

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
BROOKLINE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
FOR 1969-1974



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OF THE
BROOKLINE
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FOR 1969-1974



BROOKLINE, MASSACHUSETTS 02146

PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY

1975

last copy

CONTENTS

1969

| | PAGE |
|---|------|
| HIGH STREET HILL IN THE EIGHTIES, BY CAROLYN H. WETHERBEE | 7 |
| THE STORROW FAMILY OF HIGH STREET HILL, BY S. MORTON VOSE | 10 |
| A MODERN DWELLING FROM A 19TH CENTURY STABLE, BY ROBERT M. ADAMS | 13 |
| DESMOND FITZGERALD'S ART GALLERY, BY S. MORTON VOSE | 15 |
| COLLECTORS AND COLLECTIONS IN GREATER BOSTON, SOME PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS, BY CHARLES D. CHILDS | 17 |

1970

| | |
|--|----|
| OFFICERS | 19 |
| REPORT OF THE TREASURER | 20 |
| REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ROOMS | 21 |

| | PAGE |
|---|------|
| AMY LOWELL OF BROOKLINE: PATTERNS OF A LIFE, BY PETER C. ROLLINS | 23 |
| HISTORY OF THE PUTTERHAM SCHOOL, BY NINA F. LITTLE | 45 |

1971

| | |
|---|----|
| OFFICERS | 47 |
| REPORT OF THE TREASURER | 48 |
| ADVENTURES IN RESTORATION, BY GUSTAV D. KLIMAN . . . | 49 |
| INDIANS OF THE NORTHEAST, BY WENDELL S. HADLOCK . . . | 51 |
| A PERMANENT GREEN CORRIDOR FROM THE CHARLES TO THE CHARLES, BY JAMES WHITE | 54 |

1972

| | |
|---|----|
| OFFICERS | 62 |
| REPORT OF THE TREASURER | 63 |
| REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ROOMS | 64 |
| FREDERICK HENRY HEDGE: CONSERVATIVE SCHOLAR IN A LIBERAL FAITH, BY PETER C. ROLLINS IN COLLABORATION WITH OTTO VAN OS | 65 |

| | PAGE |
|---|------|
| THE OLMSTED FIRMS OF BROOKLINE, BY ARTEMAS P. RICHARDSON | 74 |
| DR. GEORGE CHEEVER SHATTUCK, BY ELMER O. CAPPERS | 82 |
| 250 YEARS OF TOWN GOVERNMENT IN BROOKLINE, BY ARTHUR A. O'SHEA | 85 |

1973

| | |
|--|-----|
| OFFICERS | 90 |
| REPORT OF THE TREASURER | 91 |
| REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ROOMS | 92 |
| REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE PUTTERHAM SCHOOL | 93 |
| REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH | 94 |
| REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON PAPERS | 95 |
| REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT | 96 |
| BROOKLINE AND PUBLIC HEALTH: SMALLPOX AND POLIO BY DR. FRANCIS D. MOORE | 98 |
| SOME REMARKS CONCERNING THE CABOT ESTATE, BY FRANCIS A. CASWELL | 107 |
| THE BROOKLINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY, BY ELMER O. CAPPERS . | 112 |

1974

| | PAGE |
|--|------|
| OFFICERS | 119 |
| REPORT OF THE TREASURER | 120 |
| REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ROOMS | 121 |
| REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE PUTTERHAM SCHOOL | 123 |
| REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH | 124 |
| REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT | 125 |
| PERNICIOUS ANEMIA YIELDS TO NEW ENGLAND CHARACTER, BY DR. WILLIAM B. CASTLE | 126 |
| BY-LAWS | 132 |
| LIST OF MEMBERS - 1975 | 138 |

1970

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

S. MORTON ROSE

VICE-PRESIDENT

GEORGE L. BLACKMAN

TREASURER

J. FREDERICK NELSON

CLERK

CAROLYN WETHERBEE

TRUSTEES

JASON A. AISNER, MRS. YVES HENRY BUHLER,
MRS. THERESA A. CARROLL, REV. FRANCIS A. CASWELL,
ARTHUR A. O'SHEA, MISS MAUD OXENHAM
MRS. GARDNER WASHBURN, and the officers, ex-officio

The Annual Meeting of the Brookline Historical Society will be held at Pierce Hall, 382 Walnut Street, Brookline, on Sunday, January 18, 1970, at three in the afternoon. At the conclusion of the business meeting there will be a talk illustrated by slides on "Early New England Landscape and Garden Design" given by Abbott Lowell Cummings, Assistant Director of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities.

Patricia A. Aisner, *Clerk*

Because Mr. Cummings' talk was so closely involved with the pictures he showed it was not possible to include it in these proceedings.

THE BROOKLINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Treasurer's Annual Report 1969

| | | |
|---|---------------|--------------------|
| Cash on hand January 1, 1969 | | |
| Brookline Savings Bank | | |
| 90 day Special Account | \$16,660.90 | |
| Regular Account. | 756.67 | |
| Brookline Trust Company | <u>174.80</u> | \$17,592.37 |
| Income during 1969 | | |
| Membership Dues | \$ 1,205.00 | |
| Interest – Brookline Savings – 90 Day Special Acct. | 843.14 | |
| Regular Account | 5.65 | |
| Charles B. Blanchard Memorial Fund | 8.28 | |
| Income from Estate of Josephine H. Wilder | 61.97 | |
| Book Sales – “Some Old Brookline Houses” | 12.00 | |
| Curtis “History of Brookline” | 12.00 | |
| “Proceedings” | 2.00 | |
| Donations | <u>22.25</u> | \$ 2,172.29 |
| | | <u>\$19,764.66</u> |
| Payments during 1969 | | |
| Secretary's Expenses | \$ 119.31 | |
| Treasurer's Expenses | 16.75 | |
| Insurance Premium | 27.90 | |
| Collations | 41.84 | |
| Chair Rentals | 24.00 | |
| Service Charges – Brookline Trust Company. | 3.11 | |
| Bay State Historical League Dues | 4.00 | |
| New England Council Listing | 4.00 | |
| Massachusetts Tax – Secretary of State Filing | 5.00 | |
| Attorney General Filing | 3.00 | |
| Audit and Tax Services | 40.00 | |
| Printing the 1963-1966 Proceedings | 1,661.50 | |
| Putterham School Repairs | 115.00 | |
| Custodian Service at Main Library. | <u>15.45</u> | \$ 2,080.86 |
| Cash on Hand December 31, 1969 | | |
| Brookline Savings Bank | | |
| 90 Day Special Account | \$16,259.19 | |
| Regular Account. | 62.32 | |
| Charles B. Blanchard Memorial Permanent Fund | 504.14 | |
| Charles B. Blanchard – One Half Interest Accumulated Fund for Special Use | 4.14 | |
| Brookline Trust Company Checking Account | <u>854.01</u> | \$17,683.80 |
| | | <u>\$19,764.66</u> |

Respectfully Submitted,

J. FREDERICK NELSON,
Treasurer

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ROOMS

Four meetings were held at the Devotion House during 1969: January 21, D.A.R., Boston Tea Party Chapter, about thirty-five persons attended and Mrs. Dorothy Waterhouse was the speaker. January 26, Annual Meeting of the Brookline Historical Society. April 19, annual Patriot's Day celebration. December 15, D.A.R. Hannah Goddard Chapter, about thirty persons, with entertainment of eight bell ringers.

Visitors during the year, as well as from New England, have come from Virginia, Ohio, New York, New Jersey, California, Missouri, Colorado, Washington, D.C. and London, England. We are getting some additional visitation because of the proximity of the Kennedy birthplace, and on May 21st three National Park Service staff members came to see the Devotion House and how we show it.

We have entertained and instructed four Fourth-grade classes from the Devotion School, accompanied by their teachers.

A new tub and tiling have been installed in the bathroom, the old kitchen floor has been repainted, and minor repairs have been attended to as needed — all by the Town Building Department.

From time to time we receive requests for photographs of the Devotion portraits. These orders have always been supplied by the Museum of Fine Arts who own negatives since they conserved the pictures about twenty-five years ago. We are now in touch with the Museum to see if they are willing to continue this convenient arrangement. We allow illustration of these portraits in accredited publications provided that proper credit to the Society's ownership is given. Recently Time-Life magazine sent their own photographer to make reproductions to be included in their forthcoming book *The World of John Singleton Copley*.

Your chairman answers various queries which come through the mail each year, inquiring for local historical material, or offering gifts or loans. We accept the former if we feel that the items offered are of direct Brookline connection, and if we can store or display them properly. The Devotion House does not provide much space for unrelated exhibit material. We received four postcards with local views from Mrs. J. J. Mumms through Mrs. Richard V. Wakefield.

We have accepted with much regret the resignation of Mr. and Mrs. Nelson as Custodians of the Devotion House. After many years of devoted service they wish to retire to their own home on Cape Cod. We have interviewed several prospective custodians, but the house is still available, and we would like to find new occupants soon.

Respectfully submitted,
NINA F. LITTLE
Chairman, Committee on Rooms

After this report, on motion of Mrs. Little, the following was voted:

VOTED The Brookline Historical Society tenders its most hearty thanks and appreciation to Mr. and Mrs. Nelson for their many years of enthusiastic assistance to the Society as Custodians of the Devotion House.

FALL MEETING – November 1, 1970

The Fall Meeting of the Brookline Historical Society, in recognition of the progress toward restoration and re-opening of the HISTORIC PUTTERHAM SCHOOL, will be held at Larz Anderson Park, entrance from Newton Street, on Sunday, November 1st, at 2:30 o'clock.

The program will take place in the auditorium of the Antique Auto Museum, followed by refreshments and inspection of the Putterham School Grounds and building.

Carolyn H. Wetherbee, *Clerk*

HISTORY OF THE PUTTERHAM SCHOOL

by NINA F. LITTLE

In 1713, eight years after the incorporation of Brookline as a town, there was agitation for a school to serve the south part of the town. In that year it was voted in Town Meeting that "The Inhabitants in the South part of this Town may erect a School House there, at their own charge." This vote, however, was not carried out, and many years were to pass before the matter again came up before Town Meeting. In 1760 assistance was voted to those "inhabitants of ye South part of ye Town who Shall give their Names in at ye next May Town Meeting for a school in that part of the Town." The assistance consisted in excusing the residents from paying any tax toward the upkeep of other town schools (of which there were three), provided that they "kept up and Maintained such schooling."

Still nothing was done for eight years, but in 1768 it was voted again to assist the South District with the stipulation that the building "Be of the same Bigness of the Woman's School House that is in the Middle District". This referred to the school located on the green adjacent to the present First Parish Church. It is believed that the present school was then erected. Difficulties had been experienced in purchasing the land, but finally on September 22, 1777, the Town acquired for 5 shillings a lot just large enough to accommodate the first small building, from one Joseph Smith of Roxbury. This served the inhabitants until enlargement became necessary in 1839.

From the Goddard farm, situated about a mile away on Goddard Avenue, came Nathaniel Goddard to this neighborhood school, and in his Memoirs he has given a revealing picture of the school as he attended it in 1771. Mr. Goddard writes: "At about four years of age I was sent in the summer to a school kept by a female about a mile to the westward of our dwelling. We had books as were generally used in the country schools of the day, to wit: a primer, Dilworth's spelling book, a Bible, or in lieu of it a Psalter, and a New Testament. The latter books were not used until we had some proficiency in learning, for he who could read the Bible with a 'good tone' was much of a scholar." The meals, while he was in school,

were cooked in the fireplace of Nab Wilson, "upon a knoll a few rods distant from the schoolhouse." Nab was an eccentric character whose home consisted of a pitch roof over a stone cellar with a fire at one end. The boys collected sticks over which to boil their chocolate which, with milk brought from home, they cooked in an iron skillet. Bread, sometimes sweetened with sugar or molasses, was eaten in pint pewter basins.

In 1821 a town committee reported that sixty-five pupils were registered at the school. In 1834, a similar committee reported that only seventeen were listed, and they recommended that the Town dispense with a male teacher in favor of a female for forty-eight weeks during the year, at \$2.50 per week. This would save the amount of \$46.00 which could be better expended elsewhere.

In 1839 still another committee was charged with investigating the condition of the Putterham School and reported as follows: "After several meetings we have finally agreed to recommend that the Putterham School House (so-called) have the back end carried back eight feet, and that the sides and roof be made to correspond with the other part, and also to put two windows to correspond with the others, and all new seats such as we have seen in Dorchester, Expense estimated by Mr. Elijah Stone, \$125.00."

It soon became apparent that the original lot purchased in 1777 was only twenty by thirty feet, allowing hardly a foot of extra space for enlargement. Consideration was then given to moving the building but this would have cost an added \$600.00. Two small pieces of land adjoining were fortunately available and were acquired from Joseph Curtis and Samuel Hills of Roxbury for \$5.00, after which the school was renovated on its original site. The cost as reported in 1840 was as follows: lumber \$76.07; nails etc. \$9.00; masonry \$11.26; painting \$38.33; labor \$112.24; with a grand total of \$238.72. Seven years later, in 1847, a few minor additions were made which gave the building the appearance which it still bears today. Mr. G. C. Colbarth offered to give a parcel of land beside the house in exchange for other property provided that the following improvements were completed by April 1848: a new door, window blinds, a woodshed with a door into the schoolroom, a new privy beside the shed, and a good fence.

So Brookline is fortunate in having preserved one of its pre-Revolutionary school houses, of which few now remain in such unaltered condition.

Delivered at the opening of the
restored Putterham School
on November 1, 1970