



Fall 2015

Thursday, November 19, 2015, 5-8 pm
First Light Brookline at the Edward Devotion House
150 Years of Shopping in Coolidge Corner

A Century and a Half of Shopping in Coolidge Corner



First Light Slide Show, 5-8 pm, November 19th
Running Continuously at the Edward Devotion House

Brookline's annual First Light Festival, showcasing the talents of local artists, musicians and performers and the many wares of Brookline merchants takes place Thursday, November 19th, from 5:00 to 8:00 pm.

Join the Historical Society at the Edward Devotion House for a slideshow on the history of the Coolidge Corner shopping district.

Plus, step inside for a tour of one of the oldest houses in town and chat with us about the past, the present, and the future of our town.

Helping Hands at the Devotion House



This summer, the Hannah Goddard chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution spent several Sundays working on the plantings in the Devotion House yard. They tidied and refreshed the gardens at the house, pulling weeds, removing dead plants, and raking acorns. This effort was part of a national initiative to celebrate the 125th birthday of the DAR via service projects partnering the local chapters with area nonprofits.

Leslie A Heke, chapter regent of the Hannah Goddard chapter, expressed the excitement of the group: "We all agree that project has great symmetry with our chapter." Every year, the Hannah Goddard Chapter participates in the Patriots' Day ceremony in front of the Devotion House, so there is a strong connection between the group and the site.

Their work was much needed and much appreciated!

Putting Our House in Order

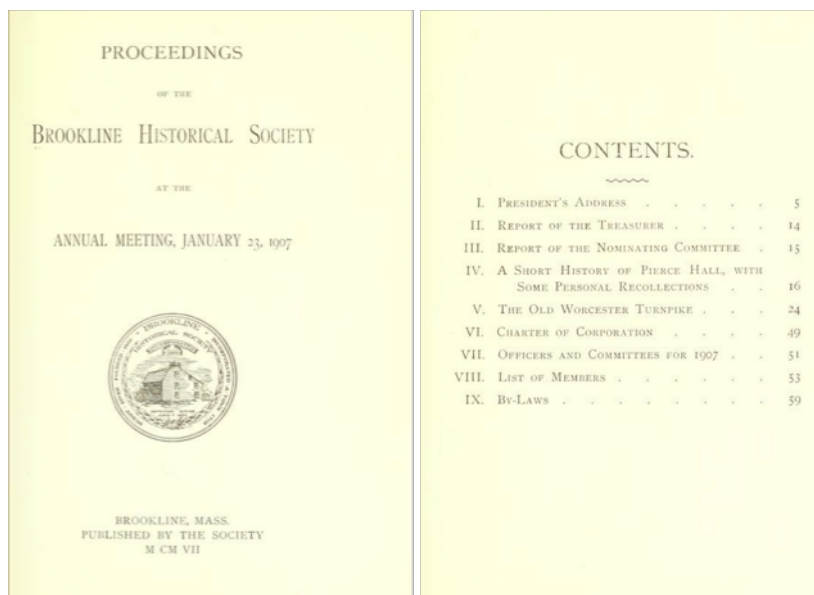
The Brookline Historical Society made a new acquisition this summer: shelving! Little strokes fell big oaks, and these mundane items are quite important for helping us keep our collections in good order.

Adding new shelving to the attic of the Devotion House has substantially increased our space for storing materials, made it easier for us to find items when needed, and, most importantly, allowed us to get precious items off the floor, where they were trip hazards for our trusty volunteers who work with the collections up there.



As part of our ongoing collections cleanup, we are “deaccessioning”—a fancy term for discarding—extra copies of the Brookline Historical Society’s own *Proceedings* and a variety of town reports. (No fears, though: digitized copies of the BHS’s *Proceedings* are available at our website, <http://brooklinehistoricalsociety.org> and we have retained multiple copies of each issue, as has the Brookline Public Library.)

If you would be interested in owning your own copies of some of these items, we will have them available free to members at both the First Light celebration on November 19th at the Devotion House, and at our fall meeting on November 22nd at the Coolidge Corner branch of the Public Library. Please come along, browse, and take.



Extra copies of annual Proceedings of the Historical Society from years past will be available free for Society members in November

Ralph Waldo Emerson in Brookline



Ralph Waldo Emerson is most famously associated with Concord and Boston. But did you know that this leading figure in the Transcendentalist movement lived in Brookline for a brief time early in his career?

In May 1830, Emerson, then a young pastor at the Second Church in Boston, moved with his wife Ellen and his mother Ruth to the old Aspinwall House. (The house stood where the Billy Ward Playground, on Aspinwall Avenue opposite St. Paul's Church, is today.)

Emerson described the lodgings in a letter to his brother William:

"I expect mother in town Thursday or Friday & she will go to Brookline & take possession of our lodgings at Mrs. Perry's — (in old Aspinwall House where Uncle Ralph lived one summer long ago) where we have a parlor & 3 chambers one for mother one for wife & one for you when you will come & welcome. "

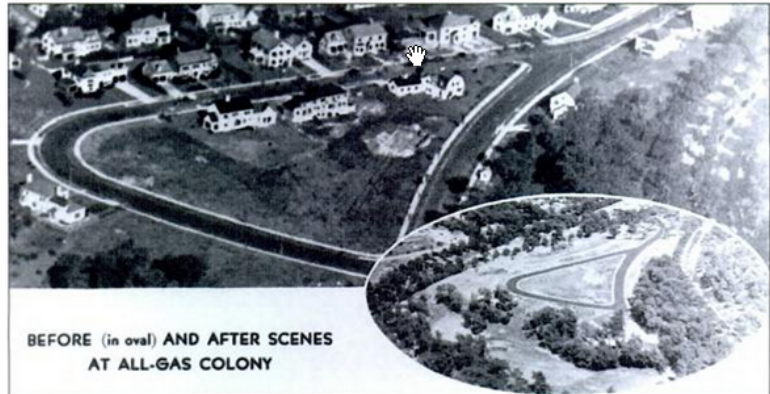
It was hoped that the new home would help Ellen recover from tuberculosis, with Emerson's mother there to keep house. Emerson, however, found it inconvenient "traveling four miles out & home daily" to and from his position at the church. In September, after only four months in Brookline, they moved into Boston. (Ellen would die of tuberculosis in February at the age of 19.)



The old Aspinwall House on Aspinwall Avenue, shown more than half a century after Ralph Waldo Emerson, his wife, and his mother occupied four rooms there in the spring and summer of 1830.

Sunday, November 22, 2015 at 2 pm
Fall Program of the Brookline Historical Society
From Golf to Gas: The All-Gas Colony in Brookline
Coolidge Corner Library, 31 Pleasant Street

Come see how the Chestnut Hill Golf Course turned into a planned community of all gas homes during the Depression. Long-time Brookline preservation planner Greer Hardwicke will tell the tale of this unusual development hiding in plain sight just off Route 9.



Refreshments will be served. [This photo from a 1938 brochure shows Fairway and Hilltop roads at the time of the development of the All-Gas Colony. \(Photo Credit: Boston Gas Company Collection, John Burns Library, Boston College\)](#)

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