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Register of Deeds

# Worcester Registry of Deeds

# Newsletter

Inaugural Issue, October 2020

Central Massachusetts is made up of a complex, diverse and forward-thinking people, but we all embrace our history and tradition. We are all storytellers and we love to share our experiences.

We have been through a difficult 7 months, but have done so together. Navigating a pandemic has been a true test for us all. It has been a time to reflect on our daily rituals, amend our approach to activities and consider new avenues of education and entertainment.

At the Worcester District Registry of Deeds, we have been brainstorming how to celebrate our communities and share our resources. Today we launch our newsletter to share the local facts, records and information that explain our county's land. The Registry of Deeds is the holder of all records regarding land in our district. We plan to spotlight and celebrate the history and cultures that are the fabric of our district, with a foundation based on the region's land and title. Our Registry includes 55 cities and towns, all of which are in Worcester County. Each issue of our newsletter will highlight a different town, city or region of the county.

We hope you enjoy our research and the information shared in each issue and expand your knowledge of our beautiful Worcester County.

## What's Inside?

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## Community Statistics

Number of Recordings in September  
**161**

Contributions to the CPA in September  
**\$109K**

Homes Owned vs. Rented  
**94%**

% Increase in 2020 Home Prices  
**+9%**

Density (Houses per Square Mile)  
**72**

# Town Spotlight

## Fruitlands Museum

# Harvard

By Christine Metzger

One of the most famous sights in Harvard is the Fruitland's Museum, with credit thanks to author Louisa May Alcott, who lived there with her family for a period in 1843. Louisa May Alcott is likely best known for her popular novel, *Little Women*. Another of her pieces, *Transcendental Wild Oats*, is specifically about her time and experiences living at the Fruitland's.



Photo courtesy of The Trustees

Less known is that various other famous individuals owned and lived at the farmhouse. Amos Bronson Alcott, Louisa's father, was a reformer and decided to start a utopian commune with one of his followers, Charles Lane. In 1843, Samuel J. May, uncle to Louisa May Alcott, acted as an agent for Charles Lane to purchase the Fruitland's for \$1,800. This sale is recorded in the Worcester Registry of Deeds [Book 380, Pages 306 - 307](#).

The Fruitland's was a group of Transcendentalist thinkers, striving to create a society living pure and spiritual lives. They did not eat animals, nor use their labor or any animal byproducts. In addition, they did not use artificial light or bathe with hot water. In addition, there were other strict guidelines that the individuals had to abide by. The commune was not overly successful and only lasted seven months.

“They did not eat animals, nor use their labor or any animal byproducts. In addition, they did not use artificial light or bathe with hot water.”

The failed community was sold off to another Transcendentalist—Ralph Waldo Emerson, who, after a short while, sold it to Joseph Palmer—a member of the original commune run by Alcott and Lane. Palmer, famous for facing persecution for sporting a beard earlier in his life, used the farm as another utopian society, a refuge for former reformers. The property eventually made its way to Clara Endicott Sears—author, preservationist, and philanthropist.

It was Clara Endicott Sears who created the Fruitland's Museum, including putting the Shaker Home on the property along with the Native American Museum. On April 1, 1930 she sold the property to the Fruitland's & Wayside Museums Inc. and it is recorded in the Worcester Registry of Deeds [Book 2522, Pages 189 - 190](#).

# Community Preservation Act

The Community Preservation Act (CPA) is a smart growth tool that helps communities preserve open space and historic sites, create affordable housing, and develop outdoor recreational facilities. CPA also helps strengthen the state and local economies by expanding housing opportunities and construction jobs for the Commonwealth's workforce, and by supporting the tourism industry through preservation of the Commonwealth's historic and natural resources.

Community preservation monies are raised locally through the imposition of a surcharge of not more than 3% of the tax levy against real property, and municipalities must adopt CPA by ballot referendum. To date, 177 municipalities, including 14 in Worcester County, have adopted CPA.

For more information about the CPA, please visit their website:

<https://www.communitypreservation.org/about>

## VOTE 2020!

As a reminder, Election Day is Tuesday, November 3, however it actually represents the **LAST** day that you can vote in Massachusetts. With absentee and early voting options,

voting has already begun in most towns. No matter what, voters can cast their ballots in ways that can keep them safe and comfortable this November.

## J U M B L E

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One of the best ways is voting by mail. Voting by mail is available to all voters for all elections in 2020. Instructions for mail-in voting can be found on the Secretary's website:

<https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/elev/early-voting-by-mail.htm>

Besides election day, all towns will have early in-person voting available. Please check with your town for availability, times and locations:

<https://www.sec.state.ma.us/earlyvotingweb/earlyvotingsearch.aspx>

See the Secretary of the Commonwealth's Election Updates page for more information:

<https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/covid-19/covid-19.htm>



'Tis the season