

History of Henry S. Perham Park in Chelmsford

As depicted in a photo of a float from the Chelmsford 4th of July parade of approximately 1924, **Henry S. Perham Park** was apparently dedicated and presented to the Town in the 1920s. The initial plot of land was given to the Town in 1923, and expanded in 1924 with a \$779 acquisition by eminent domain.

The Lowell Sun of May 29, 1925 reported on plans for the Memorial Day presentation by the Westlands Girls Club of a flag for the pole at Perham Park. On November 11, 1949 (Armistice Day) the Sun reported on a parade from the Westlands School to Perham Park for a ceremony dedicating a monument to veterans of all wars.

The small artillery piece that sits under the flagpole is a 57mm anti-tank gun from World War 2; research continues as to exactly when and how it was acquired.

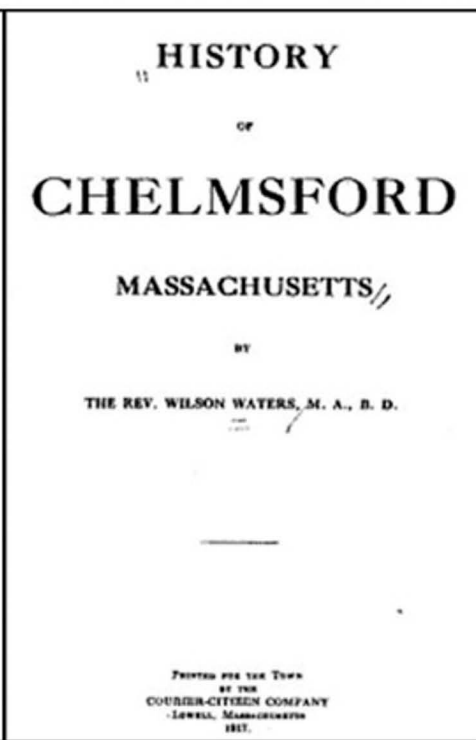
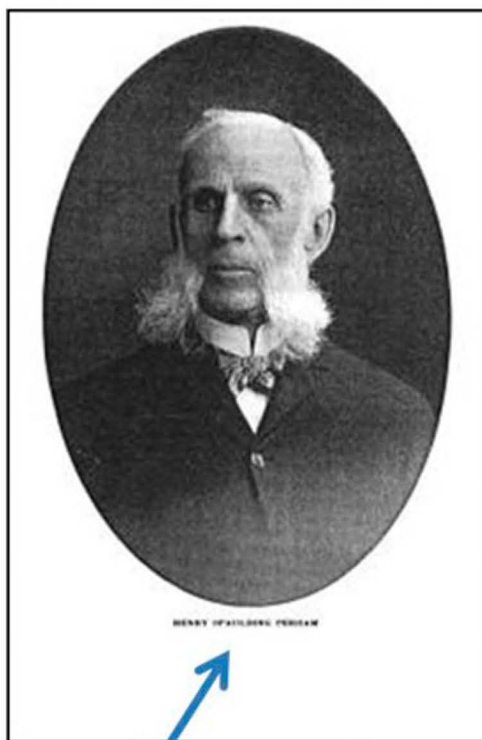
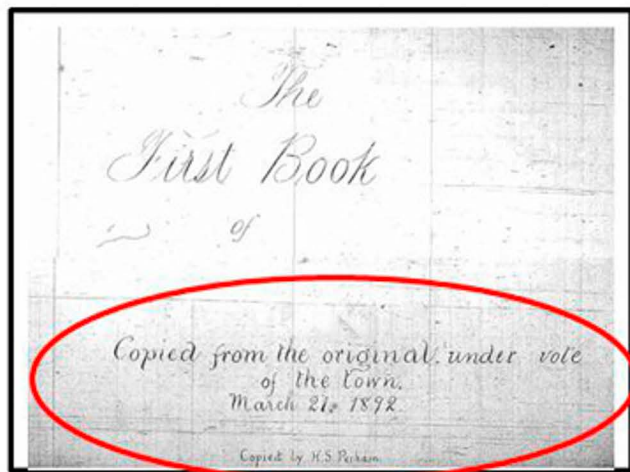


Photo of Henry S. Perham as a younger man

Photo of Henry S. Perham opposite title page in Waters' History of Chelmsford



The First Book of Chelmsford Town Records Copied from the original under vote of the Town Copied by H.S. Perham, March 21, 1892

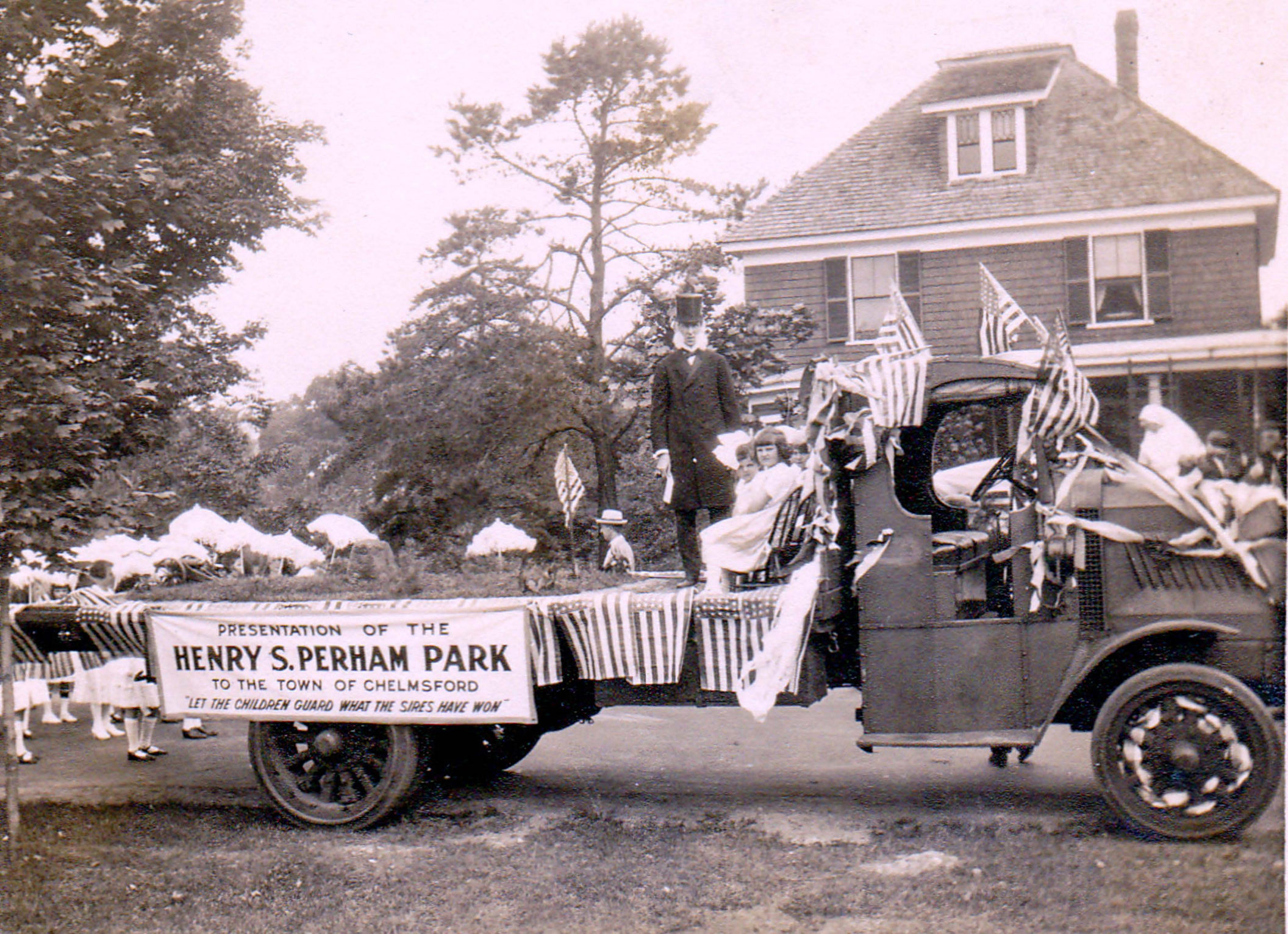
Perham Park was named for **Henry Spaulding Perham**, honoring his work as an early historian of the Town. A great-great-great-great-great grandson of Edward Spalding, one of the early settlers and leaders in the town, Henry S. Perham (1843-1906) was responsible for preserving the earliest town records by carefully copying them by hand. At the time of his death in 1906, he was working on an updated History of Chelmsford, a work that was completed in 1917 by the Rev. Wilson Waters, who gave due credit to Mr. Perham in the book's introduction.

Introduction to the Rev. Wilson Waters' History of Chelmsford, crediting the role of Henry S. Perham in the work's origin.

INTRODUCTION.

THE work of preparing a history of Chelmsford was undertaken by Mr. Henry S. Perham in 1904, at the request of the Town. Mr. Perham, a native of Chelmsford, whose ancestor was one of the early settlers, had written a sketch of Chelmsford for Hurd's History of Middlesex County, published in 1891; and at the Quarter-Millennial celebration in 1905, he delivered the historical address which was printed in the Report of the Proceedings. At the time of his death, in 1906, he had written so much of the contemplated history as appears in the first chapter of this volume under the title, "The Beginning." This, with whatever other material (consisting of a few notes, some correspondence, and occasional addresses in manuscript), was found among his papers, came into my hands, when, in 1907, I was asked by the Town to take up the work interrupted by the lamented death of Mr. Perham.

I reluctantly accepted the task, realizing the labor involved and the time it would take from other pressing duties. I have endeavored to bring the work to completion in a manner as nearly consonant with that of my predecessor and as worthy of the subject as the imposed conditions and my own limitations would allow. I have traversed the whole field, verifying the quotations made by Mr. Perham, although this was hardly necessary in the case of such an accurate historian, and have searched diligently for the facts now presented to the reader. I am aware that further years of work might yield some things of interest not unearthed, and perhaps give better faith to the



PRESENTATION OF THE
HENRY S. PERHAM PARK
TO THE TOWN OF CHELMSFORD
"LET THE CHILDREN GUARD WHAT THE SIRE'S HAVE WON"



PLAGUE PRESENTED--During the dedication ceremony held at Perham Park Armistice Day, T.W. Emerson, chairman of the Board of Selectmen accepted the plague in behalf of the townspeople from William Ayotte. Pictured above, left to right, Rev. Warren M. Chandler, Pastor of the Central Baptist Church; Rev. John Zuromskis, St. Mary's Church; Commander Raymond Ayotte, Selectman T.W. Emerson; William Ayotte, Mrs. James Grant and Mrs. Elizabeth Vinal.



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COMMUNITY IN MEMORY
OF THOSE WHO SERVED
IN THE ARMED SERVICES
WESTLANDS IMPROVEMENT
ASSOCIATION





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FORM C - OBJECT

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
 MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
 220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
 BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Assessor's number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

Plat 52 Lots 1,2	Billerica		945
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Town Chelmsford

Place (neighborhood or village) Westlands

Address or Location Intersection Chelmsford St. & Dalton Rd.

Name Perham Park

Ownership Public Private
 Town of Chelmsford

Type of Object (check one):

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> statue | <input type="checkbox"/> monument |
| <input type="checkbox"/> bust | <input type="checkbox"/> milestone |
| <input type="checkbox"/> group composition | <input type="checkbox"/> marker |
| <input type="checkbox"/> religious shrine | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> boundary marker | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify) | |

Date of Construction 1920s probably

Source Howard Nickerson, Jr.

Designer/Sculptor

Materials Granite boulder with bronze plaque

Alterations (with dates)

Condition good, some "weeping" from bronze on to boulder

Moved no yes Date

Acreage 11,408 sq. ft

Setting Primarily residential but near two shopping malls

Recorded by Jane B. Drury

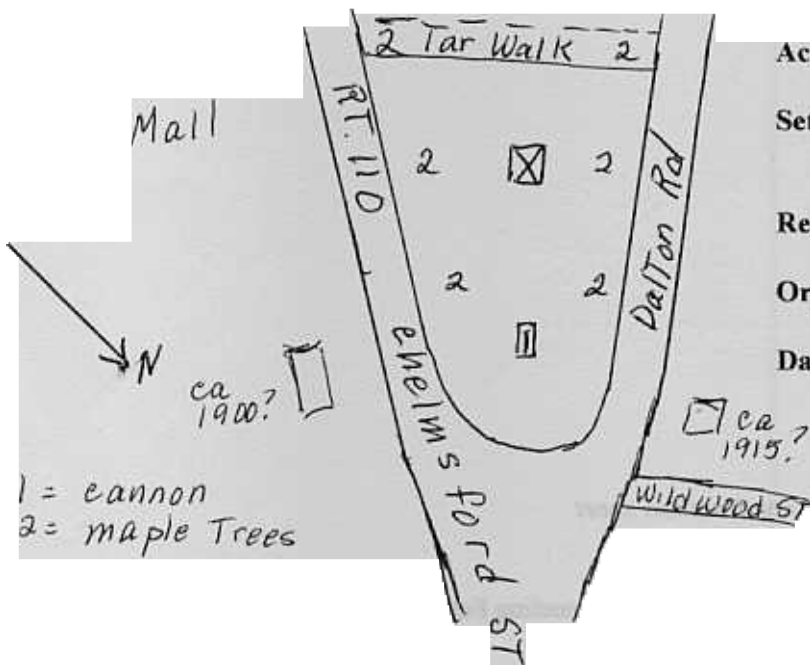
Organization For Chelmsford Historical Commission

Date (month/year) November 2003



Sketch Map

Draw a map showing the object's location in relation to the nearest cross streets and/or major natural features. Show all buildings between object and nearest intersection or natural feature. Label streets including route numbers, if any. Circle and number the inventoried object. Indicate north.

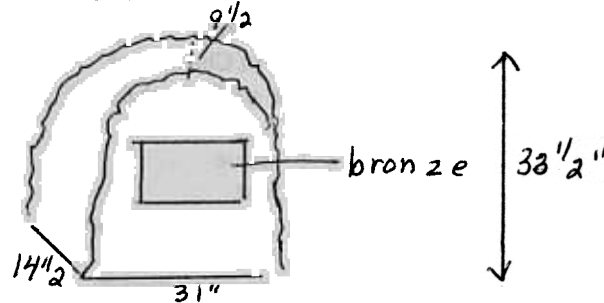


OBJECT FORM

DESIGN ASSESSMENT see continuation sheet

Describe the design features of the object, and evaluate in terms of other similar types of objects within the community.

The boulder at Perham Park with a bronze plaque is very similar to others in the town, many prepared by area monument/gravestone companies. Colmer Monument Works of Lowell prepared this monument. The granite boulder is 33½ inches high and 31 inches wide. It is roughly finished on all sides but the front.



HISTORICAL NARRATIVE see continuation sheet

Explain the history of the object, and how it relates to the development of the community

In 1923 a triangular portion of the property was donated to the Town to be left forever a park. The following year the remainder of the property was taken by eminent domain, to make it better sized. In 1925 \$500 was spent by the Park Department to grade the area. It is not known when the Westlands Improvement Association placed the monument and a cannon here, but it probably was soon after this time. At one time there was a small plaque of some sort on the cannon which stands near the boulder, but it has been removed. Alfred Coburn came to Chelmsford in 1930, and he thinks the boulder was there at that time, but he isn't sure. Howard Nickerson, Jr., born in 1923, came to Chelmsford with his family in the late 1920s, and he recalls playing on the boulder as a fairly young boy.

ENTIRE INSCRIPTION (if applicable).

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ASSOCIATION

COLMER MONT. WKS.
LOWELL, MASS.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES see continuation sheet

Chelmsford Assessors' Records/maps
Town reports: special meetings July 2, 1923, Art. 1, & Oct. 20, 1924, Art. 2; meeting Feb. 9, 1925, Art. 21
Alfred Coburn: conversation
Howard L. Nickerson, Jr.: conversation



'Perham Park' Chelmsford Street & Dalton Road

9/4/2004 F Merriam

