

## Thomas “Pop” Bowler Memorial Endowment



Thomas “Pop” Bowler, a student of languages with Greek being his favorite, graduated from Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine. In July 1901, shortly after his college graduation, Thomas boarded an army transport in San Francisco bound for the Philippines. He was wearing a Van Dyke beard in an effort to look more mature! According to his written diary, Thomas stated, “The United States decided to establish American schools in the islands, and for this purpose it was planned to employ 1,000 teachers.” The plan was to train young men of the Philippines.

Thomas started writing his diary during the crossing of the Pacific, “But as we passed the Golden Gate, we received a choppy welcome from the blue waters of the Pacific. There is a sudden weakening of the stomach; an indefinite faintness comes over us, we feel a peculiar dizziness when we rise. Many try to reach their bunks. Others remain on deck. The inevitable happens. For two days the waiters had but little to do. You know when one is seasick, it is said that at first there is a fear of dying and then the fear that one will not die.” His sense of humor never left him!

Thomas Bowler and his wife had six children: Helena, Dorothy, Josephine, Gerald, Richard, and Mary. His career in education went from the far Pacific to Cape Cod and Martha’s Vineyard. In 1912, Thomas began teaching Latin at Westfield High School in Westfield, Massachusetts. He remained at Westfield High School until he retired in 1950. His outstanding career spanned fifty years in education! The stories of students taking Latin just to be in his classes are legendary.

“Pop” Bowler was a playground director in Westfield during the summers. At Westfield High School, he was also the faculty manager. He firmly believed in good sportsmanship. If anyone was booing in the crowd, he would suspend play of the game. In addition to these sporting legacies, he was a most popular umpire for local baseball games.

In his later years, “Pop” was a crossing guard for school children in Westfield. I can remember long chats around the supper table in the summertime, when he would recall various students he kept in touch with from years gone by.

Thomas Bowler cherished his beloved Red Sox! He had the knack of listening to a baseball game on the radio in one ear, and watching another game on television. He would be able to follow both games and tell you the scores of each!

This scholarship in his name was the “brainchild” of Mrs. Rita Borden, one of Pop Bowler’s grandchildren. She wanted to do something to honor him while our father, Gerald “Laddie” Bowler, was still alive.

In closing, Thomas “Pop” Bowler’s legacy in Westfield, Massachusetts is truly legendary.

Written by: Thomas William Bowler, II

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