

# Chelmsford: Stedman or Steadman Street? Examine the Evidence. You Decide.

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John Langner, December 2020

There has long been confusion about the spelling of Stedman (or Steadman) Street in Chelmsford, Massachusetts. Which spelling is correct? Where did the other spelling come from? (page 36) Why does the confusion persist?

This is what my research revealed. If you are in a hurry, you can get the most important points by reading the first and last pages. You will surely want to go back and read the whole story.

Places using **Stedman**: (starting on page 2)

- Google Maps, OpenStreetMap, Apple maps, Map Quest, Bing Maps, Rand McNally, U.S. Geological Survey, Here We Go, Via Michelin, Waze, Roadtrippers, TomTom GPS, "The Town Book" (telephone book), **Official Chelmsford GIS town maps**.
- Business Signs. **Property deeds**.
- Driver's License and car registration.
- Bills from Town Hall: Real Estate Tax, Car Tax, Water.
- **History of Chelmsford**, by Wilson Waters, 1917, covering Colonial times into early 20<sup>th</sup> Century.
- **History of Chelmsford 1910-1970**, by Eleanor Parkhurst, edited by Fred Merriam, 2011.
- Numerous Chelmsford historical documents including 1900 recording in the Book of Roads.
- Lists of residents compiled by the Chelmsford Registrars of Voters.
- Three **Stedman** families lived on the street late 1800s and early 1900s. Genealogical records indicate the street was named after one of them, John G. Stedman.
- The street name sign at Westford St.
- The street name sign at Chelmsford St - sometimes yes, sometimes no.

Places using **Steadman**: (starting on page 32)

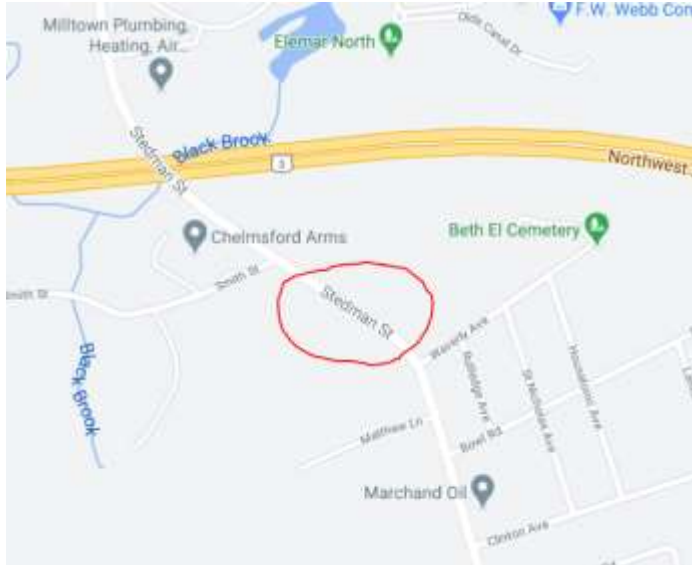
- Some of my mail - mostly the junk mail.
- The street name sign at Chelmsford St - sometimes yes, sometimes no.

In the following pages, we will dig into the historical records to discover the reason why there is some confusion about the spelling. It will become clear that the "Steadman" spelling is the result of a careless mistake and some questionable record keeping in 1926. Almost everyone realized that spelling was bogus and continued using the original "Stedman" name.

# Places using Stedman St

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Google Maps <https://www.google.com/maps/@42.6209895,-71.347869,16z>



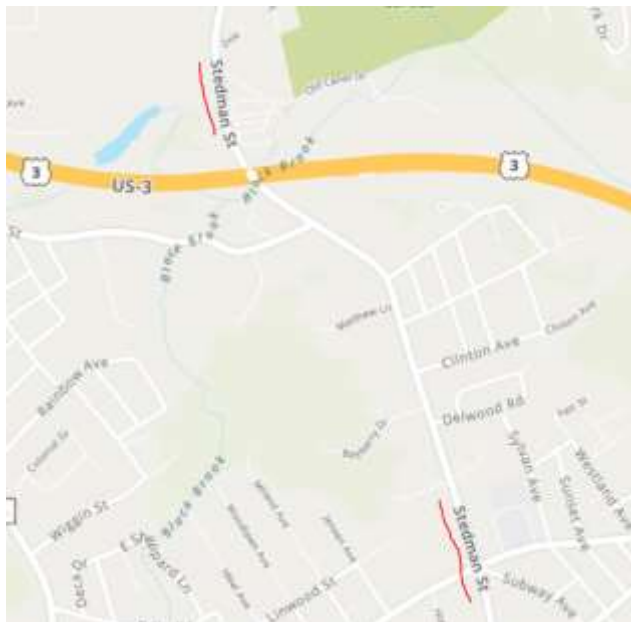
OpenStreetMap <https://www.openstreetmap.org/#map=16/42.6222/-71.3513>



## Apple maps



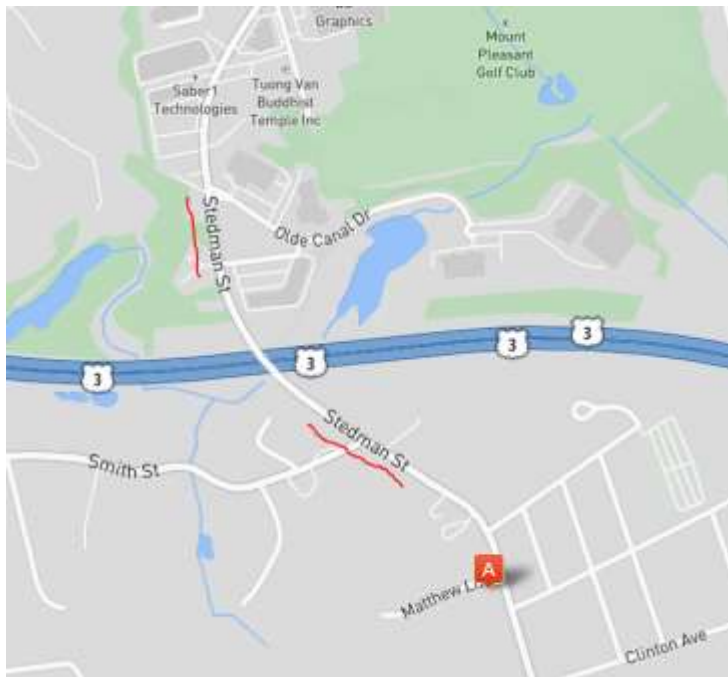
Map Quest <https://www.mapquest.com/embed?center=42.61939413974092,-71.34916305541992&zoom=15&motype=map>



**Bing Maps** <https://www.bing.com/maps/embed?h=400&w=500&cp=42.62073278964417~-71.34993660106616&lvl=15&typ=s&sty=r&src=SHELL&FORM=MBEDV8>

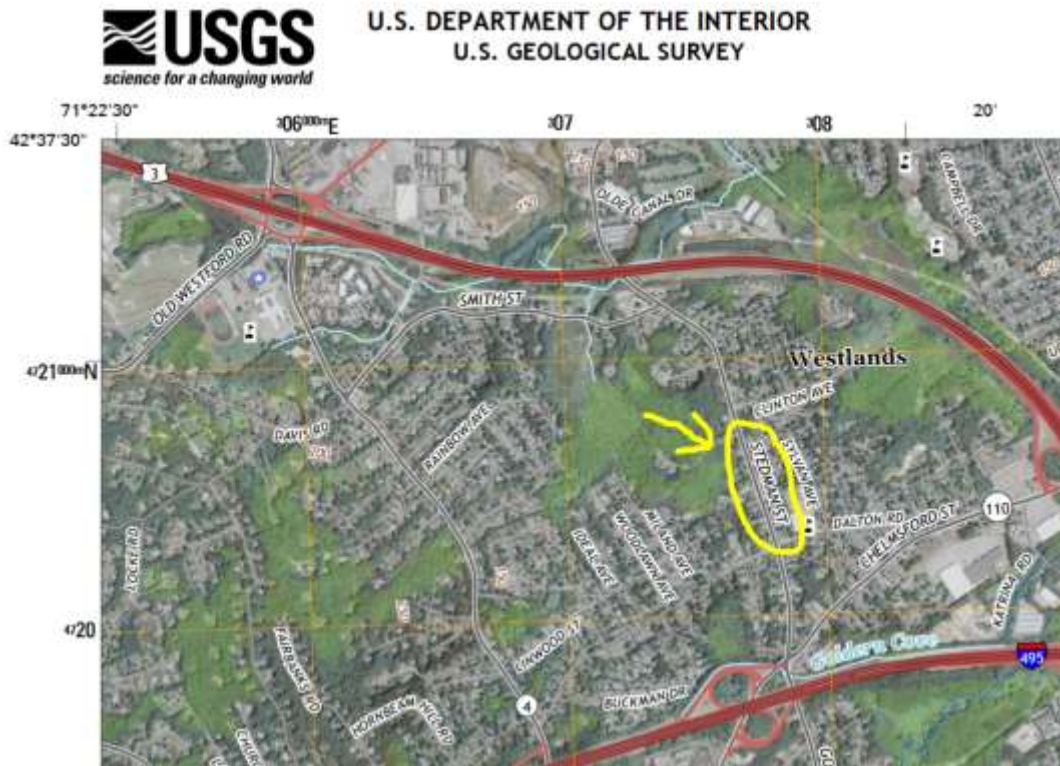


**Rand McNally** <http://maps.randmcnally.com/>



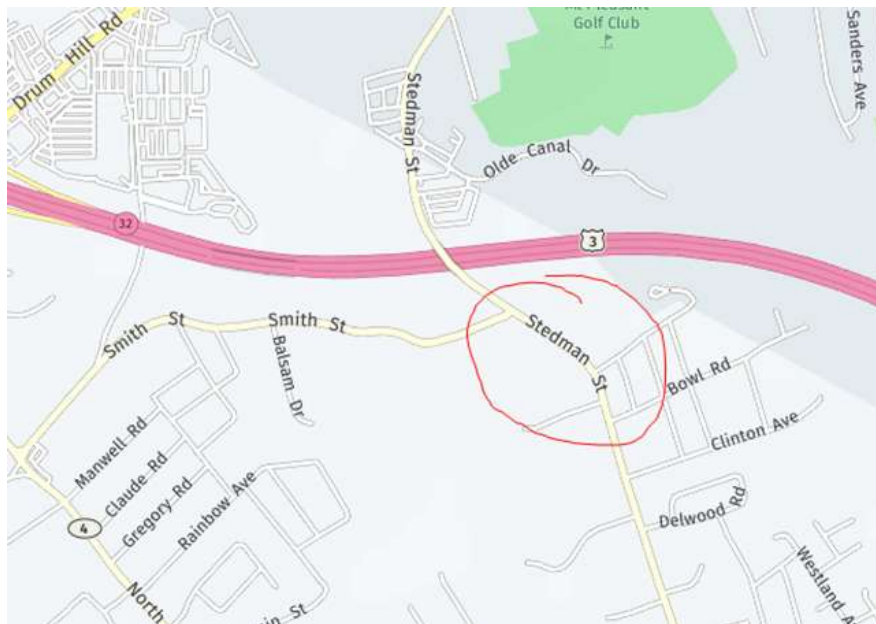
United States Geological Survey.

[http://www.chelmsfordgov.com/CHCwebsite/PDF\\_files/USGS\\_2015\\_SouthEast.pdf](http://www.chelmsfordgov.com/CHCwebsite/PDF_files/USGS_2015_SouthEast.pdf)

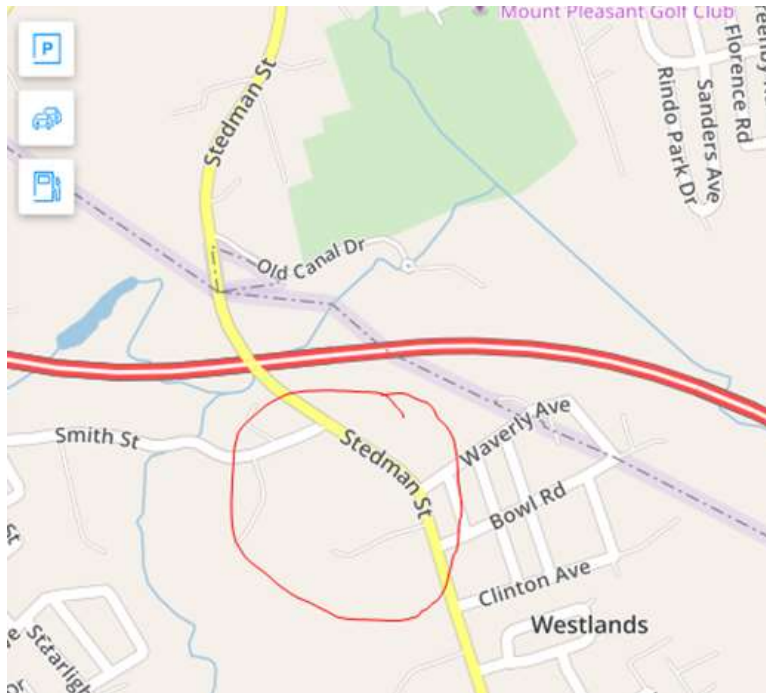


Same in 2012 map: [http://www.chelmsfordgov.com/CHCwebsite/PDF\\_files/USGS\\_2012\\_SouthEast.pdf](http://www.chelmsfordgov.com/CHCwebsite/PDF_files/USGS_2012_SouthEast.pdf)

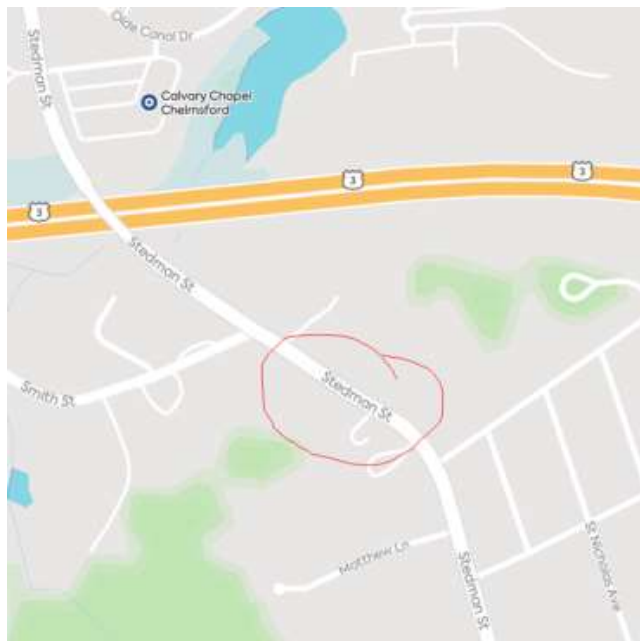
Here We Go <https://wego.here.com/?map=42.6115,-71.3309,15,normal>



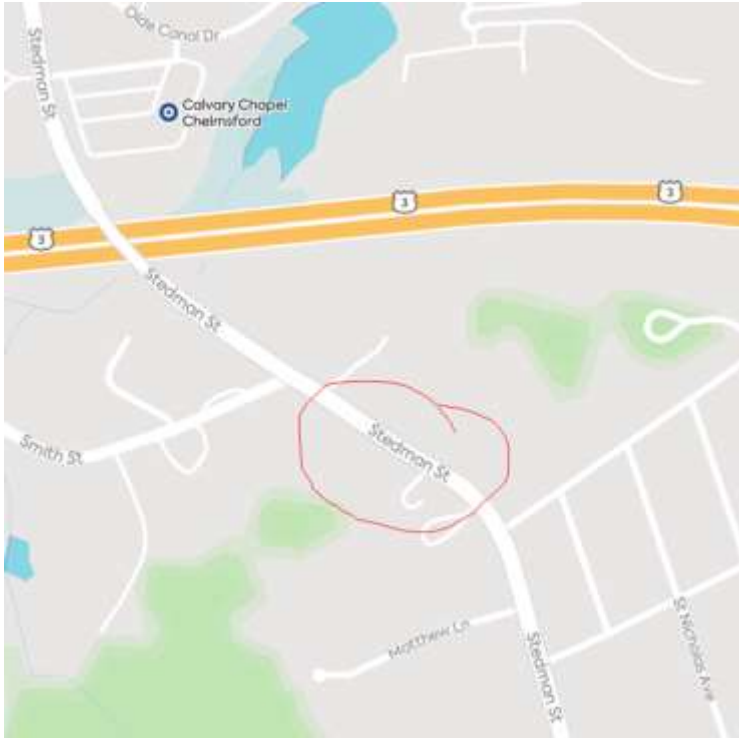
Via Michelin <https://www.viamichelin.com/>



Waze <https://www.waze.com/>



Roadtrippers <https://maps.roadtrippers.com/?lng=-71.34918032096755&lat=42.615950269071305&z=15.559793893399803>

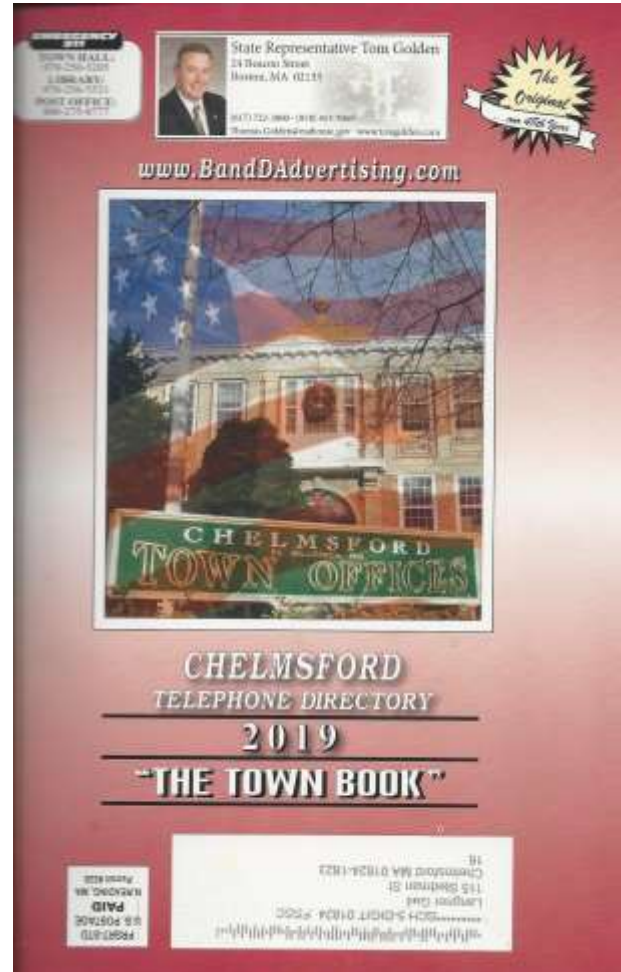


TomTom GPS navigation system



This is the only paper map I could find at home.

The mailing label, address listings inside, and the map in the back all use the same spelling.



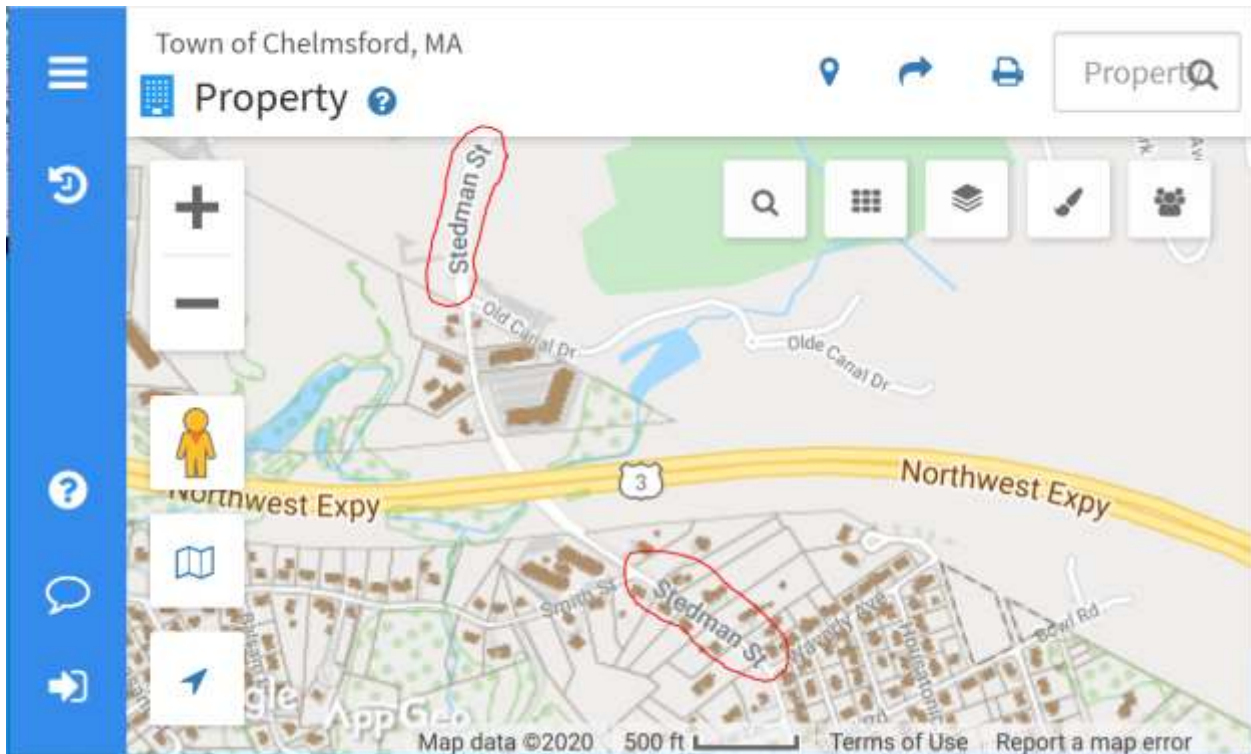


Last, but certainly not least, **Town of Chelmsford official Geographic Information System (GIS) map.**

<https://chelmsfordma.mapgeo.io/>

### GIS Mapping

This link will provide information individual properties and a variety of layered maps such as; topography, open space, land conservation, zoning and districts, historic & cultural resources, water and wetland resources



All of the modern maps, that I could find, have the same spelling.

The name does not change when going over the town line.

## Historical Maps

Chelmsford Water District 1939

[http://www.chelmsfordgov.com/CHCwebsite/PDF\\_files/1939WaterlineMap.pdf](http://www.chelmsfordgov.com/CHCwebsite/PDF_files/1939WaterlineMap.pdf)



Chelmsford Water District 1956

[http://www.chelmsfordgov.com/CHCwebsite/PDF\\_files/1956WaterlineMap.pdf](http://www.chelmsfordgov.com/CHCwebsite/PDF_files/1956WaterlineMap.pdf)



All of the signs on the Chelmsford side of the town line have the same spelling.



Across the town line, there are many other signs, all with the same spelling. Here are just a few.



All of these, and others, are in 100% agreement about the spelling.

**Car Tax Bill** --- Same address on Driver's License and car registration

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

**TAXPAYER'S COPY**  
DO NOT MAIL CASH

**MAIL PAYMENTS TO:**  
Town of Chelmsford  
PO Box 100  
Chelmsford, MA 01824

**CALENDAR YEAR - 2020**

COLLECTOR OF TAXES JOHN B. SOUSA		DATE OF ISSUE 02/14/20	BILL NUMBER 17103
REGISTRATION	TAX DATE 01/01	MODEL YEAR 2002	MAKE TOYT
VALUATION 1256	VEHICLE IDENTIFICATION NO.	EXCISE DUE 31.40	

STATE EXCISE RATE \$25.00 PER 1000

**NOTICE OF MOTOR VEHICLE AND TRAILER EXCISE FOR THE YEAR 2020 DUE AND PAYABLE WITHIN 30 DAYS OF ISSUE**

2020-01  
PAS 585

LANGNER, JOHN W  
115 STEDMAN ST  
CHELMSFORD, MA 01824-1823

ABATEMENT	
INTEREST	
DEMAND	
CHARGES	
<b>TOTAL DUE</b>	<b>31.40</b>

Due Date - 03/17/20


**TAXPAYER'S COPY**


03 20 017103 0000003140 031720 00000031403

**Water Bill**

Chelmsford Water District  
20 Watershed Lane  
Chelmsford, MA 01824  
000001 0000320  
Administration: 978-256-2381  
Operations: 978-256-2931  
Monday - Friday, 8:00AM - 4:00PM

SCH 5-DIGIT 01821  
John Langner  
115 STEDMAN ST  
CHELMSFORD, MA 01824-1823





**CHELMSFORD WATER DISTRICT**

Please include Account Number on Check  
Account Number: 710

Current Charges	
Credits	\$0.00
Prior Balance	\$0.00
Interest	\$0.00
<b>Total Due</b>	
<b>Due Date</b>	<b>10/31/2020</b>

Account #	Service Location	Parcel Identifier	Issue Date	Due Date
710	115 STEDMAN ST	.75	09/22/2020	10/31/2020
Meter Readings		Usage Summary		New Charge Summary

A few examples of town **Real Estate Tax bills** -- Always "Stedman"

**FISCAL YEAR 2002 PRELIMINARY REAL ESTATE TAX BILL**  
 Based on assessments as of January 1, 2001 your Real Estate Tax for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2001 and ending June 30, 2002 on the parcel of Real Estate described below is as follows:

**TAXPAYER'S COPY**

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
 OFFICE OF THE COLLECTOR OF TAXES  
**TOWN OF CHELMSFORD**  
 COLLECTOR OF TAXES  
**CHARLES F. MANSFIELD**

Interest at the rate of 14% per annum will accrue on overdue payments from the due date until payment is made.

**FISCAL YEAR 2002 PRELIMINARY REAL ESTATE TAX BILL**

**Bill No 3290**

PROPERTY IDENTIFICATION				
Location	115 STEDMAN ST			
Map	33	Block	120	Lot 3
Book	02497	Page	0230	Deed Date 8/28/1981

LANGNER JOHN W  
 GAIL P  
 115 STEDMAN ST  
 CHELMSFORD MA 01824

Preliminary Tax:	
Current Payments/ Credits	\$0.00
1st Payment Due 8/1/2001	
2nd Payment Due 11/1/2001	
<b>Amount Due 8/1/2001:</b>	

1 058 2002 03290000 4 0000103675 4

Based on assessments as of January 1, 2011, your Real Estate Tax for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2011 and ending June 30, 2012 on the parcel of real estate described below is as follows:

**Town of Chelmsford  
 Fiscal Year 2012 3rd Quarter  
 Actual Real Estate Tax Bill**

**3rd Quarter Receipt  
 Keep This Portion For Your Receipt**

Make this the last bill you get in the mail  
 Sign up for Paperless Billing Today  
 Pay Online! [www.townofchelmsford.us](http://www.townofchelmsford.us)

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION	
115 STEDMAN ST	
Land Area	2.24 AC
Parcel ID	33/120/3
Deed Date	08/28/1981
Book	02497
Page	0230
<b>Tax Rate Per \$1,000</b>	<b>\$17.49</b>

Assessed owner as of January 1, 2011:  
 LANGNER JOHN W  
 GAIL P  
 115 STEDMAN ST  
 CHELMSFORD, MA 01824

Special Assessments		
Class	Assessed	Tax Value
101 B		
101 L		

Account Number	3290
Real Estate Tax	
Community Preservation Fund	
Special Assessments	\$0.00
Subtotal	
Preliminary Tax/CPF	
Payments	
Abatement/Exemptions	\$0.00
4th Qtr. Installment Due 05/01/2012	
Past Due	\$0.00
Interest	\$0.00
3rd Qtr. Tax/CPF Due: 02/01/2012	
<b>AMOUNT DUE 02/01/2012</b>	

TAXPAYER COPY

Interest at the rate of 14% per annum will accrue on overdue payments from the due date until payment is made.

01 12 113067 0000145434 020112 00001454349

**TOWN OF CHELMSFORD**

**Bill #: 3290**

**TAXPAYER COPY**

**FISCAL YEAR 2015 1st QTR PRELIMINARY REAL ESTATE TAX**

John Sousa, Jr. Treasurer/Collector  
 Assessed as of January 1, 2014

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION		TAX SUMMARY		Bill Date: 07/01/2014	
Owner 1	LANGNER JOHN W	Land Value		1st Quarter	
Owner 2	GAIL P	Building Value		2nd Quarter	
Location	115 STEDMAN ST	Total Taxable Value		Payments/Credits	\$0.00
Land Area	2.24 Acres	Real Estate Tax		Past Due	\$0.00
Parcel ID	33/120/3	Special Assessments		Interest	\$0.00
Book/Page	02497/0230	CPF		Penalties	\$0.00
Deed Date	08/28/1981	Exemption/Abatement	\$0.00	<b>AMOUNT DUE 08/01/2014</b>	
		Total Tax/Assessments			

LANGNER JOHN W  
 GAIL P  
 115 STEDMAN ST  
 CHELMSFORD, MA 01824

Payments made after 08/13/2014 may not be reflected on this bill.

**Pay Online**

<http://www.townofchelmsford.us>

01 15 154659 0000164507 080114 00001645077

BK2301

BK2301 PG 194

I, LUCY M. HENDERSON, individual

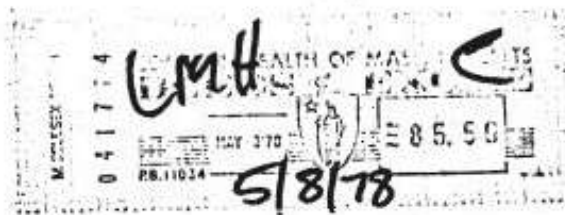
of Chelmsford, Middlesex County, Massachusetts  
in consideration of thirty-seven thousand four hundred and no/100  
(\$37,400.00) dollars

grant to LAURENCE C. JONES, JR. and LORNA J. JONES, husband and wife,  
as tenants by the entirety, both

of 121 Stedman Street, Chelmsford, Mass. WARRANTY  
with ~~express~~ covenants

the land in said Chelmsford, with the buildings thereon, situated on  
the northeasterly side of Stedman Street, and bounded and described  
as follows: Beginning at the southwesterly corner of the premises  
at a stone bound in the northeasterly line of Stedman Street, at the  
northwesterly corner of land now or formerly of Edward Drewett; thence  
northeasterly along said last mentioned land five hundred and seventy-  
nine (579) feet to land now or formerly of one Riley; thence at an  
angle of 88°5' northwesterly along land of said Riley seventy-three  
(73) feet; thence at an angle of 91°55' southwesterly still along  
land of said Riley six hundred ten (610) feet to said Stedman Street;  
thence at an angle of 65°39' southeasterly along said Stedman Street  
seventy (75) feet to the point of beginning. Containing forty-three  
thousand five hundred sixty (43560) square feet of land.

For my title see deed of George T. Little et al dated June 15, 1931  
and recorded in Middlesex North District Registry of Deeds, Book 804  
Page 542, to me and my late husband, Orrin P. Henderson, who  
deceased at said Chelmsford.



BK2497 PG 230

PROPERTY ADDRESS: 115 Stedman St., Chelmsford, Mass.

I, Linda Rondeau, of Brookline, Norfolk County, Massachusetts, Executrix

under the WILL of—

Maurice Marc Rondeau, late of Chelmsford, Middlesex County, Massachusetts, Middlesex County Probate Docket Number 535188, by power conferred by license of said Middlesex County Probate Court dated August 27, 1981,

and every other power, for Sixty-Seven Thousand Nine Hundred and 00/100----- Dollars paid, grants to John W. Langner and Gail P. Langner, husband and wife, as tenants by the entirety, both of 115 Stedman Street, Chelmsford, Middlesex County, Massachusetts,

The land in Chelmsford, Middlesex County, Massachusetts, with the buildings thereon, situated on the easterly side of Stedman Street, consisting of two certain parcels of land, bounded and described as follows:

FIRST PARCEL: Beginning at the southwesterly corner of the premises at a stone bound on the easterly side of said Stedman Street distant one hundred sixty-one and five hundredths (161.05) feet northwesterly from a stone bound established by the Town of Chelmsford in the easterly line of said Stedman Street; thence northeasterly along land of Albert C. Williams now or formerly, five hundred forty-one and sixteen hundredths (541.16) feet to a stone bound; thence at an angle of 88° 5' northwesterly along land of Patrick J. Riley, now or formerly, ninety-one and fifteen hundredths (91.15) feet to a stone bound; thence at an angle of 91° 55' southwesterly along said land now or formerly of Riley, five hundred seventy-nine and thirty-four hundredths (579.34) feet to a stone bound at said Stedman Street; thence at an angle of 65° 39' southeasterly along said Stedman Street 100 feet to the point of beginning. Containing 1.17 acres more or less and being shown on a plan of land entitled "Plan of Land in Chelmsford, Mass., belonging to Patrick J. Riley, surveyed July 1903, by Smith & Brooks, C.E.'s, Lowell, Mass.

SECOND PARCEL: Beginning at the southwesterly corner of the premises at a stone bound in the northeasterly line of said Stedman Street at the northwesterly corner of land now or formerly of Abraham Chalifoux; thence northeasterly along said last mentioned land five hundred seventy-five and thirty-four hundredths (579.34) feet to a stone bound at land of Patrick J. Riley now or formerly; thence at an angle of 88° 5' northwesterly still along said Riley's land seventy-five and twenty-nine hundredths (75.29) feet; thence at an angle of 91° 55' southwesterly still on said Riley's land six hundred ten and four hundredths (610.04) feet to said Stedman Street; thence at an angle of 65° 39' southeasterly along said Stedman Street eighty and forty hundredths (80.40) feet to the point of beginning. Containing 43,560 square feet, more or less.

For title see deed recorded in Middlesex North District Registry of Deeds, Book 2447, Page 136.

The said Maurice Marc Rondeau was also known as M. Marc Rondeau.

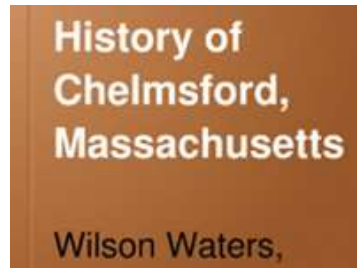




## Historical References

This book, published in 1917, covers the Colonial times into the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

[https://www.chelmhist.org/media/HistoryofChelmsfordMassachusetts\\_RevWilsonWaters.pdf](https://www.chelmhist.org/media/HistoryofChelmsfordMassachusetts_RevWilsonWaters.pdf)



Page 38:

If there were any roads laid out by the town before 1659, they are not recorded. There were, however, roads in use previous to that time. One of the first of these passed between the cemetery and common, following the line of Worthen street and Crosby place to the house of William Fletcher, some thirty rods beyond the Crosby house. Soon, if not at first, this continued toward what is now the house of Jas. L. Stearns and from there by Golden Cove road and Stedman street towards the Merrimack river.

I won't bore you with all of the places Stedman Street is mentioned. They are listed in the Index.

A snippet from an index, enclosed in a black rectangular border. The text is in a bold, black, serif font. It reads: 'Stedman Street 38, 41, 42, 55, 435, 438, 525, 526, 527, 634.'

**Stedman Street 38, 41, 42, 55,  
435, 438, 525, 526, 527,  
634.**

Three people named **Stedman** are mentioned in this book. At least one other is found in genealogical records around that time.

Dr. Jonathan Stedman (1703 - 1761)

[https://stedman.one-name.net/getperson.php?personID=I527&tree=stedman\\_main](https://stedman.one-name.net/getperson.php?personID=I527&tree=stedman_main)

<https://www.familysearch.org/tree/person/details/K8NV-2QD>

## Stedman Families on Stedman Street

In the late 1800s and early 1900s there were many people named “Stedman” on the northern part of Stedman Street which was once part of Chelmsford but is now Lowell. From the Lowell City Directories:

<https://archive.org/search.php?query=lowell+ma+directory>

1875-76

Stedman George R. carpenter, boards Baldwin, near Westford, near Chelmsford line  
 Stedman John, carpenter, house Baldwin, near Westford, near Chelmsford line  
 Stedman William, Merrimack, boards 135 do. corp.  
 Steele Leonard, Hamilton, boards 4 do. corp.

1886

Stedman Elias W. carpenter, house 17 Barclay  
 Stedman George R. (*J. G. & G. R. Stedman*), house 21 West Adams  
**STEDMAN JOHN G. & GEO. R.** contractors and builders, and dealers in real estate, 181 Wilder, house do. (see page 795)  
 Steele Leonard F. musician, house 122 Middlesex

1894

Stedman John G. contractor and builder, and dealer in real estate, 210 Wilder, house do.  
 Steele Dalis, Beatt, boards 21 Dunmer

1900

Stedman Elias, carpenter, house **Stedman street**  
 “ John, carpenter, house rear 210 Wilder  
 Steel Hannah, dressmaker, 986 Central, house do.

1906

Stedman John G carpenter 984 Middle-  
 “ Joseph printer h 51 Brookings  
 Steel Alice, Mrs. Hamilton, h 76 Union

1926

Stedman Clayton A (*Etta M*) laborer res 7 Lane-st et  
 Steel Hannah, widow, Thomas, dressmaker

Baldwin Street is just to the north of Stedman Street. This area is known as Middlesex Village because it was at the head of the Middlesex Canal. According to the Wilson Waters book, this 660 acre region was transferred from Chelmsford to Lowell in 1874.

There were 3 brothers in the construction and real estate business.

- John G. Stedman (1841-1915) <https://www.familysearch.org/tree/person/details/L4P9-LH8>  
[https://stedman.one-name.net/getperson.php?personID=I26039&tree=stedman\\_main](https://stedman.one-name.net/getperson.php?personID=I26039&tree=stedman_main)
- George R. Stedman (1847-?) <https://www.familysearch.org/tree/person/details/LZD7-MVK>  
[https://stedman.one-name.net/getperson.php?personID=I24162&tree=stedman\\_main](https://stedman.one-name.net/getperson.php?personID=I24162&tree=stedman_main)
- Elias W. Stedman (1851-?) <https://www.familysearch.org/tree/person/details/MCRD-ZS4>  
[https://stedman.one-name.net/getperson.php?personID=I724&tree=stedman\\_main](https://stedman.one-name.net/getperson.php?personID=I724&tree=stedman_main)

Along with wives and children, there were a lot of Stedmans around that time.

Patricia, great granddaughter of John G. Stedman, reported in 2003:

*I just got off the phone with my Dad. ... He filled me in with some more info.:*

*His grandfather was not a Mill owner but a "contractor" you were right. He donated land to Lowell thinking the land was Useless. Hence **Stedman street**. ...*

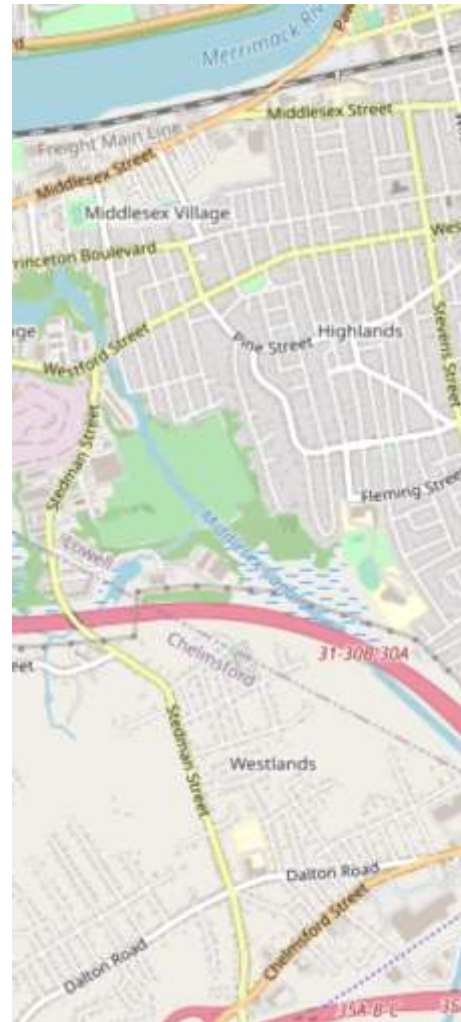
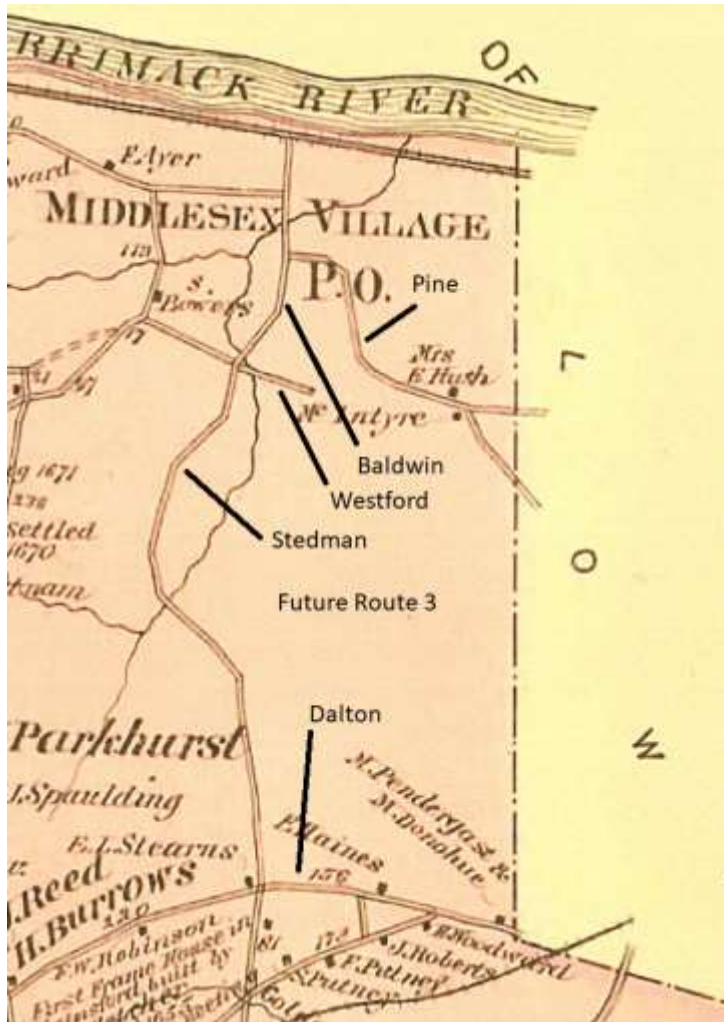
That all fits together. The Wilson Waters book refers to this area as "Great Swamp." It is now the site of a garbage dump landfill.

## When did Stedman St get its name?

Below is part of a map from around the time of interest. There is no date on the map but the file name contains 1875. It must have been before that because Middlesex Village was part of Chelmsford.

From [http://www.chelmsfordgov.com/CHCwebsite/PDF\\_files/1875Chelmsford.pdf](http://www.chelmsfordgov.com/CHCwebsite/PDF_files/1875Chelmsford.pdf)

and today from Open Street Map

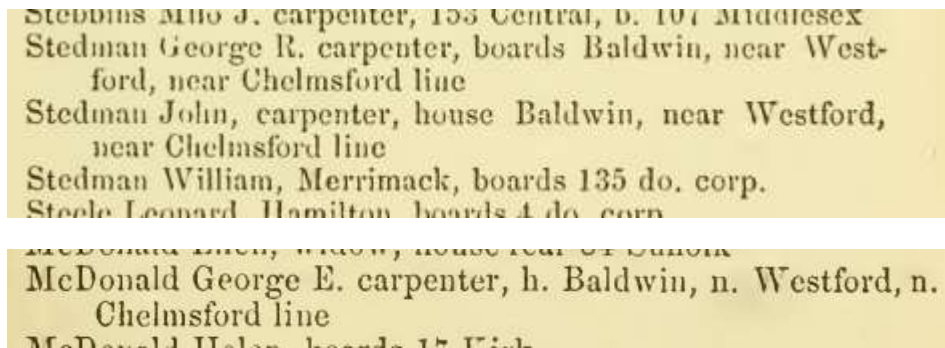


Notice the shape of Baldwin St which is a little different than today. At the time the southern part bent and lined up with the northern end of what we now call Stedman. It was a main road, not side streets off Westford. This will help us to interpret the list of residents.

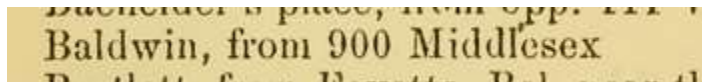
*“Baldwin street was then the main road to Boston, via Golden Cove and Chelmsford ....”*

- History of Chelmsford, Waters & Perham, page 480.

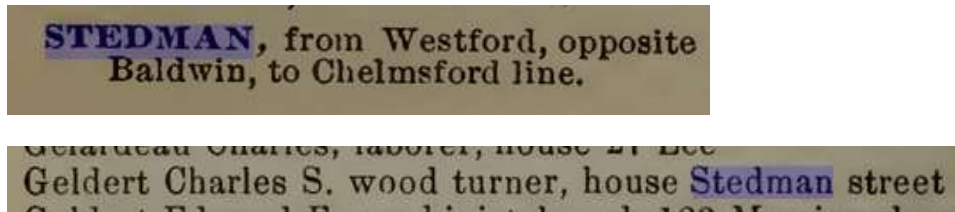
In the **1875-76** Directory, we find a couple mentions of Baldwin near Chelmsford line. This would be south of Westford St, i.e. present day Stedman.



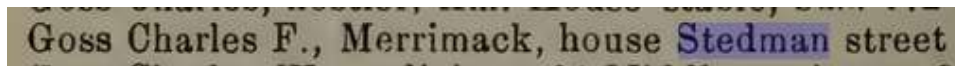
The Directory has a starting point for Baldwin but there is no mention of how far it extends. There are people listed near the Chelmsford line so it looks like the same name was used past Westford as implied by Waters & Perham.



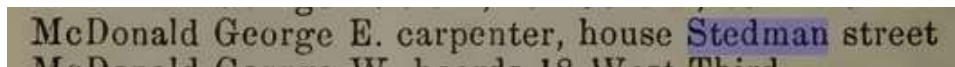
In the **1886** Directory, we find a description for Stedman Street and three residents.



Charles Goss is listed with address 203 in later years. This location is now occupied by the “Stedman Park” industrial buildings.



George McDonald was previously described as being at “Baldwin, n. Westford, n. Chelmsford line.” Now it says Stedman Street.



From this we can conclude that **Stedman Street** name began somewhere in the range of 1876 to 1886. Even though we haven't found a Directory listing with John and George on Stedman Street, that's where they were before the name. If we could find another Directory, in that time range, we should find the Stedman brothers residing on Stedman Street before they moved to Wilder.

A more recent *History of Chelmsford* has these, and other, references to Stedman St.

[http://www.chelmsfordgov.com/CHCwebsite/PDF\\_files/History\\_of\\_Chelmsford.pdf](http://www.chelmsfordgov.com/CHCwebsite/PDF_files/History_of_Chelmsford.pdf)

# HISTORY of CHELMSFORD 1910-1970

ELEANOR PARKHURST

Published by the Chelmsford Historical Commission  
for the Town of Chelmsford

Edited by Fred Merriam

Printed by Courier Corporation, North Chelmsford, MA

## WESTLANDS FIRE STATION

In May, 1914, a special Town Meeting voted \$600 "for fire hose and equipment, the same to be located in that part of Chelmsford known as the Westlands." The expenditures from this appropriation included lumber, (\$82.66); construction labor (\$38.01); apparatus (\$468.40); and painting labor (\$10.35) for a total of \$599.42. The 1914 appraisal of the "Westlands Fire Apparatus" was as follows:

Quantity	Item	Value
1	Hose reel equipment	\$75
500 feet	2.5 inch Hose	300
1	Boston play pipe	15
1	Callahan nozzle	15
6	Chemicals	40
1	Hydrant gate	9
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$454</b>

The building sheltering this equipment was on **Stedman** Street, about midway between the Chelmsford Street intersection and what was in 1970 the **Stedman** Street School at 12 **Stedman** St., and it was about the size of a one-car garage.



Rt. 110 looking toward **Stedman** Street Rt. 495 overpass under construction, 1959

Other historical records. [http://www.chelmsfordgov.com/CHCwebsite/PDF\\_files/Stedman\\_12.pdf](http://www.chelmsfordgov.com/CHCwebsite/PDF_files/Stedman_12.pdf)

**FORM B - BUILDING**

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
Office of the Secretary, State House, Boston

In Area no.	Form no.
	215



1. Town Chelmsford  
 Address 12 Stedman Street  
 Name Golden Cove School  
 Present use office-school lunch program

Present owner Town of Chelmsford

3. Description:  
 Date 1896  
 Source deed, town reports  
 Style \_\_\_\_\_

Architect Merrill & Cutler

Exterior wall fabric clapboard

Outbuildings (describe) none

Other features \_\_\_\_\_

Builder - A. W. Holt

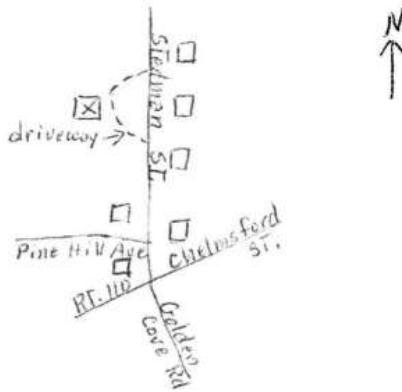
Altered \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Moved no Date \_\_\_\_\_

5. Lot size:  
21,775 sq. ft.  
 One acre or less x Over one acre  
 Approximate frontage 167.5 feet  
 Approximate distance of building from street  
ca 55 feet

6. Recorded by Jane B. Drury  
 Organization Chelmsford Hist. Commission  
 Date November 20, 1976

4. Map. Draw sketch of building location in relation to nearest cross streets and other buildings. Indicate north.



DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE  
 USGS Quadrant \_\_\_\_\_  
 MHC Photo no. \_\_\_\_\_

Another example: Butters House, 34 Stedman St., recorded in 1980.  
[http://www.chelmsfordgov.com/CHCwebsite/PDF\\_files/Stedman\\_34.pdf](http://www.chelmsfordgov.com/CHCwebsite/PDF_files/Stedman_34.pdf)

Documents from the Chelmsford Historical Commission use the "Stedman" spelling.

1900

Town Meeting

Article 22. To see if the town will vote to accept the town-way known as Stedman street as widened and straightened by the Selectmen, extending southerly from the boundary line between Lowell and Chelmsford to the County road leading from Lowell to Chelmsford Centre. All land necessary for widening given.

The following documents were sent to me by the Town Clerk.

Town way from Stedman Street Southerly. Recorded in Book of Roads.

1900  
Town way  
from  
Stedman Street  
Southerly  
=  
Recorded in Book of Roads  
Page 236  
Return to  
Town Clerk



Selectmen plan to take land to widen and straighten Stedman St.

Chelmsford Mass. March 10, 1900  
We, the Selectmen of the town of Chelmsford  
having complied with the requirements of the  
law in relation to notifying the owners of land  
taken to widen and straighten the town way, known  
as Stedman Street, extending southerly from the  
boundary line between Lowell and Chelmsford  
to the County road leading from Lowell to Chelms-  
ford Centre, and no objection having been made,  
have laid out said town way, and

March 13, 1900

~~Description of Stedman Street in Chelmsford, Mass., extending southerly from the boundary line between Lowell and Chelmsford to the County Road leading from Lowell to Chelmsford at Golden Cove Brook.~~

The westerly line of the street is described as follows, viz:

Beginning at a stone bound at the boundary line between Lowell and Chelmsford, which stone bound is on the westerly side and at the southerly terminus of Stedman Street as laid out by the City of Lowell; thence south  $2^{\circ} 19'$  west  $38 \frac{10}{100}$  feet by land of Mrs. Samuel Tyler to a stone bound; thence south  $6^{\circ} 2'$  west  $490 \frac{23}{100}$  feet continuing by land of Mrs. Samuel Tyler and land supposed of Googins and land of Michael Roarke to a stone bound; thence bearing to the left by a curve having a radius of  $368 \frac{84}{100}$  feet,  $224 \frac{31}{100}$  feet along land of Roarke and land of George W. McIntire to a stone bound; thence south  $29^{\circ}$  east  $449 \frac{57}{100}$  feet along land of said McIntire crossing Black Brook and by land of George E. Spaulding to a stone bound; thence by a curve to the left having a radius of  $525 \frac{22}{100}$  feet  $217 \frac{87}{100}$  feet and continuing along land of said Spaulding to a stone bound; thence by a curve to the right having a radius of  $1274 \frac{80}{100}$  feet  $192 \frac{09}{100}$  feet continuing along land of said Spaulding to a stone bound; thence south  $44^{\circ} 8'$  east  $645 \frac{10}{100}$  feet continuing along land of said Spaulding, crossing Smith Avenue, so-called, and by land of John Alton, and other land of said George E. Spaulding, till it comes to a stone bound; thence by a curve to the right having a radius of  $490 \frac{91}{100}$  feet,  $347 \frac{72}{100}$  feet along said Spaulding's land to a stone bound; thence south  $3^{\circ} 33'$  east  $880 \frac{61}{100}$  feet along land of said Spaulding, land of Thos. Burns, land of Albert C. Williams and land supposed of Joseph Lemere to a stone bound; thence south  $5^{\circ} 17'$  east  $1752 \frac{62}{100}$  feet by land supposed of Lemere, Estate of Samuel Putney, George Perry, James F. Stearns, crossing the old road and continuing by land of Frederic A. Butters to a stone bound; thence by a curve to the right having a radius of  $1604 \frac{35}{100}$  feet,  $199 \frac{74}{100}$  feet

by land of said Butters to a stone bound; thence south  $1^{\circ} 51'$  west 524  $\frac{44}{100}$  feet by land of said Butters and land of said James F. Stearns to a stone bound; thence by a curve to the right having a radius of 707  $\frac{06}{100}$  feet, 198  $\frac{88}{100}$  feet along land of said Stearns to a stone bound; thence south  $17^{\circ} 57'$  west 691  $\frac{47}{100}$  feet by said Stearns' land, land of the Town of Chelmsford and land now or formerly of J. M. Fletcher crossing Golden Cove Brook to a stone bound at the County Road leading from Lowell to Chelmsford.

The easterly line of the street is described as follows, viz:

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Said lines are shown on a plan of Stedman street in Chelmsford, Mass., extending from the Lowell City line to Golden Cove Brook at the County Road leading from Lowell to Chelmsford Centre. Scale 40 feet to an inch. September, 1899, Smith and Brooks, Civil Engineers, which plan is filed with the records of the Town of Chelmsford, Mass.

*The owners of land taken to widen said way giving all land necessary for the purpose. And your Selectmen hereby respectfully report said town way as relocated, to the town for its acceptance.*

*Filed in the Town Clerk's Office, March 13, 1900.*  
*Geo. A. Fairhurst* Town Clerk  
*Joseph O. Warren* Selectmen  
*Arthur H. Sheldon* of  
*Walter R. Winning* Chelmsford

## Lists of Residents

Chelmsford publishes annual lists of residents, compiled by the Registrars of Voters. These are available for most years from 1931 to 2010. Here is a small sample.

1931:

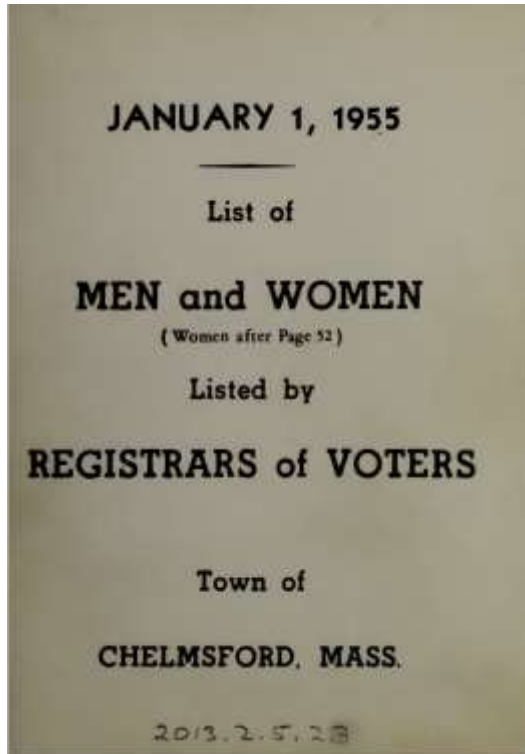


[https://www.chelmhist.org/City\\_Directories/1931\\_Persons\\_Listed\\_Men\\_and\\_Women.pdf](https://www.chelmhist.org/City_Directories/1931_Persons_Listed_Men_and_Women.pdf)

Fish, Wm. D., Westview, 55, carpenter	same
Fitzpatrick, Richard, Stedman St., 45, leather worker	same
Fisher, George A., 2000 Middlesex, 45, ice man	same
Finnick, Mary E., Cornhill, 60, at home	same
Fitzpatrick, Nora T., Stedman, 46, at home	same
Fletcher, Beatha, Spring St., 37, at home	same
Ford, Joseph, Stedman, 17, 55, molder	same
Slearns, Edwin L., Stedman St., 54, carpenter	same
Stearns, Ernest P., Stedman St., 21, accountant	same
Stearns, Ralph H., Stedman St., 50, grocery business	same
Stedman, George, Washington, 22, at home	same
Stearns, Marion W., Stedman, 50, at home	same
Stearns, Eveline J., Stedman, 36, at home	same
Stephens, Mary A., Princeton, 43, at home	same
Stevens, Anna M., Stedman, 81, at home	same
Stedman, George, Washington, 22, at home	same

In this case, the number is the person's age, not part of the address.

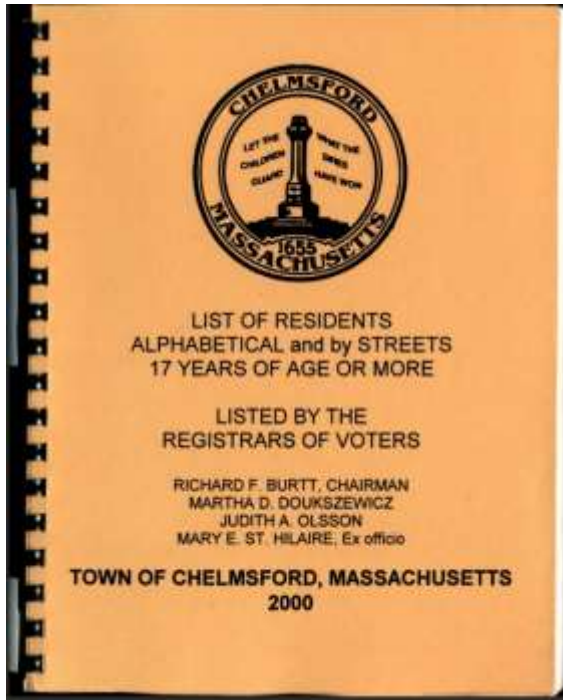
1955:



<https://www.chelmhist.org/City Directories/1955 List of Men and Women.pdf>

Fitts Dans W	(1)	41 Littleton Rd	same	56	fire ins. agent
Fitts Peter F	(1)	41 Littleton Rd	same	23	cab driver
Fitzgerald Edward	(1)	6 Hall Rd	Cambridge	31	pilot
Fitzpatrick George J	(6)	115 Stedman St	same	35	conductor
Fitzpatrick Neil J	(6)	115 Stedman St	same	33	supply room
Fitzpatrick Richard T	(6)	115 Stedman St	same	69	retired
Fitzpatrick Ronald B	(6)	5 Westland Ave	same	20	student
Flagg Wallace L	(1)	235 Boston Rd	same	69	retired

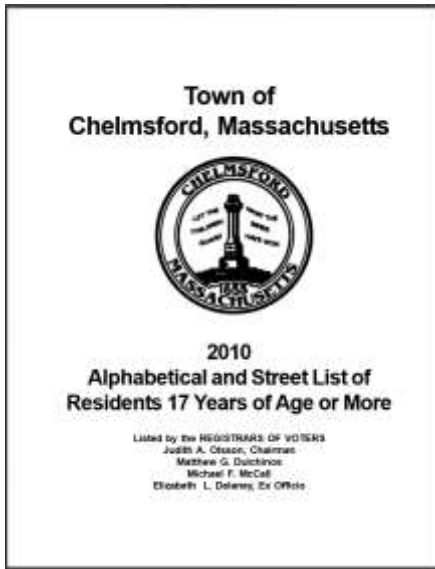
2000:



[https://www.chelmhist.org/City Directories/2000 List of Residents.pdf](https://www.chelmhist.org/City_Directories/2000_List_of_Residents.pdf)

LANGLEY, STEPHEN	70	OLD STAGE RD
LANGLOIS, SUSAN JO	138	WELLMAN AVE
LANGLOIS, JR WALTER J	138	WELLMAN AVE
LANGNER, GAIL P	115	STEDMAN ST
LANGNER, JOHN W	115	STEDMAN ST
LANGSETMO, KNUT	27	MAPLE RD
LANGTHORNE, CARMEN	95	STEDMAN ST
LANGWORTHY, BARBARA	1	EAGLE NEST RD
LANGWORTHY, JOHN R	1	EAGLE NEST RD

2010:



[https://www.chelmhist.org/City Directories/2010 List of Residents by Name.pdf](https://www.chelmhist.org/City_Directories/2010_List_of_Residents_by_Name.pdf)

The 2010 edition is sorted by Street & number rather than person's name.

STREET INDEX		
PAGE	STREET NAME	PAGE
..... 126	ST ANDREWS WAY .....	PCT ... 8 ..... 141
..... 126	ST NICHOLAS AVE .....	PCT ... 8 ..... 142
..... 126	STAGE RD .....	PCT ... 9 ..... 142
..... 126	STARLIGHT AVE .....	PCT ... 6 ..... 142
..... 126	STATE ST .....	PCT ... 9 ..... 142
..... 126	STEARNS ST .....	PCT ... 4 ..... 142
..... 127	STEDMAN ST .....	PCT ... 6 ..... 143
..... 127	STEDMAN ST .....	PCT ... 8 ..... 144
..... 127	STEEPLE DR .....	PCT ... 1 ..... 144
..... 127	STERLING PL .....	PCT ... 9 ..... 144
..... 128	STEVENS ST .....	PCT ... 8 ..... 144

### STEDMAN ST

U 6  
 R 6  
 U 6  
 U 7  
 D 7  
 U 8  
 R 8  
 U 9  
 U 9  
  
 R 11  
 D 12

### PCT 6

AWAD, ANDREW A  
 FITZGERALD, JUDITH A  
 GOLD, NATALIA  
 GILL, RYAN PATRICK  
 GILL, SARAH CLAIRE  
 DALY, DONNA M  
 DALY, JR PETER J  
 ALEXANDER, CAROLE A  
 ALEXANDER, JOHN T  
 LENZI, DEBORAH L  
 NEBEL, DOUGLAS L  
 ORRIEN, MATTHEW S

Right from the beginning and into modern times Town Hall, and almost everyone else, agrees on the name.

This is boring so far. Everything agrees. What does not agree?

# Places where Steadman is used

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Google Maps Street View allows you to select historical images. This is at Chelmsford Street, Route 110.



Nov. 2017 - Steadman



Nov. 2018 - Stedman




Sep. 2019 - Steadman



Someone else reported the street sign error but the case was closed - twice - without any comment.

<https://seeclickfix.com/issues/5678618-traffic-signals-signs>

**Issue ID:** 5678618  
**Submitted To:** [Town of Chelmsford](#)  
**Category:** Traffic Signals/Signs  
**Viewed:** 65 times  
**Neighborhood:** [Chelmsford](#)  
**Reported:** on 04/09/2019  
**Tagged:** [signs](#), [traffic](#)

**REPORTER**  
**Jack Alexander** 

---

**DESCRIPTION**





At the intersection of rte 110 and Stedman St, the street sign for Stedman St is misspelled as Steadman St.

I bought my house in 1978, the deed says Stedman St. I've been to the library and research old town maps, it was never called Steadman street, it has always been Stedman St. Please correct the signage to read Stedman St.

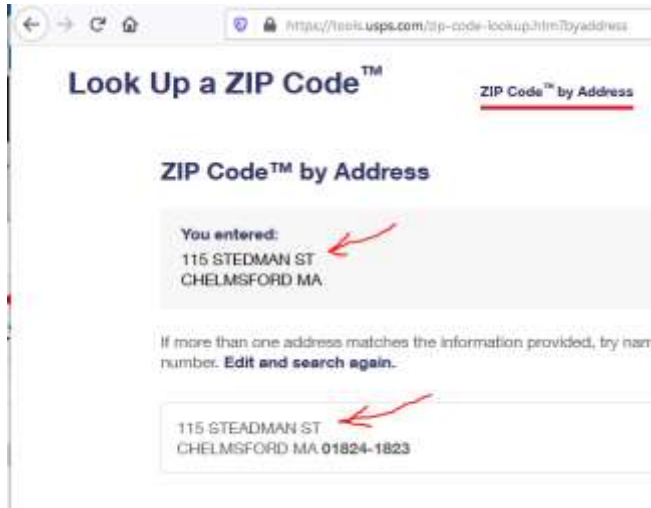
Note: this issue was previously reported and fixed on 04/23/2018, but the sign has been changed again. It is wrong.

The Town assessors office lists it as stedman.  
My MA license says stedman.  
My MA treasury checks come to stedman.  
My Federal returns come to stedman.  
Every peice of documetation I have sas stedman.  
The street was named in 1742 for Johnathan Stedman.  
There has never been a person of note in Chelmsford named stedman.  
RE: <http://www.tqsi.com/stedman/Reports/RobertStedman.htm>  
Just do an on-line search. There is plenty of information documenting Stedman in Chelmsford and none for Steaman before c. 1980.

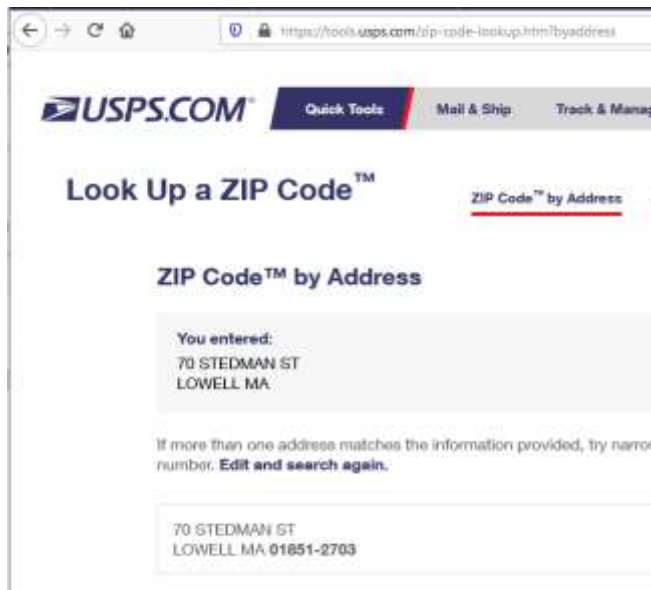
The error seems to stem from sometime in 1980's town census report, that erroneously named it steadman and that has been propagated to junk mail senders over the years.

- 
-  **CLOSED** [DPW/Highway Division](#) (Verified Official)  
-  
01/30/2020 · [Flag](#)
- 
-  **REOPENED** [Jack Alexander](#) (Registered User)  
I didn't get an answer for this complaint which is still a problem.  
01/30/2020 · [Flag](#)
- 
-  [Jack Alexander](#) (Registered User)  
Can this be assigned to the town manager?  
It needs to have some attention  
07/03/2020 · [Flag](#)
- 
-  **CLOSED** [DPW/Highway Division](#) (Verified Official)  
-  
08/25/2020 · [Flag](#)

Some of my mail (mostly the junk mail) has this alternate spelling, because the U.S. Postal Service address database has a different spelling for the Chelmsford part of the road.



However, on the other end of the street, in Lowell, the expected spelling is seen.



This makes absolutely no sense at all. Why would different parts of the same street have spellings that differ by one letter?

Where did they get that spelling? From the street sign? That's the only other place with that spelling.

# Summary, so far

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Essentially everything is in agreement about the spelling.

- The street acceptance in 1900.
- The history books and other historical documents all agree.
- People named Stedman were in Chelmsford during the Colonial times.
- Three related Stedman families, in the construction and real estate business, lived on Stedman Street in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Genealogical records indicate that the street was named after John G. Stedman.
- Town Hall records (maps, lists of residents. Annual Reports) have used the same name all along.
- My mail from Town Hall uses the same street name: Water bill, Car Tax bill, Real Estate Tax bill.
- Legal documents such as: Property deeds, Driver's License, Car Registration.
- All of the modern maps, that I found, agree on the spelling. This includes the town's own GIS map used by many town government departments.
- Take a walk and observe all of the signs north of Route 3.



- Lowell is not confused about the street name spelling. Why are some of us?

Keep reading to learn about origin of the alternate spelling.

# Origin of “Steadman” spelling

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This page intentionally left blank to build suspense.

## March 13, 1900 - Appears to be the original document

(Provided by the Town Clerk Office)

~~Description of Stedman Street in Chelmsford, Mass., extending southerly from the boundary line between Lowell and Chelmsford to the County Road leading from Lowell to Chelmsford at Golden Cove Brook.~~

The westerly line of the street is described as follows, viz:

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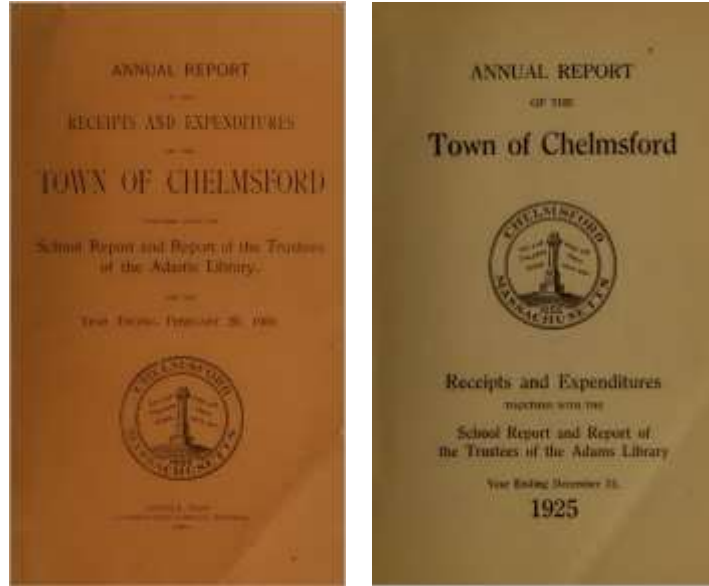
*The owners of land taken to widen said way giving all land necessary for the purpose. And your Selectmen hereby respectfully report said town way as relocated, to the town for its acceptance.*

*Filed in the Town Clerk's Office, March 13, 1900.*  
*Geo. A. Fashburn*  
*Town Clerk*

*Joseph O. Warrery*  
*Arthur H. Sheldon*  
*Walter R. Winning*  
Selectmen  
of  
Chelmsford

Right from the start, when there should have been absolutely no question about the spelling, it was often misspelled In the Annual Reports for the first quarter Century.

[http://www.chelmsfordgov.com/CHCwebsite/Annual\\_Reports/](http://www.chelmsfordgov.com/CHCwebsite/Annual_Reports/)



Year	Occurrences of correct "Stedman"	Occurrences of incorrect "Steadman"	Comments
1900	2	0	Accepted and land taking to widen
1901	0	2	
1902	0	0	
1903	0	0	
1904	0	0	
1905	0	1	Reference to street in Lowell, see below
1906	0	0	
1907	0	0	
1908	0	0	
1909	2	1	
1910	0	0	
1910	0	0	
1911	0	0	
1912	1	0	
1913	0	0	
1914	0	0	
1915	1	0	
1916	0	0	

1917	0	4	Street lights between Smith and Lowell line
1918	0	2	Street lights between Smith and Lowell line
1919	0	0	
1920	1	2	Road funding
1921	0	0	
1922	1	0	
1923	3	0	
1924	4	0	
1925	4	0	

Why were some people so inclined to misspell it?

- Correct in 7 Annual Reports.
- Wrong in 5 Annual Reports.
- Both spellings in 2 Annual Reports.

1900 Annual Report:

Article 22. To see if the town will vote to accept the town-way known as Stedman street as widened and straightened by the Selectmen, extending southerly from the boundary line between Lowell and Chelmsford to the County road leading from Lowell to Chelmsford Centre. All land necessary for widening given.

Smith & Brooks, surveying Stedman  
Street and Smith Avenue. . . . . 209 95

The 1901 Annual Report spells it wrong a year after it was accepted by the town:

Voted, to accept the townway known as Steadman Street, as widened and straightened by the Selectmen, extending southerly from the boundary line between Chelmsford and Lowell to the county road leading from Lowell to Chelmsford.

**The incorrect “Steadman” spelling began because some people had a tendency to spell it that way for no apparent reason.**

There is no trace of anyone named Steadman, in Chelmsford, until 1992. (details later)



## 1904 - Stedman St. ceases to exist ???

From 1904 Town Meeting, in 1905 Annual Report, page 15.

[http://www.chelmsfordgov.com/CHCwebsite/Annual\\_Reports/1905\\_Annual\\_Town\\_Report.pdf](http://www.chelmsfordgov.com/CHCwebsite/Annual_Reports/1905_Annual_Town_Report.pdf)

The following report of the committee on naming streets was read and accepted:

School-house would refer to the Golden Cove School. The repurposed building is still present at 12 Stedman St.

Golden Cove Road:—From Town Farm, crossing Chelmsford Street at Golden Cove, by school-house and crossing Dalton Road, to Lowell line at Stedman Street.

This was Smith Avenue in earlier listings but now it has been renamed.

Redshire Road:—From Parkhurst Road at old turn pike, over Redshire Meadow to Golden Cove Road.

What was the committee thinking? Did they intentionally want to eliminate Stedman and make Golden Cove extend all the way to the town line or were they unaware that the street name changed when crossing over Chelmsford Street?

Whatever their intention, the town meeting gave the plan a rubber stamp approval, probably without looking at it carefully.

There is a subtle but important point to notice.

- **The committee on naming streets incorrectly thought that the Lowell part of the street was spelled “Stedman.” This will be turn out to be an important clue later when assembling the puzzle pieces.**

In 1908, the Road Commission went cruising around town, measuring the lengths of roads, and got a total of 91.8 miles. This included:

Chelmsford Centre.  
The road leading off the Butman road called Smith avenue, and Stedman street by the old Turnpike to Russell road is 4 miles.

Chelmsford there are 97 5-10 miles.  
In order to give the tax payers some idea of the money spent on different sections of our highways, we here submit the cost of same, but this cost does not include the many repairs of a less nature made all over the town roads.

Gorham Street, East Chelmsford.....	\$383 90
Westford Road, Westford line .....	180 50
Stevens Hill, Boston Road.....	201 15
West Chelmsford Road.....	668 20
Groton Raod, North Chelmsford .....	939 60
Stedman Street .....	326 00
Perham Hill, West Chelmsford .....	134 20
Lowell Road, Chelmsford.....	287 90
	<hr/>
	\$3,075 25

You can find their report in the 1909 annual report, starting on page 105.

[http://www.chelmsfordgov.com/CHCwebsite/Annual\\_Reports/1909\\_Annual\\_Town\\_Report.pdf](http://www.chelmsfordgov.com/CHCwebsite/Annual_Reports/1909_Annual_Town_Report.pdf)

Huh? What happened? Or didn't happen?

Just because the street naming committee comes up with a plan and the town meeting gives a rubber stamp approval, it doesn't mean that the plan is actually carried out.

Stedman and Smith were still there.

## What happened in 1926?

In 1925, a committee was formed to compile a list of all the streets and make recommendations.

Three of the members were the same as the earlier committee that tried to eliminate Stedman (i.e. extend Golden Cove Rd. to the Lowell town line), rename Smith to Redshire, and incorrectly thought that the street in Lowell was spelled "Steadman."

[http://www.chelmsfordgov.com/CHCwebsite/Annual\\_Reports/1926\\_Annual\\_Town\\_Report.pdf](http://www.chelmsfordgov.com/CHCwebsite/Annual_Reports/1926_Annual_Town_Report.pdf)

Town Meeting Article 13 (pages 40 - 45) was to accept a list of names for streets and squares, which had been prepared by the committee. Do you think that everyone at the meeting closely examined the entire list, before voting, or just trusted the committee and gave it a routine rubber stamp approval without any scrutiny?



**In that list, we find the original "Stedman" spelling twice and a different "Steadman" twice!!!**

Smith Street—From Stedman Street to Parkhurst Road near old Turnpike.  
Spaulding Road—From Old Westford Road to Westford line on Francis Hill.  
Sprague Avenue—From Gorham Street to Brick Kiln Road.  
Steadman Street—From Chelmsford Street across Dalton Road at Stearns Square to Lowell line.  
Subway Avenue—From Chelmsford Street to Steadman Street and Dalton Road.

Stearns Square—Junction Dalton Road, Stedman Street and Subway Avenue.  
Vinal Square—Junction Groton, Dunstable and Tyngsborough Roads, and Adams, Middlesex and Princeton Street.

A lot of people were involved. Didn't anyone notice the inconsistency?

What was their original intention?

There are two possibilities:

- They intended to keep the original “Stedman” but it was a typographical error.

The two instances of "Steadman" are on lines adjacent to mention of "Stearns Square." After seeing “Stea...” nearby, someone could have accidentally typed an extra “a” in there. As we saw many times before, some people were just inclined to misspell it.

- Changing the spelling was intentional but they were not very careful about finding all of the references.

They wanted to make the Chelmsford spelling consistent with “**Stead**man” in Lowell.

Alone, this is puzzling. After looking at other connected events before and after, I have to believe it was the latter possibility.

So, this is what we got....

## 1926 or later - Similar to the original but it has been altered

Town Way from Steadman Street Southerly 3/10/1900

*from 1300 N of Lowell*

We, the Selectmen of the town of Chelmsford, having complied with the requirements of the law in relation to notifying the owners of land taken to widen and straighten the town way known as Steadman Street, extending southerly from the boundary line between Lowell and Chelmsford to the County road leading from Lowell to Chelmsford Centre, and no objection having been made, have laid out said town way and the westerly line of the street is described as follows:

Beginning at a stone bound at the boundary line between Lowell and Chelmsford, which stone bound is on the westerly side and at the southerly terminus of Steadman Street as laid out by the city of Lowell; thence S  $2^{\circ} 19'$  W 38  $\frac{10}{100}$  feet by land of Mrs. Samuel Tyler to a stone bound; thence S  $5^{\circ} 2'$  W 490  $\frac{23}{100}$  feet continuing by land of Mrs. Samuel Tyler and land supposed of Gogins and land of Michael Roarke to a stone bound; thence bearing to the left by a curve having a radius of 366  $\frac{84}{100}$  feet, 224  $\frac{31}{100}$  feet along land of Roarke and land of George W. McIntire to a stone bound; thence S  $29^{\circ} E$  449  $\frac{57}{100}$  feet along land of said McIntire crossing Black Brook and by land of George E. Spaulding to a stone bound; thence by a curve to the left having a radius of 525  $\frac{22}{100}$  feet, 217  $\frac{87}{100}$  feet and continuing along land of said Spaulding to a stone bound; thence by a curve to the right having a radius of 1,274  $\frac{80}{100}$ , 192  $\frac{09}{100}$  feet continuing along land of said Spaulding to a stone bound; thence S  $44^{\circ} 8'$  E 645  $\frac{10}{100}$  feet continuing along land of said Spaulding, crossing Smith Street, so called, and by land of John Alton, and other land of said George E. Spaulding till it comes to a stone bound; thence S  $3^{\circ} 33'$  E 880  $\frac{61}{100}$  feet along land of said Spaulding, land of Thomas Burns, land of Albert C. Williams and land supposed to be of Joseph Lemire to a stone bound; thence S  $5^{\circ} 17'$  E 1,752  $\frac{62}{100}$  feet by land supposed of Lemire, estate of Samuel Putney, George Perry, James F. Stearns, crossing the old road\*

\*Dalton Road

(continued)

276.

and continuing by land of Frederic A. Butters to a stone bound; thence by a curve to the right having a radius of 1,604 35/100 feet, 199 74/100 feet by land of said Butters to a stone bound; thence S 1° 51' W 524 44/100 feet by land of said Butters and land of said James F. Stearns to a stone bound; thence by a curve to the right having a radius of 707 06/100 feet, 198 68/100 feet along land of said Stearns to a stone bound; thence S 17° 7' W 691 47/100 feet by said Stearns land, land of the Town of Chelmsford and land now or formerly of J. M. Fletcher crossing Golden Cove Brook to a stone bound at the county road leading from Lowell to Chelmsford.

The easterly line of said street is as follows, viz: Beginning at a stone bound at the boundary line between Lowell and Chelmsford, which stone bound is on the easterly side and at the southerly terminus of Steadman Street as laid out by the city of Lowell; thence S 6° 2' W 491 84/100 feet to a stone bound and continuing southerly parallel to the westerly line above described and distant therefrom 50 feet until it curves to a point at a stone bound about 50 feet northerly from said county road leading from Lowell to Chelmsford; thence by a curve to the left having a radius of 14 94/100 feet, 41 06/100 feet to a stone bound at said county road. Said lines are shown on a plan of Steadman Street in Chelmsford, Mass., extending from the Lowell city line to Golden Cove Brook at the county road leading from Lowell to Chelmsford Centre. Scale 40 feet to an inch. September, 1899. Smith & Brooks, Civil Engineers, which plan is filed with the records of the Town of Chelmsford, Mass. The owners of land taken to widen said way giving all land necessary for the purpose.

(continued)

(STEADMAN STREET)

(continued)

Page three

And your selectmen hereby respectfully report said town way as relocated to the town for its acceptance.

Joseph E. Warren  
Arthur H. Sheldon  
Walter R. Winning - Selectmen

Filed in the Town Clerk's office March 13, 1900.  
Attest: George A. Parkhurst, Town Clerk

March 26, 1900: In Town Meeting read and accepted.  
Recorded by George A. Parkhurst, Town Clerk

NOTE: Both spellings, Stadman and Steadman, are used in the description. In 1926 the name was voted by the town as STEADMAN, the way the family of that name spelled it.

(Original book pages 236-238).

At first glance, this looks like a document from 1900 but it's an altered version. That would not be obvious unless you had seen the original. Even though it has been changed significantly, apparently in 1926, it has 3/10/1900 at the top and this statement near the end:

Filed in the Town Clerk's office March 13, 1900.  
Attest: George A. Parkhurst, Town Clerk

March 26, 1900: In Town Meeting read and accepted.  
Recorded by George A. Parkhurst, Town Clerk

Dictionary.com defines "attest" as

*"to bear witness to; certify; declare to be correct, true, or genuine; declare the truth of, in words or writing, especially affirm in an official capacity ..."*

Former Town Clerk, George A. Parkhurst, died at age 70, on February 3, 1904, yet somehow he attested to this document more than 20 years later. How could that happen?

Who rewrote this document? We can't be sure but the Town Clerk, at the time, would be a good guess. Why didn't the editor "attest" to the accuracy, of the modified version, in 1926, rather than attributing it to someone dead for more than 20 years? Would this be considered falsifying a document?

Consider the curious note at the end:

**NOTE:** Both spellings, Stedman and Steadman, are used in the description. In 1926 the name was voted by the town as STEADMAN, the way the family of that name spelled it.

That is not what we saw for the Town Meeting in the Annual Report. The vote was to accept an inconsistent list of street names that had "Stedman" twice and "Steadman" twice. Who was this elusive "Steadman" family? That name is not among the 1900 land owners along the road:

- Mrs. Samuel Tyler
- Michael Roarke
- George W. McIntire
- George E. Spaulding
- John Alton
- Albert C. Williams
- Joseph Lemere
- Samuel Putney
- George Perry
- James F. Stearns
- Frederic A. Butters
- James F. Stearns
- J. M. Fletcher



There is no one by that name in:

- The Lowell Suburban / Chelmsford Directories from 1898-1899, 1900-1901, 1905, 1911, 1912, 1913-1914, 1915-1916, 1917-1918, 1921, 1925, and 1925-1926.
- The list of town residents, compiled by the Registrars of Voters, in 1931.
- Cemetery records from the Chelmsford Historical Commission.

These are very mysterious people. If they actually existed, they didn't leave a trace. We don't find any record of a Steadman until 1992.

However the City Directories list 3 different **Stedmans** living there.

<https://archive.org/search.php?query=lowell+ma+directory>

1875-76

Stebbins Milo J. carpenter, 155 Central, D. 107 Middlesex  
Stedman George R. carpenter, boards Baldwin, near Westford, near Chelmsford line  
Stedman John, carpenter, house Baldwin, near Westford, near Chelmsford line  
Stedman William, Merrimack, boards 135 do. corp.  
Steele Leonard Hamilton boards 4 do. corp.

1886

Stedman William K., Merrimack, house 7 June  
Stedman Elias W. carpenter, house 17 Barclay  
Stedman George R. (*J. G. & G. R. Stedman*), house 21 West Adams  
**STEDMAN JOHN G. & GEO. R.** contractors and builders, and dealers in real estate, 181 Wilder, house do. (see page 795)  
Steele Leonard F. musician, house 122 Middlesex

1894

Stedman John G. contractor and builder, and dealer in real estate, 210 Wilder, house do.  
Steele Dalie Beatt boards 21 Drummer

1900

Stedman Elias, carpenter, house **Stedman street**  
" John, carpenter, house rear 210 Wilder  
Steele Hannah dressmaker, 986 Central, house do.

1906

Stedman John G carpenter 984 Middlesex  
" Joseph printer h 51 Brookings  
Steele Alice Mrs. Hamilton h 76 Union

1926

Stedman Clayton A (*Etta M*) laborer res 7 Lane-st ct  
Steele Hannah widow, Thomas dressmaker

They were 3 brothers in the construction and real estate business.

- John G. Stedman (1841-1915) <https://www.familysearch.org/tree/person/details/L4P9-LH8>  
[https://stedman.one-name.net/getperson.php?personID=I26039&tree=stedman\\_main](https://stedman.one-name.net/getperson.php?personID=I26039&tree=stedman_main)
- George R. Stedman (1847-?) <https://www.familysearch.org/tree/person/details/LZD7-MVK>  
[https://stedman.one-name.net/getperson.php?personID=I24162&tree=stedman\\_main](https://stedman.one-name.net/getperson.php?personID=I24162&tree=stedman_main)
- Elias W. Stedman (1851-?) <https://www.familysearch.org/tree/person/details/MCRD-ZS4>  
[https://stedman.one-name.net/getperson.php?personID=I724&tree=stedman\\_main](https://stedman.one-name.net/getperson.php?personID=I724&tree=stedman_main)

Along with wives and children, there were a lot of **Stedmans** around that time.

Patricia, great granddaughter of John G. Stedman, reported in 2003:

*I just got off the phone with my Dad. ... He filled me in with some more info.:*

*His grandfather was not a Mill owner but a "contractor" you were right. He donated land to Lowell thinking the land was Useless. Hence **Stedman street**. ...*

The history books refer to this area as "Great Swamp." A large part of it is now an inactive garbage dump landfill.

Some of the differences are quite significant.

Original 1900:

of said Spaulding, crossing Smith Avenue, so-called, and by land of John Alton, and other land of said George E. Spaulding, till it comes to a stone bound; thence by a curve to the right having a radius of 490 91/100 feet, 347 72/100 feet along said Spaulding's land to a stone bound; thence south 3° 33' east 880 61/100 feet along land of said Spaulding, land of Thos. Burns, land of Albert C. Williams and

Altered version: 347.72 feet have disappeared.

Spaulding, crossing Smith Street, so called, and by land of John Alton, and other land of said George E. Spaulding till it comes to a stone bound; thence S 3° 33' E 880 61/100 feet along land of said Spaulding, land of Thomas Burns,

Original 1900:

The easterly line of the street is described as follows, viz:  
Beginning at a stone bound at the boundary line between Lowell and Chelmsford, which stone bound is on the easterly side and at the southerly terminus of Stedman street as laid out by the City of Lowell;

Altered version: While other original "Stedman" references remain intact, this one was changed.

The easterly line of said street is as follows, viz: Beginning at a stone bound at the boundary line between Lowell and Chelmsford, which stone bound is on the easterly side and at the southerly terminus of Steadman Street as laid out by the city of Lowell; thence S 6° 2' W 491 84/100 feet to a stone bound and continuing southerly parallel to the westerly line above described

This is referring to the southern end of the street in Lowell. Someone who cares about paying attention to details could argue that the eastern side of the road has no starting point because there is no "Stedman" Street in Lowell. The street naming committee always had a problem with the Lowell spelling so this seems intentional, not a typographical error.

There is a lot to be suspicious about here:

- Why was it dated 1900 rather than 1926?
- How could it be filed at the town clerk's office and read at a 1900 town meeting when it was written decades later?
- Why didn't anyone notice 347.22 feet missing during the careless copying and editing?
- Why was it signed by someone dead for more than 20 years rather than the person who rewrote it? Would this be considered falsifying a document?

A quick superficial glance could give someone the wrong impression. Digging a little deeper, it all crumbles apart.

The well-meaning, but misguided plan, to rename the street, is built on 3 reasons:

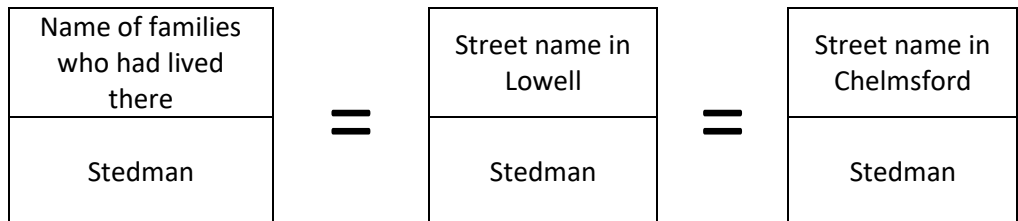
- The town voted to change the name.  
FALSE. Go back and review the Town Meeting report.
- The street should be named for a "Steadman" family.  
FALSE. No trace of anyone by that name. Three (3) Stedman families lived there.
- Lowell called their part "Steadman."  
FALSE. "Stedman" for almost 150 years. No evidence of any inconsistency.

If you yank the foundation out from under a building, everything depending on it comes crashing down.

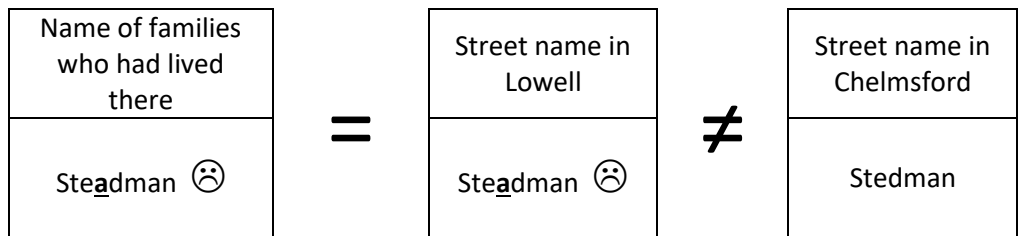
## Why would they do this?

Some of the pieces, alone, are puzzling. After fitting all the pieces together, there is a very clear and logical explanation for why this happened.

Since the time when the street was accepted, by the town, in 1900, everything was consistent:



Somehow the street naming committee got the idea that the street name in Lowell was Steadman so this was how they viewed it:



Having a mismatch doesn't make sense. It causes confusion and disrespects the families for whom the street was named.

What would you do? Probably make everything consistent. That is what they were trying to do in 1926.

They had good intentions but, **acting on incorrect information, made the situation worse.**

We would not have this mess today if a more vigilant person actually checked the information source for accuracy and pointed out the mistake before the botched street description got filed away.

I call this the "***Steadman Street Snafu.***" It has a nice sound and perfectly describes what happened. They messed up. It is still causing confusion almost a hundred years later.

In the next few pages we will see that everyone, including the most likely author, ignored the bungled street description rewrite and continued using the original name. Or looking at the situation, on a deeper level, maybe they understood the original intent and followed that. Same result.

## No Name Change Here

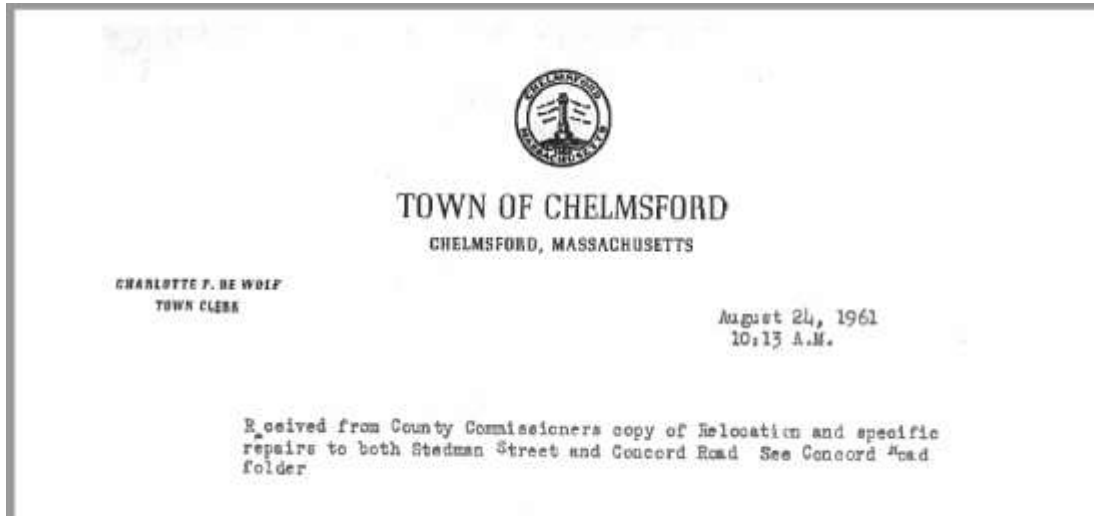
If the street name changed, it looks like **no one got the memo or they dismissed it because they realized that the “Steadman” spelling was just a mistake.** The Annual Reports are much more in agreement, about the name, than during the previous 25 years.

We can’t prove who rewrote the street description, but it is a pretty good bet that it was done by the Town Clerk. The Town Clerk was Harold C Petterson from 1923 until he died in 1956. It seems a bit ironic that Harold C. Petterson continues to use the original name after he (probably) rewrote the street description to have a different name.

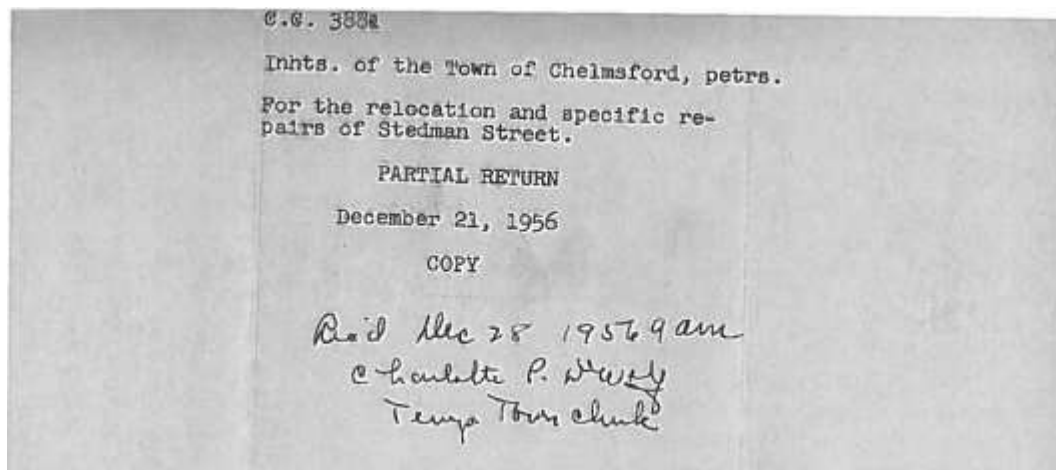
Annual Report for	Occurrences of original “Stedman”	Occurrences of new “Steadman”	Comments
1926	3	2	Street naming committee report (2 and 2) Jury list from Harold C. Petterson
1927	0	0	
1928	0	0	
1929	3	0	Jury list from Harold C. Petterson
1930	4	0	Jury list from Harold C. Petterson
1931	5	0	Jury list from Harold C. Petterson
1932	2	0	Jury list from Harold C. Petterson
1933	5	0	etc.
1934	4	0	
1935	1	0	
1936	1	0	
1937	2	1	
1938	5	0	
1939	2	0	
1940	1	0	
1941	2	0	
1942	0	1	
1943	0	1	
1944	10	1	
1945	5	0	
1946	7	0	
1947	0	0	
1948	0	0	
1949	2	0	
1950	5	0	
1951	6	0	
1952	5	0	
1953	6	0	
1954	9	0	

1955	8	0	
1956	8	0	
1957	11	0	
1958	7	0	
1959	3	0	
1960	1	0	

Town Clerks continued to use the original name.



Records related to the repair of the road retained the original spelling.





Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

MIDDLESEX, SS.

WHEREAS, at a meeting of the County Commissioners for said County, at Lowell on the first Tuesday of September A. D. 1956.

On the petition of the inhabitants of the Town of Chelmsford that Stedman Street is in need of relocation and specific repairs

it was adjudged that said relocation and specific repairs

are of common convenience and necessity:

Commissioners'

Said Commissioners therefore give notice that they will meet at the County Office Superior Court House in Lowell on the nineteenth day of November, 1956 eleven of the clock in the fore noon, to relocate and direct specific repairs accordingly.

Charles T. Hughes Clerk.

October 23, 1956

A true copy, Attest;

Attn: B. Gray Deputy Sheriff.

I have more but you get the idea.

Almost all references continue to use the original name. Just a few examples from the Annual Reports:

1932:

ARTICLE 17. To see if the Town will vote to sell to the Westlands Improvement Association, Inc., for the sum of Two Hundred (\$200) Dollars or some other sum a certain parcel of land with the buildings thereon known as the Golden Cove School House. Said lot contains about one-half an acre of land and is situated on the westerly side of the Old Middlesex Road, now called Stedman Street.



1934:

ARTICLE 37. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Four Thousand Dollars, or some other sum, for the purpose of aligning, grading and surfacing Stedman Street from Chelmsford Street to the boundary line on said street, between Chelmsford and Lowell; or act in relation thereto.

## 2. DRAINAGE

(a) School Street, West Chelmsford was drained for a distance of 1200 feet with 12" cement tile.

(b) Pine Hill Road was provided with drainage at several locations.

(c) Stedman Street at Chelmsford Street intersection was widened and a 48" steel culvert pipe placed to carry the brook water into the old culvert under Chelmsford Street.

1939:

We have a blanket project covering several roads in the Town the following have already been completed; The Dalton Rd. from Westford St. to Chelmsford St. was widened, straightened, graveled, rolled and oiled for a distance of 9137 ft. Approximately 3000 feet of drain pipe with several catch basins to afford proper drainage was installed. On Stedman St. 950 ft. of drainage was laid. Fairview St. in No Chelmsford was widened, graveled, rolled and oiled the entire length, and 300 ft. of concrete pipe and catch basins laid for drainage.

1946:

### REPORT OF THE HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

To the Honorable Board of Selectmen.

Gentlemen:

The Highway Department has endeavored to treat and maintain our roads and hold the foundation in the best possible condition, requiring a constant maintenance program with treatments of Bituminous Materials. Surface drainage was placed in various locations and gravel roads maintained.

The streets treated this year were as follows:

Name	Lin Ft.	Name	Lin. Ft.
Amherst St. ....	491	Main St. ....	1,500
Ash St. ....	250	Marshall St. ....	1,500
Aspen St. ....	764	Mill Road ....	3,250
Beaulieu St. ....	450	Mt. Pleasant St. ....	500
Broulette St. ....	430	Oak-Knoll St. ....	400
Carlisle St. ....	3,100	Parkhurst Rd. ....	1,000
Cemetery Rd. ....	200	Park Road ....	700
Clancy St. ....	580	Proctor Rd. ....	4,200
Clinton Ave. ....	1,000	Putnam Ave. ....	435
Coolidge St. ....	650	Putnam Ave. East ....	750
Crosby Lane ....	580	Quigley Ave. ....	761
Dalton Road ....	1,500	Robin Hill Rd. ....	4,000
Delwood Terrace ....	840	School St. ....	2,500
Dunstan St. ....	650	Smith Ave. ....	3,750
Edson St. ....	481	Stedman St. ....	4,150
First St. ....	1,400	Stearns St. ....	645
Fletcher St. ....	1,500	Turnpike Rd. ....	4,420
Grandview St. ....	2,280	Third St. ....	800
Hall Road' ....	400	Tobin St. ....	395
Harding St. ....	800	Tuttle St. ....	950
Harvard St. ....	480	Varney Ave. ....	300
High St. ....	7,300	Westford St. ....	4,900
Ideal St. ....	500	Wightman St. ....	440
Jorden St. ....	800	Worthen St. ....	3,870
Linwood Ave. ....	450	Westland Ave. ....	1,250
Locke Rd. ....	5,016	York Ave. ....	495

**NEW STREETS ACCEPTED:**

Varney Ave., Ash St., Elliott St., Ext. of Linwood Ave., Ext. of Woodlawn Ave. These streets were graded, graveled and treated.

**STREETS GRAVELED:**

Parker Rd., Pine Hill Road, Park Road, Tobin Ave.

1956:

ARTICLE 21. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds in the Treasury, a sum of money for the permanent construction of Stedman Street; or act in relation thereto.

1958:

It is always unfortunate that some people suffer from the development of new highways. The ultimate completion of the new Route 110 and the long awaited construction of the balance of Route 3 should place the town at the crossroads of major transportation lines and it seems likely that this should eventually lead to industrial growth in Chelmsford.

During 1958, Stedman Street was reconstructed from the Lowell line to Dalton Road. This was built by our Highway Department with certain operations completed on open bid. The town's share of this Chapter 90 construction came from Chapter 718 funds granted by the State in 1956 for such construction projects. Thus, this was accomplished without adding to the tax dollar and, at the same time, the Road Machinery account was reimbursed through the use of our Highway equipment for this construction. We anticipate doing a similar reconstruction job on a portion of Concord Road in 1959.

2000:

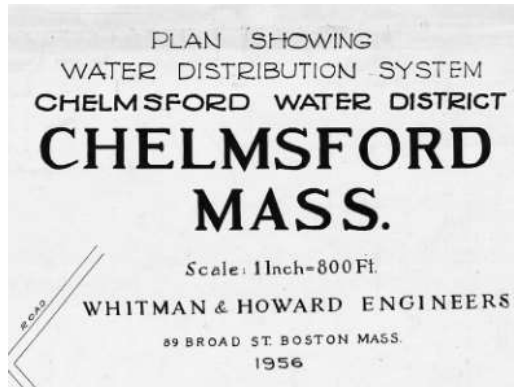
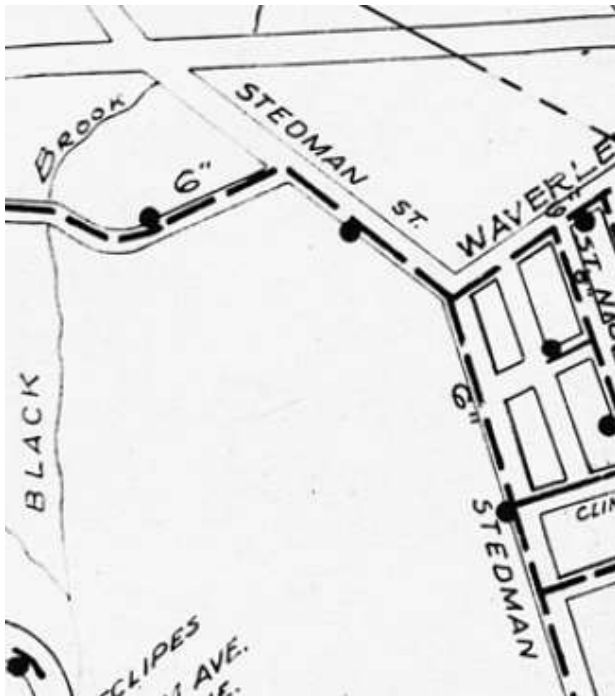
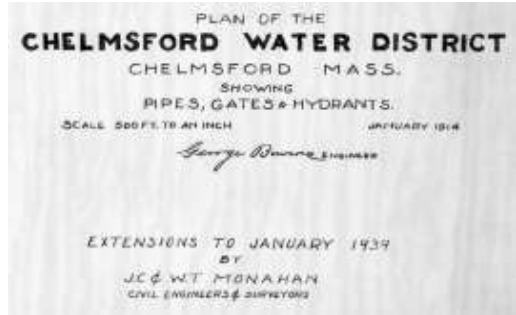
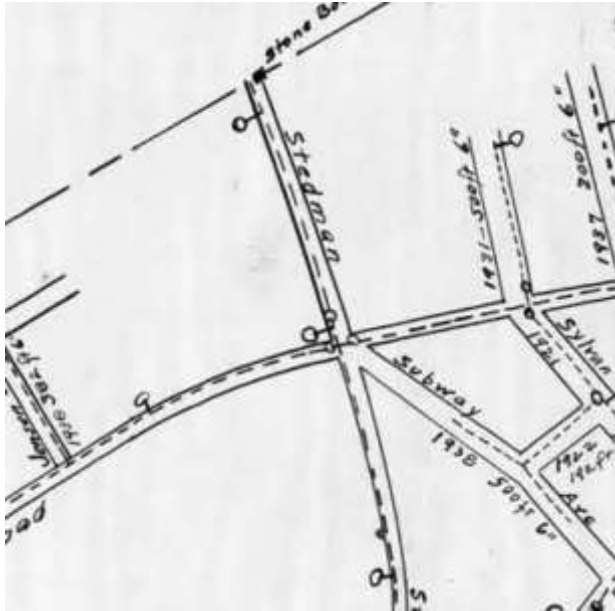
<b><u>SEWER COMMISSION</u></b>		(3 yr Term - elected)	
John P. Emerson, Jr. Chr	8 Loiselle Lane	251-3654	2001
Barry B. Balan VChr	54 Boston Road #10	256-8234	2001
John F. Souza	123 Stedman St	256-6478	2002
Richard J. Day	6 Merilda Avenue	251-3382	2002
George F. Abely Clerk	87 Swain Road	251-8472	2003

<b><u>SCHOOL COMMITTEE</u></b>		(3 yr Term - elected)	
Mary Jo Griffin, Chr	125 Stedman Street	244-5212	2001
Evelyn S. Thoren,	18 Pine od Road	256-1122	2001
Judith B. Mallette, VChr	13 Wedgewood Drive	250-0260	2002
Sheila E. Pichette	26 Shedd Lane	452-5919	2002
James B. Trager, Sec	203 Concord Rd	256-0371	2003

2010:

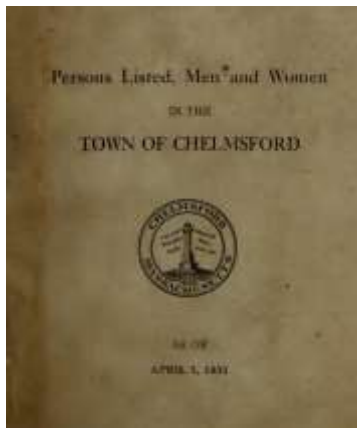
The Board in FY2010 granted 15 Variances and 7 Special Permits. One denial of a Special Permit and Variance was voted in the case of the application for a home occupation on 12 Stedman Street. During FY 2010 the Board of Appeals saw a slightly larger number of applications for in-law apartments than had been the case in previous years.

The Water District kept using the original name: 1939, 1956



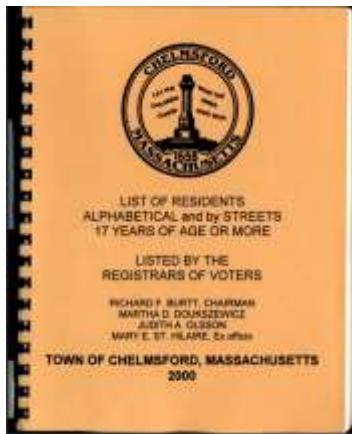
The official lists of residents continued to use the original spelling all along, from the earliest available list to modern times.

1931:



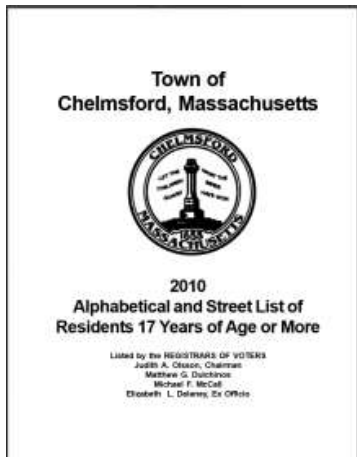
Fitzpatrick, Richard, **Stedman** St., 45, leather worker  
 Fitzpatrick, Nora T., **Stedman**, 46, at home  
 Stearns, Edwin L. **Stedman** St., 54, carpenter  
 Stearns, Ernest P., **Stedman** St., 21, accountant  
 Stearns, Ralph H., **Stedman** St., 50, grocery business  
 Stearns, Marion W., **Stedman**, 50, at home  
 Stearns, Eveline J., **Stedman**, 36, at home  
 Stephens, Mary A., **Princeton**, 43, at home  
 Stevens, Anna M., **Stedman**, 81, at home

2000:



LANGLEY, STEPHEN	70	OLD STAGE RD
LANGLOIS, SUSAN JO	138	WELLMAN AVE
LANGLOIS, JR WALTER J	138	WELLMAN AVE
LANGNER, GAIL P	115	— STEDMAN ST
LANGNER, JOHN W	115	— STEDMAN ST
LANGSETMO, KNUT	27	MAPLE RD
LANGTHORNE, CARMEN	95	— STEDMAN ST
LANGWORTHY, BARBARA	1	EAGLE NEST RD
LANGWORTHY, JOHN R	1	EAGLE NEST RD

2010:



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..... 126	STARLIGHT AVE .....	PCT ... 6 ..... 142
..... 126	STATE ST .....	PCT ... 9 ..... 142
..... 126	STEARNS ST .....	PCT ... 4 ..... 142
..... 127	STEDMAN ST .....	PCT ... 6 ..... 143
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..... 127	STERLING PL .....	PCT ... 9 ..... 144
..... 128	STEVENS ST .....	PCT ... 8 ..... 144

Most of Town Hall wisely ignored the 1926 *Stedman Street Snafu* and remained true to the original spelling.

## Conclusion

“**Stedman**” Street was accepted by the town in 1900. (pages 24 - 27) Historical records reveal that the street was named for John G. Stedman who was in the construction and real estate business.

Name of families who had lived there	=	Street name in Lowell	=	Street name in Chelmsford
Stedman (page 18)		Stedman		Stedman

Decades later, the street naming committee somehow got the mistaken idea that the street name, in Lowell, was “Steadman” so this is how they perceived it:

Name of families who had lived there	=	Street name in Lowell	≠	Street name in Chelmsford
<u>Stead</u> man (wrong)		<u>Stead</u> man (wrong)		Stedman

Having a mismatch doesn’t make sense. It causes confusion and disrespects the families for whom the street was named. What would you do? Probably try to make everything consistent.

In 1926, the street description was rewritten, apparently with the noble goal of making the street name match the street name in Lowell and the people who had lived there. The committee probably had good intentions but, **acting on incorrect information**, made the situation worse.

The bungled street description rewrite was almost universally ignored. (Or you might look at a deeper level and say its original intent - to make everything consistent - was honored. Same result.) Town Hall continued using the original name with only rare exceptions, which look like random accidental misspellings, rather than being intentional. (pages 52 - 61)

Everyone else (maps, property deeds, history book, Chelmsford Historical Commission, business signs, etc.) continued to use the original name with only two significant exceptions:

- The street signs.
- The USPS address database which trickles down into other mailing lists.

Without those two, the spelling mistake would have been forgotten long ago.

So, what do you think? After examining the historical evidence, which is the correct spelling? How can we get everyone to agree?

Please share your comments on this subject. A discussion forum has been set up at <https://groups.io/g/stedmanst>