

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
BROOKLINE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
FOR 1975-1978



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1978

OFFICERS

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MRS. KURT SCHMIDT, MRS. SAMUEL SHAW,
MRS. DANIEL TYLER, JR., and the officers, ex-officio

ANNUAL MEETING – February 22, 1978

The seventy-seventh Annual Meeting of the Brookline Historical Society, which had had to be postponed for several weeks because of the "Blizzard of '78," was held on Wednesday evening, February 22, 1978, at 8 o'clock in the "Dutch House" on Netherlands Road. Although the weather was still far from clement, a large number of members and guests, drawn by the opportunity to visit one of Brookline's most distinctive landmarks, made their way through waist-deep snows.

The evening began with a brief business meeting. The President's Report was read and Miss Elsie Briggs read a tribute to Miss Maud Oxenham, a Trustee of the Society who had recently died. "She was faithful unto death," the tribute concluded.

Miss Nancy Stieber, a doctoral candidate in Architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, spoke and showed slides on the Dutch architectural traditions behind Brookline's Dutch House, which is a copy of the Town Hall in Franeker, Holland, and was built for the Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago.

Following Miss Stieber's scholarly and informative talk, hot chocolate and zweiback were served.

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

February 22, 1978

It has been a great pleasure to serve as the Brookline Historical Society's President during this past year, and I wish to thank the Trustees, Officers and Members for their loyalty and cooperation in making this a good year for the Society and an encouraging and meaningful year for me personally.

The Society's Membership Meetings were well attended and eventful. Following Fire Chief William Murphy's Paper on the History of the Brookline Fire Department, presented at the May 15, 1977, Spring Meeting, using early 20th Century lantern slides, held in the Lodging Room of Fire House No. 1, Boylston Street, a book entitled *History of the Brookline Fire Department, A Collection of Vintage Memorabilia - 1975* was presented to the Society by Chief Murphy. The Fire Department lantern slides, also a gift to the Society, have been duplicated onto 35mm slides and loaned for presentation at the June 14, 1977, Meeting of the Brookline Kiwanis Club. During the meeting a fire alarm occurred and it was an excited membership which observed the speed and efficiency of firemen sliding down the brass pole through the Lodging Room and onto the fire trucks beneath as they zoomed out of the Station. The meeting concluded with "Fire House Punch" and savories prepared by Mrs. Henry Kohn and her Hospitality Committee.

The October 2 Meeting of the Society took place at Fairsted in the Upper Drafting Room of the Olmsted Offices. Noted Olmsted scholar Cynthia Zaitzevsky presented a paper entitled "Comprehensive Planning for a Suburb: Olmsted's Brookline Projects" and mounted an exhibition of Olmsted materials about Brookline in adjacent workrooms. The membership was permitted to view the vault housing hundreds of Olmsted papers, and to explore the various offices of this earliest of landscape architectural firms. Sherry and biscuits concluded the Meeting. This Olmsted BHS Meeting was in support of an Olmsted Weekend in Brookline, during which a photograph exhibition, "Olmsted in Brookline: Leverett Park and the Muddy River Improvement" appeared at the Brookline Main Library, a Walking Tour of the Muddy River Park was conducted with a Reception following at the Boston Hospital for Women, and a series of articles on Olmsted history and activities was featured in *The Brookline Chronicle*.

A Christmas Open House was held at the Edward Devotion House on Sunday afternoon, December 11, a first time for Christmas cheer, holiday decoration and music at the house as a Society event. The Devotion House has now been accepted for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, and special thank-yous should be extended to Helen McIntosh for preparing the necessary forms.

The Annual Meeting of the Society, a mid-week evening meeting, took place at the Dutch House, 20 Netherlands Road, and a paper was presented by Nancy Stieber entitled "Franeker Town Hall in Brookline," followed by remarks from Dr. Robert D. Mehlman who, with his family, has lived in the House for the past 15 years. Dutch hot cocoa, zweibacks and Dutch honey cakes were prepared and served by Mrs. Henry Kohn and the Hospitality Committee.

As President of the Society, I have participated in the planning of a Brookline observance of the Sixtieth Birthday Anniversary of the late John F. Kennedy, which took place on May 29 at the Kennedy Birthplace, with speeches from the porch, music and refreshments. Representing the Society, I attended the installation service of the new pastor, The Reverend Justus John Fennel, to the First Presbyterian Church, Brookline, on February 20, 1977. I have also accepted on behalf of the Society the gift of an 1890 Brookline Historical Society membership photograph — with members identified — from the estate of the late Ms. Penelope Noyes of Cambridge, whose father was part of the Brookline Winsor family. Society Trustee Maud Oxenham presented the Society with a rare 1905 copy of a Town Bicentennial publication which describes and illustrates many historical aspects of Brookline.

The Trustees met on March 8, May 3, June 16, September 7, 1977, and February 3, 1978. In addition to attention to the ongoing affairs of the Society, the Trustees are concerned with a proper inventory and evaluation of the Society Collections housed at the Devotion House, and a review of the financial goals and activities of the Society. A Committee for the cataloging of Society artifacts at the Devotion House will be organized by the Spring of 1978, and a guidelines questionnaire is being prepared to send out to the Society membership for its consideration of future Society goals and activities.

The Trustees acknowledge the generosity of the Brookline Bicentennial Commission, which extends to the Society the proceeds from sales of their publication, *Mr. Mouse Sees Brookline*, a Bicentennial project written and illustrated by the third grade children of the Lawrence School, under the direction of Helen McIntosh.

Respectfully submitted,
NANCY A. SMITH
(Mrs. Christopher E. Smith)

“DUTCH HOUSE” CAME HERE FROM HOLLAND VIA CHICAGO

Inside the great drawing room, amidst richly carved paneling, gold embossed leather wall covering, massive exposed ceiling beams supported by sculptured corbels, and hundreds of square feet of leaded green glass window expanse, Brookline Historical Society members last week heard an account of the “Dutch House” in Brookline. The guest speaker, Nancy Steiber, a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Architecture at M.I.T., traced the architectural roots of the house.

Built in 1893, the house is a direct copy of the 1591 Franeker Town Hall in Friesland, Holland, and is regarded as the most authentic example of high-renaissance Dutch architecture in America. In order that the audience better understand what the Dutch meant by renaissance architectural design, Miss Steiber reviewed the Dutch high-gothic architectural style, which dominated Holland prior to the renaissance.

The love of ornamentation, asymmetry, picturesque roof-scapes of stepped gables and cupolas, sculpted human faces and bestiary, all formed a strong gothic tradition which the Italian renaissance principles and ideology never displaced. Instead, classical motifs such as pilasters, pediments, volutes, keystone arches and numerous other renaissance designs were freely chosen from the well-known pattern books of Frans Flores or Vredeman de Vries and successfully grafted onto the already existing gothic.

This stylistic fusion is everywhere evident in the “Dutch House,” accounting for both its fancy and rough strength. This dual personality has played dual roles. In 1893, the Dutch government, in collaboration with the Van Houten and Zoon Cocoa Company, commissioned Dutch architect M. Guillaume Wyuen to design the house in Holland for the ultimate purpose of constructing it as a formidable Dutch cocoa house for the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair where indeed it stood and served the firm’s cocoa, “the consumption of which gives a grateful period of rest,” as the advertisements read.

While attending the Columbian Exposition, a Mr. C. B. Appleton became so captivated by the cocoa house that he

bought it at auction, had it dismantled and transported to Brookline, where Boston architects Messrs. Kingsbury and Richardson and master builder E. F. McIntire of Salem reconstructed it at its present location near the Olmsted parkway, now called Riverway. It is the residence of Dr. and Mrs. Robert D. Mehlman, who generously opened its doors to the Brookline Historical Society meeting.

Following the lecture, Dutch hot chocolate and zwei-backs were served in the dining room, where blue and white delft wall tiles, depicting Biblical stories, engendered lively conversation.

Reported by Yvonne Egdahl in the *Brookline Chronicle-Citizen*, Thursday, March 2, 1979.

SPRING MEETING – May 7, 1978

The Spring Meeting of the Brookline Historical Society was held on Sunday afternoon, May 7, 1978, at the Philbrick House, once the home of Brookline's leading abolitionist Samuel Philbrick, and now owned by the Rt. Rev. and Mrs. Anson Phelps Stokes, Jr., at 182 Walnut Street.

Mrs. Theresa Carroll, Town Librarian, spoke briefly at the request of President Smith about Brookline items in the Main Library.

Historian Pauline Chase Harrell presented a paper entitled "Anti-Slave Law Days in Brookline," which dealt with the activities of abolitionists and other reformers at the Philbrick House and in other parts of Brookline and Boston in the decades before the Civil War.

Following the meeting, visitors were offered refreshments and were invited to enjoy the spring beauty of the landscaped grounds.

BROOKLINE ITEMS AT THE MAIN LIBRARY

By THERESA A. CARROLL

President Smith has asked me to speak briefly about the Brookline items we have at the Main Library and how you can gain access to them. For the most part they must be used in the Library and do not circulate.

I might mention in passing that the Brookline Historical Commission has also now placed some photographs and data on Brookline Houses in the Brookline Room.

First, about the Brookline items the Library owns. There are approximately 1500 volumes in the Brookline Room collection. Some of these are duplicated in our regular circulating or reference collection. As many of you probably know, the Town Meeting officially designated the Library as the depository for reports issued by Town Agencies. Thus, we have collections of Annual Reports, Budgets, Street Lists and position papers plus various other town publications. Town Moderator, Justin Wyner, has been placing copies of Town Meeting tapes in the Library these past few years. Besides these official publications, the Library has a group of books by Brookline authors. All of these volumes are listed in the Public Catalogue under various headings. A number of years ago, when J. Aisner was President of the Brookline Historical Society, the Society donated funds to the Library for the purpose of microfilming the Brookline newspapers. The Library has continued this practice and thus Brookline newspapers from early days have been preserved on microfilm. The newspapers were indexed through 1922 as a WPA project, and from 1923 to date the indexing has been continued by the library staff as is possible. This index on cards is in the Reference Room.

The Library also has extensive pamphlet files, which consist basically of newspaper clippings and similar material. This past year, the Library received a grant from CETA. This has enabled us to make duplicate copies of the Brookline pamphlet file. This copying has been completed and is available for public use. This will help us preserve longer the clippings which are deteriorating. A subject index is available to the pamphlet collection.

The Library also has 1750 photographs of Brookline which are listed on cards.

We also have atlases and maps of Brookline. As you know, some of these were in very poor physical condition. With a gift of funds from the Brookline Historical Society the Library retained a consultant from the New England Document Conservation Center to look at our books and maps and photographs and pamphlet file. The consultant gave us advice on preservation. The Library was fortunate to receive a handsome gift from a donor who wishes to be anonymous to have Brookline materials preserved, and work has started already on Brookline maps which were in the worst condition. A gift from the Massachusetts Commission on Arts and Humanities will allow us to start work on the preservation of photographs shortly. This work of preservation is very costly and highly technical, so it will take a number of years and require additional funds. The Library also has Louise Andrew Kent manuscripts and papers of the Tuesday Club, Thursday Club, and Emery Bag.

Now the Brookline Historical Society materials deposited at the Library: First of all, we have copies of the Curtis *History of Brookline* and Nina Fletcher Little's book, *Some Old Brookline Houses*. These are for sale at the Library (\$4.00 for Mrs. Little's book and \$3.00 for the Curtis *History of Brookline*) The plates for the Curtis book are also housed at the Library. At the present time there are copies of early Proceedings of the Brookline Historical Society also for sale. However, most of them are in very short supply. The Library itself owns full sets of the Proceedings and these have been indexed. They are listed for the most part in the catalogue and also at the Reference Desk. In addition, there are approximately 300 items that belong to the Society, which have been listed on these cards by Miss Thayer, former Assistant Town Librarian for many years and Miss Coon. These are in the Brookline Room in locked drawers.

Just a word about the Brookline Room — When the renovation and additions for the Main Library were contemplated, it seemed desirable to have a special room for the Brookline collections and such a room was designated. Since the additions and renovations have been accomplished, the Trustees and Library staff have been increasingly concerned about the security of all of our books and especially Brookline materials which are not available in duplicate. Therefore, a year ago an electric security system was installed at the Main Library to detect unauthorized removal of books. All the Brookline books have also been protected

against such unauthorized removal in this way. We have been delayed in placing all the Brookline materials in the Brookline Room because of our concern for their safety, although we do have duplicates of many of the items, of course. We have had some difficulty in finding a satisfactory way to control the entrance to the room. When this is resolved the remainder of the material not yet in the room will be placed there. Let me emphasize, however, that the material is listed in public catalogues or indexes. Ask the Reference staff to help you.

ANTI-SLAVE LAW DAYS IN BROOKLINE

By PAULINE CHASE HARRELL

For thirty years preceding the Civil War, Boston and its surrounding towns were the scene of many dramatic events as the New England conscience was awakened to the evils of slavery. It was a time of intense intellectual and emotional crisis, a time when people felt driven to extraordinary measures.

Who were the abolitionists? William Jay Chapman, grandson of one of them, once described the leaders of the abolition movement as "earth-born, titantic creatures whom Nature spawned to stay a plague, and then withdrew and broke the mold." Indeed, they were extraordinary people. Before we look at some of the stirring events of those years in Boston and Brookline, let us look at some of the cast, to see what kind of people they were.

William Lloyd Garrison is perhaps best remembered among them today. Born in poverty in Newburyport, he was a pacifist who used militant words. In founding the most influential of the abolitionist journals, *The Liberator*, in 1831, he placed on its masthead the pledge, "I WILL BE HEARD." And, undeterred from his mission by the hatred and violence directed against him, he was heard, eventually winning an army of converts to his cause.

Theodore Parker was born on a farm in Lexington, and put himself through Harvard. A prodigious scholar who mastered between twenty and thirty languages, and a theologian who revolutionized Unitarianism, he was also a minister to fugitive slaves and an active leader in all aspects of the abolition movement. Censured by religious leaders for his unorthodox activities, he nevertheless had a congregation of 7,000 loyal followers who came regularly to hear him preach at the Melodean Hall, the only place in Boston large enough to hold such a crowd. Worn out by his strenuous efforts, he died in Italy in 1860. Not yet fifty, he was said by friends to look seventy.

Thomas Wentworth Higginson, known during and after the Civil War as the "Colonel of the Black Regiment," came from an old Boston family, and was a Harvard Phi Beta Kappa and master of seven languages. He was also a dare-devil buccaneer, described by Stephen Vincent Benet as "the tough, swart-minded Higginson." A Unitarian minister, he was dismissed by his first congregation, in Newburyport in the 1840s for his work in educating and organizing factory girls there, and for advocating the abolition of slavery. During the crisis over the rendition of fugitive slave Anthony Burns to Virginia in 1854, he led the attack on the Federal courthouse with a battering ram, and was later indicted in the death of a Federal deputy marshal in that attack.

Wendell Phillips, the "Golden Trumpet of Abolition," came from a wealthy Beacon Hill family, attended law school, and was well on his way to a comfortable career in the inner sanctums of Boston's establishment when his family ostracized him for joining the abolitionists. He served the cause with his "sublime, irresistible, annihilating" rhetoric. He also acted as its defense attorney, along with Richard Henry Dana, Jr., another maverick from a good family more interested in reform than remuneration.

Samuel Gridley Howe was a doctor, director of the Perkins Institute for the Blind, and famous for his success in teaching the deaf and blind Laura Bridgeman. He organized both the Massachusetts Board of Charities to make the dispensation of charity more efficient, and the militant Kansas Crusade to wrest control of the Kansas Territory from pro-Slavery settlers. Dashing, handsome and dominating, he was called "Chev" by his friends as a reminder of the Order of the Chevalier he had been awarded for his youthful exploits in that most romantic of nineteenth century causes, the war for Greek Independence. He was also the husband of Julia Ward Howe, author of the *Battle Hymn of the Republic*.

There were, as we shall see, many spirited women among the abolitionists. By becoming active in the movement, they flaunted the era's restrictive definition of proper behavior for women as well as the society's desire to maintain the status quo with regard to slavery. Their dauntless spirit is perhaps best captured by the image of Abby Fulsom being carried by three men out of a meeting where she had insisted on speaking out, shouting clearly as she was borne away, "At least I am better off than Jesus. He had but one ass to carry him, while I have three!"

Lydia Maria Child was the best-selling woman writer of the 1820s. As author of *The Frugal Housewife* and other guides for women she was known and respected throughout the country. When she published *An Appeal on Behalf of That Class of Americans Known as Africans* in 1833, her former admirers turned against her for her audacity. Her books were publicly burned in the South. She was castigated in the North as well, and an outraged Board of Trustees withdrew the Boston Athenaeum card they bestowed upon her. Undaunted, she became an organizer of the Female Anti-Slavery Society.

Maria Weston Chapman, called by Wendell Phillips the "Joan of our Ark," helped finance the abolition movement by organizing women's fairs and bazaars. She was also a charismatic speaker, and a glittering symbol of the movement. More than once, other women remembered focusing on her indomitable figure standing firm when their controversial meetings were under physical attack.

Inspiring love in their followers and hatred in their opponents, they were, as a group, romantic, reckless, fanatical, and dedicated. They had to be, for they were advocating radical change, and the climate in which they worked was hostile and often violent. Elijah Lovejoy was murdered by a mob in Illinois in 1837. In Boston, Garrison was attacked

and almost lynched on State Street in 1835, and the building in which Maria Weston Chapman was lecturing to a group of women in Philadelphia in 1838 was attacked and burned.

In Massachusetts the opposition to abolition came from two widely divergent groups. Boston's textile and banking interests feared alienating their Southern business connections, and vehemently resented the abolitionists "rocking the boat." Irish immigrants feared that freeing the slaves would increase the competition for the few low-level jobs that were available to them, and they formed ready recruits for mob action. Together, they were dangerous adversaries.

Throughout the period between the mid-1830s and 1860, there was much abolitionist activity in Brookline. Meetings and lectures were held frequently, although they aroused so much hostility that the selectmen forbade them in the Town Hall, fearing the building would be attacked and damaged. Many Brookline women worked in Maria Weston Chapman's fairs, among them Mrs. John Pierce, wife of the pastor of the First Church, and Mrs. Samuel Philbrick, who lived in this house. One can imagine that many meetings and work sessions were held in the rooms we are meeting in today.

This house, however, has even broader associations with the abolition movement. Built in 1822 by John Tappan, it was purchased in 1830 by Samuel Philbrick. A leading abolitionist in Brookline, Philbrick, who worked to establish a local anti-slavery society, was also a financial backer of Garrison's *Liberator* from its beginning in 1831. He was a respected citizen, holding several town offices over the years. Although he had been raised as a Quaker and never actually joined the church, he was very active in the First Church. He left it in 1837, however, never to return again, when the congregation objected to his bringing into his family pew a ten-year-old Negro girl he was sheltering.

In that same year, 1837, the first anti-slavery meeting in Brookline was held in this house when a group of women gathered to hear the Grimké sisters speak. (Legend — not terribly well supported, but worth repeating, nonetheless — has it that John Greenleaf Whittier secreted himself in a nearby closet to hear their speech without appearing at the ladies' meeting.)

Angelina and Sarah Grimké were from a wealthy Charleston family. Their father had been Chief Justice of the South Carolina Supreme Court, and their mother was socially prominent. They had both become Quakers, and fled Charleston society for Philadelphia in the early 1830s. In 1835, Angelina had written a letter to William Lloyd Garrison, eloquently supporting his work. Encouraged by him, she published *An Appeal to the Christian Women of the South*, which caused an immediate sensation. Her native city heaped vituperation on her, and even her Philadelphia Quaker brethren disapproved of her radical position. Both sisters were invited by the Female Anti-Slavery Society to speak, thus launching what became a whirlwind lecture tour.

At first they spoke only to women, which was scarcely socially acceptable, but soon they were speaking to "promiscuous audiences"; that is, men and women together, which was scandalous. The New England Congregational Association warned that, "If the vine . . . thinks to assume the independence and over-shadowing nature of the elm, it will not only cease to bear fruit, but will fall in shame and dishonor in the dust The power of woman is her dependence."

The press ridiculed them as "Devilina" and "Grimalkin." Maria Weston Chapman responded with a poem:

*"They've taken a notion to speak for themselves
And are wedding the tongue and the pen.
They've mounted the rostrum, the termagant elves,
And — oh, horrid! — are talking to men!"*

In the midst of this controversy and turmoil, the Grimké sisters came here to the Philbrick house (which was well known for its hospitality to abolitionists) in August for a week's rest, then returned to the lecture circuit. Their eloquent, first-hand testimony to the evils of slavery created an unceasing demand for their lectures, and the strain of a busy schedule and the storms of controversy around them took a heavy toll. In October, they were back at the Philbricks again, with Angelina seriously ill. She nearly died of typhoid fever, but by February she had regained sufficient strength to speak again. That month she became the first woman in United States history to address a legislature when she spoke before the Massachusetts General Court. She drew huge crowds, giving one opposing legislator the opportunity to propose that further testimony by her be banned for fear that the balconies might collapse. A quick-witted supporter derisively suggested that a special committee be formed "to see if the foundations of the Massachusetts State House can withstand another speech by Miss Grimké," and in the end she was invited back to speak for two more days. This was the high point of the sisters' lecturing career, for both were now in ill health.

In March, Theodore Dwight Weld, nationally known for his abolitionist activities, came to visit at the Philbricks'. He had vowed to devote his life to the abolitionist cause, even to the extent of not marrying until abolition was attained. He and Angelina had met in Philadelphia in 1835, and had corresponded regularly since then. They were attracted to each other, but both agonized over giving in to personal happiness before the battle was won. Nevertheless, during his visit here, Theodore Weld proposed, and Angelina Grimké accepted. They were married, and set off immediately for an anti-slavery convention in the Mid-West. After this, Angelina retired from her public speaking.

Throughout the 1840s and 50s, Samuel Philbrick continued providing hospitality to abolitionists, backing *The Liberator*, and, when necessary, harboring fugitive slaves. (There is some evidence of a tunnel having once existed between this house and another across the street, but I have

found no reference to it in any of the accounts of underground railroad activities.) During this period, the Whig party was falling apart as "Cotton" Whigs and "Conscience" Whigs differed more and more sharply over the annexation of Texas, the Mexican War, expansion of slavery into the territories, and related issues. Abolitionist sentiment was growing throughout the North, and as it grew it became more respectable, but there was still violent opposition.

In 1850, the aging Henry Clay, John C. Calhoun and Daniel Webster led a movement to end the growing rift in the nation by tying all the issues together into a compromise which would balance the interests of North and South. The most odious part of the compromise to the abolitionists was the Fugitive Slave Law, which threw the weight of the Federal government behind the effort to return fugitive slaves to their owners, denying them jury trial and imposing heavy penalties on those who aided them. Webster, who supported the Fugitive Slave Act as necessary for the compromise, became Secretary of State before the measure was voted. His replacement in the Senate, Robert C. Winthrop from Brookline, voted against it, but it was passed without his vote.

Over the next few years the Fugitive Slave Law and the Federal government's efforts to enforce it in Massachusetts brought increasing numbers of converts into the abolitionists' camp. There were over six hundred fugitive slaves in Boston, and all were now in imminent danger. Theodore Parker formed a Vigilance Committee to organize their defense.

The first crisis came within a month of the passage of the bill. William and Ellen Crafts were a slave couple who had made a bold escape from Georgia at Christmas time in 1848, with the light-colored Ellen posing as a young white male invalid travelling with "his" servant to Philadelphia for medical treatment. At length they arrived in Boston and were sheltered in the Brookline home of William Ingersoll Bowditch. An indication of the change in public attitude is the fact that they were allowed to speak at a public meeting in the Brookline Town Hall at this time. In October, 1850, two agents for their master arrived in Boston with warrants for their arrest.

The Vigilance Committee sprang into action. William was hidden in South Boston and Ellen was taken to the home of Committee member Ellis Gray Loring on Cypress Street in Brookline. When William learned that Loring was not at home, he insisted that she be moved, as he was unwilling to expose Loring without his knowledge to the risk of a \$1,000 fine and six months in jail for harboring a fugitive slave. The couple was then moved to the Philbricks' house, and remained here for three days, in the hired man's room. Meanwhile, as rumors of troops being sent to enforce the law spread, Theodore Parker and sixty members of the Vigilance Committee appeared at the agents' hotel. Parker solemnly warned the agents that they "would not be safe in Boston another night." They left, and the Crafts were married by Parker and sent to England in November.

Several other cases followed, and it became increasingly difficult to flout the law. In 1851, Thomas Sims was returned to his owner despite the Vigilance Committee's best efforts. Partly because they were determined that this would not happen again, and were willing to take desperate measures to insure that it did not, and partly because support for abolition was growing, it took the entire Boston police force, twenty-two companies of Massachusetts militia, and over a thousand Federal troops to accomplish the rendition of Anthony Burns to Virginia in 1854. This show of force in turn won more converts to abolitionism.

The last Brookline involvement in the anti-slavery crusade which I would like to mention demonstrates the escalation of the conflict in the 1850s. Amos Adams Lawrence, influential textile merchant and a founder of the Cottage Farm area of Brookline, was drawn into the struggle at the time of the Anthony Burns affair. At this time, the doctrine of "Popular Sovereignty," or allowing the settlers of each territory to adopt or reject slavery, was being tested in Kansas. Lawrence became one of the founders and chief financial backers of the Massachusetts Emigrant Aid Society, whose purpose was to promote the settlement of Kansas by anti-slavery forces. The first party of emigrants sent out in the summer of 1854 named the town of Lawrence, Kansas, in honor of their sponsor.

Conflict between the Massachusetts-sponsored settlers and the pro-slavery settlers soon won the new territory the name of "Bleeding Kansas." Raids on the anti-slavery settlements by "Border Ruffians" from the neighboring slave state of Missouri elicited an alarmed response from the Emigrant Aid Society. A Rifle Committee was formed to supply the Society's settlers with arms for self-defense.

Here the records become very murky. The situation was rapidly degenerating, and many abolitionists, frustrated by the Federal government's protection of slavery, increasingly moved outside the law, justifying their actions by an appeal to a "Higher Law" than the United States Constitution — God's law, which condemned slavery. Other dedicated abolitionists, however, insisted on working within the nation's laws.

The Rifle Committee of the Emigrant Aid Society was separated from the rest of the company, and it is unclear how many of the directors — or even of the Committee itself — were aware of all that was happening. Lawrence, for example, insisted that no rifles be used against the United States government. And yet it is clear that he, along with Howe, Parker and Higginson, met with John Brown on the latter's 1856 trip to Boston, at a time when Brown was a criminal wanted for murder, with a price on his head offered by the governor of Missouri. (That Brown also addressed the Massachusetts legislature on that trip gives some indication of the strange legal atmosphere of the country in that period.) It is also clear that Lawrence, along with John Murray Forbes, Wendell Phillips

and such "Cotton" Whigs as Samuel A. Eliot and Theodore Lyman contributed heavily to the purchase of rifles, helping to raise over \$50,000 for that purpose. These rifles were smuggled by other members of the company to Kansas under elaborate subterfuge and at great personal risk from both pro-slavery "Ruffians" and Federal law enforcement officers.

Many abolitionists viewed Brown as the fearless mainstay in the defense of anti-slavery Kansas. Others saw him as a fanatic and murderer, and were increasingly uneasy with supporting him. In 1856, the Rifle Committee raised some money for him to carry on his fight to oust the "Border Ruffians" from Kansas. In 1857, however, when he returned to Boston with plans for an attack on the South which he hoped would lead to a slave uprising there, most Boston abolitionists wanted no part of it. The records grow increasingly shadowy, probably in part because those who were involved at this time sought to cover their tracks after the disastrous raid on Harper's Ferry. Higginson, Howe, and a few others seem to have met with Brown and may have known the extent of his plans. Lawrence, however, seems to have shied away from Brown by this time; at least, there are no records of his having either met with him or provided money to him.

Despite a brief flurry of investigation and scandal, none of the Massachusetts group was ever prosecuted in connection with Harper's Ferry. Events moved rapidly to a crisis, and thirty years of tension and conflict ended in the Civil War, and with that war, the goal of abolition was achieved. The abolitionists, having lost many battles along the way, won the war.

Pauline Chase Harrell is a doctoral candidate at Tufts University and a lecturer at Northeastern University and the University of Massachusetts in Boston. She is Chairman of the Boston Landmarks Commission and an historical consultant to the Museum of Transportation in Boston.

FALL MEETING – October 8, 1978

The Fall Meeting of the Brookline Historical Society was held at the Maimonides School on Philbrick Road, site of the former Fletcher house, on Sunday afternoon, October 8, 1978.

Mr. Bertram Little presented a paper which had been prepared by his wife, Nina Fletcher Little, entitled "Reminiscences About the Philbrick Road Neighborhood and the Site of the Fletcher Family Home." The presentation was illustrated with slides made from photographs in albums of the Fletcher family, and the Littles have presented a set of these slides to the Historical Society.

Rabbi David Shapiro, Principal of the Maimonides School, concluded the meeting with a talk on the programs and goals of the school, and members were invited to tour the school buildings and grounds with student guides.

Refreshments were served by the Women's Auxiliary of the Maimonides School under the chairmanship of Auxiliary President, Mrs. Pearl Gopen.

REMINISCENCES ABOUT THE PHILBRICK ROAD NEIGHBORHOOD AND THE SITE OF THE FLETCHER FAMILY HOME

By NINA FLETCHER LITTLE

In 1822, according to the Brookline Historical Society's *Land Ownership Maps*, the Philbrick Road hill was owned by Benjamin Goddard. His house, built in 1810-1812, still stands at 43 Sumner Road, having been moved many years ago from its original location facing Boylston Street, a short distance west of Sumner Road. Harriet Woods' *Historical Sketches of Brookline* records that in 1822, or soon thereafter, the hill was acquired by Benjamin Bradley, a well-known town character about whom many amusing stories attest to his eccentricities. He was a carpenter by trade, sexton for thirty years of the First Parish Church, and was known as Captain Bradley because of his active connection with the town militia. During the ensuing twenty-five years Bradley built or moved a number of small houses to the hill, and it eventually became a modest settlement for poor but respectable working people to whom he was a kindly landlord. The most conspicuous structure, known as "Ben Bradley's Meeting House," was a caricature of a church with steeple and belfry. He used part of the building as a carpentry shop, and part as tenements. On occasional Sundays, from the old pulpit he installed, he treated his audience to profane but ludicrous harangues. At one time he constructed his own coffin but later changed his mind and built shelves inside it for the storage of his generous supply of liquor. Shortly before Bradley's death in 1856 the hill was sold to a Mr. Hart. In 1871 it changed hands again, this time to the Goddard heirs, and the little houses were moved

to Sewall Street, a locality later known as "Hart's Content." At the time my father bought his land from the Goddard Land Company, about 1904, I believe there were no buildings still standing upon that part of the hill. However, all the houses which now front on Philbrick Road were already there as far back as I can remember. Beginning at the Buckminster Road end they were then owned by the Carver, Morse, Alexander, Harvey, Farnsworth, Shepard and Pond families. The Morse and Shepard houses have disappeared but Marian Pond Bond is still living in her parents' old home on the corner of Philbrick Road and Boylston Street. When I was a child, there were children in all but one of these families and I have seen or had news about most of them in the recent past.

My parents, Frederick C. and Selina (Jarvie) Fletcher, moved from Providence to Brookline in 1902 because his sister, Mrs. Harry Hartley, had settled at 49 Rawson Road and the two young couples wished to live near one another. For their first home my parents rented the comfortable, old-fashioned house at 63 Buckminster Road, and there I was born in the rear northeast chamber. My father had grown to like Brookline and after my mother's death he decided to build a permanent home in the neighborhood. In a short time he purchased a piece of land on Philbrick Road, now the site of the Maimonides School, which was only a portion of the entire lot. In 1905 he built the rambling stucco house with red tiled roof that was acquired, after his death, by the School in 1959.

Philbrick Road was then lit by gas streetlights, and on one memorable occasion I was guiltily caught out of my bed on an early spring evening, standing by the nursery window to watch the lamplighter illumine the lamps. I seem to remember that he had a long pole with an iron hook on the end with which he turned up the gas jet high above his head on each lamp.

Our house stood facing north almost in the center of the Philbrick Road crescent. The architectural style was, I suppose, Spanish in influence. A fine hedge of spirea (or bridal wreath) stood in front, of which in later years I used to pick large, fluffy bouquets for Park School graduations.

The front door opened onto a long, transverse hall with staircase opposite the door. The hall connected with the dining room on the left end of the house. This was rather an interesting oval room with a frieze of colorful tapestry beneath the ceiling, and alcoves for china cabinets on either side of the fireplace. The living room was down the hall to the right, with the original decoration of green grass-cloth paper and redwood finish, considered the latest thing in the early twentieth century.

Various members of the family were enthusiastic yachtsmen. Beginning in 1886 my grandfather owned a succession of boats on Narragansett Bay and my father and uncle were brought up on the salt water from

their earliest childhood. So when the house was to be enlarged in 1914 it seemed appropriate that the new room added to the back, or south side, should be named the "yacht room," and be planned to create the atmosphere of a large ship's cabin. It measured about 30 by 50 feet and was furnished with marine paintings, ship models, figureheads and other seafaring artifacts. The room was designed by the architect, Horace S. Frazer of Boston.

Six steps led from the old part of the house down to the rear of the new room which provided a ceiling height of approximately eighteen feet. The ceiling itself was constructed of oak, and was slightly arched to give the impression of the interior of a vessel. From it, on long chains, hung copies of large, old ship's lanterns. Just below the ceiling were wide plaster bas-reliefs set into the upper parts of the walls to form a frieze. Each long section depicted a different type, or era, of shipping. Above the fireplace was a chronological panorama illustrating sailing vessels from Viking galleys to the Mayflower period. On other sides of the room different racing yachts of the previous fifty years were pictured, also representations of all the boats, both large and small, that had been owned by the family. It was a fun room, representing the hobbies and interests of all ages.

The room was lighted by four large bay windows in whose middle sections were incorporated copies in colored glass of the flags of various yacht clubs to which family members belonged. About eight yacht models in glass cases stood on tables against the dark panelled walls, most of them made by the well-known model maker, Horace Boucher of New York. The figureheads flanking the fireplace were scaled-down copies of a life-size figure carved by Isaac Fowle about 1820 and used as his shop sign at 246 Hanover Street, Boston. The original figure is now in the collection of the Old State House, Boston.

Two of the models were quite different in character from the rest. One was an English Admiralty model of the naval frigate *Royal George* which dated to the early eighteenth century. This was acquired in England and brought to America by Mr. Boucher as "hand luggage" in his cabin. The other represented the three-masted-clipper *Flying Cloud* under full sail, and was constructed by Mr. Boucher under the supervision of Captain Arthur Clark, who came one evening a week to work with my father on the study of navigation. Clark had sailed when a young man on the *Flying Cloud* which, in 1851, made a record run from New York to San Francisco in eighty-nine days. Although these two models were later given to the Museum of Fine Arts, most of the other marine items in the yacht room have remained in the family.

There were eight bedrooms and bathrooms upstairs.

Previous to the addition in 1914, Father had purchased the remaining land in the semi-circular Philbrick Road lot. This he developed into a secluded garden setting at the rear of the house, the grounds laid out by

Warren H. Manning of Boston. A garage with chauffeur's quarters above was constructed at the lower easterly corner, with a gardener's cottage in the opposite corner on Buckminster Road. A high stucco wall was built around the property to afford privacy and to minimize the noise from Boylston Street. One of my most vivid memories as a small child is looking over the wall from an upper story window and seeing the horse-drawn fire apparatus plunging at top speed with bells ringing up Boylston Street hill — an unforgettable scene! Another time I witnessed from a north window the distant smoke and flames of the great Chelsea fire of the early nineteen hundreds, after which terrifying sight I was unable to eat any supper!

On the inner side of the wall, trees and shrubs were planted, through which a narrow winding walk gave a tiny girl the exciting feeling of being far from home on a country pathway. Near the gardener's cottage was a greenhouse which supplied flowers and plants for the house, and a vegetable garden whose tomatoes, my father jokingly said, cost him \$5.00 apiece to grow. Being a child with a literal turn of mind, I quite believed him and, much to his embarrassment, relayed this interesting bit of information to my friends.

On the south side of the house was a room facing out onto a sunny terrace which was known as the conservatory. The odd decoration on ceiling and walls consisted of brown-painted trelliswork which was intended, presumably, to create an outdoor atmosphere. Here could be seen some of the handsome greenhouse plants raised by our Scottish gardener, whose name never ceased to intrigue me as it really was Gardner.

Leaving the greenhouse, the path continued on up toward the house near which was a grass croquet lawn that provided recreation for members of the younger set. Beside it was a tennis court surrounded by a high wire fence, which in later years was in frequent use by cousins and friends. My English stepmother was fond of flowers and Father planted beds of various species of roses of which they were very proud. Two windows of the old living room, re-decorated about 1918, overlooked this garden. I remember, too, the colorful beds of tulips which blossomed beneath the windows during the spring and early summer. The property, although surrounded by closely-built suburban streets, was really a microcosm of a large country estate, yet conveniently situated within only a few miles of downtown Boston.

During his later years, I am sure my father began to realize that after his time 34 Philbrick Road would probably not continue to be a private home. In fact, he surmised that an educational institution might be its eventual owner, and the property was sold by his estate to the Maimonides School in the spring of 1959. When it appeared obvious that the house, with its unique architectural features, was unsuitable for school purposes, the house and garage were demolished, although the gardener's

cottage is still standing in 1978. Happily, the red-tiled wall remains surrounding the property — a familiar landmark in a neighborhood whose aspect has changed but little during the past seventy-five years.

SLIDES OF PROPERTY AT 34 PHILBRICK ROAD, BROOKLINE

1. Plan of Philbrick Road, lot, 1914.
2. Philbrick Road side of house with spirea hedge.
3. Front hall and staircase.
4. Front hall looking toward dining room.
5. Dining room.
6. Living room as first built in 1905.
7. Yacht room, looking toward fireplace.
8. Yacht room, looking back toward stairs from main house.
9. Yacht room fireplace, and windows with yacht club flags.
10. Model *Royal George*.
11. Model of clipper ship *Flying Cloud*.
12. Bedroom over living room as redecorated in 1916.
13. Lawn at back of house.
14. Garage with automobiles, c. 1917.
15. Path around edge of property.
16. Gardener's cottage with vegetable garden and greenhouse.
17. Conservatory and plants from greenhouse.
18. Rose garden west of yacht room.
19. Living room as re-decorated c. 1917.
20. View of back of house.

Nina Fletcher Little is probably Brookline's best known architectural historian: her book, Some Old Brookline Houses, published by the Brookline Historical Society in 1949, has served as a definitive text since then. She and her husband, Bertram Little, former Director of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, live in an Old Brookline House which they are uniquely well-qualified to appreciate.

1979

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ANNUAL MEETING – January 14, 1979

The seventy-eighth Annual Meeting of the Brookline Historical Society was held at The Country Club on Clyde Street at 4 o'clock on Sunday afternoon, January 14, 1979.

Reports of the President and several Committee Chairmen were read at the business meeting, after which Mr. Elmer O. Cappers read a paper entitled, "Curling and The Country Club."

Following the presentation of Mr. Cappers' paper, members adjourned to the nearby Curling House for bouillon and cheese and a look at some actual curling.

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

This past year has been in part one of reflection and re-evaluation of the Society's goals and activities on the part of Society members and myself. In April of this year an extensive questionnaire, prepared by Christopher Smith and tabulated and analyzed by Rebecca and Irvin Taube (see separate report), was sent to the Membership to learn its current opinion as to the type of projects that should be considered for the spending of the Society's energies and funds, both short and long term. There was good response to the lengthy questionnaire, and it is already serving its purpose in better guiding the Trustees and officers as they make plans and set priorities for future Society activities and position viewpoints.

The Collections of artifacts owned by the Society and housed at the Devotion House, the Putterham School, and the Brookline Library are in need of orderly Society identification, numbering, photographing, and updated valuation. A committee under the chairmanship of Ruth Vose has prepared a three-card catalog system and this is now being implemented with the Devotion House Collections with good progress. We hope that the cataloguing of all objects at the Devotion House will be completed during this coming year so that we can then begin with the Putterham Schoolhouse Collections.

As I have personally come to know and understand the Society and its membership better during this past year, I am aware and appreciative of many loyal members' support to the Society activities, and this goes back a long time. Over the past year we have gained many new members, obviously therefore interested in the Society, and I am eager to better involve them in the Society's activities and interests/responsibilities. I hope old members will help new members feel welcome and a part of the Society, and I hope new members will make the effort to become better acquainted with the Society and indeed contribute to the Society. It is important to continue the dedicated loyal membership base of the Society.

The Society's Membership Meetings have been well attended. The Spring Meeting on Sunday afternoon, May 7, was focused on nineteenth century Brookline abolitionist activity with Pauline Chase Harrell presenting a vibrant paper entitled, "Anti-Slave Law Days in Brookline," in the dining room of the historic Philbrick House on Walnut Street, once the home of abolitionist Samuel Philbrick. Refreshments were served in the parlor following the Meeting by Mrs. Edward Hartz and the Hospitality Committee.

The October 8 Fall Meeting of The Society took place at the Maimonides School on Philbrick Road, the site of the former Fletcher family home and childhood home of Brookline historian Nina Fletcher Little. Mr. Bertram Little read a paper prepared by Mrs. Little entitled

"Reminiscences About the Philbrick Road Neighborhood," and shared with the members photographs of the house and grounds taken from family photo albums. The Littles have presented a set of slides of these photos to the Society. Rabbi David Shapiro, Principal of the School, concluded the meeting with a description of the goals and program of the Maimonides School and students conducted tours of the school buildings and grounds. Refreshments were served by the Women's Auxiliary of the school with the guidance of Auxiliary President Mrs. Pearl Gopen.

A Christmas Open House took place at the Edward Devotion House on Sunday afternoon, December 10. The house was decorated with greenery and a display of antique toys; mulled wine and cookies were served; a fiddler played seasonal music, and Santa Claus stopped by during the party.

The Annual Meeting of the Society was held on Sunday afternoon, January 14, at The Country Club, where historian Elmer O. Cappers, author of *History of Curling at The Country Club* and a Country Club "Skip" of many years, presented a paper entitled, "Curling and The Country Club." Following the paper, bouillon and cheese were served in the nearby Curling House where Society members were able to watch active curling.

The Trustees met on April 19, July 5, November 20, 1978, and January 4, 1979. During the year color postcards have been printed for sale by the Society of the two Chandler portraits of Ebenezer and Martha Devotion. It has been decided at a recent Trustee Meeting that these paintings will go on loan exhibition in February-May, 1980, at the Whitney Museum, New York City, as part of their Major American Folk Painters Exhibition. The next issue of *The Proceedings* will be edited in the spring, edited by Jean Kramer.

I look forward to the completion of several projects during my forthcoming last year as Society President and to the pleasure of serving historic interests and concerns in Brookline. I wish to thank the Trustees, Committees, and Members for their support and cooperation in this recent good and active year for the Society.

Respectfully submitted,

NANCY A. SMITH
(Mrs. Christopher E. Smith)

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ROOMS

During 1978 the Brookline schools again have used the Devotion House, with its period furnishings and historical collections, as a teaching aid. A total of 180 children came from the Devotion, Driscoll, Lawrence, Pierce and St. Mary's Schools. The Brookline Extended Day School came to the House at Thanksgiving for a story in front of the fireplace.

In September, instead of members of the Boston Aid to the Blind coming to the House, I went to them. With the help of three school children we took fifteen articles from the House which would be easily explained and identified by touch to twenty-three blind people who were eagerly awaiting our visit.

During the year we have had visitors from Nigeria; Algeria; France; Toronto, Canada; Salisbury, England; Sacramento, California; Houston, Texas; Bay City, Michigan; Wheaton, Maryland; Morristown, New Jersey; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Warren, Rhode Island; and Ashland, Brighton, Newton and Sharon, Massachusetts.

We have had twenty-two pieces of correspondence, mostly inquiries about the house or people in search of their ancestry. We have also helped two students with research papers, and another Devotion descendant made a call.

The Trustees have voted to have Herbert Vose take photographs of the two portraits of Ebenezer and Martha Devotion, and we now have beautiful colored picture postcards of them for sale.

Meetings held at the House included a Girl Scout meeting, a gathering of the Hannah Goddard Chapter of the DAR, a tea for Jean Kramer's Historic Brookline class, and four different Committee meetings of the Brookline Historical Society.

April is still the most exciting time on Patriot's Day when William Dawes makes his annual visit to the Devotion House on his way to Lexington. This year on April 19 we had sixty-two visitors and a total of 175 people awaited Dawes' arrival.

The Christmas Party at the Devotion House on December 10 was fairly well-attended; its theme was "A Child's Christmas." Violin player Sam Bittel provided us with the opportunity to sing carols, Christopher Smith played Santa Claus, and hot glogg warmed us and put us in the holiday spirit. Elsa Calen, Dorothy Clemens, Irene Hertz, Linda Kohn, Jean Kramer, Leslie Larkin, Nancy Smith and Rosamond Vaule made up the committee.

The inventory of furnishings is under way. Mrs. Yves Buhler is designing our inventory card and Leslie Larkin, Edward Ostrander, Nancy Smith, Rosamond Vaule and I are working with our Chairman Ruth Vose on the actual inventory. More people are needed!

The kitchen ceiling has been repaired, the gutters cleaned, and Jim and I painted the bathroom, kitchen and rear stairs and papered the rear bedroom. Jim repaired one latch in the old kitchen, leading to the parlor. The House is in need of exterior painting and clapboard replacement. Jim has placed three smoke detectors in the House, but vandalism is a constant problem.

Gifts to the Brookline Historical Society this year:

From the estate of Mary Sawyer, Dean of Girls at Brookline High School,
Donated by Mr. and Mrs. Edward Heartz:

1. *The Little Merchant's Handbook*, 1863.
2. *Picture Alphabet*, Mayhew Baker, 1855 (paperback)
3. *Bible History*, 1820 (paperback)
4. *Mother Goose's Melodies* (signed, "Alfred Sawyer")
5. *Standard Third Readers, Part II: with Spelling and Defining Lessons*, 1865 ("Alfred Sawyer") Hardcover.
6. *Anne and the Elves*, Franklin, New Hampshire, 1860 (inscribed "A. Sawyer") Hardcover.
7. *Washington Pictorial Primer* (paperback, no date — 1799?)
8. *My First School Book to Teach Me to Read and Spell*, 1863 hardcover. Picture postcard of the mid-1930s, showing the Edward Devotion House and School. Mechanical signature stamp with signature of A.L. Sawyer, Mary Sawyer's father.

Donated by Paul Weiner:

A man's pocketwatch, to be placed in a case in Edward Devotion's bedroom, replacing one taken years ago.

Donated by Mrs. Winthrop Wetherbee:

Book of Songs: One-Hundredth Edition of the Golden Wreath.

Donated by Brookline Fire Chief William Murphy:

Thirty-five Slides from Fire Department Archives, made from lantern slides.

Donated by Mrs. Bertram Little:

Slides of her old home at 34 Philbrick Road from photographs made in 1948; given to President Smith following the talk on Mrs. Little's family home at the Fall Meeting of the Historical Society, October 8, 1978.

Donated by Mrs. Walter W. Patton, Jr., 27 West Cedar Street, Boston.

Document: Boundaries of Town Lands Uplands to the Marsh, 1782.
Presented by Mr. S. Morton Vose.

Respectfully submitted,

HELEN C. MC INTOSH
Chairman, Committee on Rooms

COMMITTEE ON THE PUTTERHAM SCHOOL

The Putterham Schoolhouse is one of the two buildings owned by the Town which the Society administers, the other being, of course, the Edward Devotion House. As custodians of this historic little building, first opened in 1768, we are charged with two responsibilities; first, to see that it is maintained physically in good repair (exterior work being done by the Town), and secondly, to see that it is open at appropriate times for display to Brookline citizens and visitors from other areas. I would like to take these points up in reverse order.

As it has been for several years past, the Society was fortunate this season in employing Mrs. Owen M. Carle, a Society member, as docent for the summer months. Guided by past experience, the schoolhouse was opened on weekend afternoons and occasional Thursday afternoons during June, July and August. Attendance varies greatly but is enough to show that the effort is distinctly worthwhile. Mrs. Carle's enthusiastic and sensitive interpretation of the school's history and meaning are obviously appreciated by visitors. In addition to those who drop in casually, there have been more than one scheduled bus tour by pupils from schools outside our area. Surely the highlight of the season, though early, was the use of the schoolhouse on two occasions by groups from the Park School fourth grade. This was re-creation of a school session from the early years of our building. Teacher and pupils appeared in costume and the class was conducted with the greatest gravity and appropriate phraseology. Although the event was reported in the *Chronicle-Citizen*, it had to be witnessed and heard to be fully appreciated.

On the physical side, there is reason for some concern. Although vandalism has subsided somewhat over the past two or three years, it has by no means been eliminated. The door of the schoolhouse was severely damaged during the summer and although it has been temporarily secured, a proper repair or replacement is urgently needed. This is the responsibility of the Town, once we have called attention to it. To date the work has not been done, despite repeated requests. It should be noted the paint on the north side of the building will soon need attention again. It is always the first to deteriorate.

The future plans of the Museum of Transportation are a matter of concern. The presence of personnel and activity there is extremely important to the security of the schoolhouse. As far as can be learned at present, complete closing down of the Larz Anderson site and removal of all displays and activity to the new waterfront facility is not contemplated for the time being.

No report on the Putterham Schoolhouse can be complete without mentioning the devoted interest of Mrs. James McIntosh of the Committee. Her energy and alertness are irreplaceable.

Respectfully submitted,

S. MORTON VOSE II
Chairman, Committee on the Putterham School

CURLING AND THE COUNTRY CLUB

By ELMER O. CAPPERS

It seems only fair that the Scots after having invented two such frustrating games as golf and curling should have, by way of offset, invented scotch whiskey. For both games can indeed cause frustration and there should be some antidote for it. To the onlooker at a curling match it appears not too difficult a proposition to send a stone some hundred and twenty-four feet down a sheet of ice and have it stop in a circle with a diameter of twelve feet, but if the onlooker tries it himself he will be amazed at the skill required to achieve that objective. Even the most experienced curler knows moments of frustration caused by what he calls "the slippery game of curling." It is an humbling game.

In its earliest days curling must have been even more trying to temper as the stones were not uniform. As far as can be determined, the first curling-stones in Scotland (we are not among those few people who think curling began in Holland) were called "channelstones" because they were for the most part fairly well-rounded stones taken from the beds of brooks. Two hand-holds were drilled in each stone for gripping purposes. Obviously there was no uniformity in those early curling-stones. About the year 1700, some players began to use the "rough block" stone, a stone of irregular shape, although generally approaching the form of a cube, into which an iron handle had been fastened. The weight of such a stone might run from twenty pounds to the record weight (so far as is known) of one hundred and seventeen pounds. Every man owned his own stone, and frequently an owner would claim special merits for his particular "rock." One such curling-stone had the attribute of being difficult to dislodge from the house once it got there because it had a semi-pointed base and would spin when struck. The curlers on the loch where the stone was used finally protested, and the owner of "Old Whirlie" had to get himself another stone.

About 1740, some Scot unknown to history introduced the present circular or flattened ovoid stone. As this type of stone became more and more accepted, the individuality of the stone died away, and the stones then were generally the same wherever the game was played. An exception should, however, be noted in that members of a Highland regiment in Quebec fashioned their "stones" of old cannon balls melted down and cast in a form somewhat resembling a tea kettle. The "iron" did not prove to be generally popular. It is today's flattened "cheese" stone which became "the" stone, and its adoption had much to do with the rapid growth of curling over many parts of the world where ice was available.

Today's rules say that no stone including handle and bolt shall exceed 44 pounds or be of greater circumference than 36 inches. What a far cry from the original channelstone!

For centuries curling was played outdoors under what were often adverse conditions. Our early records here at The Country Club have some interesting entries such as:

February 18, 1900 Ice very thin and uneven. Skip fell through the ice but was rescued.

January 19, 1901 Thermometer at zero and a gale blowing. Skip lost an ear.

January 9, 1903 Saturday snow, Sunday heavy snow.

January 16, 1904 Ice keen at first, then snow which interfered greatly with the play.

January , 1904 Ice very keen. Thermometer six above zero.

February 23, 1904 Ice wet, but fairly keen; played on rough side.

An old-time member wrote a brief note as follows: "One amusing experience we had on the Pond occurred as we were all gathered to play. The stones had been pushed on and the old horse and plow were shaving the ice — when all of a sudden the horse and plow broke through the ice and all our stones disappeared. We called it a day and went back to the Club House and put our feet on the rail." (Putting the foot on the rail meant the same thing then that it does now.)

Curling began at The Country Club outdoors and it stayed outdoors for a number of years. The first attempt was not propitious. In 1898 the Club voted the sum of \$250.00 for the purpose of flooding the part of the ground on the right-hand side of the entrance drive. This is on the fifteenth fairway just about where your drive would terminate if you had the power of Jack Nicklaus.

With the help of the Brookline Fire Department, a fine rink was prepared, circulars were sent to the club members, and all was ready; but then, "unfortunately, a January thaw set in, and within twenty-four hours there was practically nothing to be seen" where the ice had been, but bare grass, and so the first effort wound up in almost complete failure. The loss of the ice was a blessing in disguise since the undaunted curlers of that day successfully urged the purchase of the land where our skating ponds are located and where some of our golf holes are laid out. In 1899, curling began on these ponds.

This was not the first curling in Greater Boston as there had been curling for many years at Scarboro Pond in Franklin Field. Wherever Scotsmen came and wherever there was a body of water which was likely

to freeze for a reasonable length of time, curling sessions would probably begin. New England adopted curling long before it adopted golf. Prior to the Civil War there were curling matches where the "Public Garden now ripples," and curling had been enjoyed for many years on Spot Pond and on other ponds north of Boston.

Because the game was played outdoors, a practice developed which seems to have been heard of even by those who have only the faintest notion of curling: the practice of sweeping. It was early discovered that sweeping ahead of a running stone would push to one side any snow, ice particles, or twigs which might deflect the stone from its desired course. It was also discovered that vigorous sweeping with the besom or broom kept the stone from dying. Sweeping cannot speed up a stone but it can definitely keep it from losing momentum. The skip or head of the team will often in stentorian tones call to his rinkmates to "sweep" and it is from these exhortations that curling has come to be known as "the roaring game" although perhaps the rumble of the stones on the ice has something to do with the term.

The Country Club curlers first succeeded in getting in out of the cold in 1911 when upstairs curling facilities were constructed at the old Boston Arena building on St. Botolph Street. That historic structure, erected at a cost of \$300,000, contained not only the biggest indoor skating rink in the world, but thanks to the joint efforts of Country Club and Curling Club of Boston men, also contained the first artificial ice in the world made just for the game of curling.

But all this was lost in a fire at the Arena on December 18, 1918. Because of the first world war, it had been decided not to have any ice surfaces that winter. The skating section had been covered with a wooden flooring, and roller-skating was introduced. The evening before the fire, boxing bouts were held there and the fire chief in his report on the conflagration declared that a cigarette under the board flooring was undoubtedly the cause.

As the *Boston Transcript* asserted, "The indoor rinks have been a wonderful stimulus to the roarin' game." All that was gone now, and the Country Club curlers had to go back to their outside ponds.

But not for long. In 1920, two stables at the Club were put together, ice-making machinery was installed, and the curlers were indoors once again. The curling group paid all the costs, thus relieving the Club treasury of any outlay. Notwithstanding the unadorned appearance of the building (which can be verified from some of the sketches still preserved at the present curling rink), "there were those who loved it."

Early on Tuesday, February 5, 1946, at about 2:30 a.m., the rink was demolished by fire.

In "The Curlers Bulletin" just one month before, at the bottom of the back page, there had appeared this paragraph: "Watch out for fires! Be careful of your cigarettes and matches. It would be a downright shame to burn our Curling House. We need it."

The warning failed to register. The last competition in the old building was held on the night of February 4th, and someone apparently was careless, since the Brookline Fire Chief, Selden Allen, was quoted in the *Boston Traveler* of February 5th as saying that "he believed careless smoking was the more probable cause."

The destruction was indeed complete, and for a time during the fire, lives were endangered and other club buildings were threatened. That day, the *Boston Globe* reported, "Burning embers were carried for some distance by the high wind and threatened the buildings of the club. Forty employees fled into sub-zero weather from their quarters. Holes were burned in some other buildings; the rink building itself was a total loss."

Not only had the building vanished, but with it had gone "old pictures, shields, records, stones, clothes, bonnets, buttons — everything." Even in the face of their loss — "before the embers were cool" as one report says — curlers were being formed into committees to start construction of a new curling house. War-time building regulations were still in effect, and it required a high type of persuasion to convince F.H.A. officials that scarce materials should be allocated to the building of a curling house. It was accomplished, however, even to the extent of obtaining approval for the purchase of enough iron pipe for the four sheets of ice; seemingly this was the scarcest commodity of all. Throughout the summer, the work of building went on under the chairmanship of Richard P. Hallowell; and as a result of the diligent efforts of many, curling at The Country Club began again on December 14, 1946, just 311 days after the fire.

The big compressor of the Club's ice-making plant was the original one from the Boston Arena. It had survived the 1918 Arena fire and was used for a short while at the famous "Pavillion" rink in Cambridgeport before being brought to The Country Club, where it survived fire again in 1946 and is still in use.

At The Country Club, it takes approximately two weeks to build up a sheet of ice for curling purposes. First, enough water is introduced to flood the sand, and the mixture of sand and water is then frozen. By numerous sprayings, the level of the ice is slowly brought up until the pipes are completely covered. As soon as a smooth surface has been achieved, a coat of white paint is put over the entire sheet, and another thin layer of ice is added. Then the circles and lines are painted on the ice, and the hacks for the curler's feet at the delivery kick-off spot are put in place.

The final applications of water build up the ice to a total thickness of about one and one-eighth inches. The whole two-week process requires about fifty sprayings. As the season goes on, there will be periodic scraping of the ice followed by more water applications with a hot-water mop. Weekly moppings and floodings at six-week intervals build up the ice so that by season's end it will reach a maximum thickness of one and three-quarters inches.

Ladies' curling at The Country Club did not get a firm foothold until 1937, almost forty years after the Club's first attempts to introduce the game. Six women — Mrs. Baldwin, Mrs. Potter, Mrs. MacDuffie, Mrs. Shattuck, Mrs. Kelsey and Mrs. Hill — were the enthusiastic leaders and they did their work well. However, it is possible to detect some evidence that many of the male members were unhappy about the intrusion of the ladies. As late as 1948, the ladies were not permitted to have an official "club event."

They reported to the Curling Committee (all men) that they were going to refuse future invitations to bonspiels away unless they could return invitations by inviting to Brookline lady curlers from those clubs where the powers-that-be were more enlightened. The committee responded by giving permission for a "private party" (not a club event) and four rinks of ladies from Canada and one of the ladies from Chicago played matches at The Country Club on February 19th and February 20th, 1948.

What is officially called "the first Women's Bonspiel ever held in the United States" took place at Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, one week later. The Country Club was represented at the historic event by Helen Hill, skip, with Eleanor Crocker, Marjorie Leonard and May Jackson. They did not overpower their opposition, but they were a part of making curling history.

The ladies have their own committee now, and there has been for several years a woman on The Curling Committee itself. Tempora mutantur! Some of the old, bewhiskered, frost-bitten, die-hard skips must be rotating quietly in their graves.

Curlers are ever good missionaries and those at The Country Club have spread the word far and wide, in the eastern United States at least. Curling in Canada long antedated curling this side of the border and its hundreds of curling clubs play an important part in the social life of the Dominion, but on our eastern seaboard many a curling club owes its beginnings to efforts of Country Club curlers. In attempting to spread the gospel of curling, our curlers have tried to bring to others the joy and privileges of the great and frustrating game which they have enjoyed so much.

The game has its place in literature. Robert Burns sang its praises, and there is a whole anthology of curling poetry, some good and some

not so good, composed largely for curlers' banquets. But the finest writing about the game I know is in J.M. Barrie's *Little Minister* where the doctor and the minister are on their way to take Nanny to the poor-house and are delayed by curlers on the Rashie Bog challenging the doctor to come down and defend his curling reputation. The minister claimed that curling must be a dangerous game, but the doctor called to one of the players, Jo Strachan, to come tell how his brother Sandy died of pneumonia because he remained in bed while Jo took himself and his own pneumonia out on the pond to curl. Jo said, "The joke o't is, it was Sandy that died." "Not the joke, Jo," corrected the doctor, "the moral." Every curler believes in his heart that Jo used the more accurate word, and thus we give away our own "dementia curliana," an ailment not listed in any medical publication.

In the spring of 1978, a Questionnaire prepared by Mr. Christopher Smith was sent to members of the Brookline Historical Society to ascertain opinions of the membership as to the type of projects which the Society ought to pursue. Responses to the Questionnaire were tabulated and analyzed by Dr. and Mrs. Irvin Taube, whose report follows.

REPORT ON THE OPINION SURVEY SUBMITTED TO THE BROOKLINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY SPRING, 1978

The objectives and activities of the Brookline Historical Society were clearly enunciated at the time of its incorporation in 1901.

“The objects of the Society shall be the study of the history of the town of Brookline, Massachusetts, its societies, organizations, families, individuals, and events; the collection and preservation of its antiquities, the establishment and maintenance of an historical library, and the publication, from time to time, of such information relating to the same as shall be deemed expedient.”

The interpretation and implementation of those objectives has changed with each succeeding generation just as the town itself has changed. The Board of Trustees, desirous of learning the wishes of the current membership regarding the Society's program, submitted an opinion survey to the members. Approximately 30% (75 members) responded. This represents an unusually high rate of responses for such a questionnaire. The Board wishes to thank all who answered, especially those who did so in great detail.

Four issues of current concern to the Board were investigated:

- 1) The preservation of historical materials
- 2) Historical records
- 3) Participation in the preservation movement
- 4) Operation of the Society

The questions were phrased in terms of the expenditure of money and not as vague policy statements. A report of the findings with an interpretation of their implication follows.

1. The preservation of historical materials:

Three quarters of the members favored the expenditure of funds to restore, conserve, and purchase material relevant to the history of the town, i.e., maps, atlases, books. A strong majority wanted to spend money to secure, catalogue and display such material in the so-called "Brookline Room" at the Public Library. However, the members were strongly opposed to the hiring of a staff for such a purpose.

2. Historical research:

The members were either unresponsive or opposed to the expenditure of funds for historical research by professionals or students. The strongest negative response (48%) occurred on this issue. This negative

view extended to educational programs and displays by the Society or by other groups.

3. Participation in the preservation movement:

The issue that received the greatest number of votes of agreement, 84%, suggested that funds be spent "to fight the destruction of an historic piece of property in Brookline, financially and morally." Seventy-one percent voted to purchase historic markers. Fifty percent wanted to spend money to assist the Brookline Historical Commission in specific history-related projects. Only 40% were interested in involving the Society in actual preservation projects such as loans, matching grants.

4. Operation of the Society:

A majority favored the payment of an honorium and the expenses of a speaker for the Society's regular meetings but not the expenditure of funds for social events. A sum of \$1,000.00 was the maximum the membership felt the Board of Trustees should spend without consulting the membership. There was not a clear indication of how much should be spent after such a consultation. Most people felt the dues should be kept the same or raised to cover the increasing cost of the "Proceedings." Few thought the Society should raise funds without a specific goal.

What are the implications of this survey? I believe that the survey shows that the membership as a whole approves of and is interested in the current program. The Society has been traditionally a research and paper reading group based on a 19th century model. Its major preservation activity has been the operation of the Devotion House and the maintenance of its collections.

The survey also indicates a wish by the majority for a more active program — one more similar to other historical societies in the area. This was especially evident in the handwritten comments. Most members desired greater availability of the Society's collections in a functioning "Brookline Room," or its equivalent. Certainly this must be one of the Society's major objectives in the coming years.

Perhaps the most surprising and important finding of the survey is the interest of the membership in the Society's participation in the preservation movement. The Board of Trustees has heretofore assiduously avoided any involvement in the often controversial issues of historic preservation. If the Society is to become more involved in preservation in the town in the future, the nature of that involvement will have to be explored with the membership as each specific issue arises.

Respectfully submitted,
IRVIN TAUBE, M.D.

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