



Sooner or later, anyone who owns an old house wonders about the people who have lived there before. My husband and I are the owners of such a house, located just outside Medfield center. This spring, our curiosity led us on an interesting journey from our house, through the land and Town records, to a knoll in the New Section of Vine Lake Cemetery.

Dating Our Home's Construction

We knew nothing about the history of our house when we purchased it thirteen years ago. People would often ask about the age of our house. We could make an educated guess that it dated from the late 1800's, but that was all we knew. During a kitchen renovation project in 2003, beneath the sub-flooring of the kitchen, we found stacks of *Boston Traveler* newspapers from 1899 used as insulation, which provided a clue as to the age of that portion of the house, but we suspected it had been added on to the main house after its original construction. As my son got older and more persistent, he wanted answers to some of these questions we had been wondering about for years - when exactly was the house built and who built it?

A couple of months ago, we finally decided to see what we could find out. Armed with a copy of our deed to the house my son and I went to the Norfolk County Registry of Deeds in Dedham and began our research. We learned that the lot on which our house stands was purchased by David M. Bent from George Gilmore and his wife Augusta on June 21, 1884 for \$150.00. The Bent family owned the property for 39 years.

When David Bent died on April 3, 1910, almost 26 years after purchasing the property, he was survived by his wife Adelaide and his son and only child, Ernest, who continued to own the property until 1923. Although the land records told us the lot was purchased in 1884, we wanted more specifics on when the house itself was built.

The records we looked at in Medfield's Building Department and Assessor's Office did not extend back nearly far enough, likely due to the two fires that burned the Town Hall and many Town records prior to 1923. With the help of Medfield Historical Society President David Temple, we continued our research in the Historical Society files. Although the Society had no specific files on our

house or the Bents, the Society's "Miscellaneous "B"" file contained a sheet of paper with typewritten summaries of *Dedham Transcript* articles mentioning members of various Bent families during the late 1800's and early 1900's, including:

November 15, 1884, *Dedham Transcript* – David Bent moved into his new residence on Green St. last Saturday, same day Lewis Alexander moved in to the Clemmer house on Pleasant St. recently occupied by Mr. Bent.

On that small scrap of paper in the Historical Society's folder was the answer – our house was built between June and November 1884.

A Visit to the Cemetery

With the names of the family that built the house, our thoughts almost immediately turned to Vine Lake Cemetery and whether the Bents were buried there. I asked Rob Gregg, president of Vine Lake Preservation Trust, to do some research for us to answer that question. In the meantime, while driving through the cemetery one day, my husband happened to glance out the car window and spot the Bents' gravestone, perched on a knoll in the New Section of Vine Lake Cemetery.

All three Bents, David, Adelaide and Ernest – are buried together, under a gray granite gravestone carved with three interlocking chain links. (This artwork signifies membership in the International Order of Odd Fellows; each link represents Faith, Love, and Trust.)

Uncanny Connections

We now have a connection to the family buried in that plot, and have discovered some interesting similarities along the way. The Bents moved into our house in November 1884, the same month we would move into the house 112 years later. They had one child – a son – as do we. And our son's name is David – just like Mr. Bent who built our house almost 126 years ago.