

Dedication of Olmsted Outlook, GLCT Annual Meeting, 16, May 1982

By Carolyn K. Evans, President

“It is with pleasure that we dedicate this lovely property today. In order to appreciate what we have here, I have to spend a few minutes on its past.

Many years ago, Mrs. Charles Thayer, formerly Anna Chittenden, built and lived in the yellow house on the corner of Broad and River Streets. The house now belongs to the Weaver family. Mrs. Thayer owned property on both sides of River Street, including this site. There was a lovely garden here, complete with an arbor. It was a favorite place for a picnic ... a place to launch a small boat in order to explore the marshes. Mrs. Thayer felt so strongly that this property should be kept as open space that, as a gift to the Broad Street neighborhood, she gave the neighbors across the street – the families Farrar, Sperry, and Weurth – certain rights to this property. These rights have effectively prevented any development of this site over the years.

Howard Weaver wanted to assure that this property remain undeveloped in perpetuity, and he felt that the best chance of that happening was to dedicate it to the Guilford Land Conservation Trust. The rest of his neighbors who had an interest in the property went along with Howard’s suggestion. Thanks to Howard’s foresight and the cooperation of the neighbors, we can enjoy the site today, and hopefully, it will be enjoyed by generations yet to come. I regret deeply that Howard did not live to share this day with us. But I am thankful that Debbie and her two sons, George and Chip, are here. I know that Howard is in our hearts.

It was Howard’s desire that we call this property “Olmsted Outlook.” A view, framed by old trees, encompasses the ever-changing West River and salt marshes, with Westwoods in the distance. It was 150 years ago that Frederick Law Olmsted, the famous landscape architect, first visited Guilford. Views such as this influenced his thinking when designing parks such as Manhattan’s Central Park. As far as we can tell, the site today is very much the same as it was when Olmsted first saw it years ago. The site, along the river, forms a sort of boundary to the old center of Guilford, providing a vista – an opening to the countryside. Such a setting for contemplation and appreciation of unspoiled natural beauty is rarely found near the center of a town. We hope you will enjoy this property and help us care for it.

It is with great pleasure that we dedicate Olmsted Outlook. Our deepest appreciation goes to the late Howard Weaver and his family.”