

Cheers for Parmenter

Parmenter is a well-known name in Wayland, thanks to our widely respected community health care agency which bears that name. The story of how this organization came about also bears telling.

It starts with the birth of Jonathan Maynard Parmenter in 1831. He and his brother Henry Dana descended from a farming family that had been in town for eight generations. Both lifelong bachelors, they carried on in the tradition of their forebears "rising

WAYLAND BY THE WAY

BY SUSAN L. WAGNER

at five, going to bed at nine, and tending strictly to business in the hours in between."

Jonathan traveled around town in an old horse and buggy, could often be seen driving his cattle through clouds of dust, and once startled an employee of the venerable Harvard Trust Company in Cambridge, when, after showing in up in tattered work clothes with manure on his shoes, he sat down on a bench, opened a paper bag, and proceeded to eat a sandwich.

The brothers were also friendly with a summer resident of Weston, banker Willard A. Bullard, who gave the two men sage investment advice. After Henry died in 1907, Jonathan became the sole heir of the family fortune and estate, which was quietly growing by leaps and bounds.

During the last decade of his life, Jonathan became concerned about what to do with all of his money. Eventually, he determined to leave much of it for the benefit of Wayland

in particular and his fellow man in general.

Upon his death in 1921, the community was shocked to learn the soft-spoken and frugal farmer was worth \$1.5 million.

"They'd be surprised," Jonathan had predicted on his deathbed. And he was right.

Jonathan left money to some of his cousins and their children as well as to Bullard's widow, as a token of gratitude for the sound advice he had received over the years. He also endowed scholarships at Harvard and Radcliffe and installed a water supply in part of Wayland.

But his most prominent legacy here in town is the nonprofit Parmenter Community Health Care center located in a modest one-story building on Cochituate Road.

Initially, the organization provided a range of clinics, community education programs and visiting nurses. Today, it has evolved into what is primarily a home health care agency. Other services include hospice at home and a hospice residence, a food pantry, and bereavement support.

Parmenter reaches out for financial help from the community only once a year, and it is doing so now. This time, they're highlighting the following three specific services, the first of which is brand new, as especially deserving of your attention:

Telehealth and telemonitoring units will help in overseeing cardiac and respiratory home care patients on a regular basis. Compact, user-friendly digital monitoring units are placed in patients' homes. Each unit is wirelessly connected to a blood



The old Parmenter Homestead.

pressure pump, an oxygen saturation monitoring device and a weight scale. After receiving simple instructions, patients and family members can use this equipment every day. The monitoring results are forwarded automatically to one of Parmenter's nurses, who makes sure they're not outside of expected ranges.

Wayside Hospice services are for hospice patients both at home and at Parmenter's Parlin House Hospice Residence in the premises of Traditions of Wayland.

HEART Play is Wayside Hospice's award-winning free outreach that uses the creative arts to help children and teens cope with the illness or death of a loved one.

If you can make a donation to help this fine organization stay strong and move forward, send your tax-deductible contribution to Parmenter at 266 Cochituate Road, Wayland MA 01778.

Susan L. Wagner can be reached at "susanwgnr@gmail.com". Thanks to Evelyn Wolfson and Dick Hoyt, editors of "Wayland A-Z," for much of the historical information in this column.

This article was reprinted from The Town Crier with permission.