

Uncovering some secrets about local history

By Don Staruk

Andover resident Clifford Wrigley was in the midst of writing a book on philosophy when he was ambushed by an Indian named Cutshamache.

Mr. Wrigley, 70, a retired art professor who fancies himself a philosopher, was doing research in the Jamaica Plain Public Library six years ago for a book he was going to call *Down the Muddy River*, after a body of water in Boston, when he stumbled across Cutshamache, the Indian king of the Massachusetts Indians who sold Andover to the white man for six pounds of gold and a coat. He recognized Cutshamache as the same man depicted on Andover's town seal holding the gold and the coat, and pointing across the Shawsheen River toward the hills of what is now Andover Center.

Curious about the Indian king, Mr. Wrigley set the philosophy book aside for what he thought would be about a year while he took a side trip into Andover's history. Six years later, Mr. Wrigley is still about a year away from publishing a new book called *Six Pounds of Gold and a Coat*, about Cutshamache, the settling of Andover and subsequent events.

Items he's uncovered in his research include that the first white settlement of Andover was in 1629, the same decade the pilgrims landed on the coast and that some Indians in New England were cannibals, often keeping victims, Indian or white men, tied to a tree for up to three days while they ate them alive.

This week, Mr. Wrigley talked with the *Townsmen* about a more tame subject, the true origin of the picture on Andover's town seal, Cutshamache's likeness, and successive versions of the seal. He was happy to relate that much of his research on the seal came through reading old *Townsmen*s, from the late 1890s through the 1960s.

The scene depicted on the seal is the event Andover will be celebrating in 1996 during the 350th anniversary of the sale of the land of Andover, North Andover and South Lawrence, probably in 1642, but acknowledged officially in 1646 by Cutshamache in the General Court in Boston, according to Mr. Wrigley.

"This was a surprisingly successful investigation. No one was more surprised than me. The reason was not great investigation work, but that no one had ever investigated it before. And I stumbled upon one surprising discovery after another," Mr. Wrigley said.

Three people are credited by the Andover Historical Society as having designed the original town seal, according to Mr. Wrigley.

"But an examination of the evidence reveals that all three had made copies after the original, and after one another, and the identity of the original designer has remained a mystery," he said.

"The original design was probably made in 1894, possibly in 1895, but it



Photo by Matthew Sapienza

Clifford Wrigley of Andover is writing a book about Andover's history. Here, he stands by the town seal, a mosaic on the floor in the entrance to Old Town Hall on Main Street.

was definitely completed in the form of a cloisonne pin in 1895 for the 250th anniversary celebration of Andover's incorporation in 1896."

Three of these pins can be seen on a card at the Andover Historical Society, according to Mr. Wrigley.

The pin was designed by J.E. Whiting, an Andover jeweler for 46 years, who had a shop in the building next to Old Town Hall at the corner of Main and Barnard streets.

"I was able to find, in old *Townsmen* files, a surprisingly complete biography of J.E. Whiting, and his family and their family tree, and a statement in Whiting's words as to where he drew the scene from and what event the scene depicts," Mr. Wrigley said.

"I have a letter from Mr. (James) Batchelder of the Andover Historical Society, who I believe is their president-elect, to the effect that he has read my documentation on this and I am 'correct,'" Mr. Wrigley said.

Mr. Whiting's is the original design after which the two current official versions were made, and after which as many as 50 other versions have been made for such purposes as firefighter's and police officer's badges, town vehicle decals, town publications, school buildings, and other decorations.

"Whiting probably stood on Indian Ridge to make his original sketch, above the Shawsheen River opposite the entrance of Roger's Brook into the Shawsheen," Mr. Wrigley said.

Hundreds or even thousands of the original pins bearing Cutshamache's likeness were probably made for the 250th anniversary celebration and finding one is still not uncommon today, according to Mr. Wrigley.

"Whiting sold them for 25 cents each," he said.

Mr. Wrigley credits a column by Bessie P. Goldsmith, "The Townswoman's Andover," in a 1964 *Townsmen*,

and Bernice Haggerty, then of the Andover Historical Commission and who owned one of the original pins, with pointing him to Mr. Whiting.

He then found *Townsmen* articles in 1913 and 1916 that first connected Mr. Whiting to the town seal, and which suggested that his 1896 pin influenced the design of the 1900-1902 mosaic of the seal on the floor of the Old Town Hall.

Mr. Whiting's design was adapted to the official town seal in 1899 by William Harnden Foster, age 12, and was accepted by Town Meeting on March 5, 1900. Mr. Wrigley notes that the original town seal, designed in 1855, was a typographical design with no pictorial elements.

A more professional drawing by Edward Sherman improved on young Foster's version in 1905-1906. His, and one by Ethel Coolidge in 1919 or 1920, are the two official town seals still used today.

But the most widely known and artistically impressive version of the seal and Mr. Whiting's design is probably the 6-foot wide mosaic on the lobby floor of Old Town Hall, according to Mr. Wrigley.

"It was installed there on Oct. 24, 1902, and looks as bright and new in 1992," Mr. Wrigley said.

It was designed and drawn as a "cartoon," to be used as a working document for the mosaicist, by Perley F. Gilbert, an architect and draftsman commissioned by the 1905 Town Meeting to improve the 1907 building.

The best Mr. Wrigley could come up with was that the probable mosaicist was Elias Galassi, of the Murdock parlor Grate co. of Boston, who possibly left a whimsical signature in the black grass shapes in back of the Indian's feet. If looked at upside down, a cryptic suggestion of his first name can be



This is the original design from which the two currently used official versions of the Andover Town Seal were made.

seen, "which would be natural for the mosaicist of this outstanding work of art to do," Mr. Wrigley said.

Mr. Whiting died in 1916, and is buried in Spring Grove Cemetery, but Mr. Wrigley feels his contribution to the town should not be forgotten.

"I think a plaque to honor his achievement should be erected on the wall of his shop," Mr. Wrigley said.

Painting Cutshamache

One aspect of his book, which he expects to publish himself, attempts to paint an accurate picture of Cutshamache, according to Mr. Wrigley.

"Our historians dismiss him, the symbol and benefactor of Andover, very unfairly, as a 'spy and traitor' to his own people and a 'stooge' to the white man. I have discovered that he was a great tragic hero to his people with a fascinating history, including his starting of the Pequot War," Mr. Wrigley said.

The book also discourses on the original settlements of Andover, of which there were three, according to Mr. Wrigley. There are people in Andover and North Andover who don't particularly like some of his discoveries, Mr. Wrigley said, because it discounts long held beliefs that families had roots in the original settlement, when actually it was the second or third settlement.

A retired art professor, Mr. Wrigley likes to read and is a water color painter. He plans to publish his book, which he said changes the accepted history of Andover, himself unless he finds a willing publisher.

News update on park graffiti

At *Townsmen* press time Wednesday afternoon, six to 10 middle-school students were painting over the graffiti at The Park's gazebo under the supervision of Detective David Grant. The story of police identifying these and other students responsible for various graffiti in Andover is on page 2.