew the property quite well, for he had been pruning and caring for the trees for Mrs. Julia Weldon, for many years.

The Weldon property was just over two miles from the train station, but not far enough to be of concern. Its strong points were that it was a very level site, it had no rock problems, building on it would not have encroached on wetland, and it was alongside a main thoroughfare, route 1A.

At the time, there were not many homes in the area.

In the first year of operation, 1962, it was projected that there would be about 500 students: 155 from Wenham and 345 from Hamilton. (*The school opened, with an enrollment of 481 students and a staff of 33.*) It was estimated that the new high school would be adequate in size for at least ten years.

What wasn't fully understood, at the beginning, was how little control the two towns would have over school budgets and costs. The towns only could vote for or against the total budget as submitted by the school district committee.

In its first full year of operation, 1963, the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School budget's net impact on the year's tax rate was less than four dollars.



Dodge Associates garage at 268 Main St., 1948. Photo Dodge family.

The total cost for purchasing the land, equipment and construction was set at \$2,085,000. Of this amount, \$884,807 would be paid by the State. Hamilton's share of the balance was \$731,578, and Wenham's share was \$468,615.⁶²

For Wenham, the cost per high school pupil would come to about \$500. At the time, the cost for Wenham to send its students to Beverly High School was \$425, plus \$50 for busing.

On May 29, 1961, there was a groundbreaking ceremony to mark the beginning of construction. In fifteen months, the Hamilton-Wenham Regional High School was to open its doors, for about six hundred students.

The headline on page one of the Sept, 19, 1962 issue of the Hamilton-Wenham Chronicle was, "School's Open!" It had thirty-five classrooms, five science labs, a language lab, an auditorium, a library, cafeteria, arts and crafts room, homemaking room, and a large gymnasium.⁶⁶

Al would say that *"In looking back, I think we did a pretty good job. The only thing that we might have done differently was to have built a two-story structure. The single-level approach was the way many schools were being built, at the time, and we went along with the trend."*

Both the one-story and the two-story designs were carefully considered. Because there was a \$50,000 additional cost for the two-story building, the single-story design was selected.

Selectman

After twelve years of involvement, Al left the Regional High School Committee, in 1969.

There was another motive for Al's leaving the Regional School Committee, in 1969. In 1971, Al's opportunity came to run for a selectman's seat, when Robert Spofford, the incumbent, indicated, at first, that he would not seek re-election. Spofford, however, decided to run, which meant that there would be a challenger.



Dodge family, 1949: Right to left: Win, Betty, Joanne, Susan, and Al, in back. (1949)
Photo Dodge family.

Just prior to the March election, selectman Delano M. Kennard died; he had been on the Board since 1955. The ballot was changed: both Dodge and Spofford, ran unopposed. Spofford for a full three-

year term, and Dodge for the two years remaining on Kennard's term.

Al joined the Board of Selectmen, which included Richard D. Phippen and Robert N. Spofford. Joseph Harrington was the moderator.

Al would run for re-election three times, and serve twelve years as a selectman. Not only was Al a selectman: he also continued to be the Town Tree Warden and the Moth Superintendent.

Knowing the area as well as he did, Al led the selectmen on their annual perambulating of the town's bounds, once every five years. The markers are not that easy to find. The practice was to paint the date of the walk on each marker.

During Al's twelve years, as a Wenham Selectman, many significant changes, improvements and events occurred. There is no way to make an exact comparison, but these twelve years may well have been the most active period ever, in terms of major accomplishments made by the Wenham Board of Selectmen.

1971 – Wenham's Council on Aging was established.

1971 – The Committee on the Beverly Airport was established to keep the citizens, as well as the officials of the town, apprised of developments and enlargement plans of this airport.

1972 – Wenham's Historic District, along Main Street, Route 1A, was extended to the Beverly town line. Previously it only went from the Hamilton town line to the end of the Wenham cemetery.

1973 – Wenham switched to private ambulance service, from having the police transport people to the hospital.¹¹³

1973 – Wenham's Building Code underwent some major revisions.

From Al's experience in working on the committee that built the regional high school, he had seen that there were new construction materials and methods that needed to be incorporated into Wenham's Building Code.

1974 – Regional vocational school approved at the Town Meeting.¹¹¹

1974 – A new Revenue Sharing Policy was of great benefit to Wenham.



As a selectman, Dodge annually perambulated town boundaries .
Photo, Dodge family.

This policy, which lasted from 1972 to 1987, gave some federal tax revenue back to the states and their municipalities.

1974 – The **Iron Rail purchase** was the single biggest project, the town had faced in many years. In September 1974, at a special town meeting, it was voted to purchase the 79.5-acre Iron Rail property, in the Neck section of Wenham.

The town primarily purchased the property to provide a place for the town's highway equipment.

However, a barn also was on the site. Al considers his greatest achievement, on behalf of the scouts was his involvement in getting the Wenham Troop, now Troop 28, a meeting place of their own. Right from when the town first looked at this site, Al realized that the barn might make a great place for the Scout troop to hold its meetings and store equipment. They moved into the building in 1975, and they are still there.

1975 – Enon Village. Since the early 1970s, Wenham was thinking about a complex of three or four dozen units, for senior housing. The State was willing to pay for the complex, if Wenham could find the land.

1977 – Pleasant Pond beach and swimming area was finally voted in, at a town meeting. This was eleven years after the Hallett lakeside property had been purchased by the Town.

1978 – The **merger of the junior high schools** in Hamilton and Wenham resurfaced, with the appointment of a sub-committee to investigate the feasibility of such a move.

It was pretty-much agreed that the junior high school students at Buker

would be moved over to the Hamilton junior high school, which was in the old high school building. To make room for them, three portable classrooms from Buker would also be moved to the Hamilton property.

In December, the Regional School Committee unanimously agreed to merge the junior high schools, in Hamilton, with the addition of the portable classrooms.

1978 – Wenham's Town Budget exceeded \$2 million, for the first time. Finance Committee Chair-



In 1975, Iron Rail barn became Boy Scouts meeting place. Photo Dodge family

man, Wendell Campbell, said 59.3% of the budget was for schools, for which we can't do anything."

1979 – The **Tucker property subdivision** created forty-six separate lots, on the 117 acre site, at the corner of Cherry Street and Topsfield Road. This was the old William Fairfield estate, and the site of the Fairfield Cemetery.

Al's main concern was for the Fairfield cemetery, which the town owned. A right-away was granted, allowing people to access the small site, without crossing over anyone's private property.

1979 – A **playground** for the children who lived in the western part of Wenham became a matter of seemingly endless debate. Four years earlier, The Massachusetts Bicentennial Commission awarded \$1,500 for the development of a bicentennial park in west Wenham.

There already was a site in the westside of Wenham, just off of Topsfield Road, and down from Cherry Street and behind Eaton Road. But, it was just a field where the kids would come to play.

The people on the west side of Topsfield Road had been coming to the selectmen, for many years, asking that there be a playground, in their part of Wenham.

In October, 1976, as part of the bicentennial project, a three-acre section of the old Higginson land, then owned by the Massachusetts Audubon Society was acquired by a "friendly" eminent domain for the purpose of establishing a "more formal playground." The property had a tennis court, playground equipment and a baseball field.

The playground is called, by some, Higginson Memorial Park. There should be a sign at the field that lets people know that it's the Higginson Memorial Park.

1979 – The **town budget**, for the first time ever, was less than it had been the previous year. The recommended budget for 1979-80 was \$1,996,165, a decrease of \$65,537.⁹⁸



1973 Selectmen, right to left, Marjorie Davis, Al Dodge, and Robert Spofford.
Photo Wenham Town Records

1979 – Wenham’s Main Street Cemetery was enlarged with the purchase of half an acre on the south side from Frederick Batchelder. ⁸⁹

1980 – Implementation of Proposition 2-½ was the single biggest program the Wenham selectmen handled, in the twentieth century.

Mass Gen Laws Ch 59, paragraph 21c, limits property tax increases, by Massachusetts municipalities. Passed in 1980 and put into effect in 1982, Proposition 2-1/2 limits to 2.5% the annual increase in taxes, which a municipality is permitted. ⁹⁰

Proposition 2-½, passed, in 1980, by a majority of almost two to one (1,243 yes and 687 no). The tax limit did not take effect until 1982. ¹⁰²

1980 – A cluster-zoning by-law change was passed at the Town Meeting (112 to 20), well above the two-thirds vote required. Open Space Residential Development (OSRD) allowed cluster zoning of one or two-family units on lots above 15,000 sq. ft. Previously, the minimum lot size was 40,000 sq ft.

Al supported the OSRD because housing was needed for older residents that did not want to leave town. They could sell their homes, which had high taxes, and stay in Wenham and pay lower taxes.

1981 – A merger of police departments of Hamilton and Wenham was brought before the Board of Selectmen, in both towns. Hamilton’s selectmen strongly supported the merger. Wenham’s selectmen were not willing to rush ahead, but thought the matter required a lot of study.



Al walking through Dodge Cemetery, 2011.
Photo J. Hauck 2011

1982 – At the May Town Meeting, Al was re-elected.

1982 – Consolidation of the entire school systems, in both towns, which had begun in 1981 by the Regional School Committee, moved near completion.

1982 – A police department merger was once again proposed by the Hamilton Selectmen.

At the end of discussions between the two boards, the same decision was reached as had been reached the previous year.

1983 – The push for senior housing did not die with failure of the multi-family by-law change. A group of

concerned citizens, from Wenham and Hamilton, formed a committee to search for a property where senior housing could be built. Al was a member of the LOFE Board of Directors.

Actually, the committee had been formed a few years earlier, by some members of Christ Church. In 1983, more people, from both Hamilton and Wenham joined. We called our group the LOFE committee. LOFE standing for 'Living Options for Elders.'

Finally, LOFE selected the Charles Malkemus property, on Main Street. It had been vacant for about a year and the asking price was low.

In 1988, after a Town Meeting approved the senior housing complex on Main Street. The Maples was built by Jim Brady."

In early 1983, while in the first year of his fourth term as a selectman, Al decided that it was time for him to leave the Board of Selectmen.

In May, William Shailor, who lived over on Great Pond Road, ran and was elected to serve the balance of Al's term.

Al's leaving the Wenham Board of Selectmen was not the end of Dodges being on the Board. Win Dodge, Al's son, was elected to the Wenham Board. He served two three-year terms.

Since the first Wenham Board of Selectmen, in 1642, thirty one Dodges have been Board members. They served a total of 156 years.

A walking history book

On Mar. 25, 1997, Betty Dodge died. She and Al had lived at 187 Main St. since 1940. The house had been the summer residence of the Wallis family, after they had moved to Evanston, Illinois in 193?. They rented the house at 185 Main St., for many years.

About six months after Betty's death, Al moved next door, to live with Susan and her husband, Doug. They had moved to 185 Main in 1994, from Manchester.

In 1969, after selling Dodge Associates to Carpenter and Costin, Al started a tree and shrub nursery, on the property behind 185 Main. He just had to keep involved with trees.

Windover Development purchased the property and built the senior housing development, called The Boulders.



This one was planted before his time. Photo J. Hauck, 2011

Today, when you enter The Boulders, you go along Wallis Drive, which was named after the Wallis family.

One might think that Al Dodge, at the age of eighty-three, was settling into retirement.

Yes, he was, but he also was recognized as a valuable source of historical information. His memory was excellent. His health was good. And, he still had a drive to be active.

He would remain Wenham's Tree Warden until 2004. He was a member of the Iron Rail Commission, until 2011.

Wenham's Tax Assessor often would call upon Al to tell him about the history of various properties. When a selectman, Al led the annual walks of the town's boundaries, for only he knew where the markers were located.

Various groups would invite him to give talks about specific aspects of Wenham's history.

He guided groups on walks through the great swamp, describing the swamp's importance to the early growth of the town. The swamp, with its original character still in place, was perhaps Al's favorite area in town.

He led tours of Main Street, on which he gave the history of the oldest houses and various events that had occurred along the central artery. These history walks were a continuation of walks led in the past by Rupert Lillie.



In 2010, Dodge received the Rotary Club's Paul Harris designation in recognition of his many years of service to Hamilton and Wenham
Photo J. Hauck 2011

There did not seem to be an old house in Wenham for which Al did not have some interesting and often amusing story to tell. He also knew about the old houses that had been taken down.

Dodge knew all the key people that had influenced Wenham's growth in the 20th century.

On May 28, 2010, at a meeting of the Hamilton-Wenham Rotary Club, Dodge was honored with the National Hall of Leadership Award, given in honor of the 100th anniversary of the Boy Scouts of America. In addition, he was awarded the Rotary Club's Paul Harris designation in recognition of his many years of service to Hamilton and Wenham.

Having been the Tree Warden for sixty years, Al had a wealth of information about the town's trees, including the great many that were planted in memory of specific townspeople. Nearly all were planted by Dodge.

So, where is the Al Dodge tree?



Remembering the past.
Photo J. Hauck 2009

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