Middleborough Antiquarian

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MIDDLEBOROUGH HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION, INC.
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VOLUME XXVI NOVEMBER 1987 NUMBER 1

Count and Countess Magri

THE MIDDLEBOROUGH COOPERATIVE BANK

By Robert M. Beals
President,
Middleborough Historical Association

The First Fifty Years
1889 - 1939

1889 was the year in which the Middleborough Cooperative Bank came into being when a group of far-sighted business men of the town, led by Joseph Eber Beals, recognized the fact that, with the rapidly growing number of industries in Middleboro, there was a need for planned savings, and for home financing on an economical basis.

It might be interesting to go back in time to see what was going on in the world in 1889 as the Cooperative Bank took its place among our local banking and business institutions.

There was an international exposition in Paris that year, and the Eiffel Tower was erected. The French Panama Canal Company went bankrupt. The United States entered a tripartite agreement with Great Britain and Germany for the independence and joint control of Samoa. The German Reichstag enacted a law compelling the insurance of workingmen from disabilities caused by old age or accident. In China, there was another famine. A Pan-American Congress met in Washington, organized the Pan-American Union, and toured the U.S. for a year! Benjamin Harrison became President of the United States, between the two terms of Grover Cleveland. It was a year of prosperity. There had been a "panic" in 1884, another was coming in 1893, but in 1889 the country was doing very well. The population had risen to 61,289,000.

Oliver Ames was Governor of Massachusetts and J.Q.A. Brackett, who was to succeed Ames as Governor, was Lt. Governor. Brackett was called the father of Cooperative Banking in the State. He came to Middleboro to promote the organization of the Middleboro Cooperative Bank shortly after he had visited Pittsfield to speak at the first monthly meeting of the Directors of the Pittsfield Cooperative Bank on March 5, 1889.

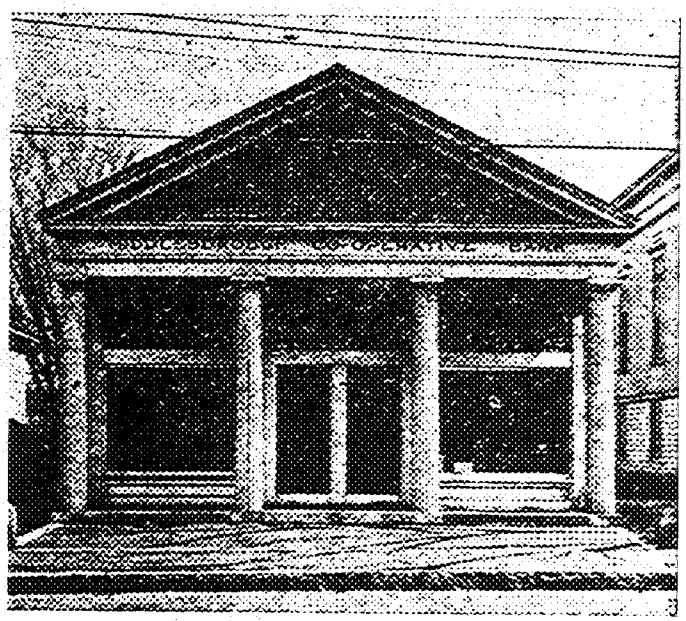
Here in Middleboro, Joseph T. Wood, Albert T. Savery and Sylvanus Mendall sat as Selectmen; Charles T. Thatcher was Town Clerk and Treasurer. Francis M. Vaughan was Justice of the Fourth Plymouth District Court, and Joseph T. Wood was County Commissioner.

James M. Coombs' Middleboro Gazette was a huge blanket sheet, nine columns to the page, well-filled with advertising of a day before style and art got in its work. Advertisers included Sparrow Bros., W.S. Andrews & Sons, George T. Ryder & Co., Jones Brothers, Macomber's Livery Stable, Dr. E.S. Hathaway, Lewis Lincoln & Son, and Washburn & Parker.

The agreement "to constitute the corporation" of the Middleborough Cooperative Bank, according to Chapter 117 of the public statutes, was signed on March 13, 1889 by a group of representative citizens who had been discussing the advisability of establishing a cooperative bank in the town.

This group, whose names appeared on the charter as the incorporators, included: Samuel S. Bourne, Joseph E. Beals, Eugene P. LeBaron, Abram C. Bowman, Thomas C. Collins, C.F. Leonard, W.H. Southworth, Everett T. Lincoln, William B. Wood, Alvin C. Howes, Bradford C. Burgess, Henry W. Sears, D. Eldredge, Francis M. Vaughan, A.B. Alden, F.W. Hayden, B.F. Tripp, Charles W. Carpenter, Jared F. Alden, John M. Luippold, C.H. Leach, I.F. Atwood, E.S. Hathaway, Henry D. Smith, C.L. Hathaway, and James A. Burgess.

The first meeting of the subscribers to the agreement was held in the West Room of the Town House at 7:30 P.M. on April 12. At this meeting, according to the minutes entered in the old record book, "an organization was then effected by the choice by ballot of a temporary clerk and D. Eldredge, of Boston, Mass. was chosen such temporary clerk and was duly sworn to the faithful discharge of his duties before Francis M. Vaughan, Esq."



CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH CHAPEL
The Middleborough Co-operative Bank Occupied this building from 1914 to 1926.

MIDDLEBOROUGH ANTIQUARIAN
Middleboro, Mass.
VOLUME XXVI 1987 NUMBER 1
Mertie E. Romaine ..... Editor

Historical Association Annual Membership

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Participating	20.00	Life	200.00

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Middleborough Historical Museum, Hours:

July-Aug. Wed., Thurs., Fri., 1-4 P.M.
Sept. First two Sundays 1-4 P.M.
Admission $2.00 Students $.75
5 and under free.

By-laws were adopted and the first officers and directors elected by ballot were: President, S.S. Bourne; Vice President, Eugene P. LeBaron; Secretary & Treasurer, Joseph E. Beals, all of whom were elected Directors also, and the following Directors, Cornelius H. Leonard, Abram L. Bowman, B.C. Burgess, B.F. Tripp, William B. Wood, Thomas C. Collins, J.F. Alden, E.T. Lincoln, I.F. Atwood, W.H. Southworth, and Henry W. Sears.

President Bourne was absent from the meeting and Vice Pres. LeBaron took the chair. The Board voted to limit the first series of shares to be issued in May to 1000 to non-borrowers, with no limit to borrowers, and to place a 500 limit to non-borrowers in respect to the second, or November series, with no limit to borrowers.

The Directors met April 12, and again May 7, when committees were appointed. On the first Security Committee were Southworth, Atwood and Wood, and Sears and Bowman were named as the first Finance Committee. It was voted that the first meeting of the shareholders be held in the Town House auditorium, and that it be a public meeting.

Meantime, the charter, signed by the Secretary of State on May 1, 1889, had been received. It was Charter No. 3639, and stated that the corporation was organized "for the purpose of accumulating the savings of its members, paid into such corporation in fixed periodical installments, and the lending of such funds so accumulated to its members."

At the public meeting on May 21, Lt. Gov. John Quincy Adams Brackett, leader in obtaining the cooperative bank legislation, and D. Eldredge of Boston, were the principal speakers, explaining the cooperative banking system to the audience.

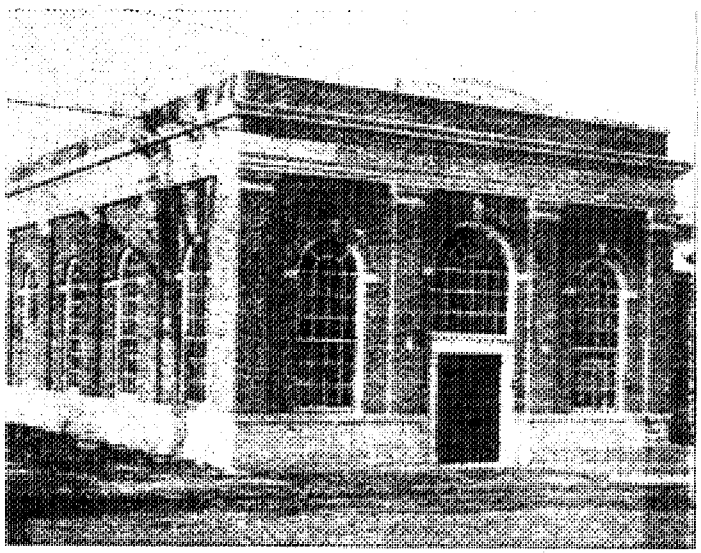
One year later, in its first annual report, May 1, 1890, the bank listed the following assets:

Loaned on real estate	$13,100.00
Cash on hand	2.90
Permanent expense	140.00
Fines due	3.00
TOTAL	$13,245.90

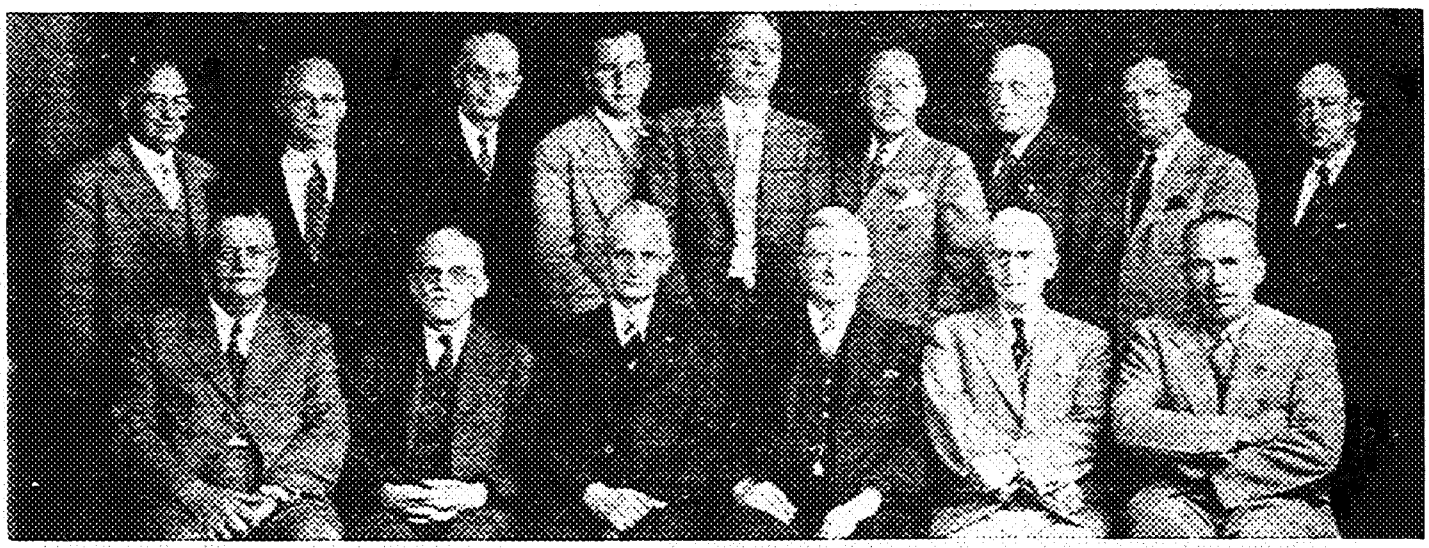
During the first twenty-five years, the bank occupied an office in the Town Hall jointly with the Water Commissioners. In 1914, the chapel on South Main Street, owned by the Central Congregational Church, was leased and remodeled for occupancy by the bank. That same year, the bank issued the first matured share certificates.

In 1916, branch offices were opened in Wareham, Falmouth and Hyannis. In September 1925, bank services were further expanded by establishing a collection point at the National Rockland Bank in Boston.

In 1927, the bank purchased the land from the church and began with plans for a new structure of its own. The chapel was moved to its present location at the rear of the church facing Webster Street. The building committee was composed of Judge D.D. Sullivan, Chairman; Alvin C. Howes, Walter L. Beals, Charles N. Atwood, and Lorenzo Wood. In 1928, a very handsome brick building was erected as a permanent home for the bank. Wilson G. Harlow, of Middleboro, was the architect, and the builder was Bertrand N. Howland of Brockton.



NEW COOPERATIVE BANK BUILDING ERECTED IN 1928



OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS OF CO–OPERATIVE BANK

Front Row, left to right—Jesse A. Holmes, Treasurer. Walter L. Beals, President. James H. Kennedy, Vice President Levi O. Atwood, Judge D. D. Sullivan, bank attorney, and Henry W. Sears, Jr.

Back Row, left to right—Harry J. Goodale, George N. Dupont, Albert A. Thomas, Lorenzo Wood, Jr., George Donner, Judge John V. Sullivan, Fred A. Shockley, Ralph J. McQuade, Frank D. Costello

In the first fifty years of the bank's existence, there were only four Presidents.

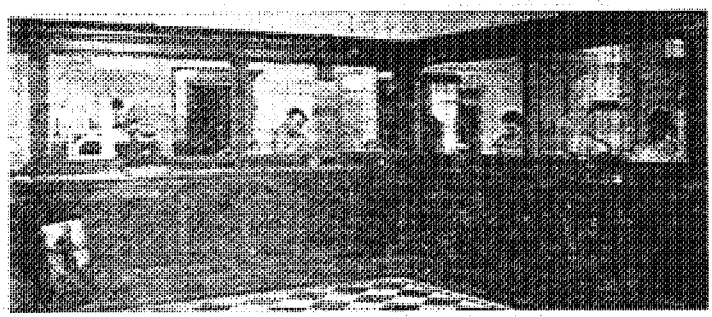
1889-1896	Samuel S. Bourne
1896-1916	Warren H. Southworth
1916-1930	Alvin C. Howes
1930-1958	James H. Kennedy

Two men, father and son, spanned the first fifty years as Treasurer. Joseph E. Beals (the writer's great-grandfather) was active in organizing the bank, as stated before, and served for twenty years until 1909. He was succeeded by his son, Walter L. Beals (the writer's grandfather), who was still to be found, after thirty years in office, busy at the bank in the hours it was open.

The full-time staff of the bank in 1939, in addition to President Kennedy and Treasurer Beals were: Mrs. Irene B. Dunham, Assistant Treasurer, who had served the bank since 1920; Marian L. Beals (the writer's mother), Vera F. (Clark) Long, and T. Francis Begley.

During 1989, just two years away, the Bank will celebrate its 100th Anniversary. I hope it will be possible for someone, hopefully the writer, to bring you a report on the second fifty years of this Middleborough banking institution.

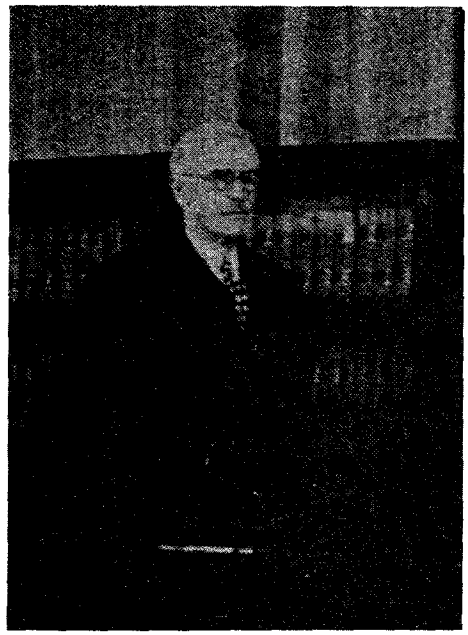
By Robert M. Beals
President
Middleborough Historical Assoc.



THE BANKING ROOM
of the old Cooperative Bank.
Members of the staff, left to right, T. Francis Begley, Vera F. Clark, Irene D. Dunham.

JAMES H. KENNEDY
President of the Middleborough
Bank Since 1930

WALTER L. BEALS
Who Succeeded His Father
as Treasurer



DENNIS D. SULLIVAN
Judge Sullivan has been active in the
Bank 44 years as Director
and Attorney

JOSEPH EBER BEALS
1834 - 1909

By Robert M. Beals
President, Middleborough Historical Association

An article that appeared in the Boston Globe in March 1904, was entitled, "J.E. BEALS HONORED." The story cited him as "Middleboro's Most Prominent Citizen."

My great-grandfather died in 1909, nine years before I was born. Over the years, I have learned a great deal about him through my late grandparents and parents, and by reading published articles about this man. Surely, the distinction that was accorded him in 1904 was well-deserved.

Joseph E. Beals was born in the Warrentown section of Middleboro on March 18, 1834, the only son of Eber and Lucy (Vaughan) Beals, and his entire life was spent in his native [illegible]n. He attended Peirce Academy, then one of the prominent preparatory schools in the state. While attending school, he was involved in various types of employment, to pay for his education. One of his jobs was working on the Nemasket Gazette, as it was then called.

Later he taught school, and, in 1862, entered the employ of Albert Alden, proprietor of the Bay State Straw Works. Here he remained for over thirty years. Ill-health forced him to leave.

His entire life was one of public service and he occupied many positions of trust in the town.

One particular branch in which he was widely known was his connection with the public library that was built in 1903. He has been called the "Father of the Public Library." He served on the building committee, and as the first secretary and treasurer of the board of trustees. Until the Dewey system of classification was introduced, he did all the cataloging, as well as managing the financial duties of his position.

In another article, published in the Antiquarian, on the Middleboro Cooperative Bank, it will be noted that he was a leader in the movement to establish that institution, and served as its secretary and treasurer for twenty years.

JOSEPH E. BEALS

As a result of being strongly in favor of a municipal water system, he was elected a member of the first board of Water Commissioners, and later served as superintendent of the water department. He also served as editor of the Quarterly Journal, the organ of the New England Water Works Assoc.

As a fitting crown to his long public career, he was chosen representative to the state legislature in 1906, serving the usual two terms.

He was one of the best known citizens of Middleboro, and was universally respected for his thorough honesty and integrity. During his active life, he was noted for his conscientious dealings with his fellowmen, and his strict adherence to what he thought was right.

He was a charter member of the Assawampsett Division S. of T., organized in 1858. He was also a member of the Mass. Total Abstinence Society. Other organizations in which he held membership were the Historic Genealogical Society, the Society of Mayflower Descendants, the Pilgrim Society of Plymouth, and the Middleboro Business Men's Club. He was also a director of the Plymouth and Middleboro Railroad Company, and served as Clerk of the Nemasket Hill Cemetery Association.

Mr. Beals was twice married. His first wife was Mary Elizabeth Leonard of Bridgewater, who died in 1871. By this marriage, there was one son, Walter L. Beals. In 1876, he married Harriet C. Barden, who passed away nine years later.

In honor of his 70th birthday, "Middleboro's Most Prominent Citizen" was presented a beautiful picture of the new public library. The presentation took place at a meeting of the Middleboro Cooperative Bank.

He passed away on September 3, 1909 at 76 years of age. He "died in the harness" as there had been no interruption of his daily activities, and the previous day, he was actively supervising the laying of water mains on Wareham Street.

On December 15, 1915, just before completion of the standpipe on Barden Hill, a brass tablet was unveiled to his memory. The tablet was inscribed as follows:

Dedicated to
Joseph Eber Beals
A Builder
His works survive him

Courtesy Mrs. Madeline Osborne

A LETTER TO MISS BETSY C. PARKER OF MIDDLEBORO

November 13, 1850

The following letter was found in an old trunk by Captain Vining A. Sherman when he sold his ancestral home in Plympton. In a fragile envelope, brown with age, is the letter addressed to Miss Betsy C. Parker from her friend, Jacob Jonson. In his accompanying letter, Captain Sherman wishes "that members of our Congress had a little of the enthusiasm, the stomach and courage aye the pride that young Mr. Jonson had in 1850 when it came to foreign affairs and the protection of our National Interest."

When Captain Sherman sold his beautiful ancestral home in Plympton, his children were the 10th generation of the family to live in the same house.

Middleboro, Nov. 13, 1850

Dear Betty:

We have just returned from a cruise against the Algerians where we have given them such a drubbing that I believe the infidels will soon be glad to make peace with us. We have sunk two and taken three of their vessels wherein is great ...sure, but it will be some time before we receive our prize ...ey. However, I have six months wages due and have sent you an order by which you will receive it at the pay office. We shall sail again in a few days. Do not be uneasy for me, my dear, as I hope the war will soon be over and I shall have the pleasure once more to see you in New York there to spend the remainder of my days.

From your loving friend until I die,

Jacob Jonson

P. T. BARNUM, PRINCE OF HUMBUG, MERCHANT OF DELIGHT

Barnum, a native of Bethel, Connecticut, and long-time resident of Bridgeport, Connecticut, built his legendary career as a showman on animal oddities and performers, ranging from Jumbo the elephant to the Bearded Lady to Swedish Nightingale, Jenny Lind, culminating in creation of the three-ring circus that came to be known as the "Greatest Show on Earth."

Born in 1811, Barnum had little formal education, and spent his early years as a storekeeper and itinerant salesman. His first venture into showmanship occurred in 1835, when he exhibited a woman claimed to be George Washington's 161 year old nurse. In 1840, he purchased the American Museum in New York City and developed it into a phenomenally ...ular attraction, where patrons could view the midget Tom ...mb and the Feejee Mermaid, among other curiosities — all of which seemed tremendously exotic to an untraveled and unsophisticated American public. Barnum appealed to a more educated audience in 1850 by arranging the American tour of singer Jenny Lind that earned the Swedish Nightingale fame and fortune.

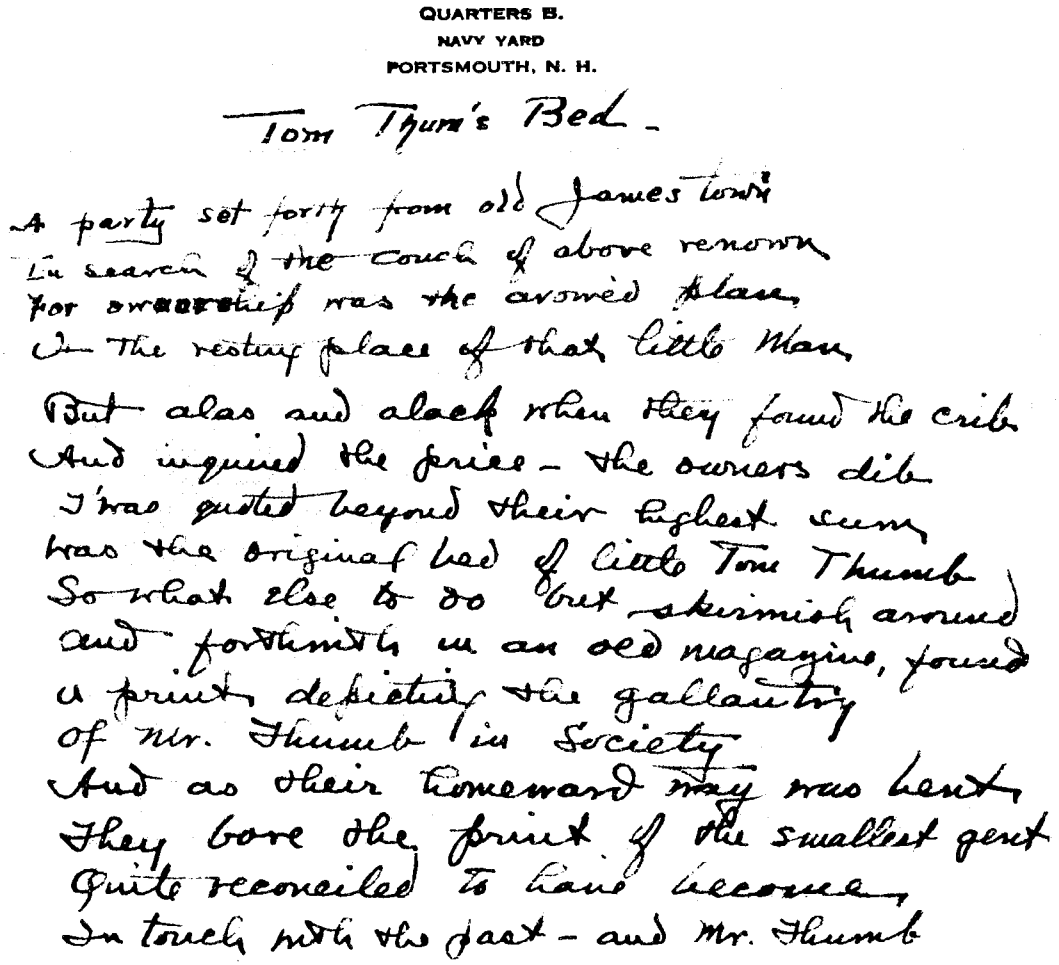
P. T. BARNUM AND GEN. TOM THUMB

The other side of P. T. Barnum the outrageous huckster was P. T. Barnum the solid citizen, including his service as mayor of Bridgeport and in the Connecticut General Assembly.

The patron saint of modern advertising Barnum was one of the first to grasp the potential of the press to create a demand for a product. His masterful promotion of the American appearance of Tom Thumb and Jenny Lind demonstrated his uncanny ability to sense and then fulfill the interest of his comtemporaries. His jokes and hoaxes, like the Wooly Horse and the Feejee Mermaid, became the stuff of American folklore.

Barnum several times exported his unique talents and product to Europe, the first such a visit with Tom Thumb that included an audience with Queen Victoria, the last in 1889, when his entire circus appeared in London. Two years later Barnum died, four days AFTER the New York Evening Sun published his obituary so that the master of publicity could see for himself what the final word on him in the press would be.

From "Notes and News," The Connecticut Historical Society.


QUARTERS B.
NAVY YARD
PORTSMOUTH, N. H.

Tom Thum's Bed -

A party set forth from old James town
In search of the couch of above renown
For ownership was the avowed plan
Of the resting place of that little Man
But alas and alack when they found the crib
And inquired the price - the owners dib
T'was quoted beyond their highest sum
Was the original bed of little Tom Thumb
So what else to do but skirmish around
And forthwith in an old magazine, found
a print depicting the gallantry
of Mr. Thumb in Society
And as their homeward way was bent
They bore the print of the smallest gent
Quite reconciled to have become
In touch with the past - and Mr. Thumb

TOM THUMB'S BED

A party set forth from old Jamestown
In search for the couch of above renown
For ow[nership] was the avowed plan
Of the resting place of that little man.
But alas and alack when they found the crib
And inquired the price – the owners did
T'was quoted beyond their highest sum
Was the original bed of little Tom Thumb.
So what else to do but skirmish around
And forthwith in an old magazine found
A print depicting the gallantry
Of Mr. Thumb in Society.
And as their homeward way was bent
They bore the print of the smallest gent
Quite reconciled to have become
In touch with the past – and Mr. Thumb.

THE CELEBRATED TOM THUMB & HIS EQUIPAGE
A CORRECT LIKENESS

furnished by our Paris correspondent with the fashions of the month.

MIDDLEBOROUGH HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION, INC.
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Middleboro, Massachusetts
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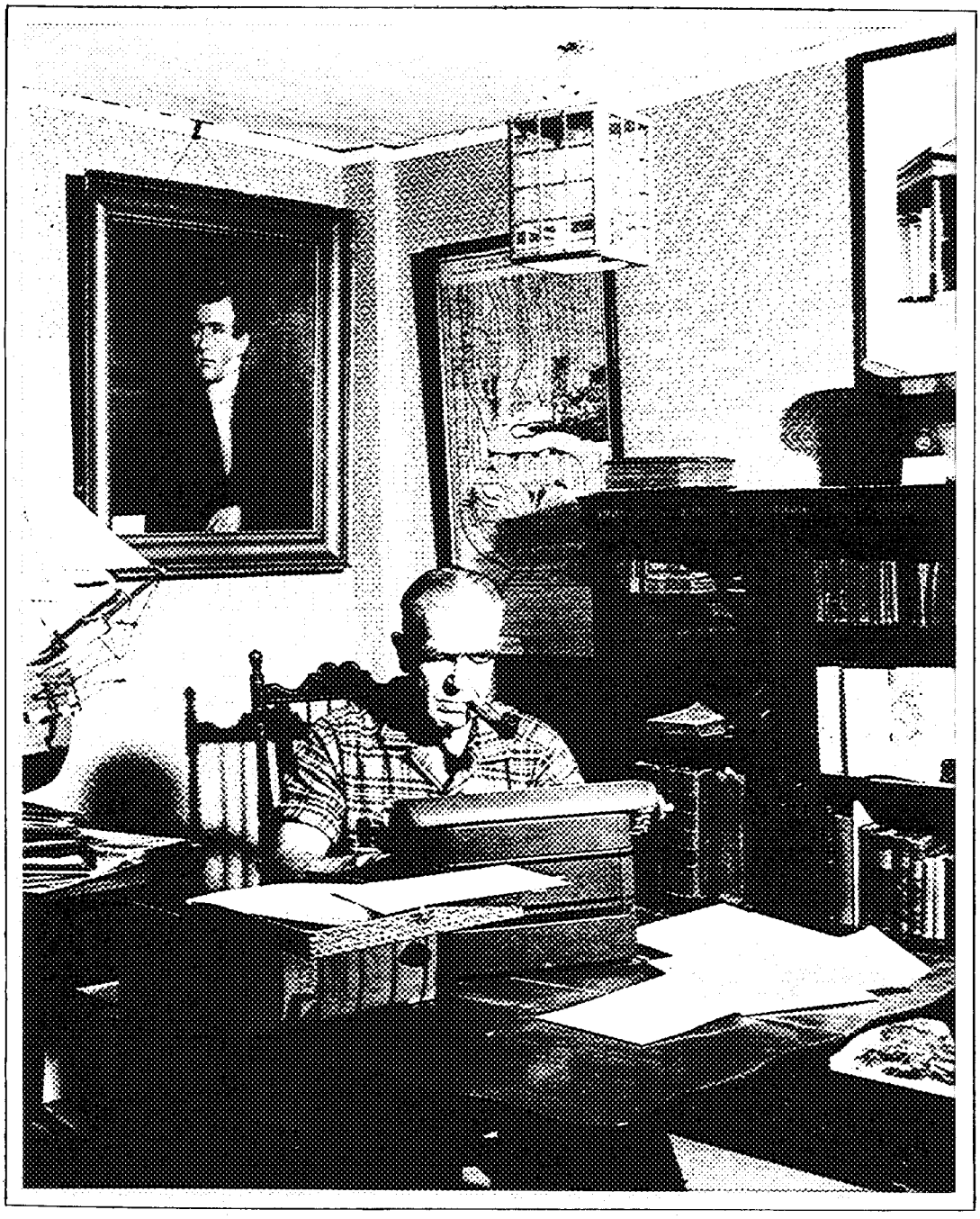

Lawrence B. Romaine, Founding Editor, at work.

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

The appearance (albeit somewhat tardily) of this issue of the *Middleborough Antiquarian* marks a milestone in its history. Mrs. Mertie E. Romaine, editor for the past twenty years and wife of the publication's founder, Lawrence B. Romaine, now assumes the position of Editor Emeritus, from which she can continue to inspire and guide its direction even while she enjoys a well-deserved rest from the day-to-day burdens of its production. In assuming the responsibilities of the editorship, I have no illusions that I, or perhaps anyone else for that matter, can adequately replace Mrs. Romaine in this capacity. Her years of dedication to the cause of preserving and documenting the history of Middleborough, assisting in, enriching, and then building upon the work of her late husband, qualified her in a unique way for the labor of love which was her editing of the *Antiquarian.* The fruits of her work will be deeply missed by our readers, to whom she offers a kind of valediction through her contribution of our lead article, "A History of the *Middleborough Antiquarian.*" On behalf of the publication, its sponsoring organization, and all of those who have over the last twenty years delighted in its pages, I would like now to offer Mrs. Romaine sincere and eartfelt thanks. It is a comfort to know that she is willing to ontinue, for the foreseeable future, to offer her advice and help to a fledgling successor who comes to his task equipped with more good will than expertise.

When, after considerable hesitation, I accepted the invitation of Mr. Robert M. Beals and the Executive Board of the Middleborough Historical Association to become the *Antiquarian's* new editor, I realized that one of the principal difficulties of the job would be that of finding enthusiastic and knowledgeable contributors. After the November issue the backfile of unpublished manuscripts contained exactly two items! Luckily, exactly as Mrs. Romaine assures us in her article has always happened in the past, along came two more contributions, including her own, just in the nick of time. But this sort of living "hand to mouthpiece" puts a terrible strain on the editorial nerves and cannot be long endured. Unlike Mrs. Romaine, I cannot rely in a pinch on a nearly encyclopedic knowledge of local history which would allow me to produce a needed piece to order. I am therefore now openly and unabashedly requesting — nay, *imploring* — any of our readers who think they have heard Clio rustling about in the dry leaves of memory or the dry pages of family archives to take up that pen which is mightier than mere good wishes and rush to our rescue with an article, a short item, or a piece of worthwhile documentation. Having labored for years over student essays, I am very willing and moderately able to assist ovice writers with the preparation of their work for publication. The really essential thing to the survival and continued vitality of this journal is that we get as many people as possible actively involved in researching, verifying, and writing about those aspects of local history which interest them and might be of similar interest to our readers.

Our second article in this issue, "Middleborough in the American Revolution" by Marion and Warren Whipple, presents a fine example of one kind of article we would welcome. Drawing together information from several previously published sources, it provides a unified and synthetic view of local participation in a crucial event in American history. Similar articles would be useful in connection with any number of other historical events or epochs, of which it might be helpful to suggest a short list for prospective writers: the adoption of the Constitution, the waging of the War of 1812, the convening of the Hartford Convention, the public attitude toward the Mexican War, the growth of the Abolitionist Movement, participation in the Civil War, the impact of industrial growth and immigration during the closing decades of the nineteenth century, the local impact of the issue of "imperialism" around the time of the Spanish-American War, the appeal here of "T.R." and Progressivism — to bring the list only up to the verge of living memory.

It would also seem time to make sure that someone has chronicled all that is about to slip over that verge: the arrival and progress in Middleborough of the various ethnic groups, for example, and the rise and occasional decline of the town's various institutions, organizations, and traditions. Certainly a goodly amount of that work has been done already by Mrs. Romaine's continuation of Weston's history and by contributions to the *Antiquarian* over the years. Yet, how much remains unrecorded and is in real danger of being lost to posterity if the living memories of our older citizens are not soon committed to writing? And in what better place to record them than in the these, the pages of our own historical journal?

Finally, as the *Antiquarian* launches out into a new era, it may be worth noting that the town itself seems likewise poised at a watershed in its history. If the rate of visible activity in the real estate and construction industries can be used as an index of the magnitude of the transformation that is in progress now, then nothing quite like it has ever happened to Middleborough in the past. In the course of the present development our physicial and social environment will inevitably be changed forever, and while a great deal may thereby be gained, much else is bound to be swept irretrievably away. That consideration alone should give this publication and its readers and supporters a renewed sense of mission as they take up and strive to continue an effort which has itself become no mean feature of the town of Middleborough's historic achievement.

George V. Simmons
Editor

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A HISTORY OF THE MIDDLEBOROUGH ANTIQUARIAN

Mertie E. Romaine

It is impossible to trace the history of the Middleborough Antiquarian without also touching upon the history of the Middleborough Historical Museum since they both came into existence about the same time and the growth of one is so entwined with the growth of the other it is not possible to separate them. This is also true of the life and times of Lawrence. B. Romaine, founder of both.

A circumstance that is unusual to say the least lies in the fact that a young man city born and city bred, should become so obsessed with the history of a small New England town that as the years passed, the history of this town became the prime interest of his life.

Lawrence B. Romaine came to Middleboro in 1932 when he was thirty-two years old. He had seized the opportunity to purchase an old farm on Bedford Street in North Middleboro, a decision which was to point his life in an entirely new direction. Upon graduating from Williams College, he entered the advertising field with the New York World. He left the employ of the newspaper during the depression, at the same time purchasing the farm in North Middleboro. Middleboro did not offer many opportunities in the field of advertising, so Mr. Romaine embarked on a line of work about which he knew nothing - the buying and selling of antiques. He went about knocking on doors in his search for antiques, covering a wide area including, besides Middleboro, the Bridgewaters, Raynham and Lakeville. In those days many a treasure was to be discovered in attics of the old homes. Finding he had an affinity for these treasures of the past and as he made a study of each relic he found, he gradually acquired the knowledge that resulted in his becoming a respected authority and consultant on antiquities and Americana.

Mr. Romaine could not become so intimately interested in the antiques he found without pursuing the history connected with them. Thus he became more and more involved in the history of the area, especially Middleboro. He became an active member of the Middleborough Historical Society and it was his dream for the Society to have a building of its own to house the furniture, paintings and other memorabilia bequeathed to the Society and temporarily stored in a room in the Middleborough Public Library. So it came to pass that Mr. Romaine's dream came true and the Middleborough Historical Museum came into existence just as the Middleborough Antiquarian was taking shape.

Mr. Romaine had a flair for writing. Words flowed easily and smoothly from the point of his pen. He was the author of four books and his articles were consistently being published in "Antiques," "Hobbies," and other magazines of the kind. Therefore it was only natural that he began to think about a publication for the Middleborough Historical Association.

I do not recall any discussion about launching such a project. It may have been discussed at an Executive Board meeting, but the name of the publication, "The Middleborough Antiquarian," was evidently Mr. Romaine's own choice. Issue Number One, Volume One, was dated February, 1959, a two page pamphlet bearing a picture of the Bay State Straw Works and the statement, "Published quarterly and devoted to the preservation of local history." To this day, each copy of the Antiquarian bears this phrase on its cover, "Devoted to the preservation of local history," and in all the twenty-nine years of its existence, the Antiquarian has adhered strictly to this purpose and has never published an article that did not have some bearing on the history of Middleboro.

On the first page of the first issue is a brief history of the Middleborough Historical Society and these words about the purpose of the new venture:

"We feel that this first issue of our new publication must record a few of the early recollections of purely local interest, after which we propose to use notes of a more general interest. After all, an organization for the preservation of history should be allowed both to crow over its past and to predict its future on its thirty-seventh birthday, and where better to do it than in its Volume One, Number One?"

From that first issue, the Middleborough Antiquarian has continued without a break through twenty-nine years and twenty-six volumes. Various editors have guided the magazine through the years. Clint Clark was the first. By 1964, Richard S. Tripp had become co-editor with Mr. Romaine. Richard continued until his school duties demanded so much of his attention he could no longer serve, and Mr. Romaine assumed the responsibility of seeing each issue was assembled and published. Upon Mr. Romaine's death in 1967, Mrs. Romaine took over the duties of editor which she continued until 1987. The new editor is Mr. George V. Simmons, a teacher in the Middleboro High School.

Members and friends have been generous in contributing articles to be published in the Antiquarian. Often times when one issue was completed, it was a question where material would be found for the next issue, but always something appeared to save the day. Clint Clark has been a loyal and consistent supporter with his articles in the very earliest and latest issues, all about old-time Middleboro. Mr. Sullwold, the publisher, has been of inestimable aid, helping with the mechanics of assembly and offering suggestions as to format and arrangement of material. The Antiquarian has become known all over the country and there are many subscribers in states near and far, as well as institutions such as the Boston Public Library.

Advertisements first appeared in the Antiquarian with the January, 1963 issue. The Red Coach Grill had the first full page ad. The advertisers have made a tremendous contribution toward helping to defray the cost of producing the Antiquarian. The following advertisers have remained loyal from the first issue of January, 1963 to the latest one in 1987.

The Boston Store
Robert L. Cushing
Egger's Furniture Store
M.L. Hinckley & Son
Daniel F. McNearney
Martenson's
Middleboro Clothing Company
Middleborough Cooperative Bank

There was a brief period when the magazine was published five times yearly, but in the November, 1963 issue, it was announced that publication would take place four times annually. At this time, the subscription price for one year was one dollar, individual copies twenty-five cents. Annual dues to the Society at this time were two dollars per year. The Antiquarian continued to be published four times a year until 1980, when in the interests of economy, the Executive Board voted to publish only three times a year. There were times when the Antiquarian was merely a mimeographed sheet, due to lack of time or money, but always it has pursued the purpose stated in an early issue:

"If its pages have contributed not only to your pleasure and daily life, but to our local historical appreciation of our place in the annals of New England, it will serve its purpose to keep us posted on what should be put down in black and white before it is lost to future generations."

MAKING THE BEST OF IT

by Clint Clark

One of the first WPA projects in Middleboro was the reconstruction of a sidewalk on Court End Avenue.

Paving sidewalks and roads is normally a fairweather job. The project on Court End Avenue, however, begain in late autumn and continued into the winter.

It was foreseen that the spring thaw would cause the sidewalk to heave, but the need to put jobless men to work was too urgent to consider the folly of pouring concrete in the winter.

Other early public works projects were of more practical and permanent value. Men who had never before worked at outdoor jobs,or had a shovel in their hands except perhaps to spade a garden, widened and graded rural roads, dug waterholes for forest fire control, and repaired bridges.

Such work now would be largely done with mechanized equipment but was all done by manual labor then.

WPA workers were a motley crew, bundled up in jackets and overcoats that had seen better days. They wore hoods and mittens their wives made out of old Army blankets and other warm material. At noon, they toasted their sandwiches on forked sticks, held over fires in oil barrels, and huddled close for warmth.

A Water Department building on Forest Street served as a commissary for distributing surplus commodities, which were made available through a Federal farm subsidy program.

Doled out on commissary days were family allotments of dried beans, peas, cheese, butter (occasionally), graham flour, and potted beef. Also, from a WPA sewing project, men's work shirts.

Records show that winters during the Depression were unusually long and severe. People whose sole income was $12 WPA check, closed off as many rooms as possible to conserve fuel. Often the only source of heat was an oil-burning kitchen range. The mainstays on their tables were such plain fare as beans, macaroni, hash and stews. A nagging problem was getting enough fresh milk for their children, If they had a car, it sat on blocks from January to the first of June, when insurance rates went down.

Parents, and children from tots to teens, spent winter evenings listening to radio programs, reading, and many, many hours putting jigsaw puzzles together. They worked in their gardens and on Sundays went for walks.

Very few people had savings accounts, other than putting 25¢ a week into a Christmas Club. They had no hospital-medical insurance, and until the advent of Social Security, no provisions for retirement, as evidenced by the number of men in their 60's and older who worked on WPA projects.

The Depression years were, indeed, "times that tried men's souls," and women's and children's as well.

Somehow, they made the best of it. Looking back on lean years, now they say, "Everybody was in the same boat. People helped one another. It brought families close together."

MIDDLEBOROUGH IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

By Marion and Warren Whipple

This story of Middleboro in the American Revolution has been compiled from Weston's History of the Town of Middleborough,*(iger's* History of Lakeville, *and the* Middleborough Antiquarian. *It is not a record of new historical research but rather it is a compilation of these three sources put together to portray a period in our history that we are proud to call our "roots."*

When the American Revolution began at Lexington and Concord in 1775, our town was already over 100 years old, with a recorded population of 4119. The town still included the area that is now Lakeville. The center of town was at the Green. Here stood the First Church, then housed in its third building which stood a little east of the present church. And the cemetery behind its stone wall looked as it does today. The church served as the meeting house for the whole town, for political gatherings as well as for religious services. This is where the Town Meetings were held, — which were soon to become so important.

The Sproat Tavern was situated at the intersection of the roads, and its barn is still standing on Plymouth Street. Here the stage coaches stopped to change horses and to allow the passengers to refresh themselves. Middleboro was aptly named. The roads branched out from here to Rhode Island in the southwest, Taunton to the west, New Bedford in the southeast, and Plymouth to the east. In earlier days it had been called Middleberry, but by whatever name it was called, it was the center for all inland routes of travel in Plymouth County.

The tavern was also the social center for the townspeople. Here the men met to hear the latest news, and on Sundays the church people adjourned here between services to warm themselves and exchange gossip. As the Revolution drew nearer, the tavern sign carried the message: "Entertainment for all sons of liberty." This was surprisingly outspoken for a public business, and especially for one that was only a mile away from the property of the powerful tory, Judge Oliver.

The two acres west of the cemetery had been given by James Soule for the mustering field for the local militia. By colonial law, the men of each town were required to drill regularly to be ready to defend their homes against the French and the Indians. Training Day was an annual holiday when everyone gathered to watch the drill. By the time of the Revolution, our town had grown so much it was divided into four precincts, and each had its company of militia. All able-bodied men from sixteen to sixty were required by law to serve; and although not enforced any more, every family was supposed to have a gun and powder in readiness. Any person who aspired to town office or wished to be a leading citizen, had to begin as the captain of a militia company.

The three important organizations in every colonial town were the church, the town meeting, and the militia.

It was during these years that many families moved into the wilderness. Over fifty families went to Vermont, and others went to Maine, which was still owned by Massachusetts. Church records show that many of our inhabitants lived to be over seventy, which was remarkable in those days. We were hardy people, who influenced the development of many other parts of the country.

There are houses still in use today that were already old in 1775. They had always flown the British flag, and the people had pledged allegiance to King George III. England was the mother country even for people born and brought up in America. In my neighborhood, for example, there is the old Cushman farmhouse (1739). On South Maine Street there is the Wood house (1771). On Stetson Street in Lakeville, there is the Ward house (1711). Look around your own neighborhood to identify the pre-Revolution houses there. What stories they could tell of the heart-rending decisions these people had to make about where their duty and loyalty lay.

Middleboro had strong ties to the British government. This was the home of Judge Peter Oliver. Judge Oliver of Boston had come to Middleboro in 1744, where he invested in land, water rights, and real estate. In the following years, he built a complex of mills on the Nemasket River, where he manufactured cannon and shot for the French and Indian Wars, nails, machine parts, etc. He also built one of the finest mansions in New England where he entertained the leaders of colonial government, including John Adams. While his private family life and fortune were in Middleboro, in Boston Peter Oliver was the Chief Justice of the Mass. Bay Colony, second only to the governor in importance. Judge Oliver presided at the trial of the soldiers in the Boston Massacre, and served his King and Parliament faithfully for many years.

In 1770, Peter Jr. married Sally Hutchinson, the governor's daughter. (Young Peter was known as Dr. Oliver to distinguish him from his father, the judge.) Judge Oliver built a fine home with extensive gardens as a wedding present for the young couple. No record remains of how many slaves and servants they employed, but obviously they lived as befitted the highest nobility in the colony.

Across the street, behind the present KOA Campground, James Bowdoin owned another fine house, but he was too busy in Boston to spend time here. He did, however, invest in some of the Oliver businesses.

Middleboro as an inland town was not directly hurt by the British Navigation Acts that restricted colonial shipping and trade for the benefit of England. The Manufacturing Law that forbids manufacturing in the colonies in order to secure those jobs for the workers in England, did not hurt us either. It may have affected some of our small local iron works that had to shape the refined ore into bricks which were sent to England to be melted down and made into salable products, but Judge Oliver was so important that he had a special permit from the King that allowed him to manufacture the finished products of military supplies and household goods. Thus he had a monopoly on the iron industry, and many local men worked for him.

It was to be expected, therefore, that the people of Middleboro would remain loyal subjects of King George. However, when news of the Stamp Act reached town in 1765, a Town Meeting was held in the Church at the Green to discuss the matter. A letter of instruction was sent to our delegate to the General Court (legislature) of Mass., who at this time was Daniel Oliver, son of Judge Oliver. The instructions said that "we Look upon the aforementioned act to be a Grevious and Intolerable Burden upon us, and an Infringement on our Charter Rights and Priviledges . . . and by all Lawfull means Consistent with Loyalty to the King you oppose Its Taking Place Till we Can Know what will be the answer To the Prayers, Tears, Petitions of this whole Continent for Relief." Although the Stamp Act was repealed, it was followed by the Townshend taxes, and British troops were sent to control Boston. Two years later, the Middleboro people in Town Meeting voted to oppose the tax on paper by making our own paper, which defied the Manufacturing Law and showed active opposition to the King's government.

Meanwhile, England was sending more troops to control Boston, and Middleboro sent Capt. Ebenezer Sproat and Capt. Benjamin White to a meeting in Faneuil Hall to discuss the quartering of these troops in private homes. It was also voted to inform the local clergy that next Tuesday would be a "day of solemn fasting and prayer." This order to quarter soldiers in private homes violated a cherished English right to privacy in the home. It is interesting to see which actions of the royal government were upsetting the citizens of Middleboro.

The Boston Massacre occurred when two soldiers became involved in a snowball fight with children, and it escalated into a riot in which several persons were killed. This event did not affect our town directly, but as we have already mentioned, Judge Oliver was the presiding officer at the trial for the soldiers. There must have been a lot of talk about it at the Sproat Tavern. Zachariah Eddy from the Eddyville section of town was the acknowledged spokesman for the critics of British policy. He was an active member of the Church at the Green, and could be found as an outspoken debater at the Tavern during the Sunday noon breaks between services. Judge Peter Oliver was also a faithful attendant at church. In 1760, the record reads that "The Hon. Peter Oliver Esq." was voted the privilege of being a "proprietor" of the meeting house with the right to build himself a special pew for his family and guests. Reportedly these two men held lively debates as their neighbors listened in and formed their opinions.

A quiet interlude followed the Boston Massacre — to the dismay of Samuel Adams who already hoped for independence from England, but his attitude found little support. However, complaints continued to be discussed at all gathering places. It was in 1773 that Benj. Franklin spent three days in town as a guest in the home of young Dr. Oliver. It is believed that the Olivers were trying to convince the famous doctor to support the royalist cause. During his visit, Dr. Franklin stopped by the Sproat Tavern where he discussed agriculture with the local people. And, he attended the Church at the Green where the minister was the outspoken American patriot, Rev. Conant. We like to think that it was here in Middleboro that Benj. Franklin made up his mind to support the cause of the "rebels" who were demanding the rights as Englishmen. (Nothing was being said yet about separating from England.)

The militia continued to drill on the Green. Committees of Correspondence were formed to keep all of the colonies in close touch with developments. Middleboro chose a committee of the five selectmen to "deal with other towns." Then the Boston Tea Party precipitated trouble. England retaliated with the so-called Intolerable Acts of punishment which included restricting the powers of the General Court (legislature) and closing of the port of Boston. The General Court moved to Salem to avoid the royal edict, and Middleboro sent two delegates to this important session to discuss what the people of Massachusetts should do now. Middleboro played it cool by sending Abner Kingman, believed to be a Tory, and Zachariah Eddy, a Whig — with instructions to move with caution to maintain a good government. The town also sent a letter of sympathy and eighty bushels of grain to the starving city of Boston.

The First Continental Congress was called to meet in Carpenter's Hall in Philadelphia on Sept. 5, 1774, and Middleboro was represented there. Rev. Backus of the First Baptist Church in North Middleboro packed some of his books in his saddlebag to sell along the way, and set out for Philadelphia on horseback. We are not sure whether he was officially delegated to go or went on his own to watch the important discussions. No doubt he made his opinions known in either case.

Rev. Isaac Backus was an influential person and we should take the time to look at his life. He had been called from Connecticut to start a new Congregational parish in North Middleboro. His house still stands on Plymouth Street. Here he and his wife raised their nine children. But, he accepted the doctrine of the new Baptist faith. This caused his congregation to split. He and his followers established the First Baptist Church in North Middleboro, and a few years later he was the agent for all the Baptist churches in Massachusetts. He published many books of sermons which reflect his dedication to the concepts of separation of state and church, and freedom for all people, including slaves. During his lifetime, he traveled from New Hampshire to the Carolinas, preaching and selling his books. He not only attended the Continental Congress, but he was a member of the convention to adopt the Constitution of the United States, and spoke persuasively for the principle of religious freedom. Rev. Backus' ministry lasted for over fifty years. He is buried in the Titicut Cemetery where an impressive stone altar and open Bible pay tribute to a most unusual man.

Returning now to the First Continental Congress, Congress voted to send a petition to King George III asking that all laws be repealed back to 1763, thus allowing England and her American colonies to start afresh from that date. There ...llowed a tense winter of waiting for England's answer. Ac...ording to the *Diary and Letters of Thomas Hutchinson,* Dr. Peter Oliver wrote a letter from Middleboro in October of 1774 as follows:

> The week before last our Sons of Lyberty put up a lyberty Pole on the Green. Our Minister grac'd the solemnity with his presence, and made a prayer under the Pole, and an harangue upon Lyberty. It was a day set apart for the Officers of the Company to resign their offices. Mr. Conant took the pikes, and gave them to the new Officers; he has rendered himself very ridiculous to many of his friends.
>
> Ere this reaches you, you will receive the News-Papers which will give you an insight of our present troubles and difficulties. The Judge (Chief Justice Peter Oliver) has been in Boston these 8 or 10 weeks, to save his life; and Madam has been there these 3 weeks, and are both going to winter there.

And then, in the Spring, while still waiting for the answer from King and Parliament, the British troops and the American minutemen clashed at Lexington and Concord. Major Peter Hoar was in the 4th Regiment of militia of Massachusetts and served at Lexington, so a Middleboro man was there at the very beginning. He rose to Lt. Col., and was under fire in Rhode Island several times. After the war, he was a selectman for over fifty years, and was a representative to the legislature for three sessions.

When the news of Lexington reached Middleboro, Capt. ...iel Peirce led about 100 Middleboro men to the aid of the American patriots beseiging Boston. Also, General Gage had been arming Tories in Marshfield, so three other companies marched to Marshfield to occupy the town for two days so that the Tories there could not seize the town.

Now that armed conflict had broken out, the Tories in our town were confined to their home farms, and allowed to leave only to attend church. Simeon Doggett, whose farm was on Main Street where the Lakeville State Hospital is now, was called "the Tory farmer." He and his neighbor, Lemuel Ransome on Rhode Island Road, were sent to prison in New Bedford briefly and then were left in peace on their own land. In all, nine men were confined to their homes. While other towns experienced violent acts of tarring, feathering, and riding on a rail, Middleboro showed remarkable tolerance under the stress of war.

Judge Oliver rode out to Middleboro under cover of darkness, took important papers from his house, and rode away again. He and his family would never return. They were banished by vote of the Mass. legislature, and went to England. Several years later, during the war, the beautiful mansion known as Oliver Hall was sacked and burned. Judge Oliver's business interests were bought out by his friend, James Bowdoin, who remained loyal to America. (Bowdoin College was named for him.) And years later, the Dr. Peter Oliver house was bought by his brother's descendants, so it is once again in the Oliver family.

Now that war had effectively separated us from England, it was necessary to establish our own government and maintain law and order for ourselves. Quoting from the minutes of 1775: "Town Meeting held at the Easterly Precinct Meeting house on Monday, the 22nd of October last . . . we have agreed with Mr. Samuel Tinkham Jun. to keep it (ammunition) in his Corn house, which he will do provided the Town pay him four shillings as long as the Town shall see cause." The next year (1776) it was voted in Town Meeting to instruct our delegate to the General Court, Deacon Benjamin Thomas, to vote for independence and to support the Continental Congress. Capt. William Shaw and John Miller were sent as delegates to the convention to write a state constitution, and we voted in Town Meeting to accept that government as amended, and to accept John Hancock as the Governor.

Although the war itself did not invade Middleboro, in 1777 an epidemic of smallpox hit our town. This was a dreaded disease with no cure, so Nature had to run its course. The process of inoculation had started but was so feared that at the end of that awful winter, the citizens still voted in Town Meeting "not to allow an anoculation of the small pox to be set up in any house or houses in this town." Capt. Joshua Eddy had to go to Braintree to get the inoculation upon which his military promotion depended. Each community had a pest house set aside where the sick people were isolated. Only those who had recovered from the disease could care for them, and these nurses were quarantined with their patients. Food and supplies were left at a safe distance, and someone had to take them in when nobody was around. Even in death, the victims were isolated - buried in some remote spot. Middleboro had three pest houses; one in Eddyville, one in Titicut

(North Middleboro), and one between Plymouth and Precinct Streets at Muttock. The house in Eddyville was owned by Seth Eddy, a son of Zachariah Eddy. And Zachariah was one who died there. Here also Rev. Sylvanus Conant from the Green died with the parishoners he had tried to help. They were buried in a special cemetery on Soule Street near Brook Street. Rev. Conant also has a stone in his family lot in the church cemetery. We don't know how many people were buried near the other pest houses.

Middleboro sent its share of men to war. The census of 1776 shows that the town had 1066 men aged 16 and over, 5 Indians, and 8 negroes. Of these, 107 served in the army. Others were at sea, like the son of Job Peirce who was captured on a privateer vessel, and was in prison in England until the end of the war. Many others were minutemen in the militia, ready to serve on local defense for a few days at a time as needed. At one time there were 64 men absent from meeting at the First Church alone.

Our best-remembered soldier was Joshua Eddy, son of Zachariah (the outspoken patriot who used to argue heatedly with Judge Oliver). Joshua Eddy had gone to Marshfield on that expedition in 1774 to save the town from Tories. He could be a captain in the army if he could raise his own men and if he would take the smallpox inoculation. He did both. As Capt. Eddy, he served at Saratoga, survived the winter at Valley Forge, was a staff officer at Monmouth and heard Gen. Washington berating Gen. Charles Lee. He knew Washington well. After the war, he was a successful farmer and had an iron furnace at Waterville. He had ten children, five of whom were sons who continued to live in the Eddyville section of town.

Another well-known name in the war was Ebenezer Sproat, son of the tavern owners. He was an imposing man, over six feet tall. Like his father, he was an outspoken critic of the British government's policies, and was among the first to enlist in the Colonial army. Although still in his mid-twenties, he quickly rose to the rank of major in the 10th Mass. Regiment. He served in the battle at Portsmouth, R.I., then was stationed at Providence. Through Baron Von Steuben he became an inspector of the brigade, and a friend and advisor to Washington himself. He is remembered as a strict disciplinarian, and very popular with the officers and men. As *Col.* Sproat, his hardest assignment was to suppress a rebellion in New Jersey, but he did his duty, held a court martial for the leaders, and directed their execution. That ended the dangerous rebellion, and Washington was very grateful. After the war, Ebenezer Sproat led the first emigrants to Ohio. He fought the Indians and earned their respect, and became a leader in the development of Ohio. His Indian nickname of Buckeye became the state's symbol.

At the beginning of the Revolution recruiting had gone well, but as it became more difficult to meet the quotas, the Mass. General Court put the pressure on. The Continental Congress had issued an order in 1775 that all men between the ages of sixteen and fifty should be trained and equipped. Middleboro had four companies of militia, one in each precint, each with its captain and two lieutenants. Our town voted that each company was responsible for filling its own quota or paying the fine. Towns were also assessed for horses, food, and money. Many Middleboro men were farmers who did not feel they could leave their families for a long enlistment, so they continued to drill in the local militia and responded to local alarms. Twice they were called to Rhode Island, including the battle on Butt's Hill at Portsmouth which Lafayette called the best fought battle of the war. Four companies of militia were there from Middleboro, including one group of 82 men under Capt. Job Peirce who was the grandfather of the famous Middleboro Peirce family and of the Civil War colonel, Ebenezer Peirce.

The militia also responded to the call for help when New Bedford and Fairhaven were attacked in 1778. They were called to the Gurnet to protect the harbor of Plymouth. Thus they served repeatedly throughout the Revolution, marched many miles, and risked their lives for our country. Food supplies and camping equipment were always a problem for these minutemen soldiers, so they would answer the emergency and two or three days later they would drift home again. Gen. Fearing of Wareham sent some bitter letters to the town fathers of Middleboro for what he considered to b irresponsible behavior. We see it from the other side. Th Middleboro militia responded quickly to every call for help, leaving their families and risking their lives, and when the emergency was over and the food they had carried was gone, they saw no reason to linger longer.

Notice the number of Revolutionary flags in our cemeteries. For example, in one corner of the Rock Cemetery, there are a dozen flags. Our veterans represent all ages and all races. The Indian, Ben Simon, served. He lived to be eighty years old, and is buried in Lakeville's Thompson Cemetery with his well-earned flag. Off Race Cource Road there is the grave of Capt. William Canedy and across the roadway is buried his faithful slave who served with him. Both are entitled to a flag.

And, of course, the most famous soldier of them all was a *woman*, Deborah Sampson. Deborah was born in Plympton (Dec. 17) in 1760, and was descended on her father's side from John Alden and Myles Standish, and on her mother's side from William Bradford. However, her illustrious ancestry didn't do her any good. Her father was destitute, and was disappointed in an inheritance that he had expected. He became a heavy drinker, and then left home. It was reported that he had died at sea. Mrs. Sampson could not support the family, and so the children had to be scattered to other homes. Debbie was five years old when she was taken into the home of Mrs. Thacher, widow of the minister of the First Church the Green. Mrs. Thacher taught Debbie to spin, and in an age when every woman needed to know how to spin and weave, Deborah Sampson became known as the best spinner in town.

When she was ten years old, she was bound out to Jeremiah Thomas who had a farm on the back side of Barden Hill. His sons were required to do the heavy farm work and haying, and Deborah was required to work with them. She was a big, strong girl. It is thought that here she learned the language and mannerisms of men, and perhaps wore male clothing as she worked in the fields. Deborah also was employed to do spinning and weaving in several homes and at the Sproat Tavern. As she worked in a corner of the tap room, she heard the men talking politics, and became interested in the issues of the Revolution.

Deborah taught school for two sessions when she was nineteen, and boarded around with different families. At this time, she joined the South Middleboro Third Baptist Church (which later moved to Rock). The church stood on the site of the present Methodist Church. Deborah was impressed by the Rev. Asa Hunt, however the church records show that she was reprimanded for being absent from services when she had to walk only eight miles!

We don't know when or why she decided to assume the role of a man and run away to war, for she confided in nobody, apparently. There is a story that she walked to New Bedford intending to sign up as a sailor, but was discouraged by the captain's reputation as a hard master. Then she started enlist as a soldier using the name Timothy Thayer, but a lady standing nearby remarked that she held her pen, "like Deb Thomas," so she was scared off. After walking to many towns, she enlisted in Medfield under the name of Robert Shurtleff, and soon afterwards wrote a letter to Mrs. Thacher, her one friend. The *Middleborough Antiquarian* for February, 1965, quotes from that letter.

> Fearing lest my long absence causes you anxiety, I thought good to write and inform you somewhat of my plans.
>
> My feelings towards this direful war are well known to you; since the first call from Lexington, I have longed to be of some actual service to the country which I love. Let me assure you that it was with this feeling and this only that impelled me to leave Middleboro and enlist as Robert Shirtliffe, a soldier of the Continental Army.

Deborah Sampson served long and courageously. She was first sent to West Point, and was wounded in the fighting along the Hudson River Valley. She took out the bullet herself with a knife, knowing that a doctor would see through her disguise. She met Col. Sproat, son of the tavern family for whom she had worked, but he did not recognize her. She saw George Washington and Lafayette, and enjoyed quoting them in later years. At Yorktown she was wounded again, but the surgeon agreed to keep her secret. Her last assignment was as aide-de-camp to General Patterson, and she lived with his family. In Philadelphia she was hospitalized with fever, and identity was discovered. The doctor wrote to both Gen. Washington and Gen. Patterson. And so she was honorably discharged in 1783.

Back home in Middleboro, her neighbors were shocked by her exploits and didn't know how to treat her. The church voted to "withdraw fellowship" for the unseemly behavior of wearing men's clothing! She moved to Stoughton, using the name Ephraim Sampson, and supported herself doing farm work and spinning. In 1784 she resumed the role of a woman and married Benjamin Gannet. He was a farmer in Sharon. They had three children, one boy and two girls. Deborah received a small pension by a special act of Congress, and an invalid bonus of $100 from Massachusetts. Her war wounds bothered her the rest of her life. Eventually, the story of her adventures was published, and that led to an offer to make a lecture tour through New England and New York, starting with an appearance in Boston. Thus she became the first woman to tour as a professional lecturer.

Deborah died in 1827 at the age of 68. Her husband was the only person to receive a war-widower's pension. She continues to be remembered whenever the Revolution is celebrated. Her picture was put on a medal issued to commemorate the Declaration of Independence. In 1944, a Liberty Ship was named the *Deborah Sampson Gannet.* The Congressional Committee on Pensions said of her, "the whole history of the American Revolution records no case like this, and furnishes no other similar example of female heroism, fidelity, and courage."

We have been able to single out only a few of our best-known patriots to mention in this article, but the flags in our cemeteries testify that there were many other soldiers who served in the Continental Army. And behind these soldiers were many, many more who contributed to their town and country in other ways. There were politicians who organized a free government; there were sailors who brought in supplies; there were the minutemen who stayed at home to raise the food and horses and to fight when needed; and there were the women and children who sent their men to war and carried on the home life and formed the workforce in mills and on the farms. The American Revolution was a war that involved everybody.

Eventually (1915), the Nemasket Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution gave our town an appropriate memorial — a fieldstone boulder with a placque to be placed on the Town House lawn. The message reads: "This boulder is dedicated to the memory of the men of Middleboro who as soldiers or patriots served their country in the war for American Independence."

The next issue of the *Middleborough Anitquarian* will appear in early September.

Deadline for the submission of manuscripts: July 20, 1988.

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An Old-Time Concert

MEMBERS OF THE Middleborough Historical Association recreate a scene from the past during a concert held on April 11, 1934. Front row, left to right, Flora Porter, unidentified, Ruth Wood, Alice Cunningham, Edith Gates, Mertie Whitbeck Romaine, Rose Pratt, Lottie Tinkham; second row, William Crapo, Henry Burkland, Hughie Rogers, George Thomas (sitting); third row, Wirt B. Phillips, Doris Chase, Dorothy Johnston, Susie Thomas, Madeline Crossley, unidentified, Henrietta Burkland, two children unidentified; back row, unidentified, J. Stearns Cushing, Ernest Pratt, Theodore N. Wood, unidentified. (From the collection of the late Mr. and Mrs. Henry B. Burkland)

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A Message from the Editor

In this age of "disposable" everything, one is inclined to respect anything with a 30-year history. Add an association with a highly respected citizen of the community, and success is virtually guaranteed.

If that is truly the case, The Middleborough Antiquarian has an awful lot going for it as it begins its fourth decade of publication. Founded by Lawrence B. Romaine and edited for many years by his wife, Mertie E. Romaine, the Antiquarian has a long and distinguished history, and its pages are filled with the words of local historians and history buffs who cared deeply about this town and its past, saw the importance of recording its history and wanted to share its stories and traditions with the next generation.

The advantage to all this is that we begin a new chapter in the Antiquarian's life with the knowledge that those who have gone before have earned the publication an excellent reputation. The disadvantage, of course, is that we have to live up to it. In that effort, we hope to have the assistance of our readers, members of the association, and past contributors. We invite comments and suggestions from readers, encourage members of the association to offer advice and ideas, and welcome past and prospective contributors to come forward.

In this issue of the Antiquarian, we cover a variety of subjects ranging from Middleboro's flirtation with the Progressive Party to the types of lighting used by our ancestors. The connection between past and present is made in an article on the historic Leonard-Hall house, which is about to become the headquarters for the town-owned Pratt Farm conservation area. Our "editor emeritus," Mrs. Romaine, is mentioned in an article about her father, written by Association President Robert M. Beals.

Following this "double" issue of the Antiquarian, which is being published as such due to technical difficulties which prevented the publication of a fall issue, the publication will return to its quarterly schedule. The next issue will be published early this summer.

"By the way," there is another connection between present and past in this issue of the Antiquarian. My colleague, *Gazette* columnist Clint Clark, was the editor of the first issue of this publication and has since been a regular contributor. Following in his footsteps, and those of Mrs. Romaine, is a pleasure and an honor.

Jane Lopes
Editor

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Jane C. Lopes ..... Editor

An Enigma and a Rebirth

By Janet Griffith

"Brick houses were not common in Middleborough during the early years of the 19th century," wrote Susan Ceccacci, a consultant hired by Arthur Chase, a principal in Middleborough Park at 495.

Yet there it was, sitting at Middleborough Park's proposed entrance on Rte. 18 – a circa 1820 building whose first floor was entirely made of brick. Not only was the main entrance to the house through this brick facade, but inside was a full-sized beehive oven, another indication that this was not an ordinary Middleboro home of the 19th century.

"The reason for the use of brick for the main facade is not easily explained," Ms Ceccacci wrote. "It may be a structural anomaly, perhaps related only to its situation on a hillside. It could also indicate that the ground floor may have originally been used for some commercial purpose. The house is said, according to local tradition, but undocumented, to have been a stage coach way-station on the New Bedford and Bridgewater Turnpike (Bedford Street) which passed in front of it. Nothing is presently known about the architecture typical of way stations. There are buildings along the old stage route (Route 2) in the Charlemont, Massachusetts area, none of which have yet been documented as having been way stations, which similarly have brick ground floors and wooden upper floors."

The Middleboro Historical Commission went on to search for documented proof that the house was a way-station or toll gate for the Turnpike. Interestingly enough, Anita Cole turned up an old postcard bearing the inscription, "Perez Leonard House 1803."

As a result of articles written in The Middleboro Gazette, Mrs. Fuller of the Lakeville Historical Commission offered to search the deeds at the Plymouth Registry. Another of their members called periodically to report on the conditions and activities at the site. Everyone seemed interested in our project to save the old place.

THE PEOPLE

Taunton's town records reveal that brothers James and Henry Leonard were given permission to set up a bloomery at Two Mile River in 1652. It is claimed to be the first successful iron works in the United States, Saugus having failed. The Halls were among the first families of Taunton, George being a proprietor and clerk of the bloomery. The Leonards inter-married with the Halls for many generations.

Caleb B. Hall [5], (James [4], James [3], John [2], George [1]) (1764 – 1845), married Betsey Leonard (1775 – 1833), daughter of Perez Leonard and Elizabeth Eaton of N. Middleborough. Caleb B. Jr. (1800 – 1876) was born in Taunton and married Lydia Leonard of Middleborough, where they lived on a farm inherited through his mother, Betsy Leonard, and grandmother Elizabeth Eaton Leonard.

Jonathan L. Hall eventually inherited the 30-acre farm. The 1879 map of Middleborough shows his widow, Mrs. J. Hall, living there. In 1900, she and the other siblings of Jonathan sold, for $800, the 30 acres, with the buildings, to Leonard Lewis. "L. Lewis," is listed as having owned the house in 1903.

Perez Leonard was descended from James and Henry Leonard. His mother was Joanna Tobey Spooner. His father married a second time, Lucy Pratt Turner. The Pratts and Leonards had established a forge on Trout Brook in Middleborough in 1700. At this same time, Col. Thomas Leonard operated a forge where the Tack Factory was later built. By

1819, the Leonard, Pratt iron business had grown and they removed to Wareham where they owned a forge and bloomery. The firm was later known as The Wareham Iron Company.

Perez Leonard married first Silence Alden, secondly, Elizabeth, daughter of Barnabas Eaton, who owned the Eaton Tavern in N. Middleborough along the old Turnpike. Barnabas was the grandson of the Rev. Samuel Fuller, Francis Eaton, and Martha Billington.

Elizabeth (Eaton) Leonard, widow of Perez, sold to Caleb B. Hall, Sr. a certain parcel of Fresh Meadow bounded on the south by her brother-in-law David Weston's land, north and west by Seth Eaton's land, and on the east by Purchade Brook containing four acres.

In 1828, Caleb bought four acres, 20 rods from David Richmond of Middleborough bounded by Deacon Benjamin Richmond's land.

After Betsey Leonard died in 1833, Caleb and his brothers signed off the rights to the Middleborough place. The four acres, 20 rods, he bought from David Richmond for $42 on Purgatory Road, so-called, was sold back to Richmond for the same price.

Caleb, Jr. sold for $100 to Thomas Washburn, 1/6 part of the farm on which he lived containing 40 acres with buildings thereon, being the right which fell to him by his mother and bounded on the west by the Turnpike Road, northerly by a road, northerly and easterly formerly belonging to the heirs of Solomon Eaton, southerly by land of Daniel Eaton.

PURCHADE

Across from the end of Clay Street is a cartway through the land once owned by Thomas Washburn (Walling's 1855 map of Middleborough). It leads to a place along Purchade Brook called "The Old City" where several small houses for the workers were situated. Calvin and Levy Murdock manufactured brick here in the late 1700s and early 1800s. They later sold their enterprise to George Sampson. Also located on Purchade Brook was a puddling mill where iron "pigs" were brought from the Taunton works and melted down to make shovels and hollow ware.

The descendants of Mayflower passenger Francis Eaton owned most of the land in Purchade. However, in the early 1800s, James Leonard owned most of the land north of Centre Street, some of which he gave to the Central Baptist Society for a burial place. The Eaton Cemetery is located on Old Centre Street behind the house where Sarah Dennis White lived. Across from this house is a road that goes into the woods to the puddling mill. This road continues through the woods to Everett Street, making its exit opposite the Richard Sampson house.

It's no wonder that, with the fires of the forge shooting skyward, sparks from the melting of iron, hammering of metal, and smoke from the smoldering bricks and charcoal curling forth, one of the many roads leading to industrious Purcha was referred to as "Purgatory Road."

TAVERNS AND TOLLGATES

The Jewett Place, "approached by a circular drive" stood on the corner of Longpoint Road and the Turnpike. This house was a toll gate. At the following intersection, at Highland Road, was Sampson's Tavern and toll gate.

Not far away at the junction of what is now Rts. 18 and 105, was the official beginning of the New Bedford-Boston Turnpike. There stood the Washburn house, built in 1803 by James Washburn, first postmaster of Middleborough. This place was later known as the King Phillip Tavern, which burned to the ground in 1918.

At the intersection of Bedford Street and Rhode Island Road, (Rte. 79), stood another large house in the Haskins neighborhood, where *Weston's History* tells of a tavern in that section. The house has since been torn down.

Next, on the southeastern corner of Taunton Avenue, the Zebulon Leonard house stands. Mrs. Vigers' *Lakeville History* calls this house "The Old Henry Pratt House," and it was used as a stagecoach stop. The present owner confirmed this when he reportedly found shelves and an old tavern sign behind a partition in the barn. The Leonard-Hall House is situated on the southeastern corner of an important Colonial roadway and was approached by a circular drive. Close by was the Solomon Eaton Tavern, near the corner of Plymouth Street. This pl was also operated as a toll gate which stopped traffic before going over the bridge into Bridgewater.

If the Leonard-Hall House was not a toll gate, it was the only house which stood at an intersection along the Turnpike which did not collect tolls. As on the toll roads of today, it would seem that no entrance nor exit could be gained to the New Bedford-Boston Turnpike without proceeding through a toll gate.

As a result of all the local interest in the house, it was not demolished, as was originally planned, to make way for development. Mr. Chase arranged for the building to be moved to a town-owned piece of land on Wood Street, and donated $10,000 toward its restoration. The town made a matching contribution, and a committee was formed to find a use for the house, which has been altered a great deal over the years, but which has much of its original interior woodwork and details.

The Leonard House Committee, working with the Pratt Farm Committee and the Conservation Commission, plans to have the house moved up the street to the Pratt Farm, where it will serve as a headquarters for the town-owned conservation area, a nature center and a meeting place for the Conservation Commission, Historical Commission and other town boards. The house will be placed roughly on the foundation of the farmhouse which once stood on the Pratt Farm.

Janet Griffith, an authority on local history, is the form chairman of the Middleboro Historical Commissioner.

The Hats Were In the Ring:
Bull Moose Progressivism in Middleboro and the Nation

By Michael Maddigan

Though progressive Republicanism was never as influential along the East Coast as it was in the West and Midwest, it did create an enormous pull on sympathies of Middleboro voters. At the start of this century, as many of the state's urban voters began taking to the Democratic Party, many rural communities in southeastern Massachusetts, including Middleboro, began developing a progressive Republican bent. The high water mark of progressive Republicanism in Middleboro was the brief period of 1912-13. During that time, the Progressive (Bull Moose) Party, under the aegis of Theodore Roosevelt, exerted a tremendous impact upon the political life of both the town and the nation. The 1912 presidential campaign brought both Roosevelt and President William Howard Taft to Middleboro in a clash of progressive and conservative Republicanism. The 1914 elections, however, sounded the death knell for Bull Moose Progressivism in Middleboro as previously disaffected progressive Republicans returned to the fold of a liberalizing Republican Party or joined the ranks of the burgeoning Democratic Party.

Bull Moose Progressivism, itself, was an indirect consequence of a political maneuver made by Roosevelt. Following election to the White House in his own right in November, 1904,the progressive Roosevelt renounced a third term for himself as president in the "bully pulpit," though this did not prevent him from personally hand-picking his successor – Secretary of War William Howard Taft. Despite a year-long African safari with his son Kermit followed by a triumphal European tour, Roosevelt could not arrest the presidential itch and by February, 1912, considering Taft disloyal to the cause of progressive Republicanism, Roosevelt declared, "My hat is in the ring" for a third presidential term.

Vying with Roosevelt for the Republican bid were progressive Wisconsin Senator Robert "Battle Bob" La Follette, who sought to deprive Roosevelt of the mantle of progressive Republicanism, and President Taft, candidate of the conservative or "stand pat" Republicans. La Follette virtually disqualified himself at the beginning of February with a rambling and incoherent speech, a consequence of overwork, while Taft had his own drawbacks. Taft's tendency to fall asleep in public (once, as a front row mourner, he drifted off at a funeral to the utter horror of his military aide, Archie Butt), his obvious corpulence, his heavy reliance upon arch-conservative Speaker of the House "Uncle Joe" Cannon of Massachusetts and his responsibility for the loss of the House Republican majority in the 1910 election were all detriments to the Taft campaign. Nor did it help that the president self-deprecatingly referred to himself as both a "cornered rat" and a "straw man" in the campaign.

In contrast, the dynamic T. R. was enormously popular with the rank and file Republican voters and he hoped to win numerous delegates in the 13 presidential primaries, 1912 being the maiden year of the primary system. The Massachusetts primary was scheduled for Tuesday, April 30, and both Roosevelt and Taft spent much time in the commonwealth posturing for the event.

On Friday evening, April 26, President Taft gave a major address in Boston which left him physically and emotionally exhausted. Taft told the Boston audience, "I do not want to fight Theodore Roosevelt, but sometimes a man in a corner fights. I am going to fight." At Boston, Taft raised the third term issue, concerned that Colonel Roosevelt "should not have as many terms as his natural life will permit." Ironically, it was just this issue which was responsible for a foiled assassination attempt of Roosevelt by a disgruntled New York bartender in October in Milwaukee.

Roosevelt was the first of the two contenders to speak in Middleboro, arriving April 27, three days before the primary. Roosevelt's stop in Middleboro was part of his second trip to New England since the beginning of April. Interrupting the New England tour was a side journey to Kansas and Nebraska which nearly cost T. R.'s voice, so strenuous were the speaking engagements. Because of the strain of the tour, Roosevelt knew it would be futile to mount a full-scale railroad car campaign when he returned to New England at the end of April. "It is folly to try to make me continue a car-tail campaign," he said.

Consequently, Roosevelt scheduled appearances only at Fall River, New Bedford and Boston for the morning and evening of the 27th. Due to the efforts of the local Roosevelt Club, however, the itinerary was altered to include brief stops in Brockton, Middleboro and Taunton.

Arriving from Brockton one hour before the scheduled arrival time of 12:30, Roosevelt's motorcade of nearly 12 autos dressed with streamers and enormous Roosevelt placards, came to a halt at the Station Street depot. Roosevelt addressed the crowd of approximately 1,500 from his auto.

Frustrating the Colonel's initial attempts to speak, several motors remained annoyingly running, whereupon Roosevelt protested, asserting, "I cannot talk against the hum of industry." He continued:

> It is a pleasure to be in Massachusetts and to ask your support in as clean drawn a fight between the people and the professional politicians as there ever was in history. We who fight as progressive Republicans fight more than a factional or party fight. The people have a right to rule themselves, to bring justice, social and industrial, to all in this nation. I want justice for the big and little man alike, with special privilege to none. I am glad to see you

Upon the conclusion of the Colonel's remarks, the motorcade began to proceed, but was impeded by the crowd, surging towards Roosevelt, anxious to shake his hand.

and to fight your fight. Put through next Tuesday in Massachusetts what Illinois and Pennsylvania have done (T. R. swept both of those states' primaries).

...I ask Massachusetts to support us in this campaign, not because it is easy, but because it is hard. I appeal to you because this is the only kind of fight worth getting into, the kind of fight where the victory is worth winning and where the struggle is difficult. Here in Massachusetts, as elsewhere, we have against us the enormous preponderance of the forces that win victory in ordinary political contests.

Upon the conclusion of the Colonel's remarks, the motorcade began to proceed, but was impeded by the crowd, surging towards Roosevelt, anxious to shake his hand. The *Gazette* reported "for a minute it appeared that an accident could not be averted." Fortunately, no such accident occurred.

Because Roosevelt had not been anticipated to arrive until after noon, workers from the George E. Keith Company shoe plant on Sumner Avenue had only begun trekking over the Centre Street railroad bridge at noon when they came upon the departing hero, who graciously stopped and shook nearly 100 hands. Roosevelt then departed for Taunton, escorted by Spanish-American War veterans and Mayor Fish of the city.

Two days later, on Monday, April 29, one day before the primary, President Taft arrived in a special train in Middleboro at 12:30 to speak before a crowd estimated at 2,000. It is extremely doubtful that Taft would have stopped in town had it not been for Roosevelt's presence a few days earlier. Despite the large crowd, the president was, according to the *Gazette*, "rather coolly received, there being but a faint cheer." Taft was introduced to the crowd by Town Republican Committee Chairman George W. Stetson. Still reeling from an address made by Roosevelt on April 3 in Louisville, Kentucky, making much of the Republican bosses' support for Taft, the president was clearly on the defensive in Middleboro:

Ladies and Gentlemen. I am very sorry to take up your time to listen to a voice nearly gone. I come here from a strong sense of duty. It does not make any real difference to me whether I am re-elected President or not so far as my comfort and happiness and reputation are concerned. I fancy, after having had three years' experience in the Presidency, I could find softer and easier places than that, and I am willing to trust to the future for vindication of my name from the aspersions upon it... (but) if I permit attacks unfounded upon me, I go back on those whom I am leading in that cause (of progress).

Therefore, I have come here, I cannot help it, and I have got to look into your eyes and tell you the truth as near as know it.

It is said that all the bosses are supporting me. I deny it. Mr. Roosevelt and I are exactly alike in certain respects, a good deal of human nature in both of us and when we are running for office we do not examine the clothes or the hair or previous condition of anybody that tenders support. But the only way by which he can make true the statement that all the bosses are supporting me and none of the bosses are supporting him but are opposed to him is to give a new definition to "bosses" and that is that every man in politics that is against him is a boss and every man that is for him is a leader.

Following the speech, the train left for Boston amidst cheers as Taft waved a flag. One ironic side note to the Middleboro speech did not bode well for Taft. Upon Taft's arrival, a local man decided to welcome the president with a cheer. "Three cheers for Ted Roosevelt!," he cried. Realizing his gaffe, he quickly corrected himself, "I mean President Taft." Taft, within earshot, remained unruffled. Smiling, he told the would-be cheerleader in his stentorian tone, "Don't make that mistake tomorrow."

Apparently, many Middleboro voters did make just that "mistake," for the primary vote in Middleboro heavily favored Roosevelt. The primary was called to order promptly at 6 a. by clerk Chester E. Weston and "voting was immediately in order." Of 635 Middleboro Republicans voting, 406 gave their preferential vote to Roosevelt, 184 to Taft and a dismal 5 to La Follette. The town also voted nearly 3-1 for the slate of Roosevelt delegates.

Of all 13 primaries, the Massachusetts contest witnessed the closest race between Roosevelt and Taft. Taft took 86,722 Massachusetts votes, followed by Roosevelt's 83,099 and La Follette's 2,058.

The popular vote notwithstanding, the Massachusetts outcome was indecisive for, though Taft won the preferential by slightly more than 3,500 (technically making him the victor), Roosevelt's slate of 8 at-large delegates trounced Taft's slate by some 8,000 votes. Roosevelt, perhaps a little disparagingly, wrote his friend, Senator Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts: "Well, isn't the outcome in Massachusetts comic? Apparently there were about 80,000 people who preferred Taft, about 80,000 who preferred me and from three to five thousand who, in an involved way, thought they would vote both for Taft and me!"

The final primary was held the first week of June. Of the 13, Roosevelt won nine, losing Wisconsin and North Dakota to La Follette and his native New York and Massachusetts to Taft. As a consequence, Roosevelt received 278 delegates, Taft 48 and La Follette 36.

Because of his victory in the primaries, Roosevelt could joke about the skewed Massachusetts results, but the Massachusetts outcome would cause further clamor at the Republican con-

"The Massachusetts delegation would shout: "Massachusetts 18! Massachusetts 18! Roosevelt first, last and all the time!"

vention held in Chicago, June 18-22. At Chicago, Taft hoped his control of the National Committee and the southern delegations (whose states did not hold primaries) would offset Roosevelt's popularity.

The first order of convention business was to elect a temporary chairman and the Massachusetts delegation split evenly between Taft-backed Elihu Root and Wisconsin Governor Francis E. McGovern, whose backing by Roosevelt was a concession to appease the La Follette forces. Root squeaked by, 558-501, with the vote of each delegate being taken individually. The close vote set the tone for the remainder of the convention, which the Taft forces intended to dominate by denying Roosevelt's disputation of the credentials of some 250 Taft delegates, and which the Roosevelt forces were determined to keep in turmoil.

During the frequent lulls in convention activity, the New Jersey delegation would rise on cue and begin cheering for Roosevelt. T. R.'s young cousin Nicholas Roosevelt would later recall how the New Jersey delegation would generally be followed by the Massachusetts delegation which, in a cheer led by historian and Harvard professor Albert Bushnell Hart, would shout: "Massachusetts 18! Massachusetts 18! Massachusetts 18! Roosevelt first, last and all the time!" (the 18 referring to the state's number of electoral votes).

On Saturday, June 22, nominating began with Taft being nominated by fellow Ohioan Warren G. Harding who, by calling Taft "the greatest progressive of the age," must surely have made Roosevelt apoplectic. The only other name place in nomination was that of La Follette.

Though most Roosevelt delegates abstained from voting at the direction of Roosevelt, there were no serious problems until the vote of the Massachusetts delegation was called. The chairman of the delegation responded that the Commonwealth "casts all 18 votes for Taft with 18 abstentions." When the tally was questioned, a roll of the individual Massachusetts delegates was called, the first being Frederick Fosdick, pledged to Roosevelt.

Fosdick: Present, but I refuse to vote. (cheering)

Root (silencing the crowd and leaning from the platform): You have been sent here by your state to vote. If you refuse to do your duty, your alternate will be called upon.

Fosdick: No man on God's earth can make me vote in this convention.

Root then made good his threat and called upon Fosdick's alternate who, due to the contradictory primary results in Massachusetts, happened to be a Taft man. Root continued through the Massachusetts delegation, calling each alternate, whereby Taft succeeded in gaining two votes.

Though the convention was not stopped following the interruption, Roosevelt was livid over the Massachusetts outcome. In the July 6 issue of *The Outlook*, an irate T. R. labelled his former friend and Secretary of State Root a "modern Autolycus, the snapper-up of unconsidered trifles" who "publicly raped at the last moment (two delegates) from Massachusetts."

Roosevelt refused to consider a compromise candidate such as associate Supreme Court Justice Charles Evans Hughes (who would lose to Wilson in 1916) or Missouri Governor Herbert S. Hadley. Said Roosevelt: "I'll name the compromise candidate. He'll be me. I'll name the compromise platform. It will be our platform." Subsequently, Taft won the nomination with 561 votes to Roosevelt's 107, La Follette's 41, Iowa Senator Cummins' 17 and Hughes' 2. However, 344 Roosevelt delegates had abstained from voting.

A week later, the Democratic National Convention was convened in Baltimore and today is notable for being as inharmonious as the Republican Convention of the previous week. In contention for the nomination were House Speaker "Champ" Clark of Missouri, New Jersey reform Governor Woodrow Wilson, Senator Judson Harmon of Ohio and House Majority Leader Oscar Underwood of Alabama. Later in the balloting, the name of Massachusetts Governor Eugene N. Foss, to whom the majority of Massachusetts delegates were pledged, was put forth, but the momentum had already begun to swing towards Wilson, who waselected on the 46th ballot. The selection of Wilson relieved many delegates who had from the start been opposed to Clark, embarrassed by his testimonial for Electric Bitters: "It seemed that all the organs in my body were out of order, but three bottles of Electric Bitters made me all right."

The following month, Roosevelt formally bolted the Republican Party to form the Progressive (Bull Moose) Party which took its nickname from the Colonel's statement that he was "as fit as a bull moose." The Progressive platform called for workmen's compensation, minimum wages for women, the establishment of a federal regulatory commission in industry and the prohibition of child labor. The party was financed, in part, by George W. Perkins, a partner in the House of Morgan, who became known as the "Dough Moose." Taft, too, had financial difficulties. When the Republican National Committee made it known that it once again expected the President's elder half-brother Charley to pick up the tab, Charley Taft protested, "I am not made of money!"

When it was suggested that Taft and Roosevelt cooperate to prevent a Democratic victory, T. R. responded, "I hold that Mr. Taft stole the nomination, and I do not feel like arbitrating with a pickpocket as to whether or not he shall keep my watch."

The 1912 presidential election in Middleboro was basically a repetition of the primary. Though Roosevelt won Middleboro, he lost the state to Wilson. Of 1,358 votes in Middleboro's

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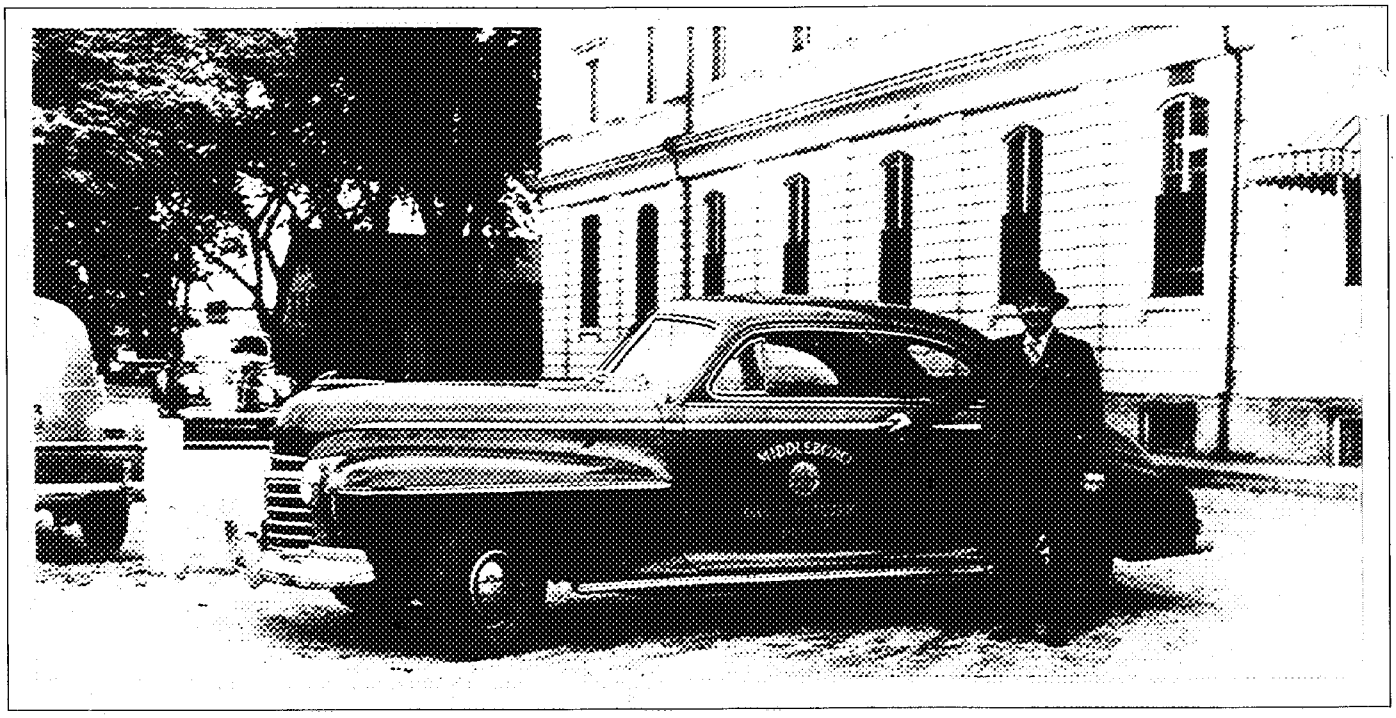


STANDING BESIDE his official "G&E" car, a 1941 Oldsmobile coupe, is George Philbrook, father of Middleboro historian Mertie Romaine and the town's fire chief as well as the "key man" in the Gas and Electric Department.

"A Good Man, A Great Asset"

By Robert M. Beals
President, Middleborough Historical Association

On June 7, 1944, 400 people, representing 42 communities, tendered George A. Philbrook a reception and banquet to honor his 50 years of service to the town of Middleboro. Warm and heartfelt praise was given in full measure to him as a faithful servant of the community, as a friend, as a good neighbor, and as a father with whom it was a "singular happy and tranquil experience to live," according to his daughter, Mertie E. (Whitbeck) Romaine.

The event was held in the auditorium of the Town Hall. George A. Philbrook had served those many years as the "key man" in the gas and electric service, 36 years in the fire department, of which eight were served as chief, and superintendent of its fire alarm system.

He was born in Woburn, Massachusetts on April 3, 1870, the son of William H. and Mary (Wentworth) Philbrook. After graduating from public school, he entered the employ of the Thomson-Houston Company (now General Electric) of Lynn. He spent about one year with the Narragansett Electric Light Co. of Providence, Rhode Island, and then returned to the Thomson-Houston Co. On Memorial Day, 1894, he came to Middleboro to be interviewed by John N. Main, the first manager of the municipal electric plant. Mr. Philbrook took charge of the power station on June 4, 1894 and held the position of superintendent and manager of the gas and electric plant until his passing in 1945.

Not many people of our day would be so dedicated to their jobs that they would work for over 50 years without ever taking a vacation. It is also to be said that this man never assigned a job to anyone that he was not willing to do himself.

In 1913, Mr. Philbrook purchased property on South Main Street near the corner of East Grove Street from Judge Dennis D. Sullivan. The house had been built in 1855 by Captain John M. Soule. Mrs. Romaine lived in the house for several years after her father's death on November 10, 1945.

As mentioned before, George Philbrook was connected with the fire department for 36 years, beginning when he joined the old Hose Co. No. 6. In 1915, he was appointed assistant chief of the department, and in 1929, became chief engineer when he succeeded Carlton W. Maxim. His duties with the department included the superintendency of the fire alarm system. I recall back in the mid-1930s when I lived at 14 East Grove St. My bedroom window looked out over some of the backyards of other property on thatstreet to the rear of the Philbrook home. Chief Philbrook drove a white 1934 Buick convertil

(continued on page 15)

Let There Be Light

By Elizabeth J. Snow

The Middleborough Historical Association is indeed fortunate to have among its treasures a most unique exhibit of early lighting devices ranging from clay lamps of the ancient world to gas lights of the early 20th century. Much of this collection was a most generous gift of Mr. and Mrs. Harold Hall.

Among the items of special interest are two clau pan lamps, said to have come from the catacombs in Rome, while another one, purchased in Holland, was used in the first century. There are several rush lights and candle holders. One large iron candle stick was used in the first Catholic "Church" about 1870. The services at that time were held in the P. H. Peirce store on North Main Street.

We can readily see the changes and improvements in the methods of lighting, however slow, in studying this collection. For centuries ways of lighting were primitive and costly. Many references to light are found in the Bible. This passage from Exodus tells us that olive oil was used: "and thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they shall bring the pure olive oil beaten for the light to cause the lamp to burn always."

From ancient times until the first colonists landed on these shores there was but little change in the kinds of lamps available. In England, pan lamps were commonly made of metal instead of clay and we usually see iron ones in museums today.

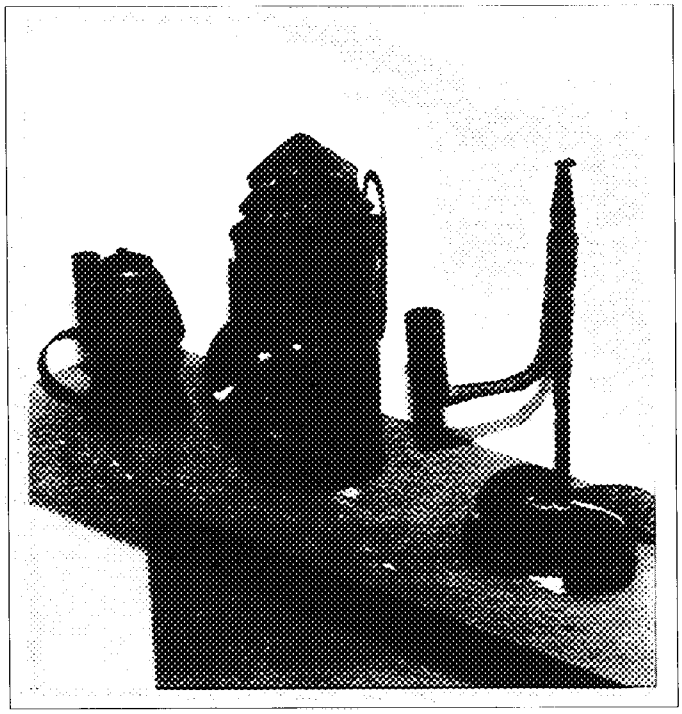
The more primitive type called a crusie was simply a pear-shaped dish with a channel for the wick. Another familiar type is called a "Bette" lamp, possibly so named from the German or Dutch word meaning "better." This had a support for the wick, a cover and a half-curved handle over the top, so that it could be easily carried or hung up.

Wicks were made from moss, weeds, cotton, flax or other burnable fibers, and fuel was whatever anyone could get—grease, fish oil, linseed oil, etc.

Among the records of the Plymouth colony which have been handed down, we find from existing wills and inventories, the following: ten candlesticks of iron, pewter and brass, three lanterns and four lamps of brass, copper and zinc.

When the early settlers built their homes in the place called Middleberry, they depended mainly upon daylight. Even on bright days the houses were rather dark, due to the unpainted walls and window panes, for the most part made of oiled paper. In later years, the oiled paper might be replaced by casement windows with the diamond glass panes.

Besides the light from the fire, pine knots and splints were also used. Higginson, writing in 1630, says, "Our pine trees that are the most plentiful of all wood doth allow us plenty of candles—and they are such candles as the Indians commonly use—they are cloven into slices somewhat thin which are so full of the moisture of turpentine and pitch that they burn as clear as a torch."



EARLY LIGHTING devices included the policeman's lantern, center, which operated on whale oil. At left is a miner's lamp.

William Wood, another early writer, stated, "Out of these pines is gotten the Candlewood, is much spoke of, which may serve as a shift among the poor folks, but I cannot commend it for singular good, because it drippeth a pitchy kind of substance where it stands."

Pine knots provided light by being burned on flat stones set into recesses in the side of the fireplace.

In late summer, rushes were gathered in meadows near brooks and ponds. A similar type of rush would have been familiar to those who came from country places in England, and were gathered on St. Michaelmas Day, the 25th of September.

Juncus effuses, the variety of rush which grew in this area, was found in clumps, having light green stems and an insignificant brownish bloom. If enough of the stem is peeled away the white cotton-like pith inside provides a wick which will soak up grease or oil. After the rush had been soaked it was put away to harden. Rush lights were burned in simple iron holders. Some were made to be set on a table, while others could be hung on a wall. A rush light, two feet in length, when placed in a holder at a 45-degree angle, will burn about 40 minutes. Undoubtedly the saying, "burning your candle at both ends," refers to lighting a rush light at both ends.

The first families to settle in Middleboro were surely aware of using bayberry wax for making candles which were far superior to those made from tallow. Bayberries grew all along the eastern seaboard and the northern variety, known by the Latin name, Myrica Pennsylvanica, grew here in great abundance and were gathered in late summer, probably by the women and children. Before any of the readers go out with the idea of gathering bayberries for a candle-making project, let's look at some statistics. About one and a half quarts of wax will make an eight-inch candle, and you might need four to 15 pounds of berries to yield one pound of wax, which is just a coating over the seeds of the plant and varies in thickness from year to year.

A letter from the late 17th century tells us about candles in very picturesque language when Walt Winthrop wrote to Fitz-John Winthrop in October 1695 saying, "I shall send by them – about twenty-three pounds, which is all I can procure. I know not whether there may be any mixture in it which is not so will discerned by the colour (which is preserved or heightened by melting in a brass kettle and lost in iron) as by the smell of the snuffe of the candle which gives a delicate perfume of itself, but stinks if adulterated."

For many years wicking was made from cotton yarn which was imported, or from twisted flax. Braided wicks came into use in 1825, and not many candle molds were in use until the 1800s.

As time went on there were candle-makers who went from house to house to make up a year's supply of candles for the family.

> Since few people had clocks, public events were announced to be held, "at early candlelight."

Thomas Weston states in his history that bees were kept for wax, as much as for honey, since beeswax was considered superior, and from long tradition had been used for church candles.

One of the old superstitions about candles says, "When the candle burns blue, ghosts walk."

Since few people had clocks, public events like prayer meetings, for example, were announced to be held, "at early candlelight."

We might be astonished at the number of candles that were used during a weekend at Oliver Hall, when before the Revolution, Judge Oliver entertained important guests. Imagine dining with a beautiful chandelier above the table, candlesticks of silver and brass around the room as well as shining sconces, then called candle arms, on the walls.

For 200 years or more candles were probably a better source of light than the many kinds of lamps which gradually came into use. Among those in the museum collection there is a lamp that burned lard oil, a Kelly lamp like one that was used by Florence Nightingale, a small night light called a fairy lamp, a petticoat lamp, an early type used in the transition period between candles and whale oil lamps, a spice warmer, a Sandwich glass whale oil lamp, and an astral lamp. This type was quite an improvement over the others, since the reservoir for oil was in a round flattened shape, it cast no shadow on the table. It had an Argand burner with a circular wick allowing a current of air inside as well as out, so that it burned with a brighter flame. This type of burner was invented about 1823.

> How proud the housewife must have been when she was able to have a kerosene lamp in her home.

How proud the housewife must have been when she was able to have a kerosene lamp in her home. We can picture her in a long dress and bonnet in the Peirce store perhaps, studying the new lamps, and after much deliberation, choosing one for the parlor table.

The tinder box with its bits of rag and pieces of flint and steel for striking a spark, had been relegated to the attic, and even spills were seldom used, since friction matches made lighting the lamps much easier. They had been invented in England in 1827.

These verses by Edgar Guest give us an interesting definition of spills.

Spills

When grate fires kept the room aglow
Against December's biting chill,
My father, often bending low,
Within the flame would light a spill.
"Now what's a spill?" the children ask,
"A roll of paper," I reply,
"And years ago it was my task,
The mantel holder to supply."

His pipe or reading lamp to light
He'd take that little paper roll,
And hold it so it would ignite
When held against a burning coal.
Some matches were expensive then
And mother watched the household bills,
On mantel shelves for smoking men
Was always kept a jar of spills

(continued on page 15)

A Visit From "Mrs. Tom"

To the President and the Board of Trustees
Middleborough Public Library

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Middleborough:
I think that you would be interested
In something that happened to me,
When, at midnight, I went to the Library
To get a forgotten key.
All was calm and serene and quiet
With a peace so deep and profound
That I lingered a while to enjoy it,
When -in the stillness- I heard a sound.
As I turned to see what caused it,
My eyes grew wide with surprise
As a shadowy figure approached me,
One of very diminutive size!
She smiled as she came toward me
And said, "From my picture frame, I've come
(Once a year pictures come to life, you know)
I'm so very happy to know you. I'm Mrs. Tom Thumb!"
She said, "I can only see the reference room
As in my picture frame, I stand,
But I know there have been many changes
And I'd like to see them firsthand."
I invited, "Come look at the stackroom.
We have over 70,000 books, you know,
And observe the new lights between shelving,
You can see even the bottom row."
We stopped and looked at the charge desk
And she worked the charge machine.
She said, "How very much faster
Than the old way that I've seen."
She clapped her hands with great delight
When -using the copy-machine-
I copied a picture of "General Tom"
From the page of a magazine!
Next on our tour was the Children's Room.
"So light and attractive, said she,
And the books, themselves, so different now
With such colorful pictures to see."
She exclaimed over our record collection.
"Over nine hundred strong!"
She listened entranced to our Stereo
As I played her favorite song.
I showed her the cranberry room,
Full of cranberry history and lore.
The only one of its kind to be found
If you search from shore to shore.
She wondered how many books went out.

I said. "Over 95,000 this time."
She gasped at the size of our budget
"I remember when it was $6,000," she chimed.
She spoke of the many young people
Who use the reference hall.
"I like to see them come and go
As I watch from my place on the wall."
"I remember the days when libraries were dark,
Places of silence and gloom.
I like it so much better now
In this bright and cheerful room.
I like the fact that there's music,
It's a busy active hive.
I like to hear the children laugh,
It makes it warm and alive.
Now it's time for me to go
Back to my picture frame.
I thank you for my library tour.
I'm very glad I came.
I like the things you've shown me,
I like the modern ways.
Things are really better than they were
Back in the good old days."
So, Mr. and Mrs. Middleborough,
I felt you should hear the thoughts,
Of this little visitor of yesterday,
On the changes time has wrought.
And when you look at her picture,
As the days and years go by,
Remember the night that we looked around.
Just "Mrs. Tom" and I.

Eleanor E. Tompkins
Librarian
1965 Town Report

Perspective on the Past

By Phyllis Holt—Valedictorian

Middleboro has had its moments in history.

Plymouth boasts a beginning in 1620, but we can outdo even that. Middleboro at that time was a thriving Indian settlement called Nemasket. The name is from the Indian words "nemah," meaning "fish" and "et," meaning "the place of" - "the place of fish."

To us, of course, Middleboro is worthy of special attention, but would you ever believe that it actually led a charmed existence? In 1616, there was a great Indian plague which wiped out whole villages, leaving only death in its wake. Strangely enough, as it approached Middleboro, it parted and continued on its path of death, sparing for the most part the settlement here.

To us, of course, Middleboro is worth of special attention, but would you ever believe it actually led a charmed existence?

The Nemaskets were constantly warring with the Narrangansetts. Once when the Indian fort was guarded by only eight Indians, Narragansetts were spotted creeping about. Showing typical quick-wittedness and sagacity, the eight quickly donned their blankets and weapons, slipped out the back door along the bank, and then boldly walked in the front door of the fort. They repeated this until the foe retreated—afraid to attack such a well-guarded fort.

Those who dared to wander from the Plymouth settlement constituted Middleboro's first settlers. Although the majority were sons and daughters of the 1620ers, we also claimed some two or three of the original Mayflower voyagers.

In 1669, the settlement was incorporated into the town of Middlebury, later to become Middleboro. It is interesting to know that the other Middleboro in the world is located in England, and that letters from both Europe and the South Pacific, addressed to just Middleboro, have reached here safely.

In 1676, one of the bloodiest and most destructive wars in the history of New England broke out. King Philip's War was a conspiracy to wipe out all the white settlements and Middleboro was right in the thick of the plot and the battle. The incident which actually caused the outbreak happened right up here on Assawompset Pond.

There was a Nemasket Indian preacher named John Sassamon who was an apostle of John Eliot. When he learned of Philip's plans, he notified the Plymouth authorities. He was evidently found out, for only a week later his body was found under the ice of Assawompset. The murderers were found to be Indians who were tried and condemned to death by the Plymouth court. This so enraged Philip that he made his attack shortly after.

Middleboro was right in the midst of the attack. Every building was burned. No property was spared. However, the majority of the colonists found refuge in the fort on the river.

The Indians tried to provoke an attack by sending an Indian up near the hand-rock to taunt the whites with insulting words and gestures. The colonists shot him from a distance of 155 rods with a gun 7 feet, 4 1/4 inches long. It was so heavy that they had to rest it on a man's shoulder.

The atrocities during this war were numerous. Both the Indians and whites were offenders. When Philip was killed, the English had him beheaded and had his head erected on a pole in Plymouth where it remained on public exhibition for over 20 years. The Indian who shot him preserved his right hand in rum and collected pennies from its exhibition.

Middleboro, like most places, had its share of characters and famous personalities. One woman named Hannah Reed used to walk to Boston in a day to shop. She was evidently quite rugged, for once a clerk bet that he dared kiss her. He did and was thrown out of the store bodily by the indignant Hannah. The name Hannah must signify size, for another Hannah, Hannah Grossman, carried a muff large enough for a child to crawl through.

One of our most famous people was Deborah Sampson who fought in the Revolutionary War. She secretly wove herself a man's suit and enlisted. Finally, when she was seriously wounded, a doctor found her out. When she donned a dress and revealed her secret to the men with whom she had fought side by side, they were astonished as you can well imagine.

You've all heard of our famous midget Lavinia Warren, better known as Mrs. Tom Thumb, but did you know that Middleboro also had a giant? The Indians told a story of a man of great strength with whom they had many contests. They claimed he was killed during Philip's War. This story was confirmed when a few years ago his remains were found. The skeleton measured 7 feet, 8 inches and a double row of teeth were found in each of his jaws.

Without a doubt Middleboro's past has been eventful as well as picturesque. The first settlers provided a firm foundation upon which we must now build. They have created a past to be proud of and have left the future to us.

Note: This essay was written by Phyllis Holt, Valedictorian of the Class of 1948, Middleboro High School.

Let There Be Light . . .

(continued from page 12)

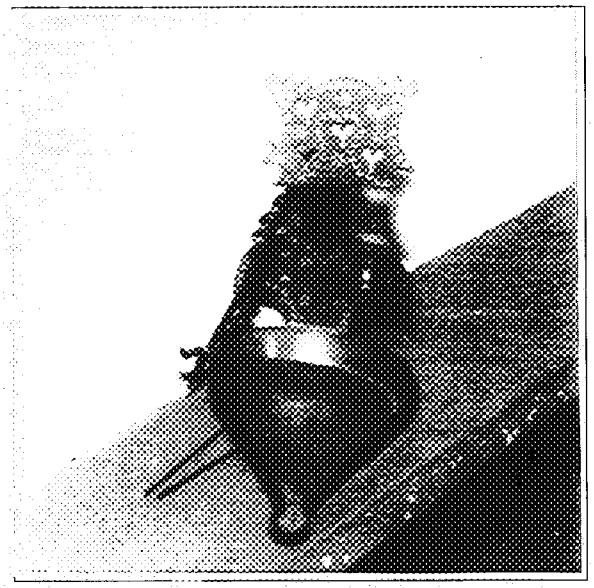
Early street lights were oil lamps on posts, which necessitated having a lamplighter go from light to light with a ladder and torch to brighten the way for evening travelers. My mother used to tell me how, when she was young, she would stand by the window at twilight, watching for the lamplighter.

Gas for the town was manufactured in the early 1800s by John O'Donnell in a building on Pierce Street. In 1868, Nahum Wilbur bought the business and moved to a location on Vine Street.

In 1906, there were about 150 customers using gas, which was said to be of poor quality.

In 1888, a committee consisting of Joseph E. Beals, George Wood and Eugene LeBaron was chosen at the town meeting to look into the possibility of finding a company to "furnish the town with the most and best street lighting." Eventually arc lights were installed and they acted in a most peculiar manner, as they constantly flickered and sputtered. For years, in the interest of saving the town some money, they were not turned on when the moon was bright.

In 1922, a few lights of 600 candle power were put into use on a trial basis and, in 1928, many more were installed. The merchants were so pleased with this great improvement they decided to celebrate. On September 28 there were special window displays, with prizes awarded for the best windows. There was a big parade and the Bay State Band gave a concert at Everett Square. A vaudeville troupe entertained at the Four Corners and the Eastern Star ladies put on a turkey dinner at the Commercial Club for the public officials of Middleboro and several surrounding towns.



THIS ELABORATE lamp is one of dozens in the Middleborough Historical Museum's collection of early lighting devices. The collection includes primitive "crusies," which were pear-sharped dishes holding wicks, all types of candlesticks, and many different types of lanterns.

Thus have we the progress of lighting from the days of rush lights and candles to the Great White Way.

Elizabeth Snow, a resident of Carver, recently co-authored a history of that town. She is a member of the Middleborough Historical Association.

"A Good Man . . ."

(continued from page 10)

that he parked in the driveway to the right of the house. Whenever the fire alarm sounded during the night, I would sit at my window and watch for the chief to respond. In a matter of minutes (sometimes I would time him), he would be out of the house and into his car, lights on, and dash down South Main Street, with the red light attached to the front bumper flashing. This bit of nostalgia brings back many memories for me of the early and mid-1930s.

Mr. Philbrook was one of the first owners of an automobile in Middleboro. His daughter, Mertie E. Romaine, tells us in the "History of the Town of Middleboro, Massachusetts, 1905-1965," of her first automobile ride when she accompanied Carlton W. Maxim and her father on a trip to Myricks early in 1900. The car had no top and only one door in the rear. The road was a rough one, and the two men in front had to keep close watch on their passenger in the the rear so that she would not fall out.

At the banquet honoring his years of service to the town of Middleboro, Speaker Rudolph F. King of the House of Representatives, said, "When I think of George Philbrook's years of unselfish service, I am reminded of all that Massachusetts stands for and has stood for in this nation. Massachusetts has become great because men like George Philbrook have lived and worked within the state."

In closing one might say that he was a good man and a great asset to the Town of Middleboro.

Hats in the Ring . . .

(continued from page 9)

two precincts, Roosevelt received 545 votes; Wilson sneaked into second place with 378 votes ahead of Taft with 360 votes. Roosevelt, however, was unable to carry the state and, in fact, finished third behind Taft. In total, Wilson won 40 states, Roosevelt six and Taft two.

Whether it was favoritism for Roosevelt or a genuine progressive Republican impulse in Middleboro, the town favored Progressive Party candidates in 7 of 13 races on the ballot, giving progressive candidates the town's first vote for president, governor, lieutenant governor secretary of state, state treasurer, 2nd Plymouth District senator (Alvin C. Howes of Middleboro) and Plymouth County commissioner (Lyman P. Thomas of Middleboro).

However, in the long run, progressive Republicanism fared badly, both in Middleboro and the nation as a whole. Though the 1913 elections saw Middleboro give its first place vote to eight progressives in 13 races, it was beginning to lose influence to the Republican Party which began to re-absorb its lost members. In fact, in a three-way race in 1913 for the 7th Plymouth District between Middleboro residents Charles N. Atwood (R), Stephen O'Hara (D) and Lyman P. Thomas (P), Thomas finished third, an indication of progressivism's waning appeal. Running for the same position in 1914, Thomas was the only Progressive candidate on the ballot not to be relegated to a third place finish by the Middleboro voters. In fact, the 1914 elections saw few Progressives run and they even failed to contest the gubernatorial race. Many Bull Moose Progressives not rejoining the Republican Party in 1914 fou solace in such candidates as progressive-minded David .. Walsh, the successful Democratic candidate for governor in 1914 and 1915.

Roosevelt's declination of the 1916 Progressive presidential nomination and his endorsement of fence-straddling Republican candidate Charles Evans Hughes effectively mended the breach between Republicans and Bull Moose Progressives. In the 1916 elections, Middleboro voted overwhelmingly for Hughes, who received 743 votes to Wilson's 476. The Democratic share of the 1916 Middleboro vote, however, was nearly 35% greater that the Democratic share in 1912, while the Republican share was down 12.5% from the combined Republican-Progressive share of 1912, an indication that many Middleboro Bull Moose Progressives had moved to the Democratic Party by 1916.

In a fitting epitaph for Bull Moose Progressivism, Roosevelt wrote James R. Garfield, son of President Garfield and Roosevelt's secretary of the interior: "We have fought the good fight, we have kept the faith and have nothing to regret."

Michael Maddigan, who lives in Middleboro, is currently a graduate student at Syracuse University, where he is concentrating on international studies. A graduate of Stonehill College, he worked for the Middleborough Historical Museum during the summer as a high school student.

MIDDLEBORO HIGH SCHOOL Class of 1922 included, front row, from left, Edna Kelly, Doris Sousa, Alice Robinson Shaw, Dorothy Shurtleff, Polly Stetson Wood, Thelma Weeman McGrady, Florence McGrady Mills, Annie Lewis, Alberta Hathaway; second row, Sally Fillebrown, Mildred McCrillis, Edith Gay Haggerty, Alice Rice Shurtleff, Eloise Phillips, Sarah Boucher, James Dennett, Principal Walter Sampson; third row, Elsie McCarthy, Kathleen Maddigan, Priscilla Churbuck Shurtleff, Marjorie McClusky Hanson, Mary Wood Butler, Arleen Callan, Esther Bryant, Dorothy Ellie Mitchell, Royce Oliver; fourth row, Clyde Turner, James Peck, Sherman Monroe, Percy Churbuck, Sidney Buckman, Milford Dennett, Morrill Ryder. (Photo courtesy of Esther Bryant)

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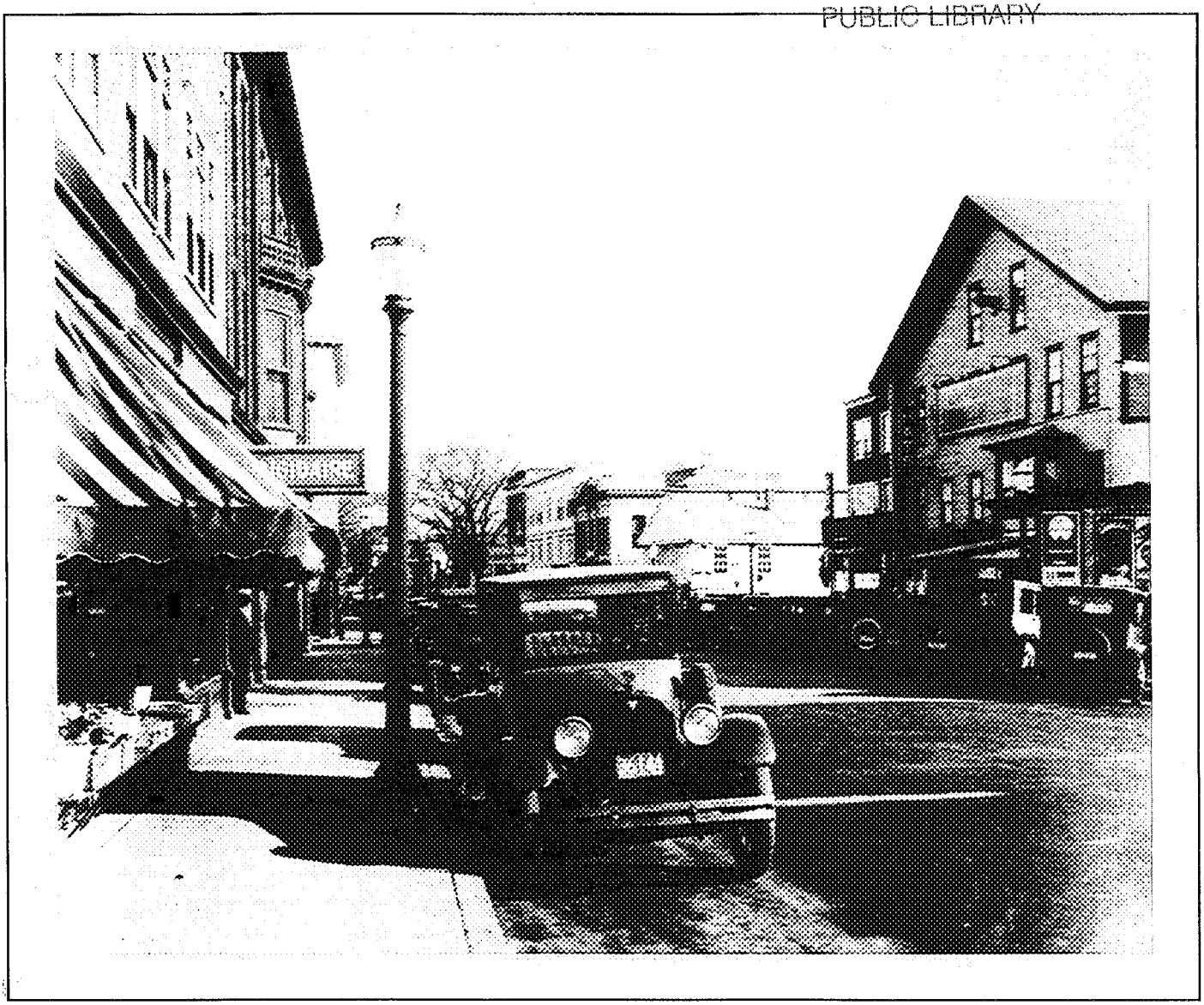

Boom Town

IN ITS HEYDAY, parking was at a premium in downtown Middleboro, as evidenced by this photo of South Main Street, looking toward the Four Corners. Note the diagonal parking. The photograph is undated, but must have been taken sometime after 1928, when new street lights were installed and overhead wires were placed underground.

1889 1989

100th ANNIVERSARY

Personal service is still in style at MTC . . .

Adrianne Ferrigno, Customer Service Representative, with customers: Christina and Joseph Deburgo.

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Middleboro's Family Heirlooms

By Jane Lopes

Remember when you were young, and went to visit your grandparents, perhaps for a week in the summer? Somewhere in the house, either on display or tucked away in attic caves, were scrapbooks filled with family pictures, trunks of clothing and family wedding dresses, heirloom furniture, and portraits of somber-looking ancestors.

Now imagine that some of those ancestors were average citizens, some were quite well-known in the community, and others were famous all over the world, and you have some idea of the contents of the Middleborough Historical Museum, an extended "Grandma's Attic" filled with treasurers whose value, like family heirlooms, is mainly based in memories and associations.

This summer, and the museum's regular operating season, are almost gone, but there is still time to pay a visit to Middleboro's history. The museum is open to the public from 1 to 4, Wednesday through Friday, through the end of August, and the first two Sundays in September. Group tours can also be arranged by calling the museum, 947-1969, during operating hours, or by contacting museum director-curator Marsha Manchester.

MIDDLEBOROUGH ANTIQUARIAN
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VOLUME XXVII 1989 NUMBER 2
Jane C. Lopes ..... Editor

Historical Association Annual Membership

Single	$10.00	Sustaining	$ 50.00
Family	15.00	Benefactor	100.00
Participating	20.00	Life	200.00

Membership includes each issue of Middleborough Antiquarian. Subscriptions $10.00 per year. Single copies $3.50.

Dues and subscriptions—mail to Mrs. Ruth Watt, 15 Oak Street, Middleboro

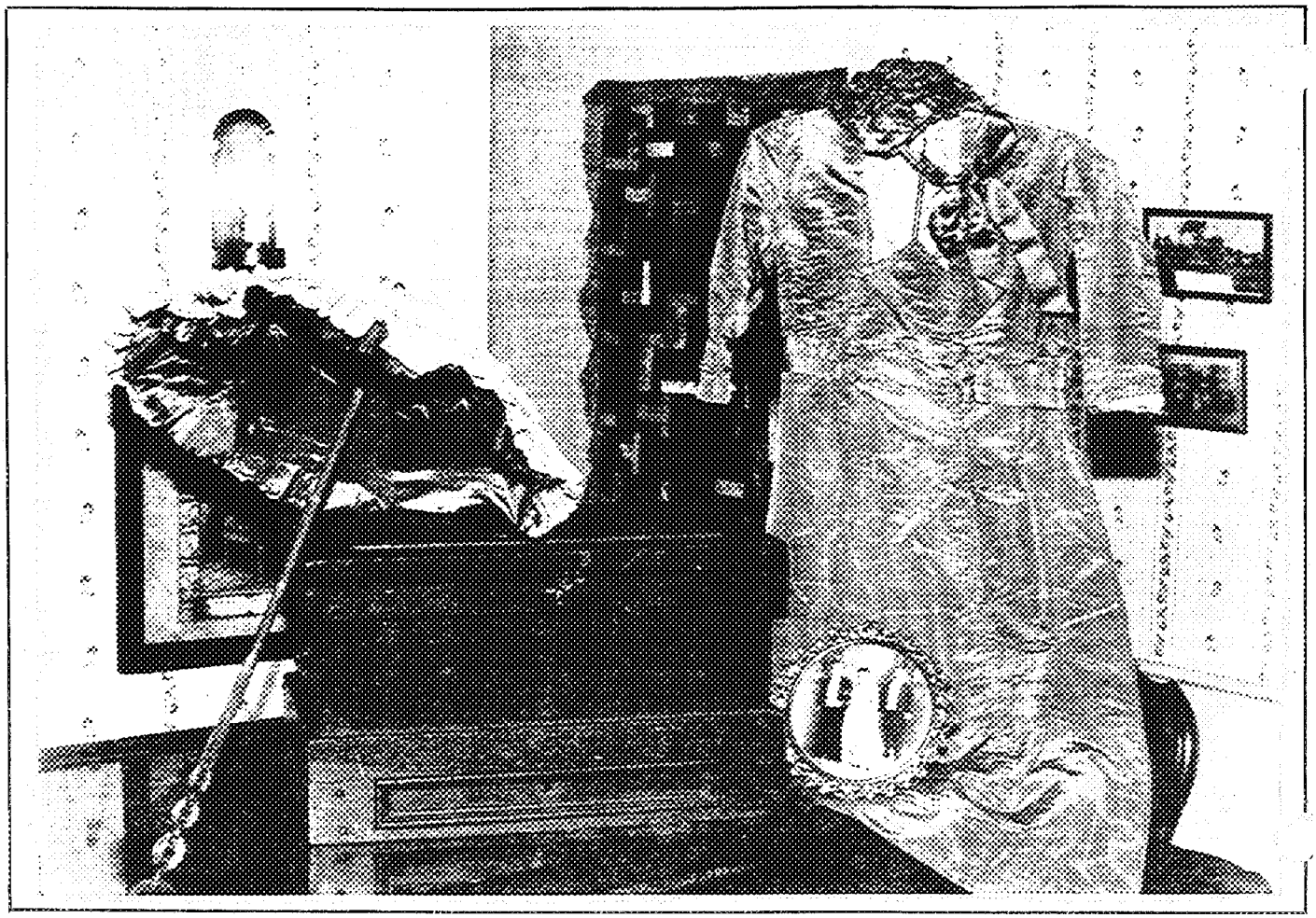
HISTORICAL Association secretary Ruth G. Watt donated a number of items to the museum this summer, including these charming children's outfits dating from the 1880s. Both are hand sewn, made of wool and fully lined. One is red with black trim, and the other is a green, red, blue and black plaid. (Photo by Jane Lopes)

Mrs. Manchester, an antiques dealer for a number of years, has enhanced the museum with her knowledge of antique furniture, clothing and the decorative arts. Pieces in the museum collection which were tucked away in corners have been dusted off and brought out for visitors to see, offering longtime members and newcomers alike something new to admire and study.

In addition, the museum collection has been augmented this summer through the generosity of several donors. Lois Brown of Lee, a great-great-niece of Lavinia Warren, better known as Mrs. Tom Thumb, has donated a handsome mahogany toolbox owned by General Tom Thumb, along with a lovely beige silk parasol and some clothing owned by Lavinia. Some family portraits were included among the contributions relating to Middleboro's famous "Little People."

Some less famous little people once wore the clothing donated to the museum by Middleborough Historical Association secretary Ruth G. Watt. Contributions made to the muse-

(Continued next page)

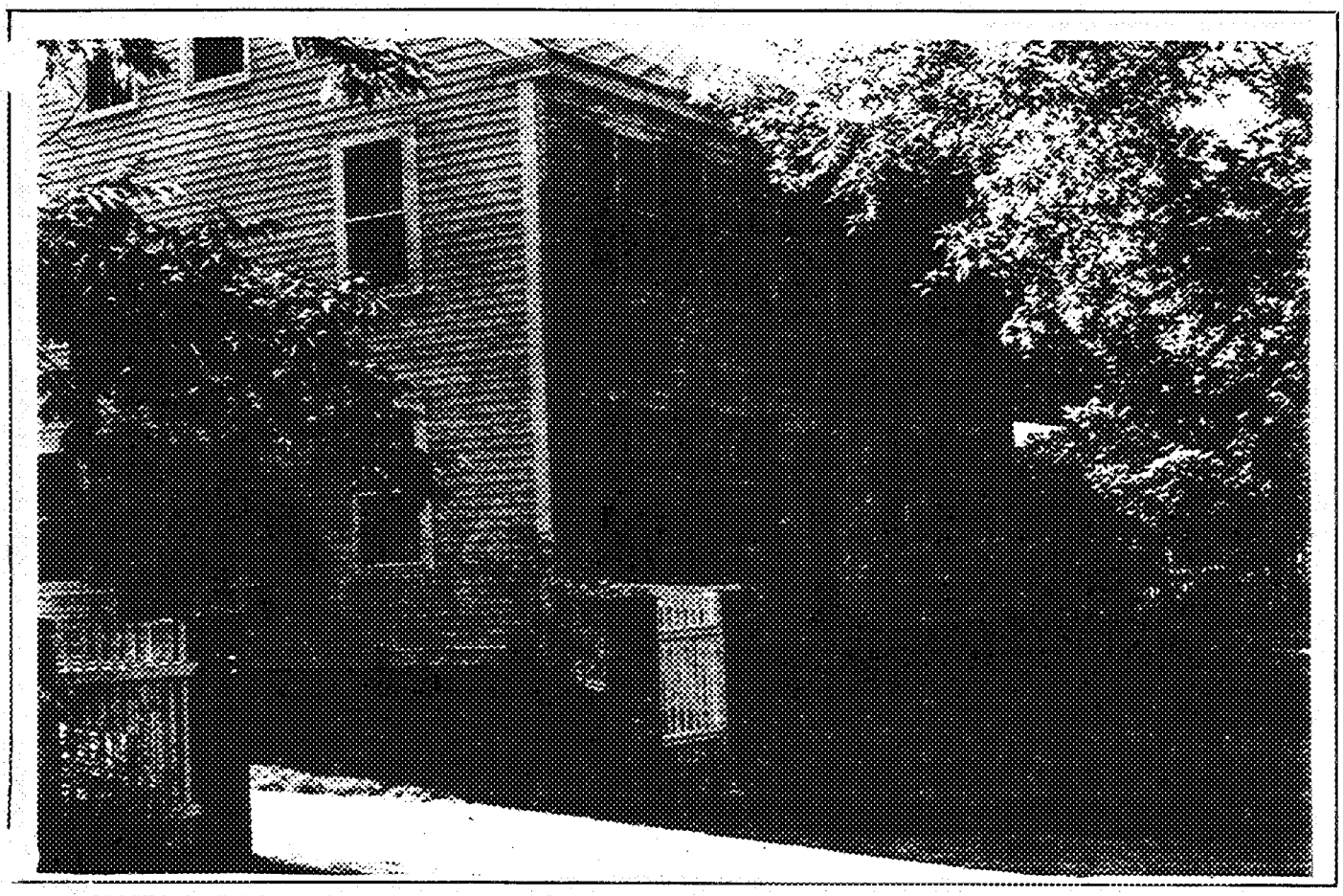


GENERAL TOM THUMB'S toolbox, a parasol and gown owned by Lavinia Warren (Mrs. Tom Thumb), and photographs of the famous "little people" have been donated to the Historical Museum by Lavinia's great-great-niece. The parasol is made of beige silk and silk blend, and has a mother of pearl or seashell handle, while the violet satin gown is trimmed with lace and has a matching cap. (Photo by Jane Lopes)

um by Mrs. Watt include children's clothing dating from the 19th century, a blanket chest, a feather mattress and samplers made by members of the Tillson family of Middleboro.

Since the maintenance of the museum and its collections depends on contributions, a visit to the museum helps to preserve it for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations. Those interested in helping further can join the association for a modest fee which includes a subscription to this magazine, which is published quarterly and contains photographs and articles on Middleboro history.

The family theme extends into this issue of The Antiquarian with an article on the Eddy family of East Middleboro, excerpts from a diary kept by James G. Thompson of North Middleboro, and the late Louise Pratt's memories from her childhood on the Pratt farm. Association members and others are encouraged to share their own family histories, or some interesting item of Middleboro history, with our readers in future issues of the Antiquarian. Manuscripts, story ideas and photographs may be mailed to Jane Lopes, 61 Everett St., Middleboro, MA 02346, or call 947-1760 days, 947-0841 evenings and weekends. All items will be returned at the request of contributors.



JAMES G. THOMPSON wrote entries in his diary from his home on Pleasant Street in North Middleboro. The property is currently owned by Roger and Jean Parent. The granite posts in front of the house were purchased by Mr. Thompson in 1849 and are mentioned in his diary. (Photo by Jane Lopes)

1849 Revisited

By George M. Barden, Jr.

An old diary is a window on the past, giving one a glimpse of the customs and events of a bygone era from the perspective of one who lived contemporaneously with them. The similarities of the daily routine of yesteryear to that of today, as well as the differences between the values and attitudes then and now, can be startling. The diary of James Gardner Thompson, written in 1849, provides such a window. Mr. Thompson filled his diary with local news, business records, a log of the weather, and events of national interest. He also recorded certain information that evidently fell into his version of "Top Secret" classification, using a kind of Indian picture writing of his own invention; the code remains undeciphered to this day and his secret is still intact. Fortunately, most of the diary is written in plain English.

J. G. Thompson, with his wife Anna (Pratt) and children, lived in the house at the southwest corner of Center and Pleasant streets in Titicut. Although he maintained a small farm on the property, several days a week he drove his horse and buggy to the station and took "the cars" to Boston where he kept an office in the morning before starting on a two-day business trip that would take him to Hartford, Springfield, Concord (NH) or Portland and back to Boston; public transportation was evidently as good 140 years ago as it is today. Sundays always found him home in Titicut. A typical entry for Sunday reads:

> "Sunday, May 2. Fair. Went to church all day. Rev. Mr. Colby preached."

The Reverend Philip Colby was the minister of the North Congregational Church in 1849, but on some occasions the preaching would be done by others: Rev. Enoch Pratt of Barnstable, Rev. Brigham, Rev. Roberts, Rev. Sanford, or the Elder Briggs. On one Sunday afternoon:

> at 4-1/2 p.m. at my house Wm. Ramsden and Esther P. Whitcomb were married by me."

Mr. Thompson was a Justice of the Peace, but this is the only instance of his acting in that capacity mentioned in the diary.

Spending so much of his time at his business in Boston, Mr. Thompson found it necessary to get help for the chores around the farm. One of many such entries shows that on:

> "Thursday, Sept. 20. Wind easterly, cool morning.

(Continued on page 12)

Childhood Memories of the Pratt Farm

(The following article was written by Louise Pratt shortly before her death. Miss Pratt recalled her childhood days on the Pratt Farm, now a town-owned conservation area.)

I was born on the Pratt Farm in 1887 to L. Bradford and Sarah L. Pratt. There were three of us, Ernest, Louise and Isabel; I am Louise. The large Georgian homestead, built about 1770, had recently been remodelled from a saltbox in back with the old fireplace and brick oven. My Grandma Pratt had an apartment there. She was Irene Bradford, daughter of Dr. Luther Bradford and Mary Standish of Plympton. She was one of twelve children, so many came to the farm over the years. She died when I was fifteen years old. The farm was ninety-eight acres in those days but my brother Ernest built it up to about two hundred acres.

I just remember the old grist mill by the mill pond. On this pond in earlier years was an encampment of Tispaquin's Indians and many arrowheads have been found here. Front lots were sold or given by my grandfather to sisters or brothers when they married. The farm stretched from the Chester Weston place on Sachem Street to East Main Street and up East Main to the top of Pratt's Hill and back nearly to Wood Street. Two brooks flowed under the street to the river and we used to drive the horse down to drink and to set the tires. My grandfather also owned a pew at the Church at the Green which has passed down to me. But we went to the Central Church and tied the horse to the railing on what is now Nickerson Avenue.

What a delightful place the farm was for us to grow up. We roamed the fields and woods and I'm afraid the wetlands. We knew where the wildflowers grew, from the early Jack-in-the-Pulpit to the late wild asters. On the Stony Brook road I could find laurel, wood violets, lady's slippers, princess pine and pipsissewa. The woods could hold an Indian raid. One day a group of small boys needed a victim and my brother was sent to bring me up to a place called White Plain. The Indians burst from the woods with plenty of war-whoops, successfully scaring a small white settler. When I was little I remember my dad taking me down to the street where a man walking with a bear on a chain had stopped.

Tramps were common and mother usually gave them a thick sandwich. The ragman came in a big wagon, and the hulled corn man and the tin peddler. He had an enormous wagon with posts on which hung the cooking ware. Usually sugar and flour were bought by the barrel. Pies were a staple. Sometimes we had one of the hired men boarding with us. The P. H. Pierce man came in the a.m. for orders, in the p.m. delivered the order. Kerosene for the lamps was in a gallon can, vinegar and molasses each in a gallon stone jug. We had a vegetable cellar and apples too were stored there. I remember slices of brown brown with thick cream on them and for a snack a slice of homemade bread with molasses and thick cream. We were sent outdoors to eat that.

In a small field back of the barn we picked strawberries and sold the extras for fifteen cents a box or two for a quarter. In season we picked cranberries after school and got a round ticket which we could each cash in for real money. There was a screen house in back of the house. We picked blueberries; the highs grew near the river. There were beechplums and wild grapes to find. We had two apple orchards near the road and a croquet ground.

We couldn't help notice the birds for they were all about us. The oriole nests hung from the tall elms by the street. After the chipping sparrow had left the nest in the honeysuckle by the door I found the nest with its soft lining. In season the air was filled with barn and tree swallows, my favorites. The killdeer nested in the gravel road to the big meadow. Bluebirds were in the apple orchards and I can still hear their plaintive songs. Robins had nests in unlikely places, one just over the door, one on a plough. When ice was cut the cranberry bog and brook meadow were flooded. When the water was drained in the spring, hundreds of red-wings fed in the bright green grass and their liquid conquerees made sweet music. In the deep dusk if I was brave enough to walk the farm road toward the cranberry bog I could hear the clarion call of the whip-poor-will, one I still love to hear.

I remember a day's trip to see relatives in Sagamore over dirt roads in a carryall and with a pair of horses.

Most Sunday afternoons we rode out with Little Dandy and the democrat or trap. We drove to nearby towns or countrysides, sometimes to visit, once to Pope's Point to see a harness maker. I remember a day's trip to see relatives in Sagamore over dirt roads in a carryall and with a pair of horses. Prior to the advent of the automobile our roads when it snowed were not ploughed. When the snow was well packed sleigh races on South Main Street were held. My father used to race with the other sleighs and fast horses.

We children at an early age learned to drive a horse and to skate. My first strokes were aided by a kitchen chair. There were skating parties and many from the town came down to skate on the big ponds. I skated until I was in my eighties; it was my favorite winter sport. Later a friend and I were to buy the first skis in town and I used the gentle farm slopes.

Although my father and brother were businessmen the farm was always well groomed with fields of hay, corn vetch and vegetable garden. The first peas were ready by July 4th, and

corn when picked, husked and on the table within the hour was beyond compare. The farm was always loved by children and my dad was Uncle Braddy to half the children of the town it seemed. He and my brother always welcomed them and they rode on the hay carts and wagons and fished in the brooks.

The boiling springs were always important to us. When company came the younger ones were taken up the cranberry bog dike, across the flume, past the alders to two springs under nearby twin oaks. We knelt, and pushing away stones or watercress so the water could run off better, we drank and gazed with awe at the incredible bubbles boiling out of the white sand. The water is tops and still prized by those who come for it. There is another lovely spring in back of the trout hatchery.

Alfalfa was planted on the flat top of the hill by the old pine tree, where a road goes over to a field surrounded by woods. The Stony Brook road goes to Wood Street from this field. On top of this hill also my dad buried his favorite horses. There were many picnics in the grove near Sachem Street. Both Sunday School groups and our own young relatives and friends loved to come. In later years many have told us of the good times they had on the farm.

I remember some businesses my father conducted. He bought wood lots and logs were carted to the mill on log gears. Wood choppers cut and stacked wood in one-cord piles. He ran a meat business for twelve years. He built a bog and raised cranberries. Neighbor women were hired to screen the berries. They were shipped in barrels or crates to New York and Boston. In 1898 the big barn and carriage house on a hill by the brook burned down one winter night. Lawns were graded and sand and gravel were sold for many years. Near the springs is a terminal moraine and there is the pit containing some of the finest gravel in town. He owned several cows and many horses. He built roads for the Plymouth County Commissioners. One was in Scituate from the North River bridge north. I was twelve and the family and collie dog in the trap left the farm first, then the cook driving a farm wagon with a cow aboard, then the men driving two-horse tipcarts. We were away all summer.

My brother Ernest built ice houses at the edge of the bog and meadow as a young man and was in the ice business most of his life. Later he built two more at Stony Brook after putting in a dam and flume and making a pond. Here, because of less wind ice formed quicker. Two horse ice carts supplied the town at first, succeeded by ice trucks. During this time he owned cows and sold milk to Fickert's Dairy.

Then he had a herd of fifty registered Gurnsey cattle and some young stock until just before he died in 1964. During these years he kept the farm up raising crops to fill the haymow and the silo. He also was in the wood business, buying many woodlots in several towns. He hired wood choppers and had a small sawmill on the farm. He sold coke and coal and fuel oil too. Gravel was still sold. There was an office building in back of the outdoor fireplace and scales on which to drive t... loads. He also had a flock of sheep and one day I went into the ram's pasture for some Porter apples and the ram chased me. So I took a few quick leaps into the apple tree. He planted an apple and peach orchard near the trout hatchery. He flooded Stoney Brook near East Main Street and gave the use of a skating pond to the townspeople.

I hoped never to leave the home of my ancestors, five generations of us on the farm. I lived there seventy-seven years until my brother died in 1964. I am the last Pratt in my family although I have one nephew, Robert D. Hall and his family.

The farm has harbored many, from the Indians and Pilgrims, to us who live in the Space Age. I applaud the town's action in buying the farm, which is considered one of the largest and finest in eastern Massachusetts. It is too precious to lose. We desperately need the farms, rain forest, wetlands and marshes which are the source of so much life on our planet.

LOUISE PRATT, who lived on the Pratt Farm on East Main Street with her family, was the valedictorian of the Middleboro High School Class of 1905.

The Eddy Homestead

The story of the Eddy family and its East Middleboro roots is at once a typical American story and a unique saga spanning four centuries.

By Jane Lopes

The story of the Eddy family of Middleboro is at once typical of the average American family history and unique because of its cast of characters and its setting.

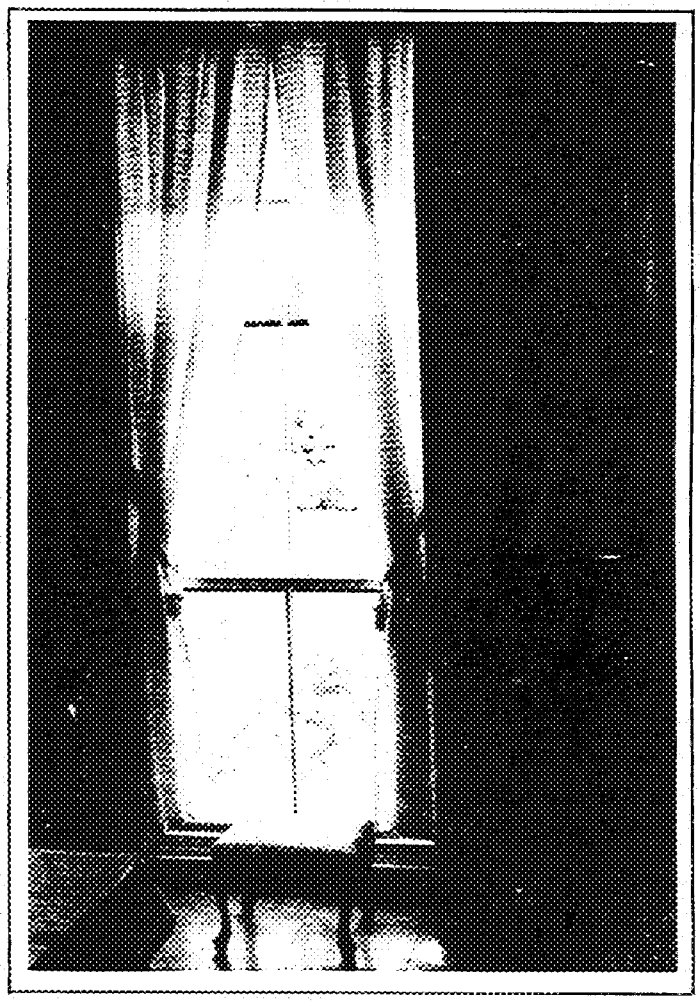
There is a typical "rags to riches" element in the story, in that the first American Eddy, Samuel, was a tailor, the son of an Anglican minister, while his descendants included a Revolutionary War captain who served under Washington, an attorney who was an associate of Daniel Webster and counted John Adams among his friends, and one of the founders of the Boston Floating Hospital. The uniqueness of the family's story is found in the anecdotes about Zackariah Eddy's confrontations with the Tory Judge Peter Oliver, about Samuel Eddy's decision to call the family homestead "Pilgrim Farm" in honor of his ancestor Samuel, about Captain Joshua Eddy's account books being found under the floor boards in the attic of his house, and about "Grandmother" Breck's penchant for dressing like Queen Victoria, whom she apparently greatly admired.

Just as the Eddy family's story is both representative and unique, the family's homestead in East Middleboro, now operated as a museum by the Eddy Homestead Association, is typical of a home owned by a comfortably well off family of the early 19th century, and at the same time reflects the personalities of the five individuals who owned it.

Samuel Eddy unknowingly "founded" Eddyville, a section of East Middleboro, when he joined in the "26 Men's Purchase" 31 years after his arrival in Plymouth with his brother John in 1630. Samuel's son Obadiah was one of the first generation of Eddys to live in Middleboro – he was also one of the first to rebuild after his home was burned during King Philip's War.

Obadiah's property was inherited by his son Samuel, a wheelwright, who was the first to build a home on the site of the present homestead. The house, which was moved across Plymouth Street in 1803, is still in existence as the ell of a later building.

Samuel left his property to his son Zackariah (the Zackariah who sparred politically with Judge Oliver). Zackariah died of smallpox in 1777 and is buried in the smallpox Cemetery on Soule Street. His eldest son John, who printed one of the first almanacs in the country in his Eddyville print shop, was killed during the French and Indian War. Next to inherit the homestead property was Captain Joshua Eddy, John's brother, who served under Washington during the Revolution and built the present Eddy Homestead in 1803 as a gift for his son Zackariah, and Zackariah's bride, Sally Edson.



FLOOR TO CEILING windows in the Eddy Homestead were built during the ownership of Charlotte Eddy Pratt. They enhance the beauty of the "organ room" and the "portrait room," the two formal parlors in the house.

Zackariah, one of the most prominent attorneys in Massachusetts and a colleague of Daniel Webster, added to the house and its surrounding acreage and was followed as the first owner of the Eddy Homestead by his youngest daughter Charlotte, who also made improvements to the property and passed it to

her nephew, General Samuel Breck, who named the homestead property "Pilgrim Farm."

The general built a small house in the side yard and turned the main house over to his son, Dr. Samuel Breck, a well-known Boston physician and one of the founders of the Boston Floating Hospital.

The last person to own the homestead as a private residence was Louise Eddy Break, "Grandmother Breck," widow of the doctor, who loved the house so much that she left her share in trust for future generations. Her son George, the founder of the Eddy Family Association, helped to complete the project his mother began. In the 1960s the Eddy Homestead became a museum, a display area for family belongings and a research center for those interested in the Eddy family and local history.

Now that the family has managed to preserve much of its written history, many family belongings and one of its best-known family homes, members would like to reach out to the community more, and share the wealth of information and local history they have collected.

"This is not our house, the Eddy house, it's everybody's house," says Sylvia Breck, vice president of the Homestead Association, whose husband Richard is descended from Samuel Eddy. "We would like to pull in more local people."

There are many interesting items to see inside the handsome Federal style house, and the owners over the years also incorporated some interesting architectural features in the house itself.

"Some things have been given over the years, while others were left here by the heirs of owners," Mrs. Breck said. "A majority are Eddy family items."

There is the chair with writing arm where Rev. Isaac Eddy wrote one of the sermons read at President Lincoln's funeral, a lovely canopy bed in one of the upstairs chambers, a portrait which is supposed to have been painted by Cephus Thompson, "Grandmother" Breck's wedding dress, and a copy of the first Eddy genealogy. There is china which was purchased abroad by members of the family, and there is a photograph taken at the first family reunion in 1920.

Of architectural interest are the beautiful floor to ceiling windows which Charlotte Eddy Pratt had built into the two front rooms, the handsome front hallway, and an interesting second floor screened porch.

The house is open to the public on weekends from 11-6 through September and may be toured by appointment by calling Mrs. Breck at 947-6058 or the caretakers, the Moshers, at

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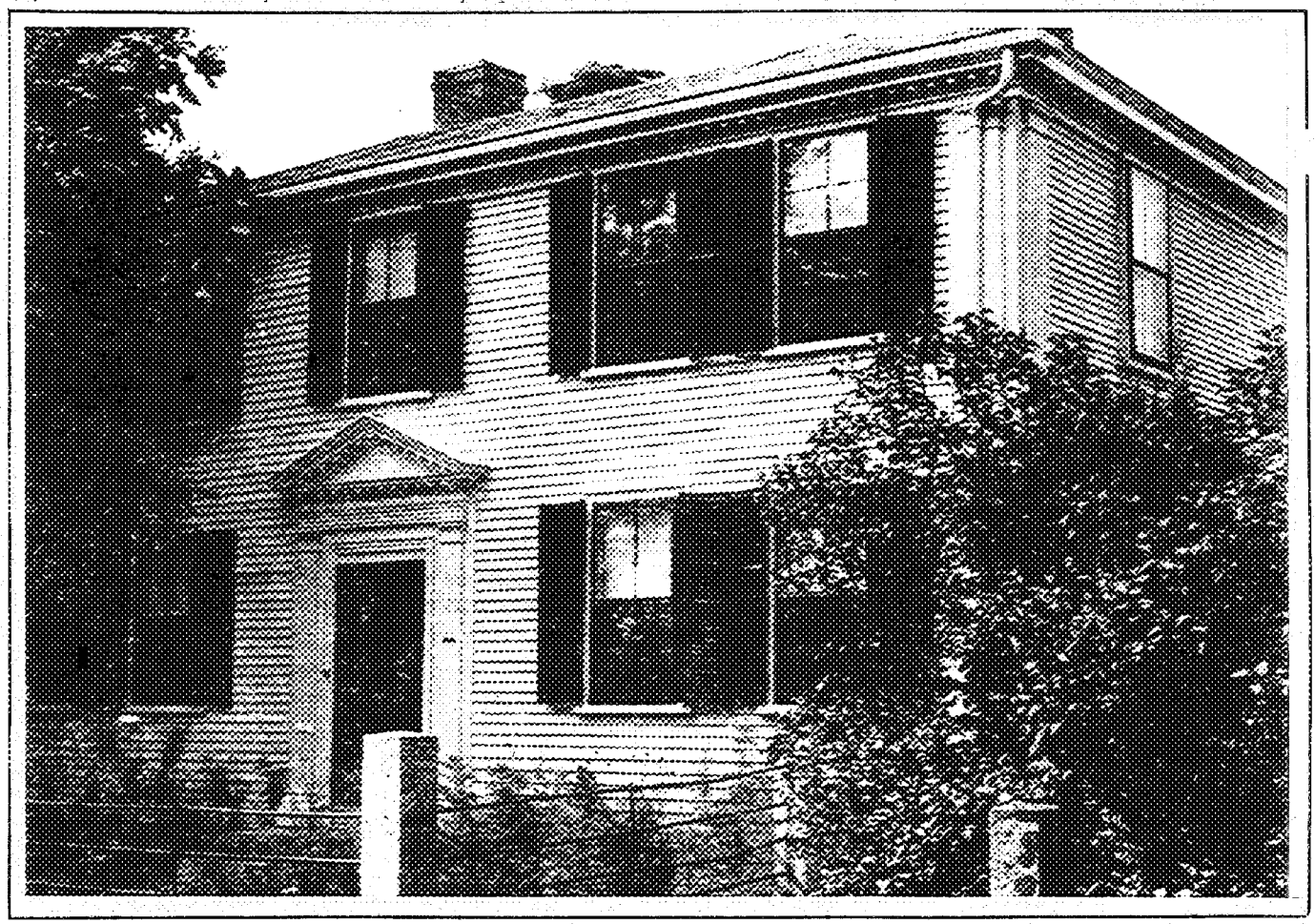
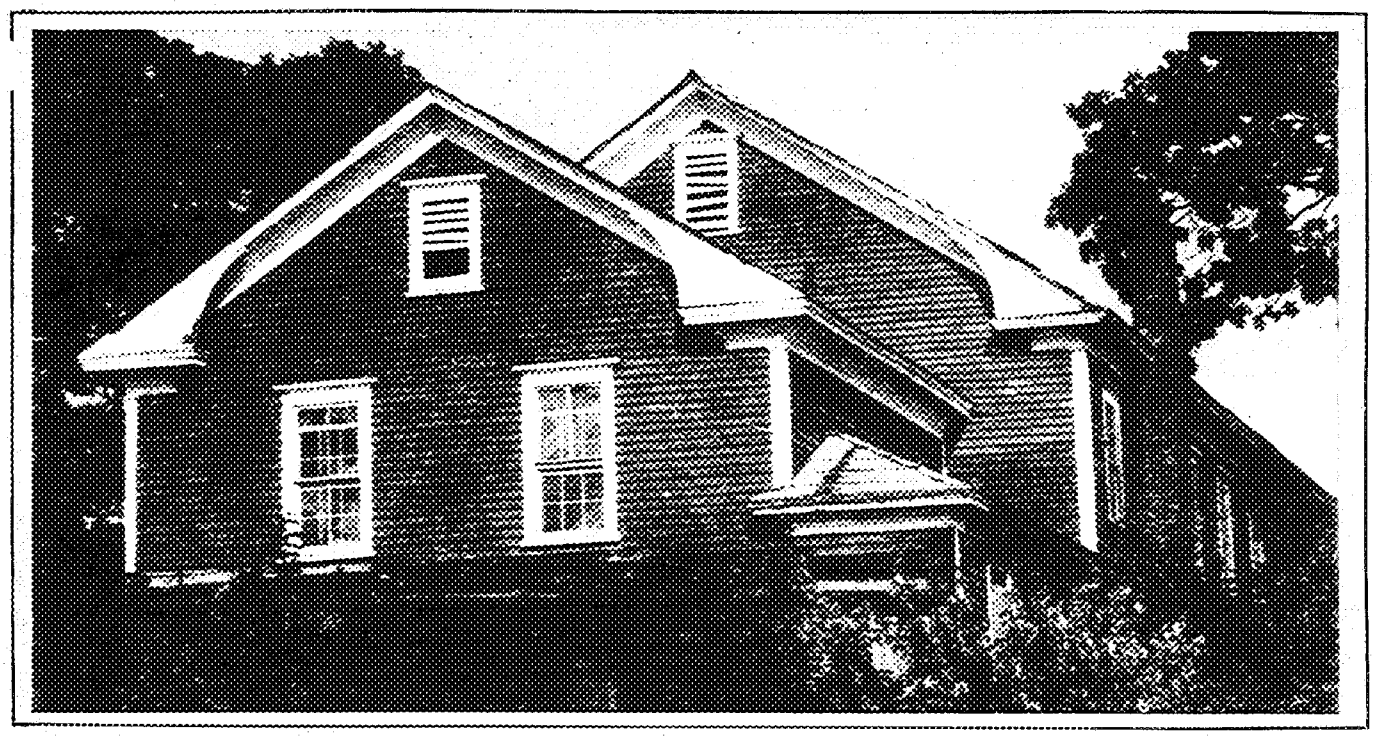


THE EDDY HOMESTEAD, built in 1803 for Zackariah Eddy and his bride, is now operated as a museum by the Eddy Homestead Association. The house is furnished in a style typical of the mid-19th century and contains many Eddy family items. (Photos by Jane Lopes)



ORNAMENTATION ONLY was the purpose of the carved cornices of this building on Center Avenue. Built with thick walls and triple-sash windows, it was originally designed for cold storage, later was occupied by Colonial Casket Company. (Photos by Clint Clark)

Industry Without Art Is Brutality

by Clint Clark

Ted Eayrs and I have kept in touch since he retired from the Gazette and turned to restoring antique furniture at his home on Pearl Street, and was working on a 19th century hutch cabinet when I dropped in recently.

"Those old-time craftsmen didn't have the equipment we do today, but they sure knew how to use hand tools in an artistic way," I remarked.

"Industry without art is brutality," he said. "Is that original?" I asked. "No, I read it somewhere," he replied.

Whoever said it was aware of the kinship between architects and artisans, evidence of which is inescapable in this old New England town.

A random tour of any residential neighborhood, save new housing developments, turns up a splendid variety of relics of the Victorian era in the form of graceful piazzas and elegant porticoes.

Coinciding with the fad for "gingerbread" in the 1800s and well into this century was the invention of multiple, power-iven wood lathes.

Mass production, however, took nothing away from the appealof what is truly an attractive art form.

Nor did it lead to sameness. On Arch Street, to name but

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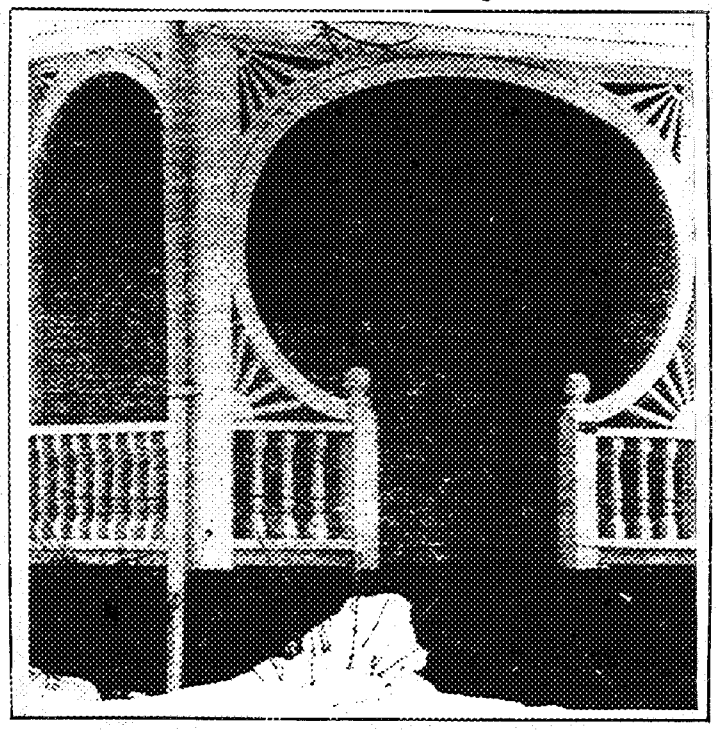


MIDDLE CLASS MIDDLEBOREANS, as well as the residents of mansions on South Main Street, had a taste for Victorian era "gingerbread."

Industry Without Art . . .

(Continued from page 11)

one of many others, no two examples of "fancy" woodworking are exactly alike: homeowners, it seems, were status-conscious even then and abhorred aping their neighbors.

On the other hand, shoe factories were in the main strictly utilitarian.

But we find an exception on Center Avenue. Formerly a casket factory it was originally designed as a cold storage plant.

Yet, look at the carved braces at the eaves. There is little doubt that they are ornamental, rather than incorporated to strengthen the structure.

Now consider the cupolas on barns; ventilation was their sole purpose, but they too were designed to be ornamental as well as useful.

Thus, everywhere in Middleboro the town exhibits ample evidence that in the past at least, industry and art went hand-in-hand.

1849 Revisited . . .

(Continued from page 5)

Grading little garden.
Mr. Silas Hathaway worked 10 hours; pd. $1
Mr. Swift worked 10 hours; pd. 1
Mr. Aldrich worked 10 hours; pd. 1
David Swift's boy worked 10 hours; pd. .33
Paid Abner Perkins for 4 bushels of oats 1.96
Mr. Doane brought new cook stove."

Others who worked on the Thompson farm included: Daniel Alden, Calvin Shaw, Mr. Francis, Solomon White, Mr. Washburn (stone mason), Levi Hathaway, and Mr. Perry (painter).

One event that must have stirred up a great deal of interest in Titicut was the departure of five native sons who left to seek their fortunes in California. The diary tells us that on October 2nd:

"Joseph Coreia, J. Davis Pratt, Philip C. Pratt, Seth Wilbur, Capt. Geo. Pratt, all of Titicut, left home to embark in the ship Oscar from Mattapoisett for California."

and on October 6:

"Ship Oscar sailed for California."

Further research has told us that of these five Forty-niners, Philip Colby Pratt, son of Zebulon Pratt, died in California in July, 1850, at the age of 32; J. Davis Pratt, Mr. Thompson's brother-in-law and son of Johnathon C. Pratt who lived on Plymouth Street, settled in Roseville, California, where he operated a hay, grain, feed and farm machine business.

In the days when there was no town water system, the condition of a homeowner's well was a constant concern. The entry of September 26 tells us that:

"Calvin Shaw's well 5 feet and clear
Mr. Hathaway's well 10 inches and clear
My well 13 inches and riley"

This called for corrective action, and we read in a subsequent entry:

"Job Johnson cleaned out my well...$1"

To us who are accustomed to the month-long commercial extravaganza that Christmas has become, it is interesting to note that in 1849 Christmas was just another work day. On December 24th, J. G. Thompson went to Boston in the morning and from there to Newburyport to settle an insurance claim, staying overnight at the Merrimack House. His entry for Christmas Day, Tuesday, December 25th, reads:

"Snowy. Left Newburyport for Boston.

To us who are accustomed to the month-long commercial extravaganza Christmas has become, it is interesting to note that in 1849 Christmas was just another work day. Mr. Thompson's entry for Christmas Day reads: "Snowy. Left Newburyport for Boston."

Left Boston for Hartford 4 p.m. —
at City Hotel, Room No. 200 —"

On the 26th:

"In Hartford. Left Hartford for Springfield at 7 p.m. At Massasoit House Room No. 11"

On the 27th:

Left Springfield for Boston 8 1/2 a.m.
Saw David Harding"

On the 28th:

Left Boston for home 5/8 1/4 to 4 p.m."

No Christmas tree, no gifts, no celebration, no office parties, and no post-holiday depression.

It was as true in 1849 as it is today that the biggest news stories are catastrophes, disasters, and bad news in general. James G. Thompson's diary reflects this phenomenon, the items of national importance that he records, all falling into this category. On April 27th, Mr. Thompson writes:

"News of burning Parliament House
by mob at Montreal."

After the American Revolution, a massive influx of Loyalis caused a serious imbalance of British over French in Montrea and led to unrest that culminated in the Rebellion of 1837-38. After the Rebellion, the two Canadas were united with Mon-

1849 Revisited . . .

ıreal as the capital, but the Rebellion Act Losses Bill, which was detrimental to the French, led to more rioting, during which the Parliament buildings were burned. It is this incident that shocked J. G. Thompson enough to cause him to record it in his diary.

On a quieter note, he writes on July 12:

"Left Hingham ⅝ 3 p.m. in carriage for Quincy. Bought 4 stone posts....."

These four posts of dressed Quincy granite may be seen today, still in place, in front of the house at 65 Pleasant Street.

Early in the year, there were two disasters involving ships that J. G. Thompson noted in his diary. The first occurred on January 13:

Steamer Empire State burned at the wf. in Fall River @ 11 p.m."

As an insurance adjuster, Mr. Thompson probably took a professional interest in this event, although he was not involved in the settlement of the insurance claim. The "Empire State," Capt. Benjamin Brayton commanding, had been added to the fleet of the prospering Fall River Line shortly before, in 1848. After this fire, she was refitted and continued in service until 1871.

The second disaster was recorded in the diary on March 1:

"Ship Franklin lost and 8 lives off Wellfleet Cape Cod."

Actually, eleven people were drowned in this shipwreck with twenty-two surviving. The "Franklin," under the command of Charles Smith, had sailed from London bound for Boston with passengers and a mixed cargo that included fruit trees, garden seeds, tow cloth and spices.

Henry Thoreau, on his walking tour of Cape Cod the following October, noted that John Newcomb's garden contained cabbage, parsley and broccoli, all grown from seeds salvaged

(Continued next page)

MIDDLEBORO HIGH SCHOOL'S Class of 1904 included, back row, from left, Percy Jackson, Lena Macomber, Jean Surrey, Florence McDermid, George Richardson, Susie Bump, Helen Kingman, Minerva Sisson and David Cunningham; middle row, from left, Mary Pierce, Josie Holloway, Edna Tirrell, class vice president Grace Tinkham, Ruth Martin and Annie Dorr; front row, from left, class president - Joe Hathaway, Mary Libby, Helen Ryder, Irena Cushing, class prophecy writer Abbie Lucas, Edith Whitman, valedictorian Edith Orcut and Wallace Wright.

An especially poignant entry states that: "Lloyd Perkins, adopted son of Linus Washburn was drowned in the tack factory pond above his father's home. Aged 10 years."

from the "Franklin"; interestingly, this is the first record of broccoli growing in North America. Mr. Newcomb (The Wellfleet Oysterman, as Thoreau calls him) also delivered a vivid eyewitness account of the breaking up of the ship and drowning of the victims. Many bundles of tow cloth were washed ashore, much to the profit of the beachcombers; and, even as late as October, Thoreau observed more coming in on the breakers.

The captain and his first mate were among those who lost their lives, the irony of which became apparent when the captain's suitcase washed ashore later. In this valise were found incriminating documents showing that the captain, in conspiracy with the ship's Boston owners, had planned to wreck the ship for the insurance. The captain was the victim of his own criminal act, but the owners, Wilson and Crafts, got off lightly after a trial that took place in Boston.

Mr. Thompson recorded the passing of his friends and acquaintances as they occurred. Most of these entries are merely matter-of-fact statements ("Judge Appollos Eaton died, age 71"), but a few of them stir the imagination, such as:

"...two brothers Leach killed on the
F. R. railroad in chaise a 2 North
Crossing from North Bridgewater Depot"

An especially poignant entry states that:

"Lloyd Perkins, adopted son of Linus
Washburn was drowned in the tack
factory pond above his father's
home. Aged 10 years."

And Mr. Thomspon was shocked when three members of the Richmond family, Elisha, his son, Alanson, and the two-year old child of Lysander, all died within the space of 15 days (Sept. 11-25).

On Thursday, March 22, Mr. Thompson wrote:

"Parker Mill at Tionet burned.
Ins. @ 30,000."

Two Titicut men, Isaac and Jared Pratt, established a nail-making operation in Wareham in 1822. Their first mill was at the lower dam on the Wankinquoah River, the site of the present Tremont Nail Company. In 1828, they built the Tihonet Works at the Tihonet Dam where there was a 28-foot fall; at this time, the lower dam was also raised to the height of 28 feet. The new iron works at Tihonet consisted of a large rolling mill, a puddling furnace for making iron and fifty nail machines, and prospered under the name of the Wareham Iron Company until 1834, when the company passed into the hands of others. After being operated by a succession of various parties, the works were incorporated as the Parker Mills in 1845, the location becoming important enough to merit its own railway station when the railroad first came to Wareham in 1847. (Today, although the tracks are gone, the station still stands there full of old machinery and other odds and ends.)

The large nail factory that we know today as the Tremont Nail Company was built at the lower dam in 1848 and was operated jointly with the iron works at Tihonet. It is the Tihonet mill that is mentioned in the Thompson diary, and whose loss by fire was covered by the insurance company represented. Subsequent entries in the diary mention several trips to Tihonet withofficials from the Hartford headquarters of the insurance company and a final settlement of the claim on April 8th.

Today there is no mill at the upper dam, but the sluice gate still holds back the dammed-up river and globules of iron slag cover the grounds.

One of the most astounding events recorded in the diary of James Gardner Thompson, is the murder of Dr. George Parkman. Dr. Parkman, the uncle of Francis Parkman, the renowned historian, is first referred to in the entry of November 24th, simply:

"Dr. Parkman missing."

On December 1st, Mr. Thompson wrote:

"Terrible! Dr. Parkman's body
found under Dr. Webster's office.
Dr. W. arrested."

Both Parkman and Webster were professors at Harvard University, Dr. Parkman, a professor of medicine, while Dr. Webster held the Erving professorship of chemistry and mineralogy. Dr. Webster's scale of living and extravagant hospitality caused him to live far beyond his means, and he borrowed from his friends, including $400 from Dr. Parkman. When, after five years, little of this was repaid, he gave hi note in the amount of $2,432 to Parkman, representing the unpaid balance plus a further loan; this new amount was

(Continued on page 16)

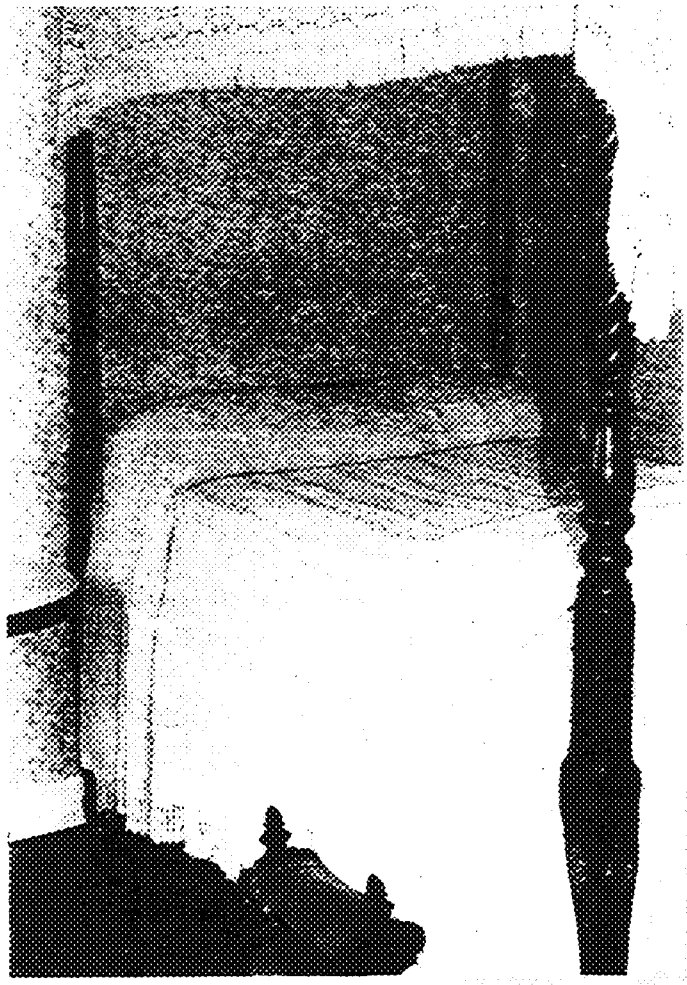
Eddy Homestead . . .

(Continued from page 10)

947-3615. Copies of "Eddyville" will be available in local book stores.

The history of the family and the homestead are outlined in a fascinating book, "Eddyville, Middleboro, Massachusetts, 1616-1987," which is a collection of articles, speeches, family records and reports, and a "tour" of the homestead. At this writing, the book was being printed at Pilgrim Press in Kingston and was to be available sometime in August. The house itself is open to the public on weekends through the end of September and by appointment.

In addition to having access to so much of its history, the Eddy family, unlike many modern families, still gets together regularly. The Eddy Family Association, founded in 1920 and thus one of the oldest continuing family associations in the country, gathers in August of each year for an annual meeting and reunion featuring a guest speaker and catered luncheon.



THIS CANOPY bed in an upstairs bedroom of the Eddy Homestead is one of several antique beds in the house.

THE LAW OFFICE of "Lawyer Robinson" in the 1880s, this handsome building at North Main and Jackson streets has been in continual commercial use since the early 19th century. (Photo by Clint Clark)

Lawyer Robinson's Law Office

By Clint Clark

The late Atty. Percy F. Churbuck in 1969 practiced his profession in the small brick building which for many years was known as "Lawyer Robinson's law office."

Its age is not on record. It is known, however that it was a jewelry and watchmaker's shop before Lawyer Robinson made it his office in 1878, and that he purchased a Victorian mansion, next door on North Main Street in 1860, soon after which he erected the ornamental iron fence in the foreground at a cost of $164.38.

A few years after this picture was taken in 1969, the Robinson homestead was demolished and the fence torn down to make way for a modern office building. The former law office, remarkably well preserved, remains at the corner of North Main and Jackson streets. In continual use since the early 1800s, it is Middleboro's oldest business building.

1849 Revisited . . .

(Continued from page 14)

secured by a mortgage on Webster's personal property, which included a chest of mineral specimens. Webster was still unable to improve his financial position, however, and in 1848, he borrowed $1,200 from another friend, Robert Shaw, pledging as security the minerals already specified in the mortgage to Dr. Parkman. This became known to Parkman, who was infuriated and accused Webster of fraudulent dealings. After a series of acrimonious discussions, Webster asked Parkman to meet him in his (Webster's) laboratory on the afternoon of November 21. Parkman was seen at that hour on Grove Street, Boston, approaching the Medical College: this was the last time he was ever seen.

The mystery of Dr. Parkman's disappearance persisted for a week until the janitor of the college, having become suspicious of Dr. Webster's conduct, discovered some human bones in a vault beneath the doctor's laboratory. Further investigation turned up more human fragments in the furnace and in a tea chest. Dr. Webster was arrested, whereupon, at the police station, he made an unsuccessful attempt at suicide by taking strychnine. His trial, lasting from March 19th until April 1, 1850, was based entirely upon circumstantial evidence, the main feature of which was the identification of Dr. Parkman's false teeth, which had been found in Webster's furnace.

Despite the outcry from the public, which had a distrust of circumstantial evidence, Webster was convicted. Webster sent an impassioned plea to the governor (Briggs) proclaiming his innocence. When this produced no results, he appealed to the governor again, confessing his guilt, but asserting that the crime had not been premeditated and asking that the death penalty be set aside. Other pressures were brought to bear upon the governor, however, and Dr. Webster was hanged on August 30, 1850.

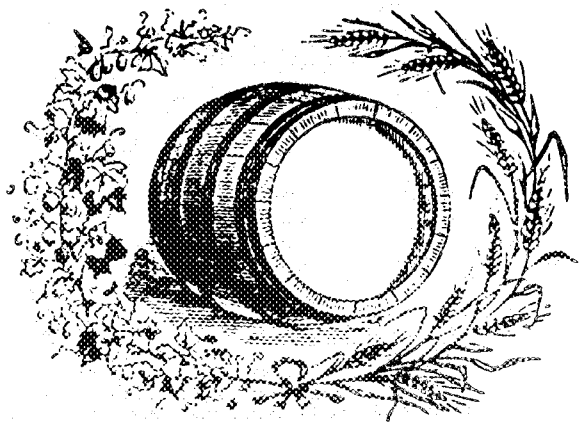
> Many of the entries in Mr. Thompson's diary leave us with a sense of frustration.

Many of the entries in Mr. Thompson's diary leave us with a sense of frustration. What, for instance, happened to his office boy who was bitten by a rabid dog on May 30th? Save for a statement on June 1st that "Saul Gault went again to the hospital," we hear nothing more of the incident. Whatever happened to the other three Forty-Niners who left Titicut on October 2nd? What was the ailment that kept Mr. Thompson "sick abed" for almost six weeks? In spite of these unanswered questions, however, our eyes have been opened to

many aspects of life as it was in 1849 and to some astonishing nts that we may never have known about otherwise.

James Gardner Thompson died on October 17, 1853, at the age of 37 and is interred in the Parish cemetery in Titicut.

(Mr. Barden is a descendant, through his mother, of James G. Thompson. His father, George Barden Sr., was "the last boy to grow up on Barden Hill," Mr. Barden reports. A resident of Mattapoisett since his retirement, Mr. Barden is a member of the Middleborough Historical Association.)



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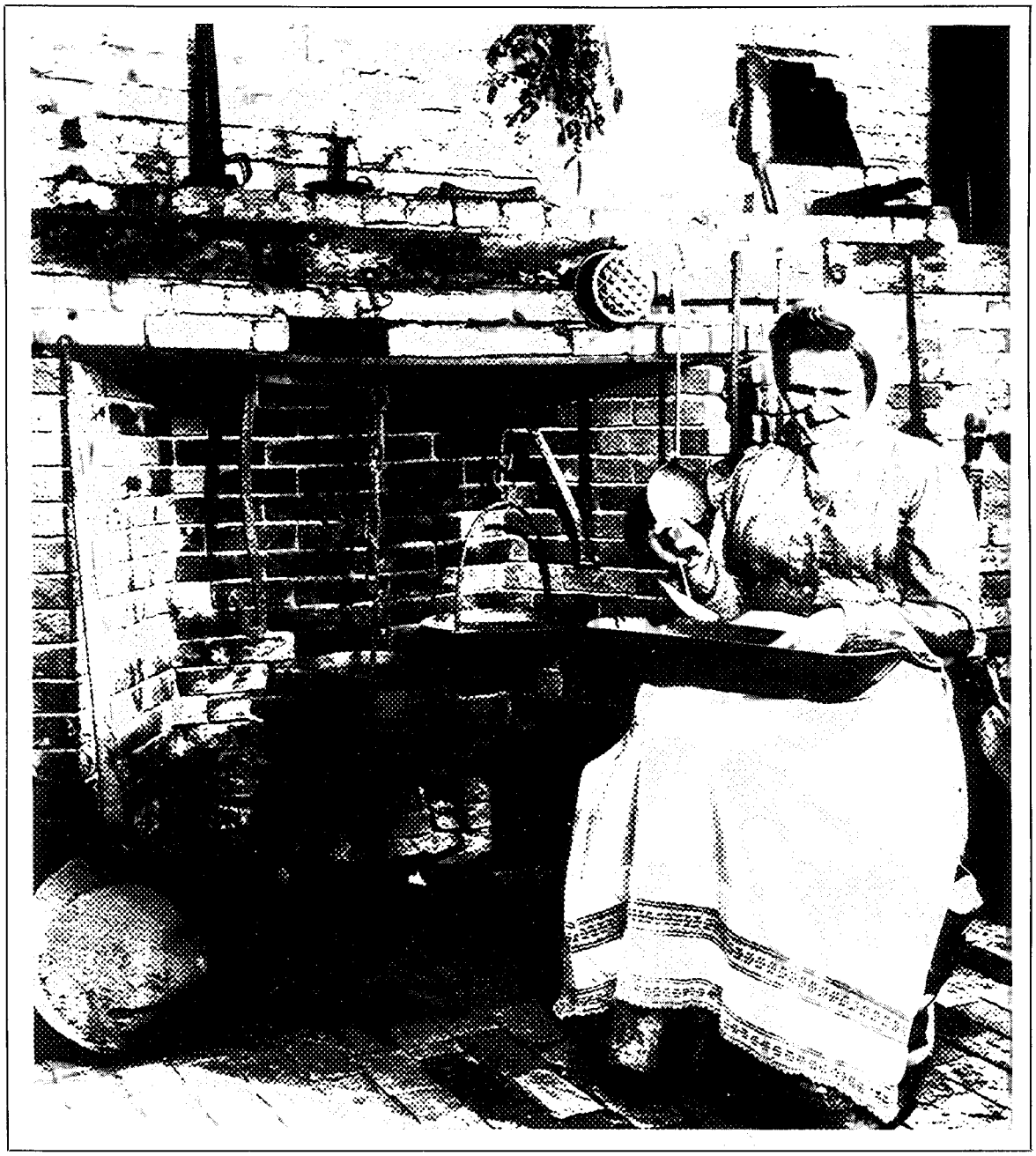

A SCENE in the Middleborough Historical Museum, photographed in 1977, portrays Thanksgiving preparations the way they used to be. (Photo by Clint Clark)

1889 100th 1989

ANNIVERSARY

Personal service is still in style at MTC . . .

Adrianne Ferrigno, Customer Service Representative, with customers: Christina and Joseph Deburgo.

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Introduction

by Jane Lopes

It has been more than 67 years since Miss Ruth Cushman, "conscious of the fact that both printed and manuscript records, as well as more tangible evidences of early local craftsmanship, were being discarded and lost," invited friends to her mother's home on South Main Street to establish the Middleborough Historical Association. The inception of this organization was recalled in these words in the first issue of the Antiquarian, published in 1959.

The inaugural issue of the Antiquarian, edited by my colleague Clint Clark, who took the photograph that graces the cover of this issue, noted that the first volume of the town's historical magazine was an appropriate forum for a little "crowing" about the town's historical association and Middleboro itself.

"We feel that we do have something to crow about," it was asserted. "Once the middle borough, or halfway house, between Plymouth Colony and the Providence Plantations, even the fields and woods are saturated with American history. It is our hope that this small publication may grow, and in time record little known facts in local folk lore. . . local history is often lost without local action and interest."

In 1989, the Antiquarian still has not run out of "local lore" to write about, although some of it has not doubt been recycled once or twice. More importantly, in 1989 the Antiquarian's mission—and that of the Historical Association—has never been so clear: to promote the preservation of the printed material and the "tangible evidence" of the town's history and to preserve word pictures of the town the way it was and never will be again, except in the memories and reminiscences of those who lived in an earlier era. Most of the events that have occurred in Middleboro over the years are not recorded in history, nor are the people who lived here. It is up to us, the 20th-century residents of this unique town, to keep that record.

The Old Middleborough Historical Association

The Fall Meeting of the Association will be held in Grange Hall Middleboro, on

Monday Evening, November 4, 1946, at 8:00 p. m.

After the business meeting we are to have the pleasure of being entertained by the Bridgewater Men's Choral Society, led by Mr. Thomas Carroll of Bridgewater, who is well known to Middleboro musical circles. During the evening we shall also be favored with a Violin Duet by Mrs. Gardner P. Sherman and her sister, Miss Jean Goodell.

Make a special effort to attend this meeting in order that we may have a large number present.

Refreshments will be served after the meeting.

REGINALD W. DRAKE, *President* MRS. ELEANOR MENDALL, *Secretary*

This issue of the Antiquarian touches on everyday life and momentous events seen through the eyes of ordinary people. There is an eyewitness account of the great San Francisco earthquake of 1906 and an introduction to a local player in the great political game that resulted in the U.S. Constitution. There are memories of the skating pond at the Pratt Farm written by a participant in the Middleboro Skating Club of the 1940s and the story of a devastating fire written by a descendant of the man who owned the building destroyed in the blaze.

Finally, this issue includes an article on the houses of North Middleboro, and one of ten houses that are scattered throughout the town but have one thing in common—they represent the uniqueness of Middleboro in some unique way of their own.

We continue, then, in the tradition of all those who have gone before us, from Miss Cushman to Mrs. Romaine, from those who had the foresight many years ago to see the need for preservation to the present, when that need has become so urgent.

As always, we invite others to join in the effort, by submitting articles to this publication, sharing photographs or memories of the town, or suggesting ideas for future articles. Preserving the past is a community effort, and one that can only be enhanced by the varied talents, memories and perspectives of others. Those who are reluctant to put their thoughts in writing because they might not be accomplished writers should know that content is much more important than form, and that one person's cherished memories or lifelong research are worth 1,000 polished essays by those whose hearts are not in what they write.

MIDDLEBOROUGH ANTIQUARIAN
Middleboro, Mass.
VOLUME XXVII 1989 NUMBER 3
Jane C. Lopes ..... Editor

Historical Association Annual Membership

Single	$10.00	Sustaining	$ 50.00
Family	15.00	Benefactor	100.00
Participating	20.00	Life	200.00

Membership includes each issue of Middleborough Antiquarian. Subscriptions $10.00 per year. Single copies $3.50.

Dues and subscriptions—mail to Mrs. Ruth Watt, 15 Oak Street, Middleboro

Letters

Dear Jane Lopes:

The cover photograph on the September Antiquarian sparked a lot of memories for me, since the car with registration number 36144 belonged to our father, Chester L. Shaw. His used number plates were tacked on the back wall of the family garage at 88 Pearl St. for years.

Our father was Town Treasurer in Middleboro, from 1932 to 1958, the year of his death.

Our family included parents, children Eleanor, Madeline and Samuel and maternal grandparents Frank and Alice Baldwin. Hence the seven-passenger Hudson.

Our neighbor on Rice Street, John G. Howes, owned the Nemasket Automobile Co. on Wareham Street, opposite Benton Street. His son, John B. Howes, still lives on Thomas Street in Thomastown.

Our family took camping vacations on the East Coast, as did the Howes family. The old sedan was ideal for transportation.

Your issue of the Antiquarian is continuing the tradition established by Larry and Mertie Romaine. You are meeting the challenge.

Sincerely yours,
Madeline Shaw Osborne
Harwich

Nemasket Automobile Co.

Terraplane & Hudson Motor Cars

78 Warcham Street
MIDDLEBORO, MASS.

July 12, 1937

Sold to Chester L. Shaw
88 Pearl Street
Middleboro, Mass.

JOHN G. HOWES, Treas. and Mgr. Telephone 358

1	1937 Terraplane Touring Sedan equipped with hill hold. (Serial #715278C; Motor #328045)	$890.00
	Credit 1 used Hudson Sedan	90.00
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Model 71
Cost $890.
List 695.

Pd July 13, 1937
J. H. Howes

(The following letter to the Pratt Farm Committee is published with the permission of the author.)

To Pratt Farm Committee:

I do not know how to present this, as your committee might already have this information about the skating pond on Mr. E. Pratt's land. Mr. L. Butler, who is a very good friend of mine, wrote about skating a couple of times, but I have a few more items that he did not know about the group of us young fellows that did not play basketball but were ice skaters.

SKATERS enjoy a winter day at the skating pond on the Pratt Farm, one of the town's favorite winter sports in the '30s and '40s.

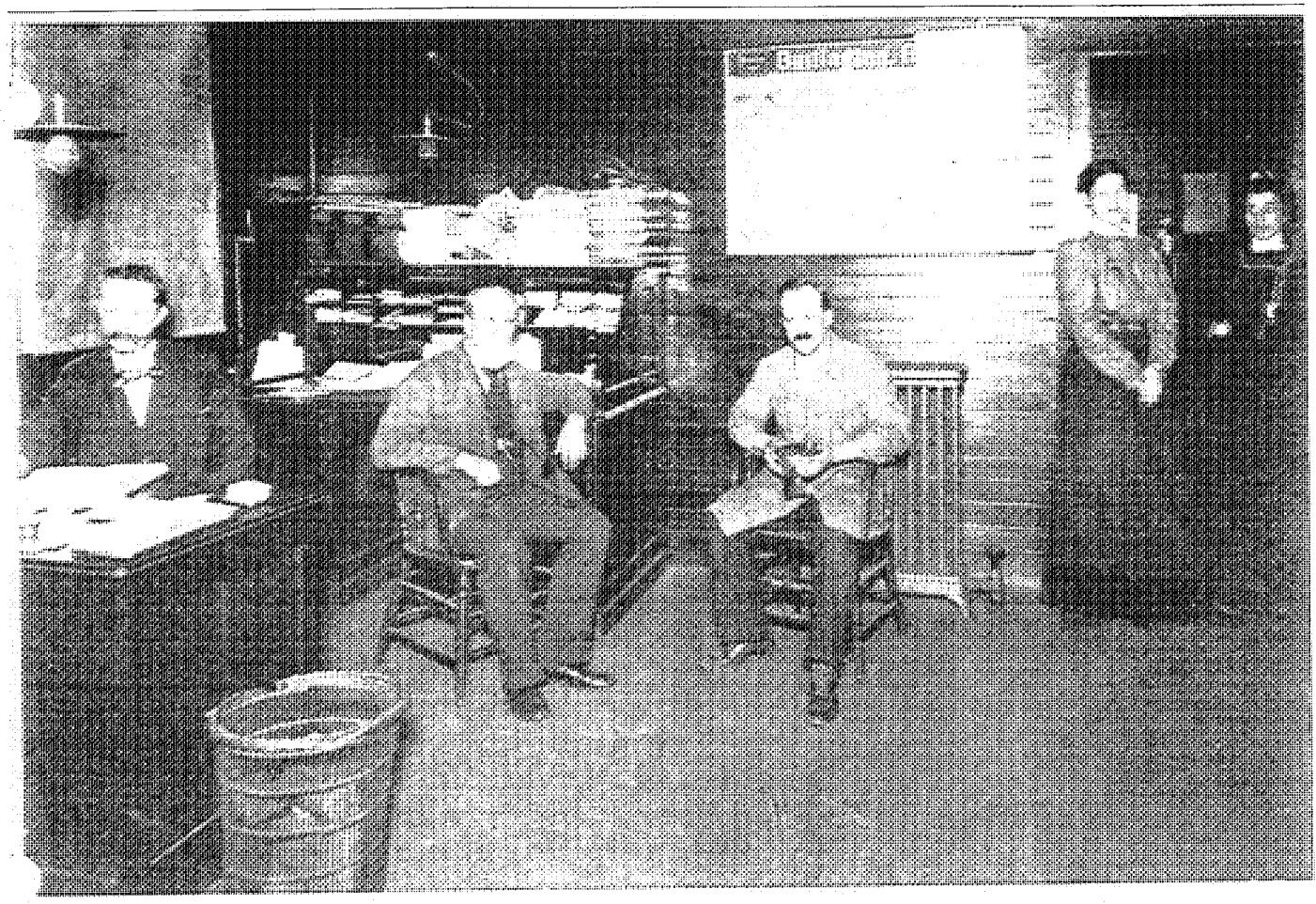
We used to skate on Plymouth Street, at a place known to us as Jacksons', as the Jacksons lived next to the small pond which was the first one in Middleboro to freeze and hold us to skate. I think Pratt owned the land. Mr. Al Hodder and Red Battis and others were with us and a few more. The talk was to have a better place to skate for the townspeople.

Al Hodder and Red said if they could dam up the brook would be fine, not too deep if you fell in; it was only a few feet deep. They got Mr. Pratt to bring in some sand and sand bags and dam it up. It did break loose a few times but we fixed it up. The Middleboro Skating Club was formed – Al Hodder, Red Battis and Dalton Penniman. I think Dalton was treasurer. We all sold membership to the club. I think family ones were $1.50 and one person $.25. With the money we built a clubhouse to change your skates, put up three or four strings of lights from side to side. We built a full-size skating rink. We played teams from out of town and had a town league. On nice days and nights hundreds of people were there. We kept order, kids and slow skaters up one end and the fast skaters up the other end. Music and all.

World War II came and all went in service. Red Battis took the clubhouse down to his football field and it is still there. They built a ski lift on the right side ending at the pond. Pratt was happy because not many used his ice pond.

At one time the ice pond was stocked with brook trout by the state. It was one of the first ponds to be used in that manner. It was to be used only for fly fishing but many used worms. I remember many of the people who were there as I still am a fly fisherman. I know where there was an Indian camp. I do not know if it was seasonal or what. I used to fish with a fine old gent by the name of Frank Tinkham. He was an Indian lore collector and we both picked up dozens of arrowheads there

Edward Grossman
Lakeville



ANDREW ALDEN, second right, superintendent, and Arthur Alden, center, assistant superintendent, are shown in the business office of the Hathaway, Soule, Harrington Shoe Factory. At left is a Mr. Wildes; the two women are Sadie Ryder and Alice Roberts.

A Shoe Business, A Robbery and A Fire

by George M. Barden, Jr.

One of the most disastrous fires of the many which have occurred in Middleboro was the one that destroyed the Alden, Walker & Wilde shoe factory on October 4, 1904. This spectacular blaze turned the historic old Needle Works building into a heap of rubble, cost many shoe workers their jobs and caused Middleboro to lose a fast-growing manufacturing firm. But first, a brief account of how this shoe company came into being.

Arthur H. Alden, who was to become the leader of the new firm, had grown up in the shoe business. His father, Andrew Alden, had first made shoes in a small shop opposite his home on Plymouth Street in Titicut. The machinery in this shop was powered by a horse who walked continually in a circle in the "powerhouse," a small shed adjoining the shoe shop. When the machines slowed down someone had to go into the shed to bring the equine dynamo back up to the required speed (with a bucket of oats, we hope).

In 1881 Andrew Alden became a partner in the firm of Alden, Leonard & Hammond with a shop in Titicut, but which moved to a factory in Middleboro in 1886. This factory was located on Cambridge Street at the foot of Frank Street, next to the Murdock Parlor Grate building. In 1887 this firm became a branch of the large Brockton-based Hathaway, Soule & Harrington, with Andrew Alden staying on as superintendent and his son, Arthur, as foreman. It was during this period that the Great Handcar Caper took place.

Hathaway, Soule & Harrington employed a Civil War veteran to serve as night watchman at the factory. He would come to work in the evening and spend the night all alone in the five-storied building, making the rounds periodically to make sure everything was secure. When two congenial young strangers made his acquaintance and offered to keep him company through his lonely hours he was only too glad to accept. For a week or more they spent most of every night with him at the factory, whiling away the time at checkers and listening to his tales of Civil War adventures. They also took note of his inspection routine. Finally, one fateful night, after the

three had finished the midnight lunch, one of the strangers said:

"Old man, we are going to tie you in your chair to keep you out of trouble and then you will hear an explosion louder than anything you ever heard in the Civil War!"

Within minutes the watchman was securely tied to his chair and the promised explosion, when the strangers blew the door off the safe in the office, was indeed impressive. Their carefully planned getaway involved the use of a railroad handcar, the old-fashioned kind that was powered by hand pumping, previously placed by the yeggs on the tracks that ran just behind the factory. Taking their bag of loot, they raced to the handcar and began pumping feverishly to put Middleboro behind them as fast as possible – a scene right out of the Keystone Cops. Family tradition has told this writer that they made it to Bridgewater before they were apprehended and the loot recovered.

"Early in the morning of October 4th Eldred Walker noticed a small blaze at the rear of the factory; he rushed into the street calling "Fire!"

When Hathaway, Soule & Harrington closed their Middleboro branch in 1900 Andrew Alden retired. His two sons Arthur and Fred joined with two of their business associates to form the new company of Alden, Walker & Wilde, setting up their operation in the old Needle Works building which stood next to Jenks building on Clifford Street about where the access to the drive-in window of the Mayflower Bank is now. Originally built as a factory for the manufacture of needles, this building was next occupied by a maker of jewelry boxes and finally, in 1900, by the newly organized shoe company.

Arthur H. Alden, upon graduating from the Pratt Free School, had gone to work in his father's shop to learn shoe manufacturing; at Hathaway, Soule & Harrington he became successively foreman, assistant superintendent, cost accountant and general manager. When the new firm of Alden, Walker & Wilde was formed Arthur Alden became its chief executive officer (to use a modern term) and supervised its operation for the next thirteen years.

During the first four years of its existence the business prospered, marketing shoes under its own name at $5.00 a pair and supplying larger companies with shoes to sell under their respective names on a nationwide basis. As October of 1904 arrived the firm had just completed its line of samples, some of which were already packed for the salesmen to take out on the road while others were on the racks ready for packing. Buyers from large retailing companies were in town to place their orders for the coming season, and stored in the building were quantities of raw materials – $10,000 worth of sole leather alone – in anticipation of a busy period of manufacturing.

Early in the morning of October 4th Eldred Walker, who lived nearby on Wareham Street, noticed a small blaze at the rear of the factory; he rushed into the street calling "Fire!" Other residents took up the cry and someone pulled the alarm to notify the fire department. But the alarm failed to operate properly and the ensuing delay proved to be costly, the flames spreading with a "wonderful rapidity," as the reporter for the Boston Globe put it. The firemen found the blaze beyond their control when they arrived; although they poured huge quantities of water into the inferno the fire continued unabated and they then confined their efforts to preventing the nearby dwellings of J.H. Moody and James curly as well as the blacksmith shop of T.F. Ford from being consumed by the sparks and hot cinders that were being rained upon them.

ARTHUR AND Annie Alden with their children, Mildred and Priscilla, in a photograph taken around 1900.

The spectators, seeing that all thought of saving the building had been abandoned, volunteered to remove the finished shoes from the building. These shoes were placed in an unoccupied factory building owned by C.W. Maxim and most of the samples, both packed and unpacked, were saved. The upper floors

(Continued on Page Ten)

THE "TOM THUMB HOUSE," so called because it was built for General Tom Thumb and his wife, Middleboro native Lavinia Warren, is located on Plymouth Street in the Warrentown section of Middleboro. (Photo by Jane Lopes)

Middleborough's "Top Ten" Homes

by Jane Lopes

The Middleboro Historical Commission, with the assistance of the Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District, has recently completed a Preservation Plan for the town of Middleboro. The plan offers guidelines that will help the commission and other town boards take steps to preserve and protect the historically significant areas, sites and buildings in the community. It is an exciting prospect, although one that obviously involves a great deal of work.

One aspect of the preparation of the Preservation Plan was the identification of ten of the most significant homes in Middleboro, outside the town's major village centers such as the Church at the Green and Titicut Green. The consulting firm asked to compile a "top ten" list of the most significant private dwellings, using criteria such as age, architectural significance and integrity, and historical significance (the role the building or its owners played in the development of the community). This list will be used to help determine, with the approval of current owners, which homes in Middleboro should be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. Currently, there are only three buildings – the former Peirce Store which is now used as a police station, the Washburn grain will and the Post Office – on this prestigious register.

Using the historic sites and buildings survey that was compiled by consultants several years ago and includes more than 400 pieces of property, the historical commission has come up with a list of ten homes which it would like to see preserv and protected. They range from the elegant "Gingerbrea House" on East Main Street to the simple half Cape where

Lavinia Warren was born, and each one represents Middleboro in a unique way.

The "Gingerbread House," also known as the Z. Leonard House, and more recently as the home of the Andreotollas, who owned it for several years and donated adjoining land to the town, is one of the few "high-style" homes in Middleboro that is not located on South Main Street. Situated on East Main Street across from the entrance to the Pratt Farm, this handsome house was built around 1860 in the Italianate style.

The Peter Oliver house on Plymouth Street, in the section of town once known as "Muttock," was owned by one of Middleboro's most famous colonial residents and was built in 1769. It is the only remaining building to be owned by the family headed by Judge Peter Oliver, who operated the ironworks on the Nemasket River that is now a public park, and who was forced to leave town because of his Tory leanings. The house is a beautiful example of the Federal style and is still owned by the Oliver family.

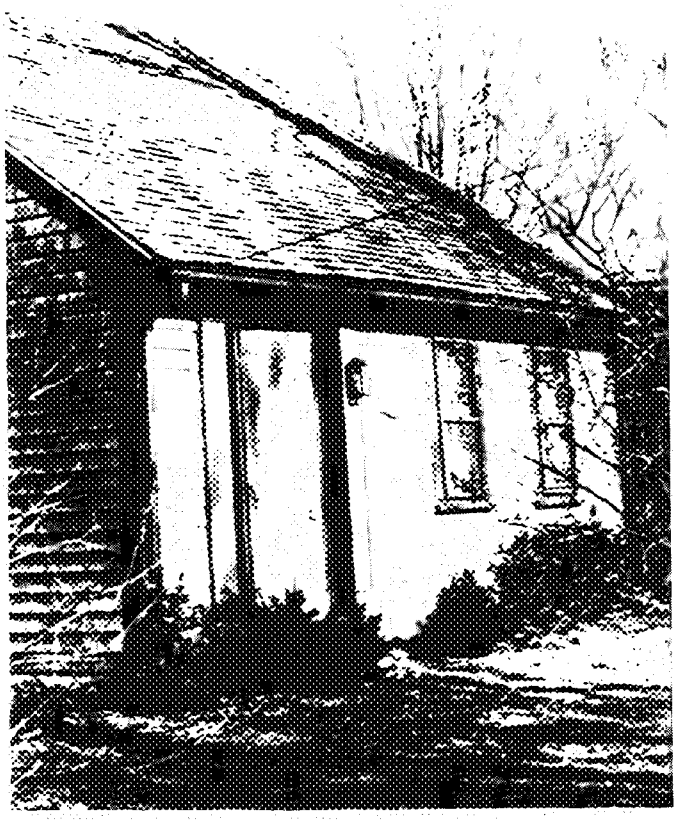
Commanding the attention of anyone travelling down Everett Street is the Richard Sampson Homestead, which is now owned by former Middleborough Historical Museum director Joan Ashley and her husband. The imposing Greek Revival home, built around 1840, features four large, round two-story columns supporting an entablature and pedimented gable. The mansion once overlooked the Sampson Brickyard, one of the town's most successful 19thcentury businesses.

Built by a member of the famous Eddy family, the Georgian style home on Plympton Street that currently belongs to historical commission member Sandra Savery and her family is the only remaining Eddy home outside the central Eddyville village area and at approximately 260 years of age could be one of the oldest intact homes in the Eddyville area. (The house known is the Eddy Homestead is within an area that will be proposed as a local historic district.) The Samuel Eddy, Jr. house was built around 1730 was also owned by Dr. Stephen Powers, grandfather of sculptor Hiram Powers.

The William Barden house, one of a complex of Barden family homes on "Barden Hill," is one of the few 17th-century homes left in Middleboro. It was built around 1684 and is a five-bay Cape with "a great deal of original fabric," according to the town's consultants. William Barden came to this country in 1638 and was the patriarch of a large and distinguished family.

Currently owned by the Antiquarian's editor emeritus, town historian Mertie Romaine, the "Weathercock House" on Bedford Street was built around 1750 and was occupied by Joshua Shaw, Daniel Alden and others. The name was given to the property by Lawrence Romaine, Mrs. Romaine's late husband, who named it for his family's English manor house. Mr. Romaine was an early editor of the Antiquarian and the founder of the Middleborough Historical Museum.

The Peter Vaughan house on Vaughan Street, a vernacular cottage built in 1761, retains many of its original features. It was named for the early owners of a large tract of land north of Assawompsett Pond and is believed to have been built by Peter Vaughan's brother Thomas, a house builder who was known to have built several houses in the area. The Vaughans settled in the area in the early 1700s and purchased their land in the Twelve Men's Purchase.



THIS HALF Cape on Plymouth Street, across from the "Tom Thumb House," is the birthplace of Lavinia Warren. (Photo by Jane Lopes)

Another of the oldest homes in Middleboro is the vernacular cottage located at 305 Wood Street. Built in the early 1700s, the house contains many original features and is located on property purchased in the Eight Men's Purchase in 1697.

There are two homes in Middleboro associated with Lavinia Warren, better known to the world as Mrs. Tom Thumb, the wife of the famous General Tom Thumb, who travelled with P.T. Barnum's circus, and who settled in Middleboro with his wife after their retirement from the entertainment world. Lavinia was born in the half Cape on Plymouth Street across from the more imposing home she built with her husband in the 1870s. The former was built around 1750 and belonged to the Warrenfamily for many years. Hulda Warren married James S. Bump in the early 19th century, and they had a daughter named Lavinia who dropped her last name, Bump,

(Continued on Page Ten)

"Top Ten" . . .

(Continued from Page Nine)

THIS IMPOSING 19th century mansion house is a familiar landmark to anyone who travels frequently on Everett Street. (Photo by Jane Lopes)

when she became an actress.

The Second Empire house the "little people" built after their travels retains a few of the features built into the home in keeping with its owners' diminutive size. Otherwise, it is a handsome example of period architecture.

The Middleboro Historical Commission hopes to encourage the preservation and protection of these homes, as well as Middleboro's "village centers," its archaeological sites, its historic commercial buildings and other important structures, as examples of Middleboro's heritage.

(Jane Lopes is the chairman of the Middleboro Historical Commission and the editor of the Antiquarian.)

Motorist's Lament

by A. L. Beals

I'd like to know just why it is
That when I see a parking space
Some other parking-minded guy
Then seems to think it's time to race
And beat me to the only spot
Within a block where I would call,
And then I have to walk and walk,
Which doesn't help my day at all.
Such tactics nearly make me burst—
He surely knows I saw it first!

A Shoe Business . . .

(Continued from Page Seven)

gave way under the weight of the massive shoe machinery and soon the roof fell in, sending up great clouds of cinders and dark smoke which rose high in the air, attracting the country folk from miles around.

While the firemen were managing to save the nearby buildings from burning the Jenks building on the southwest corner of Clifford and Wareham Streets and adjacent to the Needle Works building suffered some small damage and lost some of its windows. The Needle Works building, which housed the shoe factory, was declared a total loss by the insurance adjusters, at an estimated figure of between $30,000 and $40,000. The cause of the fire was never ascertained.

Even as the building was burning Mr. Alden stated that the firm was determined to rebuild and continue its operation in Middleboro, and an unused factory building was offered to them on a contingency basis. In the ensuing weeks, as speculators bought up the sole leather, the upper leather and bargain lots of fire-damaged shoes, many rumors circulated around town regarding the intentions of the owners; 100 jobs were at stake and the matter was of vital interest to the workers who had burned out. Unfortunately, the partners finally decided to take over a much larger factory that was available in Weymouth, and Middleboro lost a prosperous and growing enterprise.

Houses of North Middleboro

by Ethel R. Penniman

More than in any other nearby community the houses of North Middleboro attract the interest of visitors and passersby. They speak quietly of a past that made a lively story as the years went by. The people who lived in these houses took part in no battles on the village green and for the most part their names are not mentioned in national history books, but they were a part of national trends, developments and industry, part of the changing patterns of thought, of hopes. The houses in many cases reflect the people who lived in them much more than modern houses do.

The houses noticed first, of course, are the larger residences. These were mostly expressions of the pleasure that numerous members of the Pratt family took in their prosperity. In those days a prosperous man expressed his status sometimes in the horses he drove, but almost always in his dwellings. So the small village of North Middleboro has more than the usual share of fine old houses. If we go beyond the green on Plymouth Street, there is a large square house not of a very ancient type. This was the summer home of the Edmund Pratt family, now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Robert Mizaris. Edmund himself was not engaged in industry in North Middleboro but he enjoyed summers there. Coming back toward the green, we come to Roy Card's home, a large house of Victorian type, once the home of Zebulon Pratt Family. In this case the property was sold to a family, of another name at a rather early date. Between the two houses there came to be tight board fence, said to be an expression of disapproval of the change. But the new neighbors on his side planted a wide row of flowers and blooming shrubs, finding the fence a protection and background for his garden.

The beautiful white house facing the green, known as the Loheed home and now owned by William Washburn was the residence of David Pratt, a State Senator. This house was tastefully redecorated inside and out by him, and viewing it we can only think that he had a fine architect. He was much interested in the life of the digging wells in the area because of the ledge near the surface, he had a deep well made at the lower end of the green where everyone needing it was entitled to get water. This well was still in use into the 1930s. A stone watering through with flowering plants mark the site. In the State Legislature David Pratt tried on all possible occasions to work for any bill which would be to the advantage of the Middleboro area.

Going past the David Pratt house toward Pleasant Street is a residence with an architecture of a slightly Victorian flavor. It is now the home of the Woodburn family. At one time during the 1800s there was a flare of interest in Italian architecture. It may be that it was at that time Jared Pratt rebuilt his old family house. It is beautiful inside with twelve foot ceilings, marble fireplaces and a handsome staircase, but certainly such ceiling were more suitable to a warmer climate than that of Massachusetts. It is fortunate that this house was preserved to our landscape by present appreciative owners. Back in the 1930s it stood empty for many years with the doors unlocked. It was originally an old New England farmhouse and some of the rear rooms upstairs preserve that general look. The last Pratts to live in the house were Christopher and two unmarried sisters.

We pass the Pratt Free School, and first on the left of Pleasant Street is the residence of A. Kingman Pratt. It was for many years in the 18th and early 19th century the home of ministers of the Congregational Church. The best known one was perhaps the Reverend David Gurney. In his time the house became also a preparatory school where he educated boys with a view to Harvard College. Well into the 1900s the whole property

TITICUT Green, pictured here at an angle facing toward the Pratt Homestead, has changed little over the years. (Photo by Jane Lopes)

was an excellent working farm operated by Augustus Pratt. One may see across the street the foundations of a barn where the cattle were housed. The building burned with a great loss of cattle, and as Augustus Pratt was well along in years, the active operation of the farm was never resumed.

The tall brown shingled house on the right is a turn-of-the century house built by Herbert Pratt, who was at the time half the partnership of the Keigh and Pratt Shoe Company. Just beyond the house on the curve is the site of the factory. This industry ran for many years and under the managership of Herbert's son, Harold, became the last of many shoe factories which had operated in the village. It was eventually sold to strangers and not too much to anyone's surprise was hopelessly afire one winter's noontime.

Across the street are three very old homes. All were owned by the ancestors of Russell Carver. Five generations have lived here since the first owner, Joanna Aldrich. This is one of the very few homes to be continuously occupied by members of the same family.

Two newer houses are next in view on the left. Then a house not looking very old, but it is one of the homes of the Hathaway family who once occupied various houses in this section of Pleasant Street. There has not been a Hathaway in the area for many years. A large two-story house beyond was one of the wide farmland with a fine stone wall bordering it. It was known for many years after the departure of the Hathaways as Hathaway Lane. It was recently largely ruined by a lumbering operation where the tractors knocked down the walls. The house itself was last occupied by two generations of the Allan family. Father and son were prominent lawyers in the town of Middleboro. The Hathaways of Pleasant Street seemed to have scientific inclinations in early times. Among other activities one of them, after he was away from this section, became one of three men who solved the problems of converting crude oil into a burning fluid.

If instead of going along Pleasant Street from the green, we had continued along Plymouth Street, we would have found a number more of interesting houses. Directly across from the church is the Congregational parsonage, a very old dwell. still with ancient chimney and fireplaces. Several ministers with interests besides religious activities have lived here. One of them was Herbert Job. While yet a minister he became interested in ornithology. Later he left the ministry and took up this study of birds as his only work. He used to write about them, specializing mainly in sea birds. One of his books was titled "Among the Water-Fowl."

The building now under alteration was the old village store. It was once operated by Jared Pratt, at another time by Mr. Boynton of Middleboro, and for more than fifty years by the Caswell family of this village. The new store just beyond was built by this company, then under the head of Henry Casell, and at this moment one may meet four Caswell Brothers on duty.

(Editor's Note: The latter building now houses a toy-train museum.)

Directly across from the store is a house of special interest. It was not built in the village, but is an "adopted" house. Its original site was six miles away where the Unitarian Church in Middleboro now stands. Its best known occupant there was one of Middleboro's early doctors, and the house had a room originally intended as his library decorated with a marble fireplace and having much wall space for books.

Four or five houses on the left, is an old two story house now owned by Mr. Bent. It was the home of the Kingman Famil for several generations. Behind the barn there was once an i teresting farm lane leading down to the river. One Kingman father, as each of his children was born, planted a tree along the lane in honor of the child. These trees grew up tall and handsome and stood for years after the last Kingman moved away. In the hurricanes of 1938 and 1944 these trees were ruined and there is probably no healthy tree of the lot left along the old lane.

A house on Bedford Street is an excellent example of 18th century architecture, though not in the village it is worthy of note. Known for the last several years as the "Weathercock House" it is thought to have been built in 1750, possibly by the man who still owned it in 1804, Joshua Shaw. In 1823 Daniel Alden became the owner and when he died in 1879 it was leased to his 'kins-in law, Henry Shawn, for four dollars a month. It was operated as a farm until it was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Percy Clulow whose interest was antiques, a perfect setting for such a home business. Lawrence and Elizabeth Romaine bought it in 1932 and the place became well known throughout the country as the headquarters for Mr. Romaine's business of buying and selling rare books and trade catalogs (Mrs. Mertie Romaine, the current owner, is the editor emeritus of this publication.)

ONE OF several homes in North Middleboro associated with the Pratt family is this handsome house on Pleasant Street. (Photo by Jane Lopes)

Mrs. Penniman, who recently passed away, wrote the preceding article in 1976 for publication in a booklet on Nort Middleboro history. Mrs. Penniman's nephew, Clifford Richmond, has helped to keep the Middleborough Historical Museum buildings in repair.)

Isaac Thompson, Esquire:

A very important voter in the Massachusetts ratification of the United States Constitution on February 6, 1788.

by Merle A. Peabody and Jennifer Mott

A brief history of the events leading up to this important day are needed here. The year 1786 had been one of turmoil in Massachusetts. All over the state, farm property was being foreclosed because farmers could not pay their debts due to a somewhat burdensome tax structure. The Articles of Confederation was a document which loosely knitted all thirteen states together. Something needed to be done about the language in the Articles before the new United States of America became a laughing stock for the world. Each state was allowed to do its own thing. Each had its own rules and regulations.

Over the hot summer of 1787, twelve states who had sent delegates to Philadelphia met behind closed doors at Independence Hall. The state of Rhode Island sent no delegate because they saw no point in changing the Articles. The fifty-five delegates met to upgrade the language of the Articles, but behind the closed doors a new document was hammered out. Much compromising was done to make this the excellent document it is today.

However, the fifty-five delegates realized that each of the states needed to ratify this document. They also realized that to send the idea of ratification up to each of the state legislatures would be tantamount to a veto because the legislatures all realized that they were losing much of their power to a federal government. The people of each state were thus given the opportunity to vote "yea" or "nay" to this new document by sending delegates to state constitutional conventions. Immediately, two groups faced opposite sides of the issue in each state – one for ratification of the Constitution, called the Federalists, and one against ratification of the Constitution, called the Anti-Federalists. There were some very good reasons for the Anti-Federalists being against ratification: (1) the Constitution had no area set up for individual freedoms for the people; and (2) it was felt that somehow the new federal government would lord it over the state governments and cause more problems than not. A two-thirds number of states (9 out of 13) was needed to ratify the Constitution as the law of our land. December 1878 saw Delaware and Pennsylvania ratify the Constitution. January 1788 saw New Jersey, Georgia, and Connecticut follow. Each of these had just sent a few delegates to their state constitutional convention. The pivotal state was now holding its convention in January 1788 – Massachusetts. It was felt that the remaining states would follow the lead of what Massachusetts did about the Constitution. All eyes were on Massachusetts from the opening of their convention in January until the final vote was cast on February 6, 1788. One of the important members of this drama was Isaac Thompson, Esquire, a native of Middleboro.

Isaac Thompson, the son of John and Lydia Thompson, was born in Middleboro, Massachusetts, on February 1, 1745. He was baptized on March 2 of that same year. Isaac Thompson had three major occupations – farmer, stone cutter, and politician, the latter on both the local as well as the state level. He married Lucy Sturtevant (Stuyvesant) in 1774. They had nine children, one of whom was instrumental in the settling of Halifax, Massachusetts – Deacon Isaac Thompson. From March 14, 1786, until his death, Isaac Thompson was a member of the Middleboro First Congregational Church of the Green. He was a member of the building committee for the church building that now presently stands at the Green. His stone cutting tools were probably in use as the church was built.

During the Revolutionary War, Thompson was a private in the First Company of Minutemen, under the leadership of Captain William Shaw. This company responded to the "Lexington Alarm" on April 19, 1775. He served in and around Boston for a short period of time, as this group was not included in the regular Continental Army. In the year 1776, Thompson joined the First Company of Infantry, again as a private. This group was asked to defend Rhode Island temporarily, which many did not wish to do as it had nothing to do, many felt, with the defense of Massachusetts. At this point, it is surmised that Thompson went back to work on his farm.

All of these men who came out to fight early on in the war were young, but little was done by the state to help them as far as food, uniforms, and shelter. They all had to fend for themselves. Most of these men had signed to defend Boston, not Rhode Island. However, skirmishes happened around Rhode Island for some three years after the war's commencement (1775-1778).

Prior to Thompson's call to the ratification convention held in Boston in 1788, he did important service for the community of Middleboro. He was a Middleboro selectman from 1778-1786 and was a Representative to the General Court of Massachusetts from 1782-1786. After a year's hiatus from the selectman's position, he was re-elected in 1778.

In his first year as selectman (1778) a smallpox epidemic came to the town of Middleboro. Various town meetings met that year and voted not to hold inoculations against smallpox in houses. They did allow the selectman to monitor the matter as to whom should be quarantined. On June 2, 1778, it was

Thompson, Reverend Backus, and two other gentlemen represented Middleboro at the convention which was to be held in Boston.

allowed that inoculations would be given in two specially built hospitals for smallpox patients. Inoculations would still not be allowed to be given in houses.

On April 26, 1787, Thompson was made a justice of the peace. This was his first of many appointments to this post, which he probably held until his death. Reappointments for this post were made every seven years.

In June, 1787, Thompson was one of three men chosen from the town of Middleboro, along with three men from Plympton, to help settle the town's boundary lines. A perambulation of the entire area was made, and the stakes were placed. Thompson was also an overseer of the poor, which was a way of helping the poor, at this time, monetarily at the town's expense.

In 1785, the problem that was a major factor in the calling of the Constitutional Convention came into focus. Many farmers in Massachusetts could not pay their debts and mortgages, so there were many farm foreclosures. Daniel Shays, a farmer, and other farmers made an unsuccessful raid on the Springfield Armory. Shays' Rebellion lasted from the summer of 1786 and was finally quelled in December of 1786. Something needed to be done. During the rebellion, Thompson was a member of the General Court. His constituents, who were worried about the monetary situation in the state, had earlier drafted a letter of recommendation at the January 2, 1786, town meeting and sent it to him. This letter recommended that something be done to alleviate the present monetary problems by setting up a bank that would handle paper money as a viable currency, thus helping the people who were in dire straits who could not pay their mortgage payments with gold or silver. Evidently nothing was done in this area because a few short months later came Shays' Rebellion.

After the Philadelphia Convention, nine out of thirteen states (two-thirds) was needed to ratify the Constitution. The turn for Massachusetts came in January-February, 1788. At the Massachusetts convention, two very important friends were delegates – Isaac Thompson and Reverend Isaac Backus. Although Thompson had little to say at the convention, Backus did speak out. Backus and Thompson had the same ideas. They both felt that because there was no test of a religious nature (one did not have to belong to a specific denomination or pay so much money to a church), the importation of slaves would hopefully be abolished around 1808, and there were to be no titles of nobility, the vote should be for the Constitution. They also were happy to hear of a possible future Bill Of Individual Rights that might be added to the constitution through amendments. This would eventually be done in 1791.

Thompson, Reverend Backus, and two other town gentlemen represented Middleboro at the convention which was to be held in Boston. A vote was called of the town meeting members on December 17, 1787, to see what the town would instruct these delegates. The four men were sent to the convention to vote in the negative against the Constitution's ratification.

These men traveled forty miles daily from Middleboro to Boston. Isaac Thompson was in attendance 22 of the 28 days. All delegates were paid travel allowances according to how many days they were in attendance. The total amount received by Thompson was 9 pounds, 16 shillings, 0 pence.

The convention went until February, 1788, when the vote came down. Isaac Thompson and Reverend Isaac Backus voted for the Constitution; the other two men voted in the negative. Evidently, the townspeople did not hold this vote against Thompson because they re-elected him as a selectman in the town election shortly after the ratification convention.

After the convention, Thompson was a Middleboro selectman from 1788-1797. He was also a Massachusetts state senator from 1796-1805. He was the first senator to be elected from this district. As selectman he was appointed in 1795 to the committee to erect a new town house for public business transactions. From 1788 until this point, town house erection had met with much opposition, having been voted down in 1788 and 1790. In 1795, Thompson and the other eight members of the committee chose to postpone action, but their report was voted down and the town house erection was voted. The town house was begun in 1796 and completed and accepted on January 2, 1798.

During the 1800s (1807 – 1815), Thompson advised and helped Widow Patience Tinkham with her affairs. He was paid an annual sum of $80 by the Church on the Green for his advice to her. Thompson was paid the final sum of $67.97 after the Widow Tinkham died.

From 1808 until his death, Thompson paid various small payments to the church called interest. Their purpose was never mentioned in the readings, so it may be conjectured that they were either interest payments made from having borrowed money from the church, or they were the tithe paid yearly by the people. My belief is that this was the tithe paid yearly by the people. For Thompson, this never exceeded $8.

Also in the years 1800-1801, Thompson was paid the sum of $28.85 for taking care of the church's funding records.

After a fruitful life, he died on December 21, 1819. He is buried in the First congregational Church of the Green cemetery in Middleboro, Massachusetts.

(Merle Peabody, a former Middleboro resident and a social studies teacher at Brockton Christian Regional High School, and his student, Jennifer Mott, wrote the preceding article for the Massachusetts Council for Social Studies' observance of the bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution. The original of their essay, along with others, is in the Massachusetts State Archives in Boston. Mr. Peabody is a member of the Middleboro Historical Commission, the Middleborough Historical Association and the Taunton Historical Society.)

Eyewitness To History

"I heard the terrible rumbling noise and thought it must be a car passing by the house although they had never made such a noise before, but I didn't have to wait long before I found out what it was," May Thompson Keyes wrote to her aunt in Middleboro.

The earthquake in California earlier this year was devastating in terms of human lives lost and property destroyed, and for historians and those who were alive at the turn of the century, the stories about it were reminiscent of the great San Francisco earthquake of 1906.

At least one Middleboro resident, Abigail Alden of Forest Street, heard a firsthand, albeit belated, account of the terrifying morning of April 18. In a letter to her aunt, May Thompson Keyes describes the events of the day, apparently as the result of a request from Mrs. Alden.

George Barden Jr. of Mattapoisett, who is related to both women, submitted a copy of that portion of Mrs. Keyes' letter describing the earthquake for publication in the Antiquarian, thinking that "with the recent earthquake so much in the news, it occurs to me that a letter describing the San Francisco earthquake of 1906, written to a resident of Middleboro, could be of interest to readers of the Antiquarian."

Mr. Barden explained that Mrs. Keyes was the granddaughter of James Gardner Thompson, whose diary was examined in the last issue of the Antiquarian. Mrs. Alden, the daughter of James Thompson, was also the wife of Andrew Alden, Mr. Barden's great-grandfather and the subject of an article in this issue of the Antiquarian. Mrs. Keyes' father, Benjamin Lowell Thompson, was born in North Middleboro and later moved to California.

Following is Mrs. Keyes account of a day that seemed "like yesterday" to her even though five years had passed.

"Dear Aunt Abbie,

You wanted me to tell you something about the earthquake...you wouldn't think to look at San Francisco today that five years ago it was almost completely destroyed by fire. Why, there is hardly a trace of it now. Of course, Aunt Abby, if it hadn't been for the terrible fire the earthquake wouldn't have caused so very much damage. As you remember, it happened on the 18th of April at 10 minutes to 5 in the morning. I was awake nursing my boy. I heard the terrible rumbling noise and thought it must be a car passing by the house although they had never made such a noise before, but I didn't have to wait long before I found out what it was. My husband is a terrible fine sleeper but that was once I didn't have to shake him to wake him. Well can you imagine being out on the ocean on a stormy night in a tub, and you hanging on for dear life trying to keep from being tipe (sic) out into the water. Well that is near as I can come to telling you what it was like for I certainly hang on to the bed to keep from being thrown out onto the floor. My little girl slept in the room next to mine in a foulding (sic) bed and while my boy was little I use (sic) to keep a night lamp burning in the next room and it sat on a table at the foot of Helen's bed. We had gas lights but I didn't like to turn them low for I was afraid they would go out. Helen's bed was upset and the lamp was thrown onto the covers setting them afire, and my husband had quite a time putting the fire out because it was impossible to walk. He had to crawl on the floor and when he would be almost there the shake would become more severe and throw him over to the other side of the room. Well he got the fire out somehow and he always declares he put it out with his night shirt but I never could find any burnt places on him so I think he must have had a blanket instead of his shirt tail. I finely (sic) managed to get out of bed and over to the window and of all the awful sights I did see. One of my neighbors was standing in the street by the side of her father an old gray bearded man and all she had on was a little shirt and he was naked as the day he was born -- people were passing but didn't seem to pay any attention. The French Hospital was across the street from us and the patients ran out in their night dresses many of them dying before they could get them back in the house. But we all stayed in the house until we were dressed. The fire didn't get out as far as we lived but then I lost most everything I had. My stove was broken all to pieces, all my dishes were broken, by cubbord (sic) upset and the doors broken -- smashed when the chimney fell. The soot came down the fireplace and blew all over my carpets and the water tank bursted (sic) and flooded my floors so my carpets were spoiled. Then I had a big washing soaking for the next morning and it just seemed as if all my best things were in the wash that week. There was a shelf over my wash trays where I kept a box of nails, by bluing, soap, washing powder, a can of lye and numerous other things. Can you picture what my clothes must have been like? It was several days before it was safe to go in the house and when I did my clothes were all rusty and full of bluing and eaten up with the lye and washing powder. Rockers were broken off chairs and everything scratched up so you can see I didn't have much left. I had a brand new bed and that was the first night I had even slept in it. Everybody moved out in the vacant lots -- we were like one Great Camp Meeting party, and really Aunt Abbie I enjoyed it. Everybody told stories and we would sit up most all night and watch the terrible glare of the fire downtown and listen to the terrible roar when they would blast the big buildings to try to keep the fire

"They had the fire almost under control when it broke out in another place."

from spreading. They had nothing to fight the fire with, there was no water so they would blow up a block of buildings to try to keep the fire from spreading but it didn't seem to do any good. If it hadn't been for a woman things wouldn't have been so bad. They had the fire almost under control when it broke out in another place. They had told her she mustn't light a fire in her stove but she did anyway and of course the house caught and wentfrom house to house like wild fire. Her penalty was death...the soldiers shot her. The soldiers had to kill so many people. There was a grocer right near us who they had to shoot but everyone thought it served him right. Just think – he raised the bread to $1.00 a loaf. If mothers came to him and begged for a can of cream to give to their starving babies he refused. Oh that part of the Shake was awful. Then the water was so hard to get we had to drink the water from the lake in Golden Gate Park. It was awful good to us, but I would hate to have to drink it now. When I write of it it brings it all back and it seems terrible but I suffered so little compared to what some did that I don't like to complain. Rich people were made poor and since then many poor ones have become rich."

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TIMELESS SCENES include this photo of a country auction. Taken in 1977, the scene is similar to one that will be available to photographers at the 4-H Fair on Labor Day weekend. (Photo by Clint Clark)

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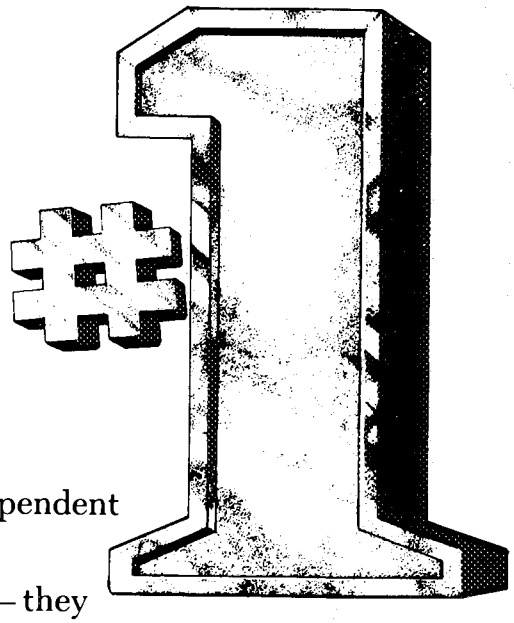

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A message from the editor

by Jane Lopes

Museum director/curator Marsha Manchester said she got the idea for the "diversions" portion of the Historical Association's annual meeting from the pages of the Antiquarian.

An article in the last issue inspired her to rent trolley cars for a tour of "Old Middleborough" that was interrupted in a delightful way by a stop at the famous Tom Thumb house on Plymouth Street for coffee and dessert – dessert that turned out to be a birthday cake for Historical Association officer Tom Weston.

Despite an untimely downpour – springtime in New England seemed to consist mainly of untimely downpours this year – the trolley tour, augmented by a Council on Aging van because of the popularity of the event, was so successful that another trip is planned in the future. The next tour may focus on South Middleboro.

Members of the association and their guests, following a family-style dinner and a brief business meeting, were able to see Middleboro in a different light, as tourists enjoying the local sights. This unique idea heightened our awareness of the rich history of our community, and made us realize how fortunate we are to have the historic homes, buildings and sites that are available for us to enjoy. Nearly every street that the tour covered had at least one or two points of interest, from the homes on South Main Street at the tour's start and finish to the beautiful Titicut Green to the two homes associated with Lavinia Warren, the wife of General Tom Thumb. Incidentally, Lavinia's birthplace is now the home of Jim and Marsha Manchester, while the mansion house – at least by Middleboro standards – that the general and his wife occupied in later years is now owned by the Salemis, our gracious hosts on the tour.

RUTH WATT, who served as secretary of the Middleboro Historical Association for a number of years, receives a gift of appreciation from President Robert Beals during the association's annual meeting. (Photo by Jane Lopes)

At the end of the evening, Marsha was left with the nice problem of having to "top this one."

Other events involving the association this spring included Founders Day activities on June 2. The museum was one of three sites, including Oliver's Mill and the A&D Toy Train Museum in North Middleboro, on a shuttle bus tour throughout the day. Craftspeople demonstrated their skills on the museum grounds, while local Girl Scouts sold lemonade and pastry. Members of the association, led by president and Mrs. Robert Meals, conducted tours of the museum.

Meanwhile, at Oliver's Mill, Ted Eayrs, now an architectural consultant and furniture restorer, conducted a tour of the 18th century mill sites that he helped to excavate as a high school student. A scale model of the Oliver Mills is part of the museum's collections. In addition to Ted's tour, Sylvia Breck of the Eddy Homestead Association offered a brief history of the Eddy family and the homestead, which was open to visitors for the day, and Anita Neilsen, a Wampanoag, spoke on the culture of the people who greeted the first white settlers in what

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ASSOCIATION OFFICER Tom Weston blows out the candles on a surprise birthday cake at the Tom Thumb house. (Photo by Jane Lopes)

is now Middleboro.

At noon, a ceremony held at Oliver's Mill honored the town's founders, including Native Americans as well as colonists, and former selectman Joseph Walker was recognized for his many contributions to the community.

The second annual Founders Day celebration, to consist of a two-day event, will be held on the first weekend in June next year.

In the meantime the association has joined with the Middleboro Historical Commission, the Natural Resources Preservation Committee, the Massachusetts Archaeological Society, the A&D Toy Train Museum, the Eddy Homestead Association and other organizations and individuals to work on joint projects like the Founders Day celebration that are designed to teach people about the town's history, encourage preservation of historic sites and buildings, and raise funds for historic preservation. The group is planning a lecture series in the fall, and may also be able to put together a special program at the museum later this summer.

Volunteers are needed for these projects, and for the continued operation of the museum, which plans to expand its hours of operation this summer to be open Wednesday through Sunday during July and August as well as the first two Sundays in September. If everyone who appreciates the "treasures" we have here in Middleboro could donate a few hours of time, we could ensure that our own living history will be available for future generations to study and appreciate. And besides accomplishing a great deal, we're having fun, as anyone who attended this year's annual meeting can attest.

Eddy Homestead reopens

The Zachariah Eddy Homestead in the Eddyville section of Middleboro opened for the season on June 16 with a reception and open house. Hostesses guided visitors through the home, which depicts country life in the 19th century.

The house, which is located at the intersection of Plympton and Cedar Streets, was built in 1803 for Atty. Zachariah Eddy, a law associate of Daniel Webster. It sits on land purchased from the Indians by Pilgrim Samuel Eddy in 1661, and remained in the Eddy/Breck family for five generations until it was turned into a tax-free museum in 1962.

The museum contains many Eddy family paintings and pieces of furniture, along with artifacts of early New England life. The Eddy Homestead Association also owns a genealogical collection which is available on request to students of local history.

The Eddy Homestead is open to the public during the summer months, and at other times by appointment. Admission is free; donations are accepted.

Booklet available

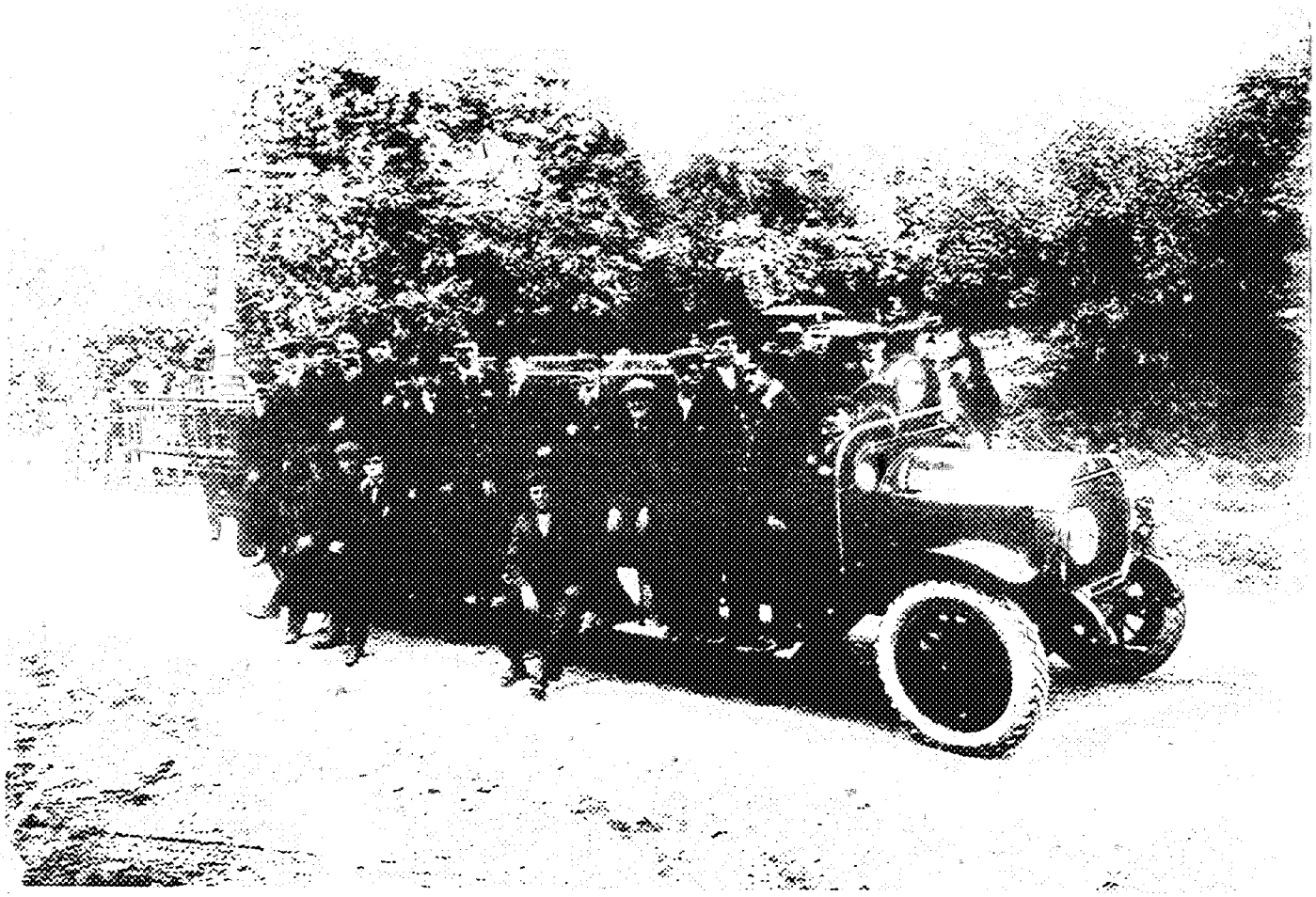
Available at the Middleboro Gazette office are copies of a booklet consisting mainly of photographs published by the Gazette as part of two pictorial history series in 1931.

Contributed by Mrs. Reginald Drake from her husband's collection of clippings, the series of photos shows what Middleboro looked like about 50 years prior to 1931. Gaps in the Drake collection were filled from the Antiquarian's files.

The booklet was compiled by Walter Thompson, associate member of the Middleboro Historical Commission and a collector of photographs associated with Middleboro's history. Mr. Thompson put the booklet together to commemorate Middleboro's Founders Day celebration on June 2.

Copies of the booklet are on sale for $5 each; proceeds will benefit local historical preservation projects.

Also available at the Middleboro Gazette office on West Grove Street are Founders Day T-shirts, $10 each, and copies of Mrs. Mertie Romaine's book on "General Tom Thumb and His Lady," $7 hardcover, $5 paperback.



CITIES SERVICE ladder truck delivered to Middleboro on Nov. 11, 1916. Carlton W. Maxim, chief engineer, is standing on the running board facing to the rear. (Collection of Middleborough Historical Museum)

To the rescue!

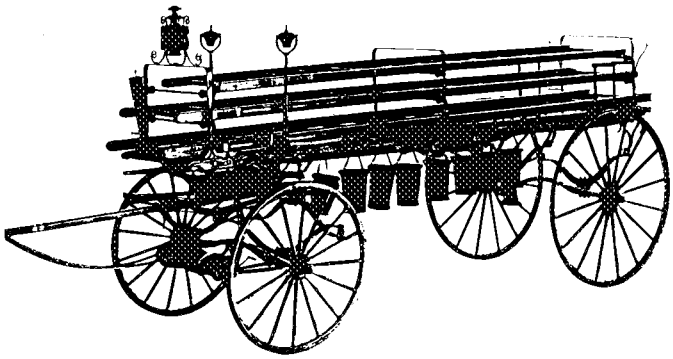
Ladder trucks of the Middleboro Fire Department

By Robert M. Beals, President
Middleborough Historical Association

In the first part of my article on the Middleboro Fire Department in the Middleborough Antiquarian, March 1986, I mentioned that shortly after the department was organized in 1852, a hand-drawn ladder truck was purchased. In 1877, a new ladder truck was purchased, and the old fire station on School Street was constructed. This hand-drawn rig was in service until 1915. This was the year that Maxim Motor company began to manufacture its own completely built pumpers and ladder trucks, and Middleboro was one of the first to purchase its first motorized ladder truck. According to an old Town Report, this was a "Cities Service" truck and it was delivered on November 11, 1961. The term "Cities Service" means that in addition to ladders in various lengths, the truck also carried a chemical tank and booster hose about the size of a garden hose.

This truck was in service until 1946, almost thirty years, when the department purchased a new Maxim ladder truck or "Quad." This rig had an enclosed cab, several ladders, a 750-gpm pump, 250-gallons of water, suction hose and booster equipment.

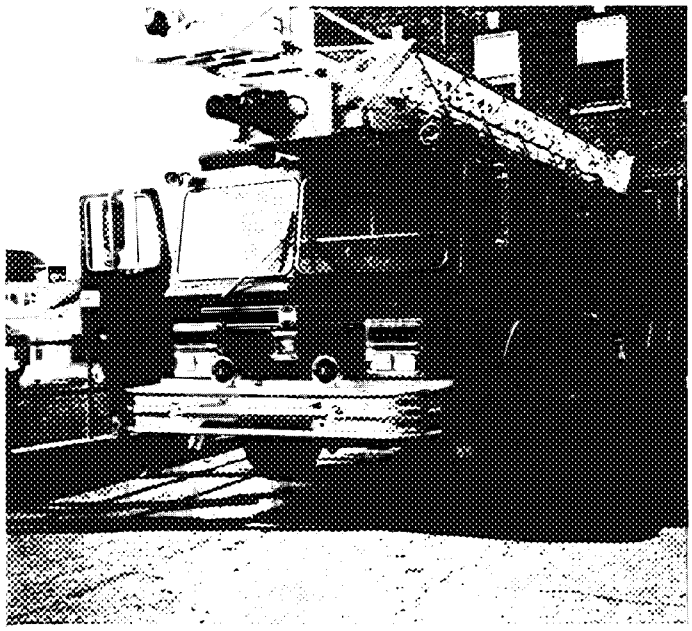
In 1955 a new Maxim 75-foot aerial ladder truck was ordered and delivered to the Fire Department on January 18, 1956. The aerial ladder was mid-ship mounted, and the truck was also equipped with a 250-gpm pump, 150-gallon water tank, and ground ladders in several lengths. In 1965, the 1946



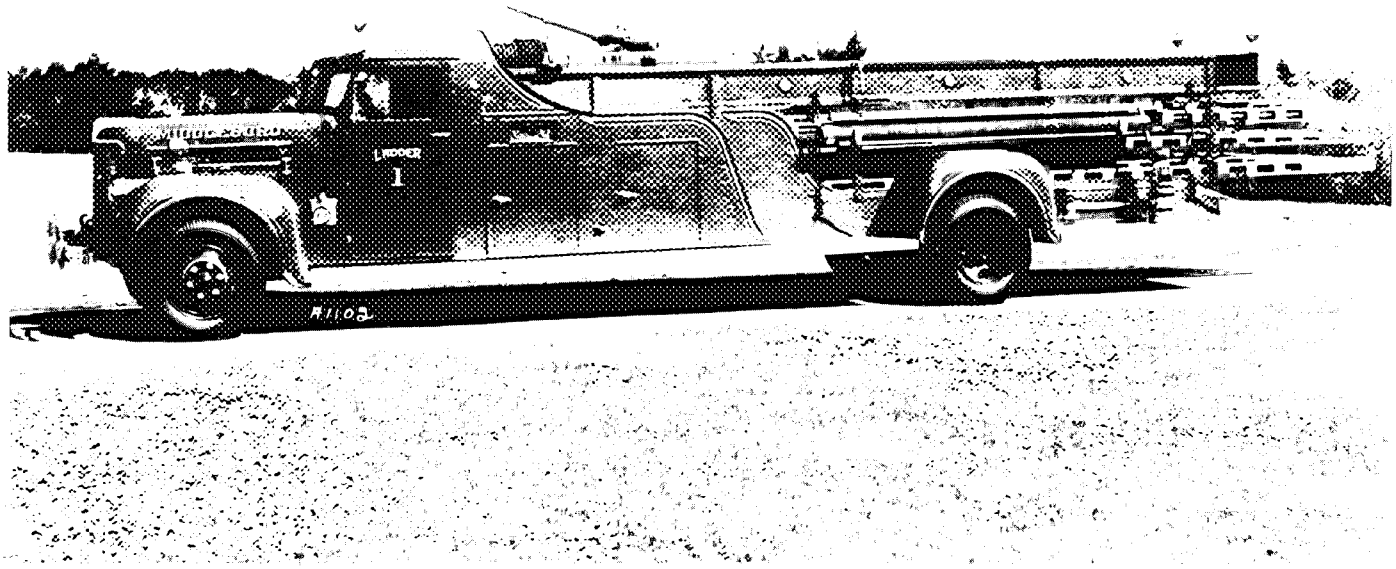
AN EARLY hand-drawn ladder truck, possibly similar to the first one used by the Middleboro Fire Department from 1852-1877. (Collection of R. M. Beals)

"Quad" was converted and shortened in length to a 750-gpm pumper, and returned to the Fire Department as Engine Two. Several years ago, the 1955/56 aerial ladder truck was "modernized" with the installation of a diesel engine, automatic transmission, rebuilt pump, and other changes to keep it in service for at least another thirty years. In 1988, it was discovered, during testing by the department, that the steel aerial ladder had several cracks in it. The truck was immediately removed from service, and temporarily replaced with a reserve ladder truck from Wareham. Town meeting approved the purchase of a new ladder truck, after considerably discussion, and a new one was delivered late in 1989, one of the last fire apparatus to be built by Maxim. The new rig can also be considered a "Quad," since in addition to its 109-foot rear-mounted ladder, it also has a 2,000-gpm pump, 300-gal water tank, and ground ladders. The engine is a diesel with an automatic transmission, and a four-door sedan cab that will seat at least six firemen.

Since Maxim Motors closed its doors and discontinued production of December 15, 1989, it is very possible that the next aerial ladder truck purchased by Middleboro, some 30 years from now, will not carry the name of the company that has been part of the town's industry since 1914.



1989 MAXIM rear-mount 109-foot aerial, with 2000-gpm pump, 300-gallon water tank, four-door enclosed cab, diesel engine, and automatic transmission. (Collection of R.M. Beals)



1946 MAXIM "Quad" ladder truck that was converted to a pumper in 1965. (Collection of R.M. Beals)

A personal glimpse of the 1920s

Sunshine, family trips and local tragedy are among Florence Harlow's childhood memories of Middleboro

by Florence E. Harlow

(The following collection of memories, strung together with photographs from her family album, was submitted to the Middleboro Gazette by Miss Harlow, who said she has been "pulling the albums apart and distributing the contents" among her family members. "That left me with some snapshots of some day trips we took, mostly back in the '20s. There were no dates of the years taken, so have put my memory to work and used dates which fit the pictures," she wrote from her Brockton home.)

In the 1920s, the Harlow family lived in a house on Fairview Street, one of only two homes on the street at that time. "My father once told me that when there was a snowstorm, the men from the two houses would dig a path down the street to Wareham Street so the three Swett girls (the Harlows' neighbors) could go to school," Miss Harlow wrote.

"The house at 6 Fairview St. was built by my great-uncle Benjamin F. Harlow and his brother Simeon, who was my grandfather. It was occupied by Benjamin Harlow and his family until they left with a group of other Middleboro folks to reside in California. That was in the early 1910s. The house was left in the care of a real estate agent to be rented. In 1918 my father bought the house and we moved in the same year. To my knowledge, there were no Harlows living there during that four to five year period.

"It was the first house built on the street. So with the exception of those four to five years there was someone born a Harlow living on Fairview Street from 1893 to April 1989, a period of 96 years.

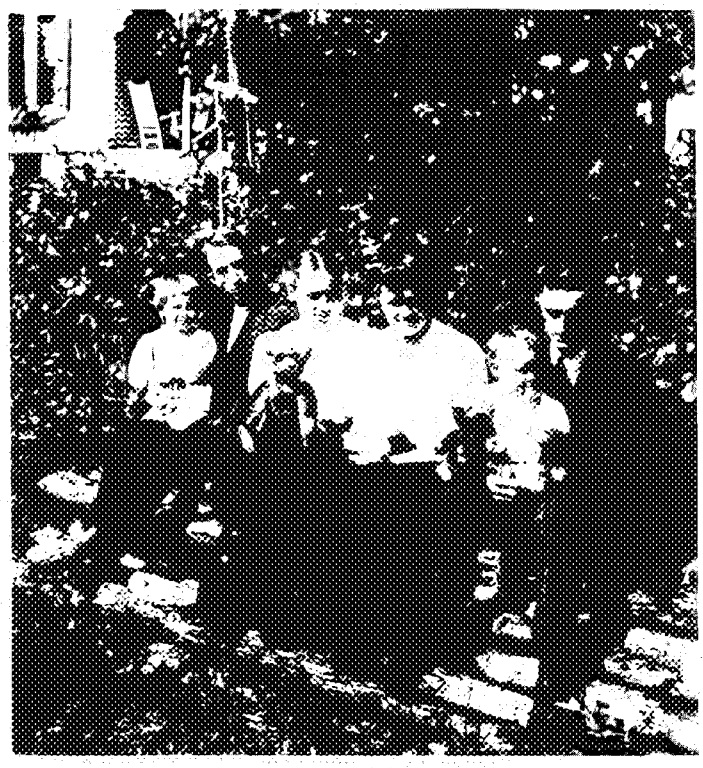
A picture of friends enjoying a Sunday afternoon shows the Sumners and the Harlows in a scene from 1907.

"Fred Sumner was the jeweler in Middleboro, and when my father bought the house on Fairview Street ten years later, the Sumners rented the apartment on the first floor. It was around 1920, don't remember the exact date, but I was just tall enough to stand at a window and see what was going on outside.

Tragedy struck the household, however, painting a different picture from the one taken on that sunny afternoon.

"I remember when (Fred Sumner) shot himself in one of the rooms on the third floor of the house. Can remember standing at the window and watching all the people coming and going, and Mr. Soule backing the hearse into the driveway. My first experience with death," Miss Harlow wrote.

It wasn't until several months ago that I learned the reason he committed suicide. There was an article in the Brockton Enterprise about old happenings in Middleboro and there was a short paragraph in it that spoke of a Middleboro jeweler who committed suicide because he was bankrupt. That connected in my mind with the experience of almost 70 years ago."



ENJOYING A SUNNY afternoon are neighbors, from left, Fred Sumner, his wife Cora Belle, Esther Harlow and her husband Franklin. Sumner is holding his son Norman, while Frank Harlow is holding his son Franklin.

A photograph of a delivery man brought back memories of the Hathaway Bakery, which operated in Brockton from the '20s to the '40s and delivered baked goods door to door. Miss Harlow found a picture of the bakery truck, and of delivery man Arthur Atwood, who delivered baked goods to the Harlows for many years.

"I still have a white linen handkerchief with a tatted edge on it that his wife had made," Miss Harlow recalls, "It was given to me when I graduated from MHS in 1936. Do not know the exact year the picture was taken, but believe it was in the mid '20s."

A picture of a New York steamer going through the Cape Cod Canal was taken in 1936, the day the new Sagamore Bridge was dedicated and opened to traffic.

"The New York to Boston Steamship was late in going through the canal, the reason I do not know. It usually we through the canal about 2 a.m. To my recollection it was t only time I saw the New York to Boston steamship going through the canal."

THE NEW YORK to Boston steamer heads through the Cape Cod Canal on the opening day of the new Sagamore Bridge in 1938. The old bridge is in the background.

Photos of other sailing ships recalled Sunday afternoon drives to Round Hill in North Dartmouth, where the family would enjoy the ocean view, "while listening to the radio programs transmitted through the speakers that were built on a little round hill.

"It was owned by the famous Hettie Green of Wall Street, who we would see once in a while going up her mansions in r big black electric car.

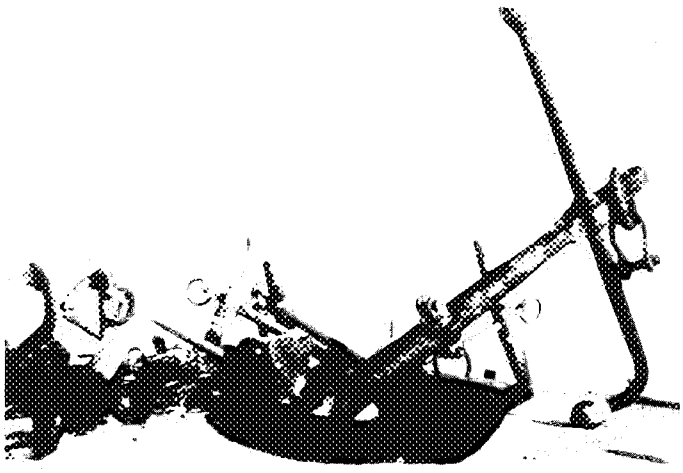
The Harlow photo albums contained pictures of the anchor at the entrance to the estate, the radio transmitter on Round Hill and the whaling ship Charles W. Morgan, which was docked at that time at Round Hill and was later moved to Mystic Seaport in Connecticut.

Miss Harlow's memories of trips to Round Hill ended when she would "fall to sleep down there and wake up in my own bed at home."

Once a year, the family would travel to Provincetown, in 1923 riding in a model T Ford. "My mother would pack a lunch which we enjoyed on the beach at Race Point. This time there was the added attraction of a shipwrecked rum runner at Race Point."

The family took pictures of the shipwreck that are now too faded to reproduce, but they show family and friends exploring the ship's remains and sitting on the bowsprit.

(The Antiquarian is indebted to Miss Harlow for having the opportunity to see something of another time through her memories.)



AN OLD ANCHOR stood at the entrance to Hettie Green's estate on Round Hill in North Dartmouth.

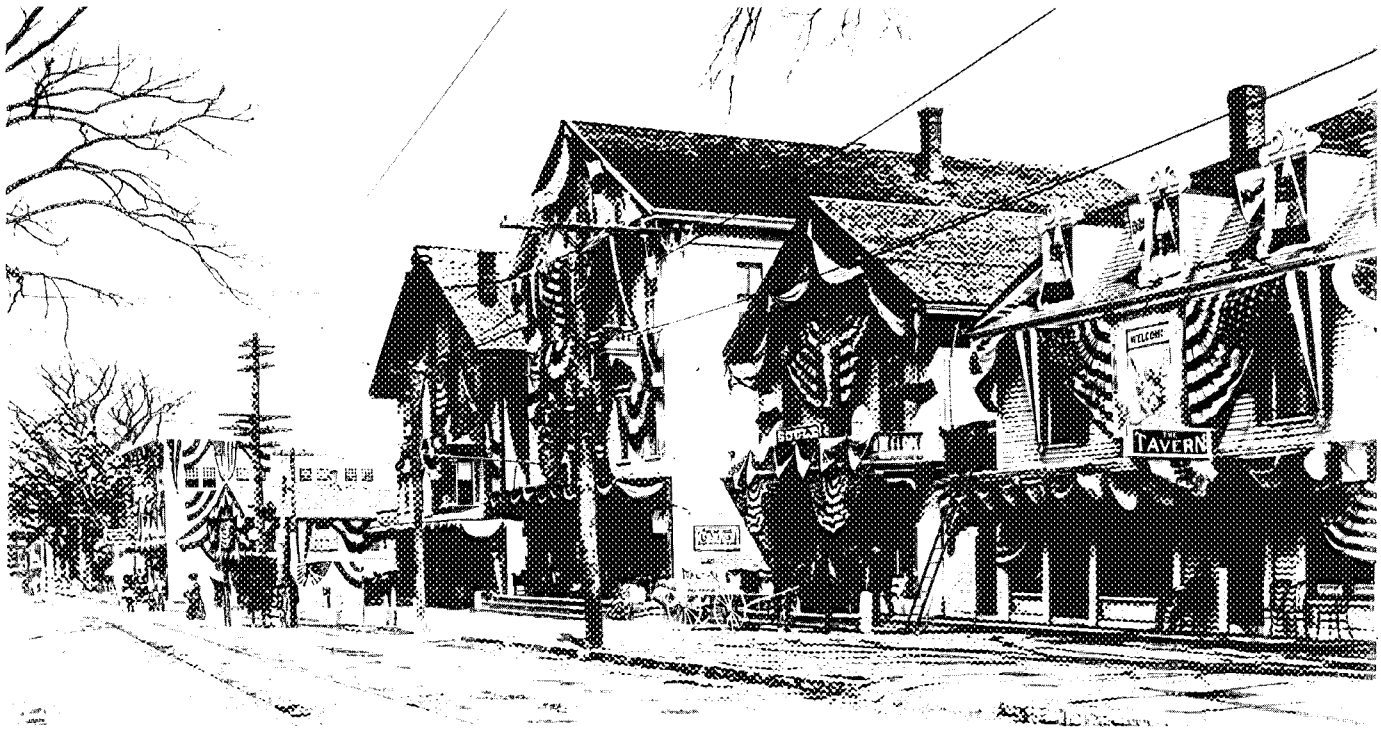
ARTHUR ATWOOD, a delivery man for the Hathaway Bakery, brought baked goods to the Harlow family's Fairview Street home for many years.

The good old summer time,

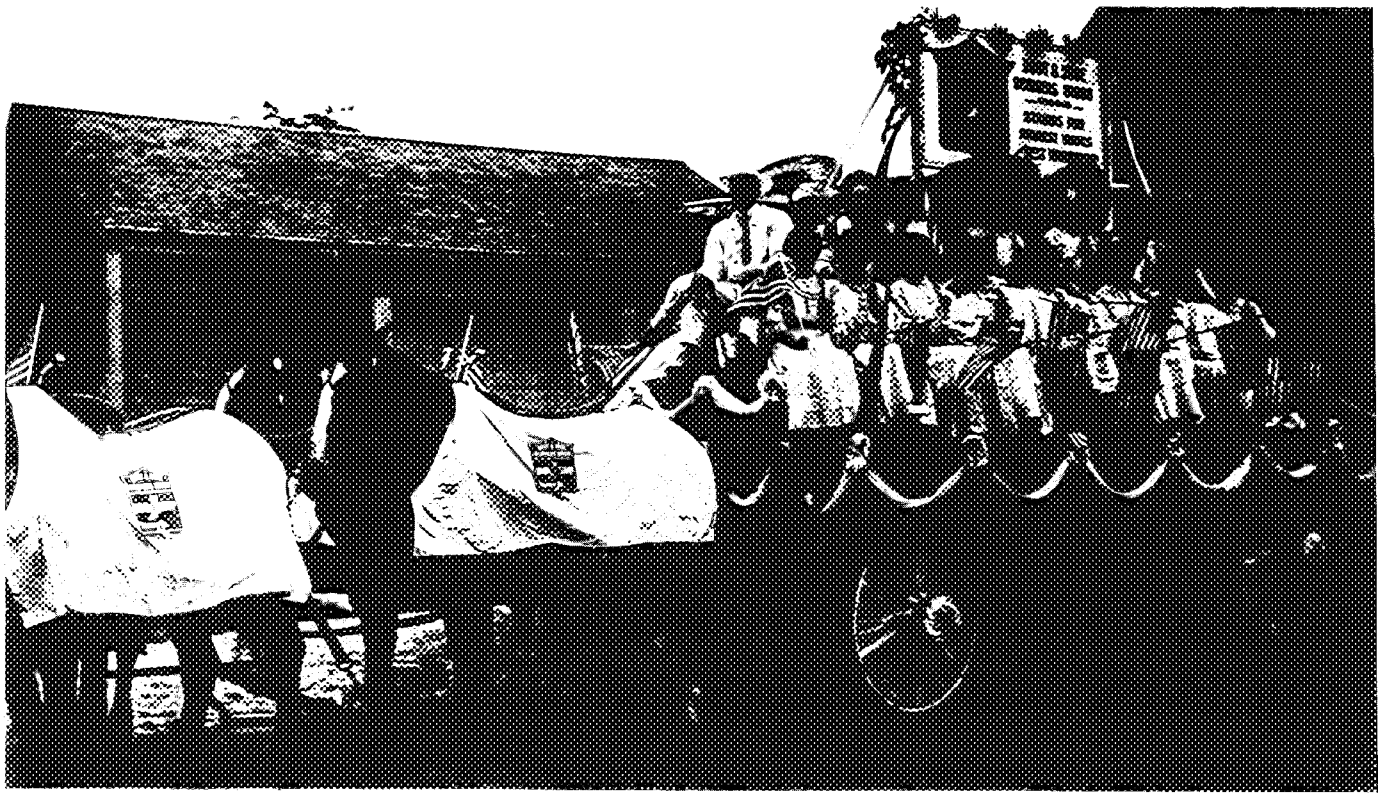
UNIDENTIFIED women relax on a handsome "piazza" on a long-ago summer day.

YOUNG PEOPLE cool off in the waters of Assawompset Pond while their elders look on.

back in the good old days



DOWNTOWN MIDDLEBORO is decorated for the Odd Fellows celebration near the turn of the century. In one of a series of photographs taken by Fred. F. Churbuck and donated to the Middleborough Historical Museum by his daughter, Mrs. Dalton Penniman. All the photos on these pages are part of the collection.



THE BOOT AND SHOE WORKERS Union is ready to participate in a Middleboro parade, proclaiming that the union "stands for highest wages, best workmanship."

Historical Exchange

During the fall meeting of the Middleboro Historical Association, I passed around a booklet that I had received from a historical society in Leksland, Sweden. It was sent in thanks for information that I had furnished their organization.

Dorothy Thayer offered to take this publication to the Middleboro High School to have, at least part of it, interpreted by two exchange students from Sweden.

Here you will see a copy of one page from the booklet and a partial interpretation of it. It is unfortunate that the students had to return to their homeland before the entire project could be completed.

Thank you, Dorothy, and students, for your efforts which we gratefully appreciate.
Submitted by Robert M. Beals President
Middleboro Historical Association.

The booklet from the historical society in Leksland, Sweden was sent in thanks for information furnished to their organization.

Interpretation

Carl Edvard August Smitt was a learned and experienced man when he came as a 28 year old to Svardsjo. He was born in Stockholm, son of (representative) Smitt and his wife Augusta. After early education at the new basic school he became an apprentice at the technical institute and graduated in 1840. After a few years as bookkeeper at the ironworks in Smaland, he broadened his education in several different directions. As a surveyor, he branched into engineering (ship building). He worked as a forestry helper in Uppsala in order to become a forest ranger in Goteborg and Bohuslan. He was employed by the cooper mining company in Svardsjo.

With his many responsibilities and knowledge that he attained over the years, he became the titular head of the mine.

The church looked to him for leadership and he had a hand in the organization of the parish and was instrumental in the building of the new church in 1873.

The forest and his main interest in the workings of coal mining evolved into a book, but was not published in his lifetime.

Smitt had earned the respect and trust of the people of Svardsjo, but in the end of the 1860s, he traveled around to different parishes and encouraged people to make use of the fungus that grew in abundance in the area. Smitt tried to have the housewives extend their diet with mushroom soup, baked mushroom bread, fried and roasted mushrooms. He concocted every method and was met with indifference. The people considered it nothing more than cattle food. Finally in Vomhus, where immigrants were used to cooking with mushrooms was he met with understanding.

Jagmastare Smitt
kommunalpamp och mykolog

Carl Edvard August Smitt var en makta lard och erfaren man nar han som 28-aring kom till Svardsjo. Han var fodd i Stockholm och son till Riksgaldskontorsreferendarien, vice haradshovding Wagener Smitt och Augusta Rudolfina Stenberij. Efter grundskola vid nya elementarskolan blev han 1838 elev vid teknologiska institutet och utexaminerades dar 1840. Nagra ars praktik som bokhallare vid ett jarnbruk i Smaland foljdes av ytterligare studier i flera discipliner; som lantmaterielev kunde han 1846 avlagga lantmatareexamen och samma ar skeppsmatareexamen vid flottans konstruktionskontor. Utexaminerad fran skogsinstitutet tjanstgjorde han som lantmaterimedhjalpare i Uppsala for att 1848 tilltrada som t.f. overjagmastare i Alvsborgs- Goteborgsoch Bohuslan. 1851 sokte han och erholl tjansten som skogsforvaltare vid Stora Kopparbergs Bergslags kontor i Svardsjo.

Med hansyn till de manga uppdrag och befattningar, som han med aren kom att beklada, skulle man kunna tro att hans tjanst hos Stora Kopparbergs Bergslag var av titular natur. Med sin omfattande utbildning och inte minst som skrivkunnig och god stilist blev Smitt den forsta standsperson utom prasterskapet som kom att inta en framskjuten stallning i socknens kommunala och kyrkliga liv. For prasterna och sarskilt for kyrkoherden blev han till stor hjalp i allt vad denne hade att handlagga.

Ett protokoll fran 1862-ars sockenstamma, som leddes av kyrkoherde Carl Liljenmark, berattar: "till folje af Kongl. Majt:s nadiga forordning af den 21 sistlidne mars voro sockenmannen kallade till allman sockenstamma for att utse 1:a ordf. och v. ordf. i kommunalstamma; till ordf. utsags Jagmastaren C.A. Smitt i Borgardet"---".

Som ordforande i kyrkobyggnadsstyrelsen fick han en ledarroll vid kyrkans till- och ombyggnad 1873, da den gamla klockstapeln ersattes av den stora tornbyggnaden som sedan dess burit malmklangen ut over bydgen.

Han upprattade reglementet for Svardsjo-Envikens haradsallmanningar, var ledamot av landstinget i over 20 ar och under en foljd av ar larare vid Falu Bergsskola. 1861 foretog han en skogsvetenskaplig studieresa till Syd-Tyskland. Sedan postgangen ordnats blev postkontor inrattat i Borgardet och vem skulle bli dess forestandare om inte "Smitten".

(Continued on page 18)

Memories of East Grove Street

By Robert M. Beals, President
President, Middleboro Historical Association

When my grand-parents, Walter and Ella Beals, purchased the property at 14 East Grove Street in 1911, one of the primary reasons was because it was "a nice quiet street." For several years now, this property has been the Green Lawn Nursing Home, and many additions and other changes have been made to the house and grounds.

My grandfather, Walter L. Beals, had been treasurer of the Middleboro Cooperative Bank since 1909, when he succeeded his late father, Joseph E. Beals. The family had lived on Oak Street prior to the move to East Grove Street. In addition to being a bank official, grandfather was also a commercial photographer. In 1911, my late father, Austen L. Beals, ws sixteen years of age, and my late aunt, Marian (Beals) Drake was fourteen.

At that time, East Grove Street was unpaved and just about ended at the Nemasket River. Beyond that, it wasn't much more than a narrow cart path all the way to Wareham Street.

My parents were married in 1917, and they went to live with my grand-parents in the "big house" on East Grove Street. My father was manager of the Nemasket Press which was located on the second floor of the Gazette office on Wareham Street. I was born in my parent's second floor bedroom in the house on May 19, 1918. We lived there for about a year and then moved to 79 Pearl Street. In 1928, we moved back to East Grove Street.

One of my favorite years there was 1930 when Route 28 ws constructed and the road was widened. The question for some time was, which side of the street would lose some of their front lawn? It turned out to be the odd-numbers side, and we were spared. During the summer of 1930, I spent many happy hours riding on the huge dump trucks that carried gravel to West Grove Street and deposited it in the swampy area near the State Police Barracks. I also sold ice water to the road crew and did errands for them.

The first house on the left coming down from South Main Street was owned by the George Deane family. The next one down was the home of Attorney Fletcher Clark Jr. and his family. Twice I remember additions being built on the back of the house, which meant that the Clarks were about to add a new member to their family. At No. 12, there lived a lady named Mrs. Supple who was an invalid. A hand-operated elevator was installed in the house, so that she could be moved from the first to the second floor. The Thomas Bouchers lived at No. 16. Mrs. Boucher was my first customer for Colliers magazine which was published weekly at 5¢ per copy. Their son, Tom, still operates the paint and wallpaper business on Center Street near Everett Square.

THIS PHOTO was taken by Walter L. Beals, grandfather of Historical Association president Robert Beals, in 1911, and made into a postcard. (Collection of R.M. Beals)

On the other side of Williams Place was the Merrihew family home. Their daughter, Jennie, taught at the School Street School for several years. This property is now owned by Tom and Rose Weston. The next house at the top of the hill I know very little about, except that a Mr. and Mrs. Wright lived there. Across the street was the "Old Eaton House," where several families lived at different times. The school house was still there, and a young mother, whose last name was Brackett, and her four red-headed sons lived in rooms on the second floor. In the main house was Mrs. Krawshaw (or Kershaw), and the Grant Hadsell family. Between there and Cliff Street was a vacant lot where we used to play baseball. The next house was built by Mr. & Mrs. Charles Swift, who were the parents of Mrs. Fletcher Clark Jr. After the Swifts passed away, it was purchased by the Hornbys. Donald was a State Police Officer and his wife was a nurse at St. Luke's Hospital. Then, at No. 13, lived the Gifford family. Franklin was an engineer with the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railway. I used to spend a lot of time with their son, Richmond, who was an accomplished drummer, and played in a

(Continued on page 14)

The burning of Barnum's Museum

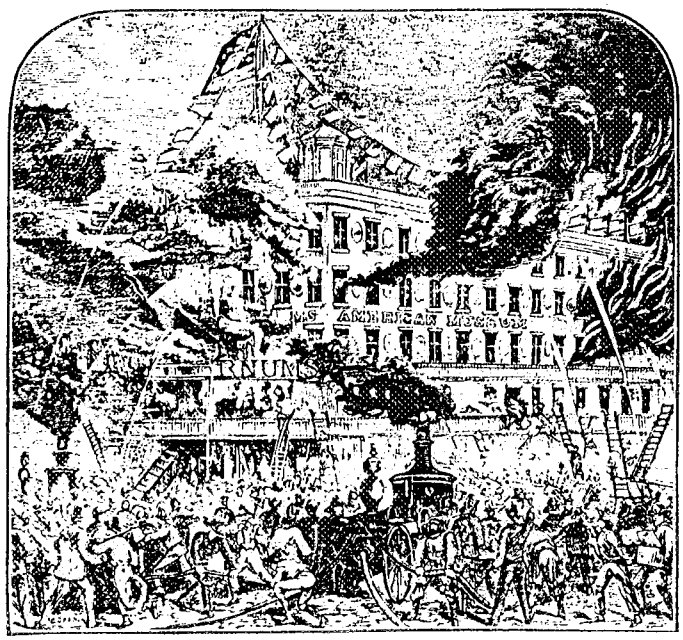
By Robert M. Beals, President
Middleborough Historical Association

It is a well-known fact that Tom Thumb began his career in show business at the age of four years through P. T. Barnum, and that he first appeared as the "star attraction" at Barnum's American Museum in New York City. It was there, in 1862, that he met and fell in love with Lavinia Warren Bump of Middleboro. They were married in 1863 during the Civil War, and then toured extensively for Barnum, both in the U.S.A. and Europe, and earned large sums of money for themselves and "P. T."

A final chapter to the Civil War was written at the American Museum three months after the war's end. There the great promoter himself had set up a display of scenes from this conflict. One scene showed Confederate President Jefferson Davis trying to escape Union pursuers disguised in his wife's clothes. Southern sympathizers were offended at this insult to their hero, and it is believed they expressed their displeasure by setting fire to Barnum's Museum.

Because there were numerous wild birds and animals, as well as human freak attractions, the firefighters faced problems in evacuating the building that were greatly different from the usual ones. They had to free the birds, who found themselves flying high over a city they had never seen. A journalist of the time described the firefighters' evacuation of the human attractions thusly, "The Fat Lady and the Giantess were handed out in safety very carefully with consideration for their welfare. Several of the firemen said they were completely awed with the "wolly-headed Albino woman."

But it was the wild beasts that were the biggest problem, and here a fireman by the name of John Denham, a member of Hose Company No. 15, came into his own. As the firefighters were trying to release the animals and control them,



Barnum's Museum fire, 1865

a huge Bengal tiger got loose from his cage and came crashing out a second-story window, landing near the crowd of onlookers below. Terror gripped the people as the frightened animal advanced. Denham swung into action! He pounced on the animal with his axe and put the big Bengal out of commission.

The museum was a total loss, but it is said that Tom and Lavinia came to Barnum's aid with an offer of money, plus a percentage of their next tour, to help him rebuild. This was done and Barnum never forgot the kind generosity of these two "little people."

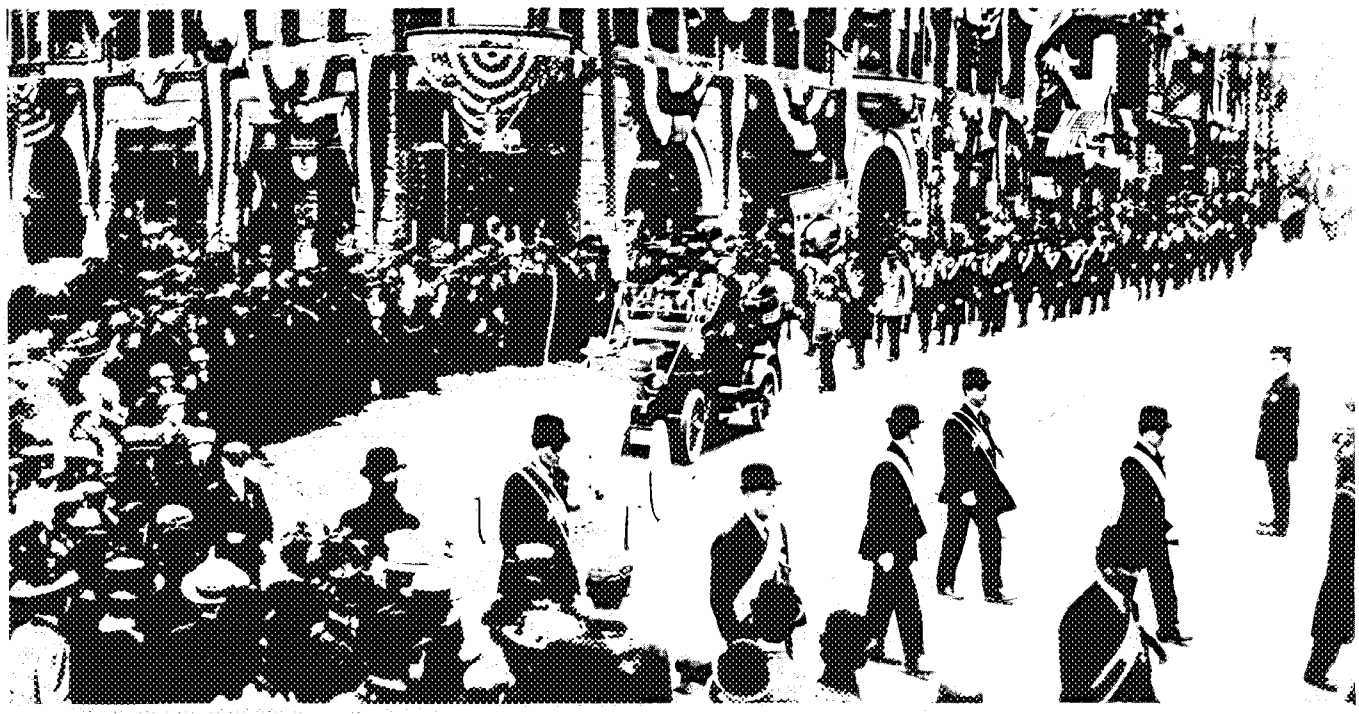
Memories . . .

local dance band. Albert A. Thomas lived at No. 11. In 1933, he married Ruth Williamson of Bridgewater. Albert worked for the Dept. of Corporations and Taxation in the State House for several years. He owned the Rocky Meadow Cranberry Co. and I worked on the bogs during the summer and fall of 1936 and 1939.

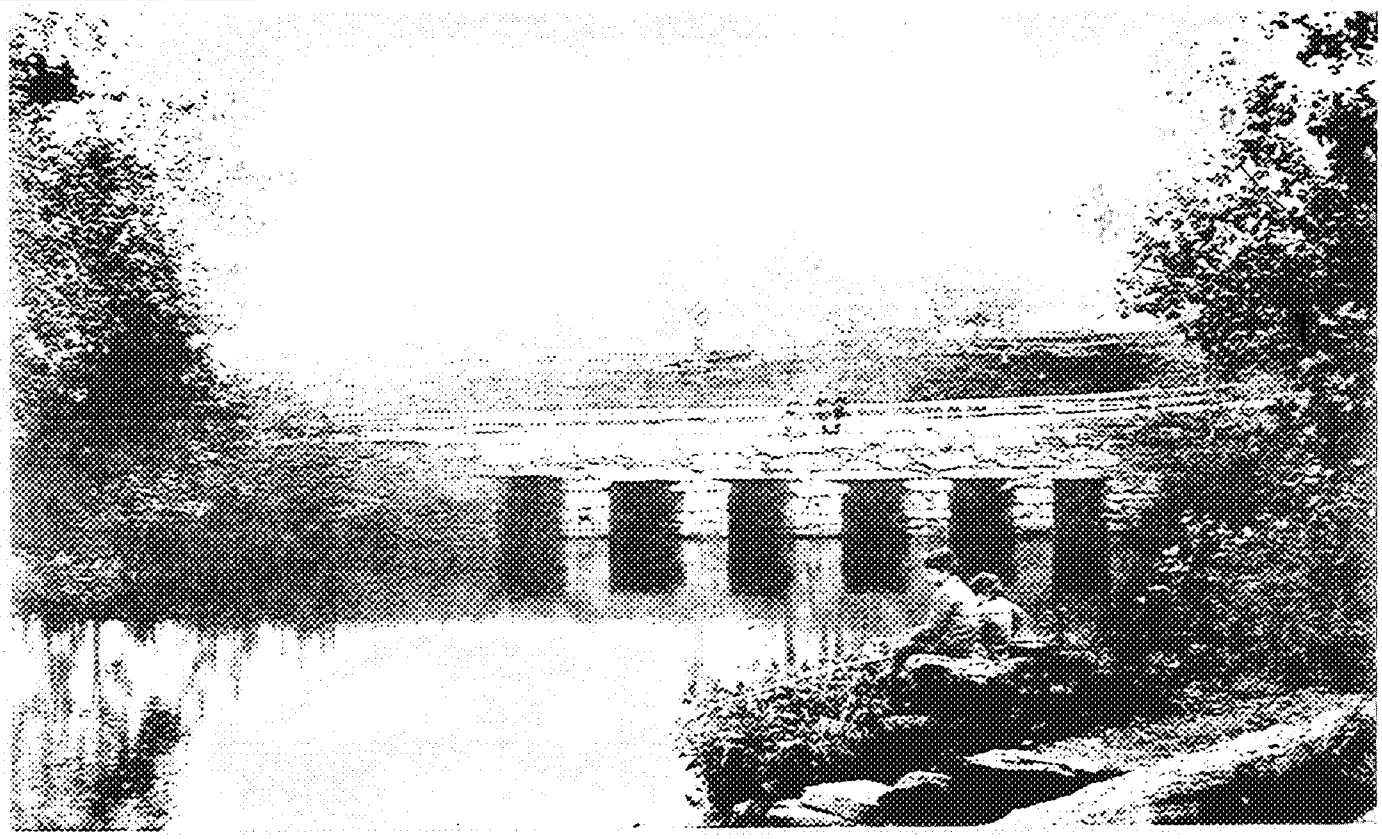
Where the Dairy Queen, Launderama, Brooks Drug Store, and Mr. Donut are now located, used to be the beautiful Stetson residence, where our former museum director, the late G. Ward Stetson, spent his early years.

Many changes have taken place in this area over the past years. Where Rich's and SuperPlace are now located, there was a field with a number of blueberry bushes, and nearby, a grazing area for Charlie Clark's cows. He had a dairy farm between Clark Street and Route 495. When this new highway was constructed near the Middleboro-Lakeville line, Route 28 became a secondary road, but all sorts of business and professional offices are now a part of it.

I hope that this is progress, but I still have fond memories of how it looked when I was a lad.



MEMBERS OF THE Odd Fellows Lodge march through the Four Corners. In the background is the Savings Bank Building.



THE BRIDGE at Muttock, undated photograph. (Middleborough Historical Museum collection)

A VIEW of what Judge Oliver's mansion and beautiful English garden might have looked like in 1775, drawn by the late James Maddigan in 1986. To the right, set on the Nemasket River, are the many mills and water-wheels in the judge's factory complex at Muttock. From left are the mansion house, styled after an old English mansion; the home of Andrew Oliver; cider mill, saw mills; furnances; forges; grist mill slitting mill; boulting mill; blacksmith shops; finishing shops; axe house; and several coal and wood houses. (Collection of the Middleboro Historical Commission)

Exchange . . .

Skogen och sin huvudsakliga verksamhet agnade han dock alltjamt stort intresse, energiskt instruerade han skogsbonderna i deras pa den tiden omfattande verksamhet och utgav publikationen "Kolarepraktika". Hans stora manuskript "Popular afhandling om kolning" kom dock inte att publiceras under hans livstid.

I Svardsjo hade Smitt mott allas tillit och fortroende , men nar han i slutet av 1860-talet reste runt i socknarna for att forma folket att ata svamp motte han mangenstades motstand. Hushallningssallskapet hade anslagit 150 riksdaler som ersattning till kompetenta personer villiga att undervisa folk om svampberedning. Valtaligt forsokte Smitt att lara folket i Jarna att dryga ut kosten med svamp, kokade svampsoppa, bakade svampbrod, stuvade och stekte svamp i alla mojliga former for att kunna overtyga folket om de fortraffliga anrattningarna. Men svampen betraktades av de flesta som kofoder, endast i Vamhus, dar harkullorna i frammande lander lart sig att svamp kunde vara god och billig kost, motte han forstaelse for sin svampmission.

Artur Sandgren, Svardsjo

Kallor:
Matrikel for Kungl. Skogsinstitutets elever 1845-1846 (STORAS arkiv).
Kommunalstammoprotokoll (Svardsjo kyrko-arkiv).

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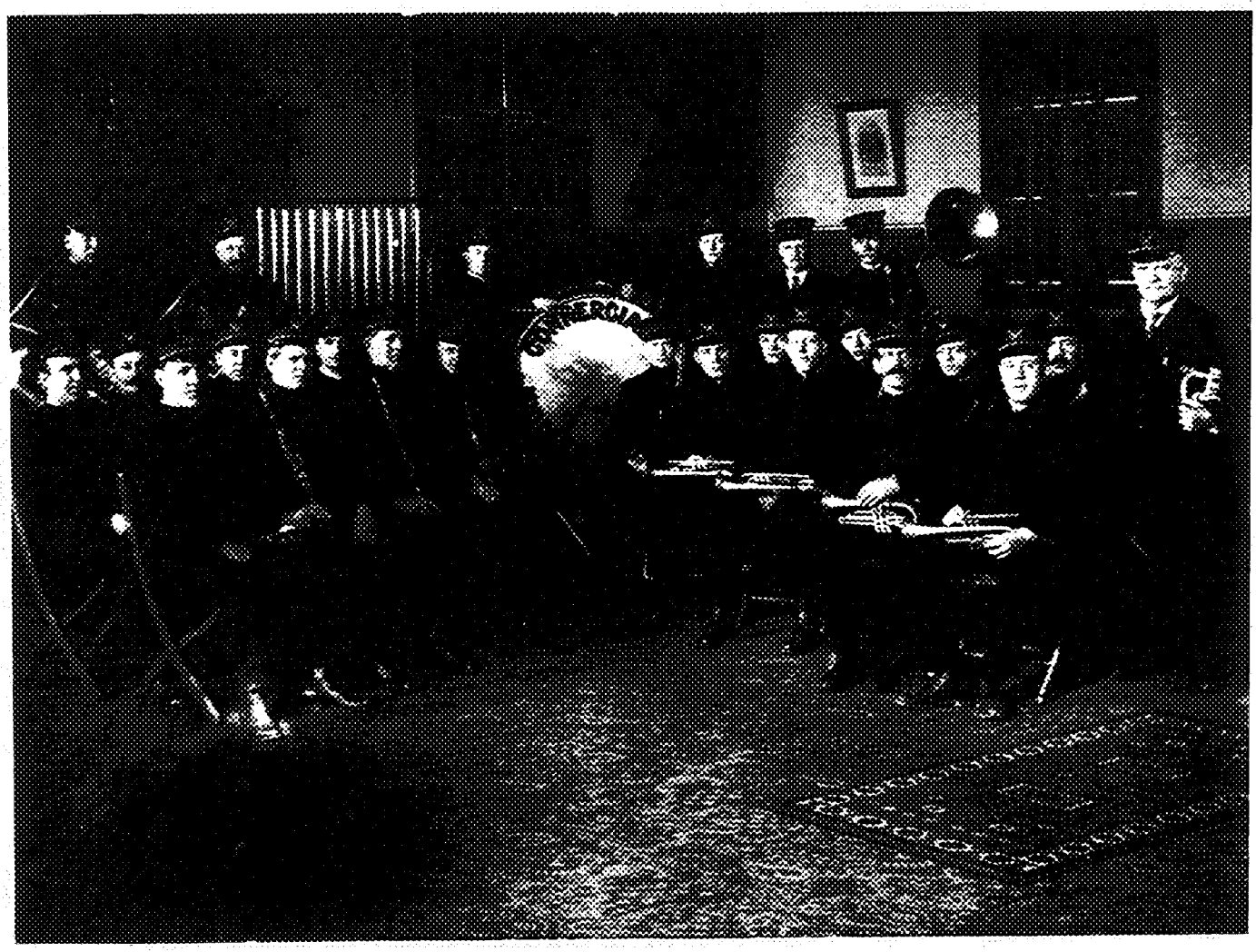

THE MIDDLEBORO COMMERCIAL Band, in 1914, included, front row, from left, Chester Shaw, piccolo, flute, Carl White, clarinet, Horace Osborne, clarinet, Al Fickert, trumpet, Bert Standish, trumpet, Tom Hart, trumpet, Ralph Caswell, trumpet; second row, Bartholomew, George Benn, Roy Caswell, french horn, John Carter, trombone, Charles Fickert, trombone, Walter Erickson, trombone, Ray Turner, trombone, Eugene Hathaway, baritone; standing, Bill Warr, bass horn, Al Whitcomb, bass horn, Carol Oakes, snare drum, Art McAllister, bass drum, McGregor, librarian, Mike Baker, bass horn, and John Carter, Sr., director and trumpet. (Photo from the Middleborough Historical Museum collection)

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A message from the editor

If curling up with a good book is your idea of a great way to spend a fall evening, and you're a local history buff, opportunities abound for you this autumn.

Whether your interests lie in the area's prehistoric past, in its early Native American inhabitants, in its prominent 18th and 19th century families, in its turn of the century appearance or in its most famous residents, reading material is readily available. What's more, the books have local authors, and the writing style in each case is more likely to send you looking for additional sources than to put you to sleep in your easy chair.

The most recent book on Middleboro's past is "The Story of Middleboro's Pre-historic Origins," by Middleboro residents Warren and Marion Whipple. The 59-page paperback, available at Farrar's and Maria's bookstore on Center Street, traces Middleboro's prehistory from its geologic origins to the first permanent settlement some 2,000 years ago, and to the Woodland Indians who began planting crops at Assawompsett, Titicut and Nemasket some 500 years ago. The book also discusses the exploration of North American by Europeans, and the so-called Contact Period, when Native Americans first interacted with the English settlers who would one day take over their homeland.

Mr. and Mrs. Whipple wrote their book after spending more than 30 years traveling and researching the subjects they touch on in their study of local history and human activity. Mr. Whipple, a professional photographer who is now retired from the Winthrop-Atkins Company, has joined his wife in the full-time pursuit of historical knowledge. Mrs. Whipple, who is also retired, taught history for many years at Middleboro High School and was the head of the Social Studies Department.

The book is in some ways a compilation of material that will be familiar to readers, but it also offers tidbits of information — some theories, along with a provocative mystery or two — that should pique the curiosity of local history buffs.

Also available in print is a history of the Eddy family, and of the area of Middleboro known as Eddyville, thanks to its most prominent citizens. Written by Sylvia Breck, the wife of a direct descendant of the first Eddy family members to settle in Middleboro, the 154-page book includes biographical sketches and accompanying portraits or photographs of members of the Eddy family; a history of the family beginning with the arrival of John and Samuel in Plymouth in 1630; a tour of the Eddy Homestead, which is operated as a museum and is open to the public; and a history of the Eddy Family Association, in which Mrs. Breck and her husband Richard have served as officers for a number of years.

The book is available from the association.

In honor of the town's observance of Founder's Day in June, Historical Commission associate member Walter Thompson compiled a collection of photographs of old Middleboro. Featuring most of the town's important buildings and offering in its lengthy captions a thumbnail history of the town, the book is available at The Middleboro Gazette office on West Grove Street.

A perennial favorite, Mrs. Mertie Romaine's biography of General Tom Thumb and his wife, Middleboro native Lavinia Warren, is now available in paperback as well as hardcover, from the Historical Association and at The Middleboro Gazette office. Since the book is in its last printing, those interested in purchasing it should do so before the current supply is exhausted.

The fascinating little book, written in Mrs. Romaine's flowing conversational style, tells the story of the famous "Little People" who traveled with P. T. Barnum and then returned to Middleboro to live. The couple's handsome home still stands on Plymouth Street, across from the half Cape that was Lavinia's birthplace, and is now the home of museum director Marsha Manchester and her husband James.

Why not spend some time this fall discovering the past right here in Middleboro?

— Jane Lopes

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COTTAGES at Lake Assawompsett, 1920, damaged by ice and high water. (Photos courtesy of George Barden)

Lakeside, 1920

by George Barden

In the second and third decade of this century there was a small colony of summer cottages on the northeast shore of Lake Assawompsett between the Nemasket River and Owl Swamp. Some were hardly more than shacks and some were fairly substantial, but none had electricity, modern plumbing or heat except for a fireplace and a wood-burning kitchen range. Water for washing was pumped in through a pipe that ended at the kitchen sink, which was equipped with a hand pump. Drinking water came from a community well a short distance up the road; here the cottagers could exchange pleasantries and the local gossip as they awaited their turns at the pump with their five-gallon water jugs.

There were no street addresses and no mail delivery here but each cottage had its own name, usually advertised by a prominently displayed sign. Grandfather Alden's cottage, built in 1915, was the "Lone Pine" and this "camp," as it was then called, was the scene of many happy family gatherings over the years until 1927, when the city of Taunton forced the cottagers to leave the area to protect the water supply. Grandfather had purchased the lot of land from Captain Bradford, a retired sea captain who lived on Vaughn Street by the bridge over the Nemasket River. The Captain eked out his income by raising vegetables and selling them from his wagon to the housewives at Lakeside. He clung to his seagoing ways, however; once a week he would "swab decks" by emptying buckets of water on the bare floors of his farmhouse and pushing the flood out the doors with a big mop.

To a small boy, "going to the Lakes" was the equivalent of a visit to the Garden of Eden. "The Lakes" had a distinct ambiance epitomized by the fragrance of the pines, the sound of crows cawing in the woods, the glint of sunlight on the wavelets

All who wanted to swim in the lake did so, keeping a wary eye on the lookout for the "Inspector," a person who it is now suspected must have been a mythical figure, as no one ever got caught wet-handed.

and the lumber-camp smell of the cottage with its bare-rafter construction, oil-cloth covered tables and kerosene lamps. The road from Vaughn Street to Lakeside consisted of two ruts across the open fields where there is now a densely wooded area. A dirt road ran parallel to the lake shore with the houses situated directly on the shore and the garages and other outbuildings on the other side of the road. Most of the properties included a wharf running out into the lake as boating, even motor boating, was allowed, although swimming in the lake was forbidden. This restriction was constantly flouted by the Lakeside population, however; all who wanted to swim in the lake did so, keeping a wary eye on the lookout for the "Inspector," a person who it is now suspected must have been a mythical figure, as no one ever got caught wet-handed. Swimming was legal at the mouth of the Nemasket River just beyond the gatehouse, and sometimes the swimmers went there to regain their feeling of righteousness.

All the cottagers were Middleboro people. The Aldens could count among their neighbors the Weemans, Dewhursts, Johnns, Amsdens, Carlsons, Turners and Robinsons, to name a ew. At a typical family gathering at Grandfather Alden's one would see Wink Shuman and his wife Grace (Wink played bass drum in the Middleboro Band and was know to play everything on his music sheet, the fly specks as well as the notes); Gus and Mamie Johnson with their daughter Eleanor and her husband Bill Rose, the affable automobile dealer; Jack and Carrie Hayes; Jim and Rose McCarthy; George and Mildred Barden; Leonard and Priscilla Wolfe, and numerous children.

The interior of the Alden cottage was just one big room, two stories high. One corner was set up as a kitchen while the remainder served as a living area, with the big dining table in the center of the room. The sleeping quarters consisted of partitioned areas on the gallery that ran around all four sides of the room, with heavy curtains shielding the occupants from the gaze of those in the room below. Sleeping here was something like sleeping in the upper berth of a Pullman car, but more roomy. It was the habit of one small boy, having been put to bed after supper, to peer through the crack in the curtains at the grown-ups clustered around the table below and listen to the murmur of their voices as they played cards or read by the light of the big kerosene lamp with the Tiffany shade.

Amusements were simple and mostly of the do-it-yourself variety. The men fished and cut wood. In the winter they fished through the ice and sailed ice boats on the lake, which seemed to be frozen over more then than it has been lately. The ladies ent on bird watching walks (through the woods, across Faxon's field, out to Walnut Street and back); the children went to play at the White Banks.

The walk to the White Banks was a small adventure in itself.

THE ARTHUR H. Alden cottage, now located at Briarwood Beach on the Weweantic River, Wareham shown during the high water at Lake Assawompsett, 1920.

A short walk along the beach brought one to the Red Brook, which ran from Owl Swamp into the lake. The brook, about ten feet wide and knee deep, was aptly named as it was the color of tawny port - evidence of the bog iron in the swamp. Once the brook had been crossed the White Banks were reached by another short walk along the beach, where every now and then an arrowhead could be picked up. The White Banks (actually one bank) were a large hill of clean white sand much more devoid of trees then than it appears to be now; it seemed as though a huge dune from the Sahara had been plunked down on the shore of Lake Assawompsett. Many happy mornings were spent on the White Banks and many a picnic lunch enjoyed there. A special treat was an evening boat ride to Staples Shore to buy ice cream at Gay's, and once in a while a long walk to the old Barden home by the "back way," via Wood and Acorn streets to Barden Hill Road.

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Massachusetts and the Constitution: The local angle on ratification

by Jane Lopes

Upon his return from the first Continental Congress in Philadelphia, there were rumors "that his mission was to interfere in some way with the union of the colonies," historian Thomas Weston tells us.

Under the Massachusetts Constitution of 1780, which he had opposed, he refused to pay taxes to support the Congregational Church, and was taken by the authorities as far as Bridgewater, where a woman paid the tax for him.

He was the author of such publications as "An Appeal to the People of Massachusetts Against Arbitrary Power," and an outspoken advocate of the separation of church and state. A delegate to the state convention called to consider the ratification of the U.S. Constitution in 1788, he carried instructions from his town meeting to vote against the document, and during the debate he spoke in favor of personal liberty.

And yet, Issac Backus not only voted for the Constitution; ıe returned to he community and continued to be a respected leader until his death in 1806, as did the fellow delegate, Issac Thompson, who voted "yea" along with him.

There are several explanations for the behavior of Backus, Thompson and the folks back home in Middleboro. One is that the two men, along with others who initially opposed the Constitution, went along in the end because there was no religious test for federal officials in the new government, because the slave trade should be abolished by 1808, and because no titles of nobility were allowed in the new government.

The second possible explanation is that, like many other Massachusetts residents, opponents of the Constitution were influenced by leading politicians who either supported the document from the start or came to believe that a strong national government was necessary in order to preserve the shaky union that existed under the Articles of Confederation.

The third, and perhaps strongest, possible explanation is that Backus and Thompson, like their fellow New Englanders, were strong-minded individuals who were jealous of their liberty but at the same time concerned about the future and loyal to their country – after their own fashion, of course.

Of the four Middleboro delegates to the Constitutional Convention in Massachusetts, Backus was the one with at least regional fame, but the rest were pillars of the community back home and were perhaps more typical of the average convention delegate.

Issac Soule, the grandson of James Soule, an early settler of Middleboro, was born in 1732 and was reputed to be an astrologer. According to Weston's history of Middleboro, Soule was "visited by many people from a distance, who came to inquire into their future." Otherwise, he apparently led a fairly prosaic life.

ELDER ISAAC BACKUS was a delegate to the 1788 convention where Massachusetts ratified the new U.S. Constitution. Although he was instructed to oppose it, he ultimately voted "yea."

Benjamin Thomas, a deacon of the First Congregational Church, served as a state representative and was a delegate to the Continental Congress in 1766 (the townspeople instructed him to push for independence.) In 1795 he was appointed to a committee to plan the construction of a new town house.

Both Soule and Thomas voted against the Constitution at the 1788 convention.

Isaac Thompson, who was born in Middleboro in 1745, was a farmer and stone cutter as well as a politician. A member of the building committee to construct a new church for the First Congregational Parish, he was a private in the Revolutionary War, a Middleboro selectman from 1778-1786, a representative to the General Court until 1782-1786, and a justice of the peace. After the constitutional Convention, he was reelected

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MIDDLEBOROUGH Historical Association president Robert Beals holds a trombone that was owned by John Carter. The instrument was presented to the historical museum by his daughter, Mrs. Floretta (Carter) Ferrero of North Dartmouth. Band director John M. Carter was her grandfather. (Photo by Jane Lopes)

The Middleboro Commercial Band

by Robert M. Beals

Several bands were formed in the Middleboro area from about 1865 to 1930. In 1911, the Middleboro Commercial Band was organized with John M. Carter as director.

When the bandstand was erected in 1919 in the parking lot behind the Town Hall, concerts were usually held there on Saturday evenings during the summer months. Several listeners would stand around the bandstand or bring folding chairs while listening as the "band played on." Others just stayed their automobiles on Town House Avenue and Union Street with windows wide open.

The bandstand served its purpose until the early 1930s when lack of interest in the concerts necessitated their discontinuance. In 1934, the bandstand was moved to the playground off Lincoln Street.

Lakeside . . .

A trip to the lake always included a stop at Peirce's store at the Four Corners to stock up on provisions, where Grandfather Alden never forgot to buy a case each of Cliquot Club Golden Ginger Ale and Sarsaparilla. For some perverse reason he would also lay in a supply of Gerber's Fried Cakes – fat, greasy little doughnuts covered with sticky powdered sugar – although Grandmother Alden made her own delicious doughnuts once a week. Next, a stop at Captain Bradford's for vegetables and milk and another at Icky Atwood's for eggs.

"Icky" - Fred, actually – Atwood was bachelor farmer who lived with his dog Goopy on Vaughn Street opposite the road that led across the fields to Lakeside. He had put in one semester at M.I.T. before settling down on the little farm where he spent the rest of his life. Icky's farm was a not a model of efficiency, Icky preferring to take life one day at a time. There was a huge hole in the middle of his kitchen floor through which the unwary visitor could plunge to the cellar; Icky was always on t' verge of repairing this potential disaster but just never g. around to it. He did position the kitchen table over the hole, however, and that evidently made repairs unnecessary. Nothing was thrown away at Icky's house. Since he raised chickens, he ate a good many eggs, and all the eggshells from years back were stacked in neat columns in the kitchen. The parlor, likewise, was filled with piles of "The Saturday Evening Post" that dated back to the boyhood of George Horace Lorimer. For a small boy the biggest attraction at Icky's farm was Goopy, a monstrous black dog with a gentle nature, who lived in the kitchen on a equal social standing with Icky and the chickens who wandered in and out.

The two Alden boys, teenagers then, did chores for Captain Bradford and Icky Atwood, sailed a boat on the lake and organized a baseball team know as the Lakeside A.A. They could spend the entire summer here, but the adults who had to work during the week spent only the weekends and the holidays at the camp.

The fragrance of pines, the sound of crows cawing in the woods and the sweet smell of soap bush blossoms still evoke memories of those happy, gone-forever days at Lakeside. The earliest recollection of this writer's life is the incident when his mother leaped fully clothed from the wharf into the lake to fish him out of three feet of water where he had fallen, and where he lay on the bottom thinking how strange the world looked from that point of view. Today the cottage sits on the shore Briarwood Beach in Wareham, where it was moved in 1927, and where the sight of it still recalls the carefree days of Lakeside in the 1920s to those of us who can remember them.

Cephas Thompson and son — portrait painters to the world

by Jane Lopes

They do not share space in art history books with the Peales, or with Benjamin West or with John Singleton Copley, but the story of American portrait painting includes the work of Cephas Thompson and his son, Cephas Giovanni Thompson, both of whom were born in Middleboro and grew up here.

A self-taught artist, Cephas Thompson the elder, born in 1775, became a celebrity as a result of his travels in the south, where he was known and respected among the prominent families. He painted the portraits of men like Chief Justice John Marshall and Stephen Decatur, and knew Thomas Jefferson.

Thompson received many gifts from distinguished families in the south after he returned to his home and studio on River Street, according to Granville Temple Sproat, who wrote of "Old Middleboro" in the mid-1800s, and whose writings were re-published in The Middleboro Gazette in the 1920s.

Sproat said Thompson had "beautiful pictures of tropical nery hung in his drawing room, a present from southern ends; and a silver tankard stood on the mantel shelf, a gift from an eminent southern gentleman. He preserved to the end of his days the warmth and cordial greeting of the southern gentry, and his love for southern society remained with him to the close of his life."

Although the family home on River Street burned in 1860, shortly after Thompson died in 1856, the carriage house where he had his studio survived and was remodeled as a home many years later.

It was in the River Street house that Olivia (Leonard) Thompson gave birth to Cephas Giovanni on August 3, 1809. Like his father, the younger Cephas was destined to be well known as a portrait painter, and his fame would spread beyond the shores of the United States.

Cephas Giovanni first established a studio in Plymouth at the age of 18, and 10 years later he was in New York, where he "became a popular figure among the literary and artistic groups of the city," according to the February, 1968 issue of the Antiquarian. Cephas Jr. married Mary Gouverneur Ogden, daughter of a prominent New York merchant, and in 1852, the couple traveled to Rome, where Cephas Giovanni met and became friendly with Nathaniel Hawthorne. He spent several years in Italy, studying and copying the old masters before returning to New York to continue his work.

Although it is difficult to distinguish between the work of her and son because many of their paintings were not signed, the Middleborough Historical Museum has a number of paintings that are believed to have been done by the two men. Portraits of Major Elisha Tucker and his wife Sarah (Peirce) Tucker are believed to have been painted by the elder Cephas because of their dates, 1812 and 1820, and he is also believed to have painted the portrait of his mother, Deborah (Sturtevant) Thompson, as well as the portraits of Major Levi Peirce, a founder of the Baptist Church, and wife Sarah.

"GRANDMOTHER SPROAT," painted in 1943, hangs in the Middleborough Historical Museum. While none of the Thompsons paintings is signed, this one is believed to have been painted by Cephas Thompson, Sr. (Photo by Jane Lopes)

Attributed to Cephas Giovanni are portraits of his uncle, Dr. Arad Thompson, one of the town's first physicians, Grandmother Sproat, and Deborah (Clarke) Thompson, also a relative.

Artistic talent ran in the Thompson family, although it was not encouraged by Cephas Sr. in any of his children other than Cephas Giovanni. The historical museum owns two paintings

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Massachusetts and the Constitution . . .

as a selectman, serving until 1797, and also served in the state Senate from 1796-1805. He died on Dec. 21, 1819.

If these three men could be described as prominent citizens, the Rev. Issac Backus merits celebrity status.

Born in Connecticut in 1724, Backus came to Middleboro in 1746 to serve as pastor of the Congregational Church in North Middleboro. After 10 years with the church, Backus and his followers left the parish to organize the 19th Baptist Church in Massachusetts. In 1771, he was named agent for all the Baptist churches in Massachusetts. He attended the first Continental Congress in 1775, not as a delegate, but perhaps as a church agent.

Americans in the period between the Revolution and the ratification of the Constitution were not anxious to replace king and Parliament with another potentially tyrannical government.

Although he had no formal education, he was well read and authored more than 50 publications, mainly collections of sermons and discourses on government and liberty. In 1797, nine years prior to his death, he received on honorary master of arts degree from Brown University.

In "The Massachusetts Constitution: A Social Impact," Ronald M. Peters, Jr. says the clergy exerted its influence in the 1780 Constitutional ratification process through the media, and notes that Isaac Backus "waged an incessant battle in the newspapers and in a number of pamphlets against the oppressive tactics of the Congregationalist majority" and fought against the concept of public support for the ministry on the grounds that it favored the Congregational church.

Throughout his career, Backus continued to urge the separation of church and state, and in his only speech at the U.S. Constitutional ratification convention, he asserted that "religion is ever a matter between God and individual; and therefore, no man or men can impose any religious test, without invading the essential prerogatives of our Lord Jesus Christ...the imposing of religious tests hath been the greatest engine of tyranny in the world."

As he moved toward a supportive stance on the new federal constitution, Backus, like others, may have been influenced by the leading figures in the state who spoke in favor of the document. He could have conversed in the subject of the proposed federal government with his "neighbor," former governor James Bowdoin, a supporter of the Constitution who owned property in Middleboro and built a "retirement" home in the town during his term as governor, which began in 1785. Bowdoin, a close friend of Middleboro resident Peter Oliver (chief justice of the appeals court) until policies separated then during the Revolution, owned over 400 acres of land in Middleboro and was a partner in Oliver's iron mills.

But Backus' position was also a reflection of the times, and of the beliefs and behavior of his fellow New Englanders.

Americans in the period between the Revolution and the ratification of the Constitution were not anxious to replace king and Parliament with another potentially tyrannical government, yet they were committed to the concepts of political and social order they had grown up with. New Englanders were further committed to the notion that Americans had the opportunity to create a new republic with the virtues handed down by their Puritan forebears. From 1776 on, they were open to the possibility of a central government, but only if their liberty could be protected. In addition, New England society had developed and split off into special interest groups— merchants, farmers, professional people— who were anxious to see a government that would protect their rights and interests.

The people of Massachusetts rejected an early attempt at a state Constitution, in 1778, because easterners wanted a strong, independent upper house and didn't get it while westerners objected to property qualifications for senators and the governor, and no one was happy with the plan for every town to be represented equally in the House of Representatives.

A Constitution was finally ratified in 1780, but "in town after town, a querulous individualism marked the evaluation of the document," says Richard D. Brown in "Massachusetts: A History." There were numerous complaints about the plan, ranging from proposed voting qualifications (Middleboro suggested there was something unfair about a man with 60 pounds having the same vote as a man with 600 pounds if one were going to qualify voters according the property), what amounted to a Congregational monopoly supported by the state, apportionment and the like. "The ratification process revealed the absence of a coherent, integrated outlook toward state government. Individualism had not degenerated into the chaos of every man for himself, but there were hints of the spirit of every town and every interest group itself," said historian Richard Brown.

The state Constitution was only narrowly approved, but in the years between 1780 and 1787, it became apparent to all but the most stubborn individualist that something needed to be done about the Articles of Confederation. Shays' rebellion helped to convince people that order had to be brought out of

James Bowdoin

chaos, as did the economic situation in general. When moderates and anti-central government types like John Hancock and Samuel Adams went over to the side of the new Federalists, enough of the "no" votes switched to allow the pro-Constitution delegates to carry the day by a narrow 187-168 at the 1788 convention.

This narrow majority was convinced, along with Rev. Backus, that the new Constitution was written in such a way that it enhanced rather than took away from the individual's rights. Backus summed us his feelings in his speech to the 1788 convention delegates:

"...the American Revolution was built upon the principal that all men are born with an equal right to liberty and property, and that officers have no right to any power but what is fairly given them by the consent of the people. And in the Constitution now proposed to us, a power is reserved to the people constitutionally to reduce every officer again to a private station; and what a guard is this against their invasion of others' rights, or abusing their power! Such a door is now opened for the establishment of righteous government, and for the securing of equal liberty, as never was before opened to any people upon earth.

ENTRANTS IN THE Children's Costume Contest held on the museum grounds during Tom Thumb Days line up for the judging. Children were instructed to dress as General Tom Thumb, Lavinia Warren, or others who might have appeared in P. T. Barnum's circus. (Photo by Jane Lopes)

Smoke, fire and alarums— Middleboro Fire District, 1887-88

by Robert M. Beals

During the past few years, I have written articles on the Middleboro Fire Department for the Middleborough Antiquarian. I have continued to search for additional material, and during the summer of 1990, I located copies of the Annual Reports of the Middleboro Fire District for 1887 and 1888, at the Museum.

Apparatus consisted of Hook & Ladder Truck No. 1, and Chemical Engine No. 1, which were located at the Central Fire House on School Street; Hose Cart No. 2, was located at the Courtland Street house; Hose Cart No. 3, was located at the East Main Street house; and Hose Wagon No. 6, was located at the Oak Street house, near High Street.

During the year 1887, there were eleven alarms, – three working and eight still, as follows:

February 18th, 10:20 p.m., old Post Office building, Center Street, owned by the heirs of Enoch Tinkham and occupied by Charles Jaques, dry goods, first floor, and Otis Barden, barber, second floor. Insurance paid on Jaques' stock, $2,637; insured for $6,000, Insurance paid on building, $100; insured for $1,500. Cause – hook of hanging lamp setting fire to ceiling.

May 6th, 3:40 p.m., dwelling house on Nemasket Street, owned by Edward F. Tinkham and occupied by the Misses Winslow. Insurance paid, $10; insured for $2,500.

December 7th, 11:05 p.m., building on Cambridge Street, unoccupied, owned by Peter Washburn. Cause – incendiary. Insurance paid, $2; insured for $700.

Other fires were extinguished by members of the department and citizens without giving a general alarm.

There were seven working and six still alarms during the year 1888, as follows:

January 22nd, 12.16 p.m., Church owned and occupied by the Central Baptist Society. Loss, $12,000; insurance, $6,800; insurance paid, $6,800. Cause, defective chimney.

February 20th, 8:20 p.m., Jackson Street. Dwelling, owned by P.H. Peirce's heirs, and occupied by Mr. Crap. Loss nominal. Cause, burning soot in chimney.

June 6th, 8:45 a.m., LeBaron Avenue. Sawmill, owned and occupied by J.B. LeBaron. Loss nominal. Case, sparks from chimney setting fire to roof.

July 18th, 3:50 a.m., Oak Street. Workshop, owned and occupied by Joel W. Tobey. Loss, $40; no insurance. Cause unknown.

September 9th, 5:10 a.m., Main Street. Store owned and occupied by M. Toole. Loss, $600; insurance on building, $1,200, on stock, $3,000. Insurance paid $600. Cause, spontaneous combustion.

September 30th, 7:15 p.m., Main Street. Barn, owned and occupied by R. F. Barrows. Loss on barn, $100, on contents, $75; no insurance. Cause, smoking in barn.

November 1st, 12:55 p.m., Water Street: Manufactory, owned by J. W. P. Jenks. Loss on building, $25; no insurance. Occupied by E. T. Jenks, machinist, loss on stock nominal; occupied by W. B. Stetson, shoe manufacturer, loss $517, insurance $10,000, insurance paid $517; occupied by W. H. Schleuter & Co., jewel case manufacturers, loss $25, insurance $400, insurance paid $25. Cause, spontaneous combustion in boiler room.

One of the Water Commissioners listed on both reports was my great-grandfather, Joseph E. Beals. He is also list as superintendent of the Water Department for which he was paid $350 annually.

1855 Middleboro map available for Christmas

The Middleboro Historical Association is taking orders for framed copies of the 1855 map of the town. A nine percent enlargement of the original black and white map, the 37 by 34 3/4" prints are framed in oak, under plexiglass, and are ready for hanging. Cost is $75. Unframed copies in mailing tubes are available for $15, plus $2 postage if shipped. Framed copies may be viewed at the Mayflower Cooperative Bank. A copy may also be seen at the association's fall meeting, to be held on Wednesday, Nov. 7 at the May Flower Masonic Lodge, 46 South Main St. Orders for Christmas must be received by Friday, Nov. 16, and may be made by contacting the association at P.O. Box 625, Middleboro, MA 02346, attention Jean Michael.

MRS. ELISHA TUCKER, who sat for this painting around 1820, was the former Sarah Peirce. A painting of Maj. Elisha Tucker hangs next to this one in the historical museum. (Photo by Jane Lopes)

Cephas Thompson . . .

that are believed to have been painted by Marietta Tintoretta, Cephas Sr.'s daughter. Marietta left home with her brother, Jerome, after their father discovered that Jerome had secretly been painting in the attic. Cephas Sr. flew into a rage and smashed his son's canvas and easel. Apparently, more than two artists in the family was too many.

Jerome and Marietta traveled to Barnstable, where they painted signs to earn enough money to head for New York. In the meantime, Jerome is said to have painted a portrait of Daniel Webster at his Marshfield home.

But Jerome, who was married twice, once to a fellow artist, was best known for his sentimental scenic paintings, which had titles like "The Old Oaken Bucket," and "Scenes from my Childhood," while sister Marietta became known as a miniaturist.

Granville Sproat wrote that Jerome's paintings were "full of beautiful delineations of rural life and scenery. . . his pictures literally talk; they are fragrant with the sweet air of the country."

While their work did not earn them a permanent place in the art world on a par with the 19th century American masters, the Thompsons' legacy includes portraits that bring local history to life for those of us who have the opportunity to gaze, for instance, into the eyes of "Grandmother Sproat," who sat for her portrait in 1843, at the age of 63. Her dark hair pulled back in a no-nonsense style and partially covered by a white frilled cap that softens her unsmiling visage, Lucy Morton Sproat looks out across the room in the historical museum as if she could offer wise advice, if only one would seek it.

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Middleborough Antiquarian

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THE MIDDLEBOROUGH Historical Museum's extensive collection of memorabilia associated with General and Mrs. Tom Thumb includes a parasol, gloves, shoe and footstool belonging to Lavinia Warren, the Middleboro native who became a worldwide celebrity and the wife of Tom Thumb. The museum will be celebrating Lavinia's 150th birthday this year.

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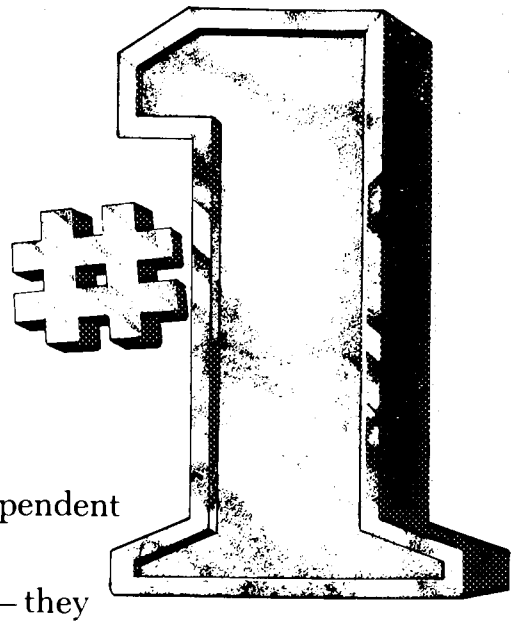

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A message from the editor

by Jane Lopes

This season promises to be an exciting one for the Middleborough Historical Museum—and the excitement will begin even before the museum opens for the summer.

As always, the museum buildings will reopen for the summer months on the day after the Fourth of July, this year a Friday. The museum will be open from 1 to 4 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday during July and August, and for the first two weekends in September. The weekend opening was an experiment that worked very well last year; a number of visitors commented that they had tried to visit the museum before but were prevented from doing so by the "weekdays only" hours.

Having the museum open on weekdays enhances opportunities for visitors to see our collections, and thus increases the museum's income, but the additional hours place a burden on curator-director Marsha Manchester and the museum committee. Volunteers are needed to relieve Marsha and her "regulars" and to ensure that all the museum buildings can be open to the public during museum hours. Those who volunteer find that they gain as much from the experience as does the museum; the rewards include an afternoon spent with people who also appreciate the past, and a chance to take a closer look at the museum collections.

LAVINIA WARREN, better known as Mrs. Tom Thumb, was born 150 years ago in North Middleboro. The Historical Association is observing that milestone this summer.

In addition to another eventful museum season, the association is looking forward to two special celebrations this year—the Founders Day celebration to take place on the museum grounds on June 1, and the year-long celebration of the 150th anniversary of Lavinia Warren's birth. Lavinia, also known as Mrs. Tom Thumb, was, of course, the diminutive lady who was born in Middleboro and grew up to travel with P.T. Barnum's circus.

Lavinia's birthday will be celebrated with a special cake during Founders Day, which promises to be an event-filled day that local residents will remember for some time to come.

In addition to commemorating the birthday of one of Middleboro's most famous natives, Founders Day will recognize the efforts of those, from Middleboro's first residents the Wampanoag to today's inhabitants, who have made our community a special place in which to live.

The town's history will be celebrated with demonstrations of traditional crafts, tours of the museum and the town's historic sites, children's activities with historical themes and the dedication of the future home of the Robbins Museum of Archaeology, the Middleborough Historical Museum's new Jackson Street "neighbor." The highlight of the day will be a parade featuring nine Gettysburg Peace Flags and culminating with the unfurling of the Mt. Rushmore flag, a huge 45 by 90 foot flag made for the anniversary of the Mt. Rushmore sculpture of President Lincoln. The flag is housed here in Plymouth County and is being flown in Middleboro for the first time, although it was once displayed during a Flag Day ceremony at the junior high school.

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Middleboro, Mass.
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Jane C. Lopes ..... Editor

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A message from . . .

A tentative Founders' Day schedule of events is published in this issue of the *Antiquarian*. Anyone interested in helping with the celebration is encouraged to contact Jane Lopes, chairman, or a member of the museum committee.

It is fitting that Lavinia's birthday should be observed during an event that might aptly be referred to as a "three-ring circus" judging by the number of events that will be occurring at once. Born in the morning of All Hallow's Eve, Oct. 31, 1841, tiny Mercy Lavinia Warren Bump, who never grew taller than a yardstick, was destined to become world famous as a performer.

As one to P.T. Barnum's proteges, Lavinia met and married Tom Thumb, and the two "little people" became the toast of Europe and the United States, once appearing before the royal family at Buckingham Palace. The couple retired to Middleboro, building a home on Plymouth Street across from Lavinia's birthplace. Both homes are still standing, as is the building operated as Primo's Pastime by Lavania and her second husband Count Primo Magri.

A number of the general and Lavinia's possessions can be seen at the historical museum, including the items pictured on the cover of this issue of the *Antiquarian*. The famous couple's possessions are also scattered throughout the country, as evidenced by an article on a Texas museum written by Association president Robert Beals elsewhere in this issue.

Anyone who visits the museum this summer will have the double pleasure of helping to observe Lavinia's birthday and helping the Association to preserve its collection of "Middleboro memories."

TENTATIVE FOUNDERS DAY SCHEDULE FOR JUNE 1, 1991 (Rain or Shine)

TIME	ACTIVITY
8:30 am	Set-up time for crafters and exhibitors at Middleborough Historical Museum
9:00	Middleborough Historical Association Plant Sale begins. Craft booths open between 9 and 10 am.
10:00	Opening Ceremony
10:00-4:00 pm	Crafts demonstrations, exhibits, historical museum tours, food sales.
10:00-1:00 pm	Walking tours, children's activities at both museums including story telling, costume contest, coloring contest, and judging of pie contest.
1:00 pm	Dedication of Read Building, the new home of the Massachusetts Archaeological Society and Robbins Archaeological Museum; ribbon cutting.
1:00	Parade begins to form at Burkland School
1:45	Parade steps off, proceeding to playground via Jackson St., Parade includes the National Guard Ceremonial Unit, Gettysburg Peace flags carried by representatives of local groups; bands and color guards.
2:00	Mt. Rushmore Flag Ceremony begins, lasting about 45 minutes. The flag will then fly until 4:00 pm. Ceremony will include speeches by local dignitaries.
4:00	Official end of day's activities.

Preserving Middleboro's Past

by Jane Lopes

It is not necessary to leave downtown Middleboro to find examples of buildings that have been saved from demolition and "recycled," nor is it necessary to travel far from the Four Corners to see examples of opportunities lost.

The old Peirce grocery store on North Main Street, shown in the photograph accompanying this article, was for many years the Fourth District Court building, and today it houses the Middleboro Police Station. The handsome, imposing building is related both architecturally and historically to the unusual building across the street that was the Peirce family homestead and is now occupied by attorney George Decas and his staff.

On South Main Street, across from the Town Hall, is the administration building of the Middleboro Gas and Electric Department. Built prior to 1855 by Philander Washburn, the building has been decorated in period wallpaper and trim to retain its "personality" but is otherwise a functional office building.

Unfortunately for the present generation, at the same time one looks for examples of preservation, one can find all too many former sites of significant buildings in the downtown area, including the sites of the Peirce Academy, the Martinque and the Nemasket House. While many of the historic buildings that give Middleboro its unique New England flavor are stills standing and in use today, many more have been lost forever, perhaps in some cases out of ignorance or lack of alternatives.

At the annual town meeting on June 17, the Middleboro Historical Commission will ask voters to approve a demolition delay bylaw, a preservation tool that will allow the commission to review all demolition permit applications and meet with owners and developers of property to explore alternatives to demolition for significant structures. By the standards outlir in the bylaw, a significant structure is one that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, one that has been nominated to the register, one that is listed on the town's historic

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Bay State No. One — Middleboro's First Fire Pumper

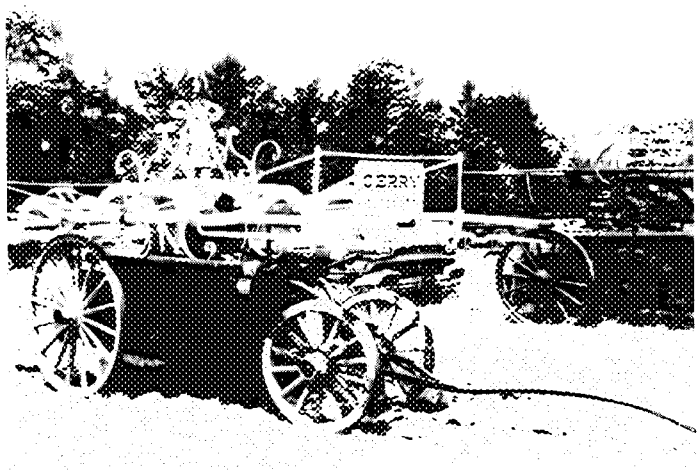
by Robert M. Beals

In Volume XXIV, No. 4 (March 1986), I began a two-part history of the Middleboro Fire Department. I mentioned that the first apparatus consisted of a hand-tub under the name of "Bay State No. 1," and a hook and ladder truck, both hand-drawn. I had no idea who the manufacturers might be of either one, and even thought they could be one-off products of local artisans.

Recently, while trying to find information on another hand-tub, I consulted the book, "Hundreds of Hunnemans," by Ward R. Tufts. I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Tufts several years ago when were were both visiting the New England Fire and History Museum in Brewster on Cape Cod. His book is the result of several years of research into the history of every Hunneman pumper that was built – a total of 745 hand pumpers and steamers, between 1792 and 1881. Bay State #1 was delivered to Middleboro on March 22, 1852, and was the 447th ilt by the Hunneman Co.

The story of William C. Hunneman is a fascinating one. He was born in Boston in 1769. As a young man, he learned to be a coppersmith as an apprentice to Paul Revere. Once this training period was over, Mr. Hunneman went to work with Mr. Martin Gay, a brass founder, at 20 Union Street in Boston. In fact, he had a room at this address that he rented for a modest price, plus attending to the fires and cleaning. Hunneman's association with Mr. Gay was short-lived, however, as the latter, a Tory, was banished to England. Hunneman continued in business in the manufacture of warming pans, pots, kettles, irons, etc. As the 1700s came to a close, and on the heels of several major fires, Hunneman decided to make his contribution to the solution of the fire problem by building fire engines.

Toward this endeavor, he arranged to purchase a patent for a hand-pumper from Mr. Jacob Perkins of Boston. One Ephraim Thayer (1794-1811) of Boston was also building fire engines, and the Thayer engine and Hunneman engine were quite similar in design. The only difference was in the angle upon which the piston operated. The Thayer egine had its piston set to operate in a vertical manner, that is, straight up and down, while the Hunneman patent called for the piston action to operate at a thirty-degree angle. The name "hand-tub" derives its origin from the fact that the body is, actually, a tub designed to hold water. Formed from sheets of copper, such as those rned out by Paul Revere, to sheathe the bottoms of ships, the e engine was a square or oblong box, lined with these sheets of copper to seal in the water, and a pump to force the water out. The piston diameter of the Middleboro pumper was 5-1/2 inches.



THE HUNNEMAN hand-pumper, pictured here, is similar to Bay State No. 1, the first firefighting apparatus owned by the Middleboro Fire Department.

These rigs were sold all over the United States and Canada, and a small number even found their way to Puerto Rico and Chile. Fire departments liked them because they were light in weight and only required a small crew to operate. The chassis has a goose-neck design which made them easy to steer.

Even today, after all these years, there are still many Hunneman hand-pumpers in existence. They can be seen in parades and musters around the country. The "Ousamequin," built in 1850 is on display at Bridgewater's Central Fire Station. There are two at the New England Fire and History Museum in Brewster. During a trip to the state of Washington a few years ago, I photographed the 1850 "Sacramento" in a museum in Seattle. It was delivered to that city in 1854.

In 1862, the company began to build steam fire engines. Most of these were sold to Boston, Brighton, Dorchester, East Boston, and the Charlestown, who had their own Fire Departments in those days. The last steamer was delivered to Richibucto, New Brunswick.

William C. Hunneman passed away in April of 1846, but the company remained in the family until its closing in 1881.

PATRICK LEROY, a member of Boy Scout Troop 10, earned his Eagle Scout badge by refurbishing the South Middleboro United Church Cemetery last summer and redrawing the cemetery's plot plan. (Photo by Jane Lopes)

Scout project benefits cemetery

by Patrick A. Leroy

Patrick Leroy, a member of Boy Scout Troop 10 of the Central United Methodist Church, recently completed an Eagle Scout project that involved cleanup, restoration and redrawing of the plot plan for the South Middleboro United Methodist Church Cemetery.

According to Mertie Romaine's history of the town, the land for the South Middleboro cemetery was given to the community by Consider Benson in 1768. In the beginning, each family could mark off as much space as needed. In 1929, the Cemetery Association voted to sell no more lots in the original cemetery, but in 1946 the association accepted a gift of land from Mrs. Harold Williams in memory of her grandfather, Ephraim A. Hunt; thus 117 plots were added to the cemetery. A receiving tomb was built in 1924.

I began my project on Saturday, May 19, 1990. I worked on ıc weekends and weekdays throughout summer vacation finally finishing the restoration part of the project on Saturday, September 29. I had a total of 6 work parties with a total of 25 hours spent working. A total of 29 people contributed to the completion of my project: 14 scouts (including myself), 5 nonscouting youth (from my youth group), 5 adult scouters, 4 adult nonscouters, and my sister. Over the course of the next three weeks I gathered all of the necessary notes and diagrams for the re-drawing of the plot plan. I spent approximately 12-15 hours total on this part of the project. My sister helped me to take notes and measurements at the cemetery, and I used them to re-draw the plot plan.

My Eagle Scout Service Project was to be carried out in two phases. The first phase can be described very simply as a cemetery clean up and restoration. The second phase consisted of the verification and revision of the plot plan of the cemetery.

This cemetery is already well maintained and well kept up. The clean up will consist of the following: several headstones which have become grown in will be cleaned out, and along the edges of the cemetery any old flower pots, coffee cans or

(Continued on Page Fifteen)

Setting the stage for conflict

by Jack Coleman

Few people realize that the bloodiest war on the North American continent, in per capita terms, was fought in this area and was precipitated by a specific event in present-day Lakeville. The conflict is remembered as King Philip's War, a savage exchange that lasted nearly a year and a half and caused widespread misery and destruction.

Fully six hundred of the early English settlers lost their lives, a number that might sound mild in the context of the carnage of the 20th century, but one that translates into one on every ten able-bodied males at the time. More than ten times as many Indians were killed, losses that further decimated a native population already ravaged by disease.

During King Philip's War, sixteen English settlements, including Middleboro, were completely destroyed, and many others repeatedly attacked by native forces. The precarious economy was shattered. Trade between English settlers at Plymouth, neutral Indian tribes, and other nations' colonial outposts ground to a standstill. Historian Douglas Leach estimated that fully 20 years would pass, before the extent of colonial settlement reached the pre-war stage.

What was the cause of such a destructive conflict and how did it affect early Middleboro? Many claim that warfare between the early settlers and native population was inevitable, given the rapid encroachment of Indian lands by the new arrivals, as well as some particularly heavy-handed legal practices on the part of the English.

The fact is, however, that there had been a three-decade long period of peace and prosperity between the Indians and English before the relationship began to strain in the early 1670s. The two groups were interdependent – the Pilgrims had needed the good grace of the Indians for their very survival after arriving in 1620. So many of their numbers perished the first winter alone – more than half – that the deceased were buried in unmarked graves for fear of alerting the warily-regarded natives to their predicament.

The cautionary practice turned out to be unnecessary. Massasoit, the benevolent sachem (chief) of the Wampanoag, extended help to the Pilgrims and along with others, such as the well-known Squanto, taught the early settlers vital survival skills.

As the years passed and the Pilgrims' numbers grew, their strength and adaptability to Massachusetts improved. Trade developed between the Indians and settlers. Although the Indians enjoyed a clear advantage in numbers in 1620, the settlers slowly began to reverse the situation, through immigration and superior weaponry. Massasoit helped expedite this development by ceding tracts of land to the English, although some historians now believe that the relinquished areas that were largely uninhabited. In the process, he protected his western borders, by virtue of the English presence in the ceded territories, from his major native foe, the Narragansett tribe.

After Massasoit died in 1661 at the venerable age of 81, he was succeeded by his oldest son Alexander (Wamsutta). Alexander's reign was brief and uneventful. About the only thing remembered about Wamsutta is the mysterious nature of his death, and the fact the he preceded Philip (Metacomet) as sachem.

After being summoned to appear before the English at Plymouth, a subservient practice that later infuriated Philip, Alexander fell deathly ill. His fellow Wampanoag strongly suspected that their sachem had been poisoned, although there has never been any evidence of this. Whatever the cause, Alexander died on the shores of Monponsett in present-day Halifax while attempting to return to his native Mount Hope. His suspicious demise strained relations between natives and English settlers.

Alexander was succeeded by Philip in 1662. Over the three centuries since the war that would bear his name was fought, Philip has been described in a number of ways – as "ruthless and sentimental, wily and indecisive, noble and niggardly, in the words of one contemporary historian. On the whole, the impression of him that has been passed down to us is a negative one.

In fact, there is little solid knowledge of the type of man and sachem Philip really was. Nanepashemet, a research associate at Plimouth Plantation and the manager of the Wampanoag Indian Program, points out that the negative characteristics attributed to Philip clearly reflect a Puritanical bias, part of what he claims is the perpetuation of the myth that the war was "righteous and justified in the Puritans' eyes."

One thing we do know for certain about Philip – in the years following his accession to power, he came to bitterly resent the increasing English domination in the region. Initially, Philip had been cooperative with authorities at Plymouth, as in 1662 when he renewed a pact signed years earlier by his father.

But by 1677, rumors had begun to spread, supposedly from the mouths of the Narragansetts, that the Wampanoag sachem was planning action against the English. Philip was summoned three times to answer the charges, appearing twice in Plymouth and the last time in Taunton. He did so in deference to their acknowledged authority, a position backed by greater numbers and weaponry.

During each appearance, Philip assured the officers of the General Court that the rumors were unfounded. Enough doubt remained for Philip to be fined, and after 1671 he was forced to pay an annual tribute to the English in the form of five wolves' heads. The English also demanded that the Wampanoag surrender any and all of their firearms, and Philip relinquished a total of seventy-five muskets.

ALDEN BLAKE, SACHEM OF THE ASSONET band of the Wampanoag, walks across King Philip's Lookout in Lakeville, from where the alleged murder of John Sassamon was witnessed by John Patuckson in 1675. The trial following Sassamon's death helped push colonial settlers and Native Americans to the brink of King Philip's War. (Photo by Jack Coleman)

It is important to remember, as Nanepashemet points out, that Philip was regarded as a king by the Wampanoag. It infuriated him that he was forced to humble himself before a mere governor, one in fact subservient to another king, Charles II. After his last appearance, he is said to have left Taunton in a blinding rage, intent upon preventing further personal and tribal humiliations. But while the English had angered Philip to the point of provocation, he was in no position to take them on. Estimates of the population of white settlements in New England in 1670 run from 36,000 to 45,000, and the number was growing rapidly. The native peoples numbers less than half of that, their ranks having earlier been decimated by virulent European microbes against which they had no defense.

There was also the vast difference in the use of technology between the two peoples. When the Pilgrims landed fifty years earlier, the native people they encountered had never seen firearms, looms, or the wheel. As surprising as it sounds, the domestication of animals was also unknown to them. The trade that grew over the years helped close the gap, but the white settlers never lost their clear technological advantage.

The Indians, however, possessed centuries-old knowledge of New England's rough-hewn topography and harsh climate, as well as the use of an extensive trail network that extended hundreds of miles. Not being able to compete with the English in manpower and technology, they would come to rely on stealth and guerilla warfare. It is a scenario strongly reminiscent of later American involvement in Vietnam.

In January, 1675, as relations between native Americans and English settlers continued to deteriorate, the body of John Sassamon, Philip's former personal secretary, was discovered beneath the frozen surface of Assawompsett Pond. Sassamon had once transcribed Philip's will for the illiterate sachem and was said to have made himself the main benefactor. After breaking from Philip, it was rumored that Sassamon had warned authorities in Plymouth that the Wampanoag sachem was planning for war.

After the discovery of Sassamon's body, a native by the name of Patuckson claimed to have witnessed his murder at the hand of Philip's braves. In June, three Wampanoag, including another close associate of Philip's and Patuckson's son, were put on trial in Plymouth for Sassamon's murder. Two were found guilty and sentenced to hang. The third Wampanoag, Tobias, was bailed out by Tispaquin, the Assawompsett sachem and most powerful chieftain of Philip's, for one hundred pounds, with security on land in present-day Middleboro. But after the start of hostilities later that month, Tobias was also executed.

There remains, however, no firm evidence that Sassamon was murdered by Philip's followers. A more likely scenario is that he simply fell through the ice of Assawompsett Pond and

(Continued on Next Page)

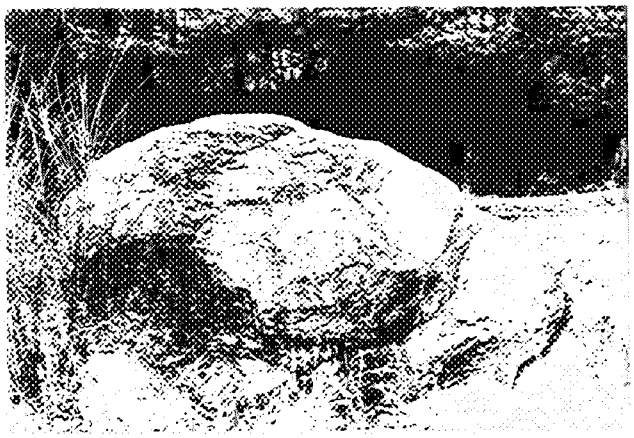
As colonial forces organized and gained strength, Philip abandoned the Mount Hope peninsula and fled westward with his braves. The nearby Narragansett consented to care for the Wampanoag women and children during the trek, an agreement that would later help draw the tribe into the fray.

was drowned. Taken in this light, the Wampanoag reaction to the trial and executions was understandably severe. But according to Nanepashemet, Philip did not then order attacks, as is commonly believed, but put his people into a "defensive posture." Nanepashemet believes that the English interpreted Philip's moves as offensive preparations, and were unnerved. Further actions on both sides began to assume a momentum of their own.

The war itself broke out in Swansea, Rhode Island, a small settlement at the mouth of the Mount Hope peninsula, not far from the seat of Philip's power in the town of Sowans. On Sunday, June 20, while Swansea residents were in meeting, Wampanoag braves killed several of their cattle. The townspeople cautiously gathered in the garrison house while the Indians ransacked Swansea homes. After three days, a teenage boy ventured out and shot one of the marauders. Shortly after, the Wampanoag retaliated by killing the youth and his father. Later that same week, a Middleboro resident, Gershom Cobb, was numbered among the first victims of the war to fall at Swansea.

The news of the hostilities spread rapidly. Armed contingents were dispatched to Mount Hope from Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay colony. In Middleboro, the townspeople took to seeking shelter in the fort, near the present location of the Grange hall on North Main Street. The fort was capable of holding all of the tiny settlement's seventy-five inhabitants.

After the outbreak of fighting in Swansea, an Indian whose name is lost to history took to insulting the occupants of the fort with inflammatory words and gestures from atop a rock across the Nemasket River. During a council between the town's elders, it was deemed necessary to shoot the Indian. As described in Thomas Weston's "History of the Town of Middleboro, Volume I," Isaac Howland was chosen to attempt the shot on the basis of his skill with a musket. Howland was the son of John and Elizabeth Howland, who were both passengers on the Mayflower. Among his sister Ruth's direct descendants is Robert Beals, who is the president of the Middleborough Historical Association.



SHORTLY AFTER THE START OF KING PHILIP'S WAR, early Middleboro settler Isaac Howland shot and killed an Indian standing on top of this rock near the Nemasket River. According to legend, the dying man's handprint was emblazoned upon the rock, leading to its local designation, the "hand rock." (Photo by Jack Coloman)

According to Mr. Beals, Howland shot and mortally wounded the Indian in one attempt, "the first and only instance that the weapon has ever been fired." He said the musket, a long gun measuring over seven feet in length that had to be placed over another man's shoulder to be steadied, hit the Indian from an estimated distance of 155 rods. Given that a rod is five and a half yards, this would mean a shot of almost nine hundred feet. Either Howland was very lucky, as weapons at that time werenotoriously inaccurate, or the distance was exaggerated. Most likely it was a combination of both.

Legend has it that after being hit by Howland's shot, the dying Indian's handprint was permanently emblazoned on the rock he was standing upon. It is known to this day as, simply, "the hand rock." Nenepashemet claims that the markings on this and other rocks on the area were gradually chipped onto the stone. In fact, Weston's history described the marking a already there at the time of the incident.

In the conflict that followed, the tiny, fledging community of Middleboro suffered extensive damage. Without sufficient provisions, Middleboro residents were forced to abandon the fort and seek shelter with many other settlers in the "Old Colony" of Plymouth. In July, 1675, Wampanoag warriors returned to Middleboro and, according to Weston's history, "all of the dwelling houses and outbuildings were destroyed."

As colonial forces organized and gained strength, Philip abandoned the Mount Hope peninsula and fled westward with his braves. The nearby Narragansett consented to care for the Wampanoag women and children during the trek, an agreement that would later help draw the tribe into the fray. Colonial authorities in Boston and Plymouth were able to obtain an agreement that the Narragansett would remain neutral for at least three months. It was a pivotal move; the Narragansett tribe was by far the most powerful in southern New England, and their immediate alliance with Philip would undoubtedly have prolonged the war.

While on the run, the Wampanoag warriors, adept at hunting in the forest and living off the land, took to raiding English towns and outposts. Among their targets were Dartmouth, Taunton, Bridgewater and, as they swung further west, Weymouth, Marlborough, Sudbury and North Brookfield. Philip also used this period to attempt to persuade other Indian tribes to take up arms against the English settlers. Among those wl agreed to join the fray were the Niptucks to the north of Massachusetts Bay colony, as well the Pocasetts to the east of Mount

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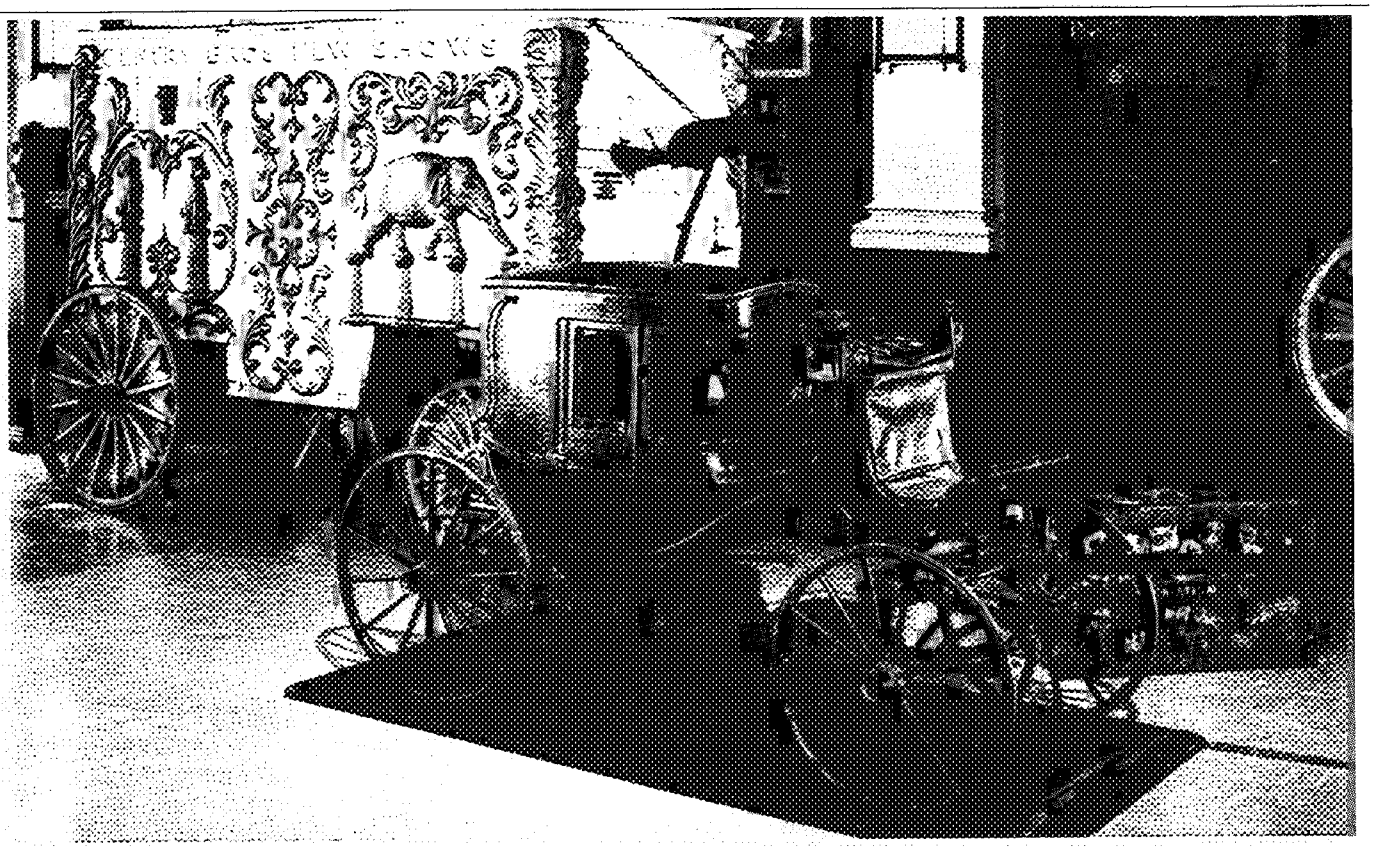


THIS COACH is believed to have been built in 1843 for General Tom Thumb by P.T. Barnum. Now owned by the Hertzberg Circus Collection, it was once used by Mrs. Tom Thumb, Lavinia Warren, to get around Middleboro. (Post cards courtesy of the Hertzberg Circus Collection)

The Hertzberg Circus Collection

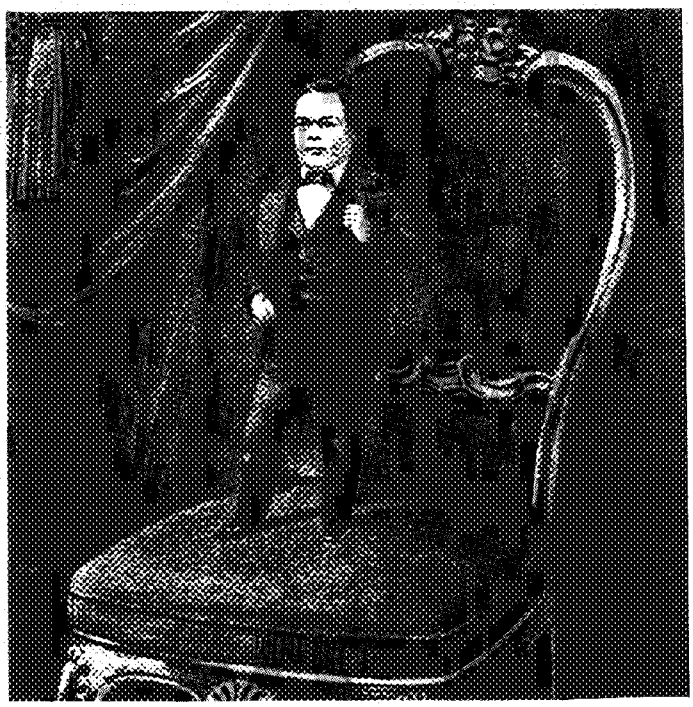
by Robert M. Beals

During the summer of 1990, a visitor came to the museum who told us about the Hertzberg Circus Collection at the public library in San Antonio, Texas.

After correspondence with the curator, we received an envelope containing an interesting letter, a brochure and several post cards of the circus collection. One of the post cards shows a small coach that was built in 1843 by P.T. Barnum for Tom Thumb when he was five years old. While several other Tom Thumb coaches are in existence, none are as old. The coach, always pulled by small ponies, was later used by Mrs. Tom Thumb during her appearance after the death of her husband in 1883.

Harry Hertzberg was fascinated by the "little general" and acquired numerous other objects associated with the "little person." (For example: a piece of Gen. and Mrs. Tom Thumb's 1863 wedding cake, Tom's miniature violin used in his stage presentations, a tiny muzzle-loading rifle, a vest and cane, and a cast of Tom Thumb's foot.

Mr. Hertzberg also acquired numerous prints and music, as well as a poster advertising Gen. & Mrs. Tom Thumb with Barnum's circus of 1881, one of the few times they actually were part of a circus.



TOM THUMB, who at 22 years of age stood 33 inches tall, is pictured in a Currier and Ives lithograph from 1860. Tom Thumb memorabilia is included in the Hertzberg Circus Collection in San Antonio, Texas.

Setting the stage . . .

(Continued from Page Ten)

Hope. Eventually, the Narragansett were also drawn into the war, but only after being attacked by colonial forces wary of any ostensibly neutral native tribes. Attempts to enlist the Mohawk from the Albany, New York region was unsuccessful.

For over a year, the scales of war were evenly balanced. But the colonial superiority in manpower and arms was more than Philip and his allies could endure. After a particularly serious defeat at Scituate, Philip's forces were broken and dispirited. An offer of amnesty to Indians who surrendered their weapons was accepted by hundreds of Wampanoag facing almost certain death from attack, disease and starvation. The Wampanoag were unwilling to accept the staggering casualties that accompanied European-style warfare, losses they found horrendous. As was inevitable from the moment the first shot was fired, a desperate Philip fled to the swamp of his native Mount Hope in a futile attempt to elude his pursuers.

It was just a matter of time before the sachem was discovered and trapped. On August 12, 1676, during an early morning raid on his camp, Philip, was shot and killed by a "friendly" Indian named Alderman. In accordance with English practices in punishing traitors, Philip's body was quartered and severed parts hung from trees. One of his hands was taken by Alderman, who went on to earn a lifetime of tavern favors from its display. Philip's head was placed on a stake in Plymouth, where it remained for many years. Cotton Mather is said to have been particularly pleased with the gruesome sight, and more than once while visiting "took off the jaw of that blasphemous leviathan."

For the Wampanoag, defeat in the war meant an end to any serious possibility of preventing English encroachment into their territory and the gradual erosion of their culture. They found themselves squeezed between the inexorable pressure of new arrivals and remaining Indian foes to the west. Their lives shattered, thousands of the Indian survivors of the war, among them the remaining members of Philip's family, were sold into slavery in the West Indies.

Native Americans have not forgotten King Philip's War, nor the crucial assistance they had earlier extended to the Pilgrims and other English settlers. According to Nanepashemet, "the one thing Indians hate more than anything is ingratitude...by the 1670s, the tables had turned, and the English never reciprocated." Nanepashemet believes that the war helped "set in motion the complete subjugation of Native Americans," a process that has continued to the present day. He also thinks that Philip has been unfairly maligned historically, by bearing the brunt of responsibility for a conflict that could very well have been avoided.

But Nanepashemet appears to have few illusions about the history of the era. "Did the natives kill innocent people, and destroy their property?" he asks. "Yes, they did. Did they practice scalping and torture? Yes, they did all of this – and so did the English. It was a war, and nothing less, and those are some of the things that happened."

King Philip's War was not the first armed conflict between European settlers and Native Americans, and it would be followed by two centuries of bitter, intermittent struggle. But the die had been cast – never again would native peoples oppose the white man on anything resembling a level playing field.

An event that was partly-precipitated by seldom-remembered incidents in the Middleboro area helped established a dubious historical dynamic that endures to this day.

Isaac Howland 1649 – 1724

by Robert M. Beals

Isaac Howland was born in Plymouth on November 15, 1649, the youngest of the ten children of Pilgrim John and Elizabeth (Tilley) Howland. As a young man, he moved inland to Middleboro, a distance of about fifteen miles. He purchased land on which the present town hall stands, and was also involved in the Sixteen Shilling and Twenty-six Man's Purchases. He married Elizabeth, daughter of George Vaughn, of Marshfield, and they were the parents of eight children; Seth, born Nov. 28, 1677; Isaac, born March 6, 1678; Priscilla, born Aug. 22, 1681; Elizabeth, born Dec. 2, 1682; Nathan, born Jan. 17, 1686; Jael, born Oct. 13, 1688; Susanna, born Oct. 14, 1690; and Hannah, born Oct. 16, 1694.

Shortly after the beginning of King Phillip's War, the Middleboro settlers were advised to move to the village fort, on what is now North Main Street (approximate location of the present Nemasket Grange Hall). Isaac Howland and seven men were chosen as a council, with John Tomson as commander. Tomson then formed sixteen able-bodied men into a company to protect the people. In addition to the "ordinary guns," which each family owned, the company was equipped with a "long gun." It was seven feet, four and a half inches long; the length of the barrel, six and one-half feet; the size of the caliber twelve balls to the pound; and the length of the face of the lock, ten inches. The gun weighed twelve pounds.

In early June of 1675, a band of Indians was seen from the fort on the opposite bank of the Nemasket River, near "hand rock." It was called that because of what appeared to be the impression of a person's hand on it.

For several days, an Indian came to this location and offered insults in gestures and word to the garrison in the fort, hoping to provoke an attack. John Tomson called his council together, and after careful consideration, decided that they should shoot the Indian. The "long gun" was brought out, and Isaac Howland was selected for his skill as a marksman. He rested the gun on the shoulder of a comrade and fired. The Indian fell, mortally wounded. The shot was considered remarkable at the

Setting the stage . . .

time, as the distance was one hundred and fifty-five rods (or 2,557-1/2 feet), much beyond the range of an ordinary musket. The wounded man was carried away to the home of William Nelson, about three and half miles away, where he died. The house was then burned. Several houses and mills were also destroyed by the Indians.

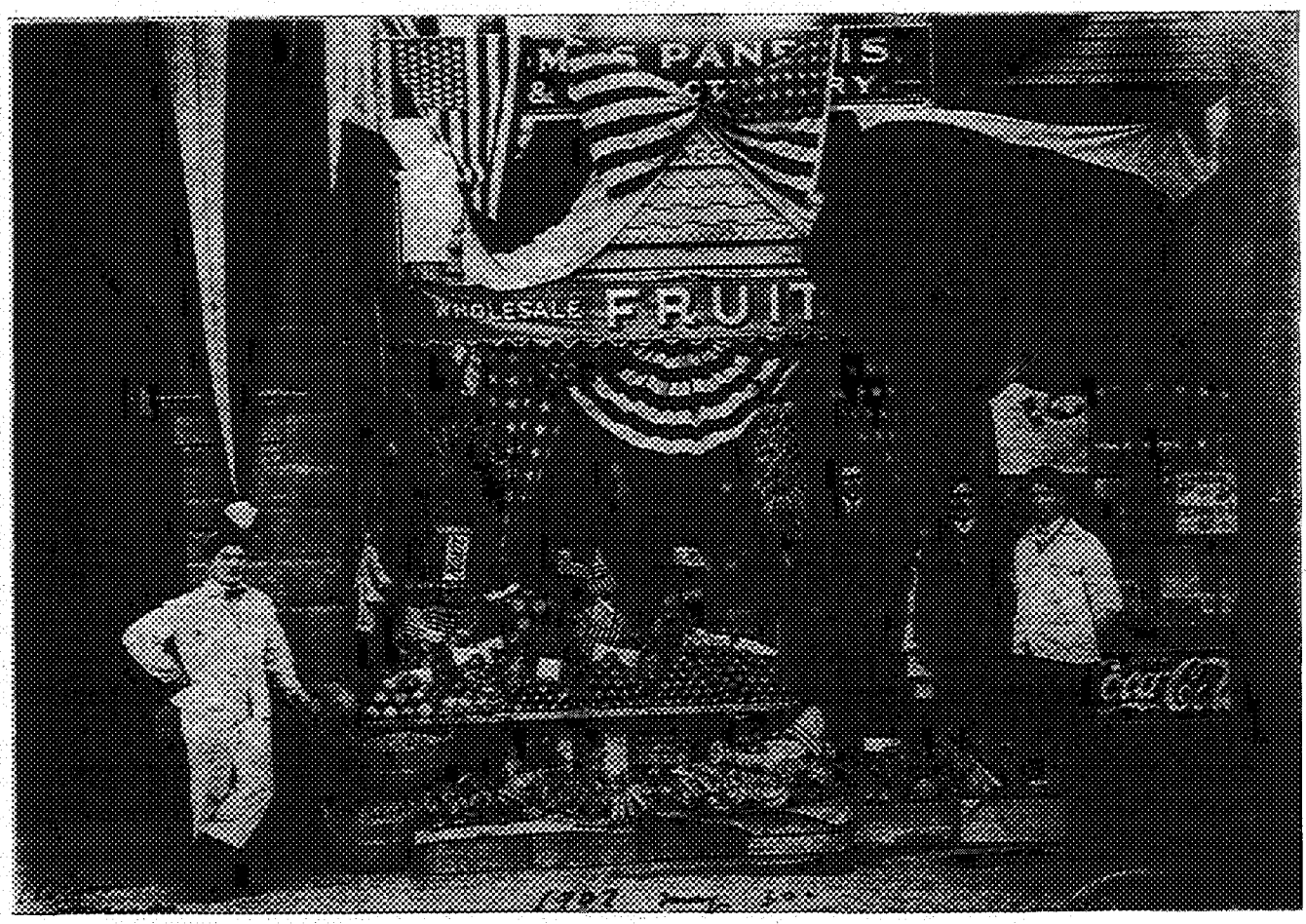
On July 30, 1675, the authorities in Plymouth learned that a force of Indians was near the Middleboro-Bridgewater line. Captain Church, along with Isaac Howland, and other members of a company, went off in pursuit. They went to Bridgewater, where King Phillip, with some of his followers, desiring to escape, had cut down a tree to serve as a bridge across the Taunton River. Church, on reaching this temporary bridge, saw an Indian sitting nearby, and was about ready to fire, when one of his company, who thought it was a friendly Indian, restrained him. It turned out to be King Phillip. Captain Church and Isaac Howland pursued him into a swamp, where they captured several of Phillip's tribe – but not him. Back in Plymouth, Captain Church received the governor's thanks for this victory in which 173 Indians were killed. Again, Church and Howland went in search to Phillip, and on Aug. 12th, surrounded and captured him at Mount Hope.

The war lasted about two years. Thirteen villages were destroyed and many others were attacked and seriously damaged. There were heavy losses of life to both the white people and the Indians.

Isaac Howland served in the town government of Middleboro for several years. In 1672, he was a surveyor of highways, and in 1674, the constable for the town. He is listed as having been a selectman in 1683, 1684, 1685, 1686, 1687, 1692, 1695, 1696, 1700, 1701, 1702 and 1703. Town meetings were frequently held in his home. He was also a representative from Middleboro to the General Court of the Province of the Massachusetts Bay in New England from 1689 to 1691. He also owned a tavern for a number of years.

Isaac Howland died March 9, 1724, at the age of 74, and is buried at the Nemasket Hill Cemetery. His name is one of the most prominent in the early history of Middleboro.

Ref.: History of the Town of Middleborough, 1906.



PANESIS FRUIT Store, Center Street, pictured in 1907 with patriotic festoons, was a downtown landmark until this year, when the store closed. The fruit business is still being operated by the Turner family.

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Scout project . . .

(Continued from Page Seven)

bottles will be collected and disposed of. Finally, any low hanging branches from trees will be removed.

The restoration will include: righting the headstones that are no longer standing straight up. Also the headstones that are normally level with the ground will be raised back up to the level of the ground. Finally several headstones will be repaired where possible.

The plot plan part of the project will consist of taking the current plans and checking them against what is actually in the cemetery. After having been verified, the plot plan will be redrawn (by me, with any necessary changes added) and presented to the church and to Middleboro Historical Commission.

This Project benefited the South Middleboro United Methodist Church Cemetery. It has benefited the church in the following ways: The headstones are now all vertical instead of tilted which makes it much more easy to mow around them. These stones are now much less prone to damage. The ground level stones are now all ground level again. The cemetery is much more pleasing to the eye now that the stones are all nice and straight instead of being crooked. And of course the church now has a new and much more accurate plot plan of the cemetery.

I have discussed these plans with both the minister of the church, Rev. Dr. Helen Oliver, and the head of the cemetery, Vincent Gorman. Both have approved of the project and contributed to the planning of it.

The help from my project came mainly from scouts in my troop. I also had help from my youth group and from adult leaders.

Contributing to my project were: Diane White, Assistant Scoutmaster, and Stuart White, scoutmaster, who had the blueprints of the cemetery made up where they work; Vincent Gorman, head of the cemetery, showed me how to handle the stones and gave me copies of the original plot plan to work off of; Edie Mathews, one of the caretakers of the church, from whom I borrowed the key to the crypt in order to use the yard tools; and Lindsay Leroy, my sister, who helped me with measuring the cemetery plots.

One very fortunate thing about my project was that there was no cost and all of the necessary tools and equipment were supplied by the church and by my workers. I had access to shovels, rakes, a wheel barrow, a broom, and a heavy pry bar. I began my project on May 19, 1990 in the Gammons plot directly behind the church. I had 5 scouts helping me that day and we started work right away. The first thing that we started on was cleaning out a bramble of wild roses that had completely grown in around two stones. The bramble was at least 10 feet in diameter and it took most of the afternoon to clean out.

We also worked in raising the ground level stones in that plot back to ground level. This was accomplished very simply by

(Continued on Next Page)

Scout project . . .

digging the stones out and then reinstalling them at ground level. On this day I did not get as much accomplished as I had planned to, however, looking back at how many people I had and the amount of work there was I am satisfied on what we did accomplish.

I held my second work party the following day, May 20, 1990. On this day I had quite a few people come to work. I had 17 people helping me on that day including members of my youth group and several adult helpers.

On this day we were able to spread out and work in the area directly behind the church. I had people working on the ground level stones and on the regular headstones. The regular headstones were also quite easy to straighten. The stones were carefully removed and then reinstalled back in their original vertical position. Unfortunately we had to end early because of the weather. I was able to accomplish much more on this day than the previous and I was surprised that we did it in so little time.

On the remaining four work days everything went smoothly and according to plan. Because I had mostly the same core of boys helping me I had a definite advantage. After having worked on one day they knew exactly what I wanted and how they were to do it, so on subsequent days they were able to show up and go straight to work after I told them which section we would be working on.

My third work day was held on May 26, 1990. I had 6 people helping me on this day. We worked along the back section along the road. We mainly worked on raising the ground level stones back up to ground level.

On the fourth work day we did exactly the same as on the third except we moved toward the middle section of the cemetery. I held this work day on June 28 with 4 people helping. When we finished on this day I was finally more than half finished.

My fifth work day was held on August 26 with 5 people helping me. We continued working in the middle section and in the area behind the crypt. We also straightened a row of headstones that looked a lot like a row of crooked teeth.

My final work day was held on September 29 on this day I had 5 people helping me. We worked on the front section and finished up everything that needed doing. We straightened and raised the remaining stones and we cleaned out the low hanging branches in the maple trees that border one side of the cemetery.

Over the course of the next three weeks I gathered all of the necessary notes and diagrams for the redrawing of the plot plan. I spent approximately 12-15 hours total on this part of the project. I went to the cemetery and measured off the perimeter of the cemetery and how its boundary lines were oriented. Next, with the help of my sister, I took all of the measurements of the different plots and took notes on all the different locations of things. After each session of note taking I came home and drew a little of the plot plan each night until it was finished.

There were no real changes from the original proposal but there were two minor omissions. The first omission was that we did not really need to clean anything up because the cemetery is already so well cared for. The second omission was that I decided not to have any of the stones repaired. This was because there were only two stones that really warranted repair. One of these stones was not so badly damaged that it needed serious repair and the other stone would have needed to be sent some-place that does monument restoration in order to make a new base.

In conclusion I can only say how pleased I am with how the whole project went. I found that working with small groups allowed me much better control and we were able to get a lot accomplished. I also must say that the people who helped me were all great to work with and a lot of help, although they did tend to get a little restless toward the end of my work parties, but there was a lot of work and that sort of thing is to be expected and there were no problems.

The only thing that I would change about my project is that I would have kept a better journal. I started out well but after awhile I stopped because it was rather repetitious because we did basically the same thing every day. I did, however, keep a precise record of the days of the work parties who attended and how long they worked.

Once again I can say how pleased I am with everyone who worked on it and how well it turned out. Surprisingly everything went according to plan, I had no difficulties. I had a lot of fun doing it and I think everyone who worked on it had fun too.

THE PEIRCE STORE on North Main Street has also served as the Fourth District Court building and is now the town's police station, an example of a well-recycled building.

Preserving Middleboro's past . . .

(Continued from Page Four)

building inventory or one which, in the opinion of the commission, has significant architectural or historical value.

If a building is determined to be a significant structure, the commission has up to six months to work with the property owner to sell or move the building rather than raze it, to have the town purchase it, to find grant money for restoration, or some other alternative to demolition. At the end of six months, or sooner, if negotiations are unsuccessful, the owner may still tear down the building, but the town will at least have had an opportunity to try to save it.

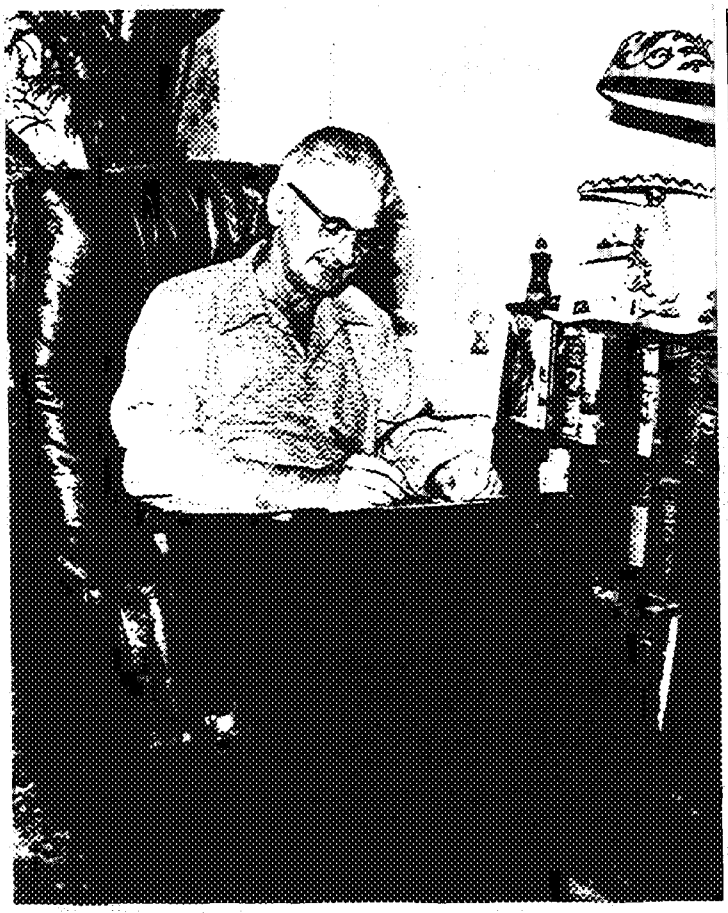
Few hearings will be held under this bylaw, perhaps one of two a year. In most cases, it will be determined that buildings have deteriorated too far to be saved. But the bylaw would offer the community a degree of protection against a loss of the magnitude of the Peirce Academy or the Nemasket House.

The bylaw could also be an educational tool, a way to show property owners that historic buildings can be adapted for use n today's world. An example of an adaptation in the making is the 19th-century Leonard House, which was recently moved to the Pratt Farm, where it will be the headquarters for the town-owned conservation area and the offices of the Conservation Commission and Historical Commission. This house, which was the subject of a May, 1989 Antiquarian article, is believed to have been a stage coach stop on the New Bedford-Boston turnpike in the 1800s. It was to have been demolished to make way for an industrial park at the Rotary, but was spared at the request of local preservationists. It is a long way from being restored to its original condition, but someday the Leonard House will serve the community and the many townspeople who visit the Pratt Farm.

The demolition delay bylaw has, admittedly, been rejected twice by town meeting voters. The historical commission believes this occurred because voters did not understand the bylaw and its implications. As a result, commissioners have been working to educate voters about the bylaw; a cable television program will be shown prior to town meeting, and copies of the bylaw will be available as well.

This bylaw is an important preservation tool, and is also an integral part of the overall preservation plan for the town.

(Mrs. Lopes, the editor of the Antiquarian, is also chairman of the Middleboro Historical Commission and the Leonard House Committee.)



LYMAN BUTLER, author of The Middleboro Gazette's popular "Down Memory Lane" column, is also a former officer of the Middleborough Historical Association.

Lyman Butler— We thank you!

by Robert M. Beals

One of the first columns that I read in the Middleborough Gazette was Lyman Butler's :Down Memory Lane." For those of us who are senior citizens, his words bring back many fond memories of "how life was back then."

Lyman has always been a great and true friend of the Middleborough Historical Association. For several years, he served as a director, vice-president and president of the association. He visited the museum frequently and loved to do little odd jobs around the buildings and grounds. He kept the bushes and hedges trimmed every summer.

Today, Lyman is a resident of the Oak Hill Nursing Home. He loves to have visitors and talk over old times. I spent a few minutes with him recently while he was working on a column for the Gazette.

The Middleborough Historical Association is grateful to this fine man for his many years of devoted service to the community and the association.

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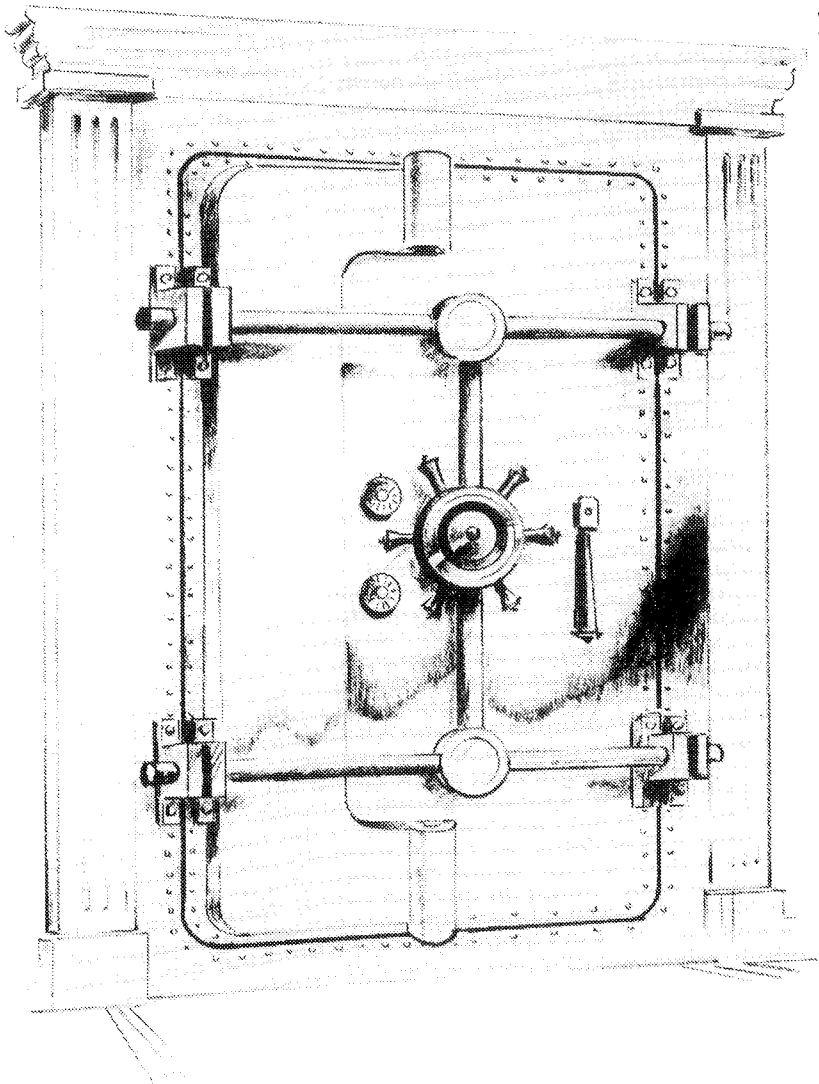

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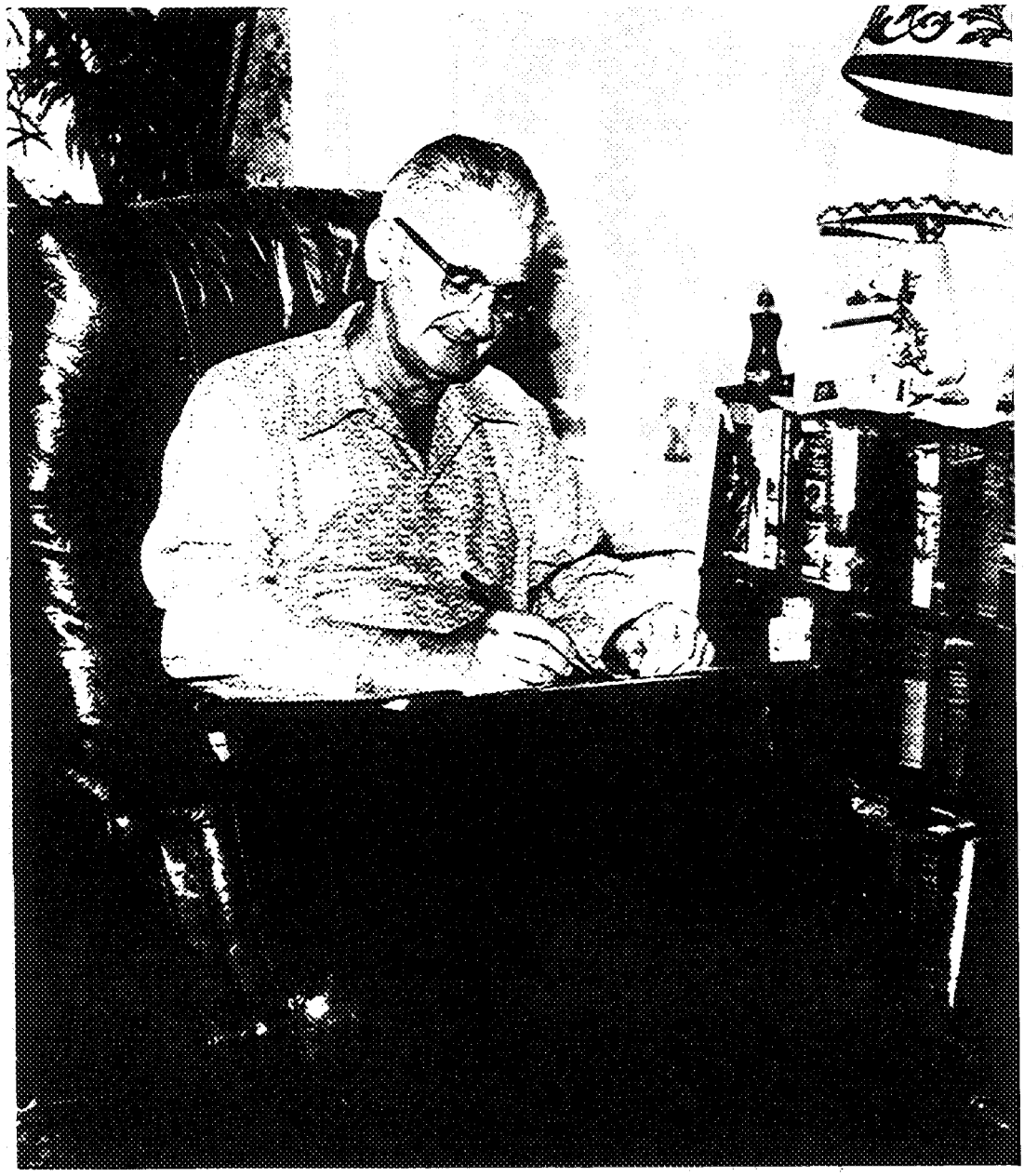

Lyman Butler
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A message from the editor

by Jane Lopes

"Chronicler of small-town life" was the phrase his longtime friend and colleague Clint Clark used to describe Lyman Butler, who passed away in January at the age of 86.

In addition to writing his "Down Memory Lane" column for the Middleboro Gazette for nearly three decades, Lyman was a frequent contributor to the Antiquarian. His writing focused on Middleboro, the town he recalled from his childhood and learned about from his lifelong passion for local history.

He wrote about sledding in the winter and spending leisurely summer afternoons in a rural New England town. He wrote about traveling by horse and buggy, attending a one-room school and watching his mother can preserves. His memories were strong, and he was able to articulate them in such a way that younger generations could appreciate and enjoy. This was a constant source of enjoyment to him, knowing that he was offering a local history lesson to young people, and perhaps instilling in them some of the values small-town life had instilled in him.

In his column and in his Antiquarian articles, he also imparted the information gleaned from research, from conversations and correspondence, and from his work - not the work for which he was paid a salary, but the work he did for the love of it. A member of the Middleborough Historical Association for many years, and a past president, Lyman was active in the association and was also a member of the Steamship Historical Society and other historical and environmental groups. His love for the Pratt Farm, now a town-owned environmental education center, encompassed both his respect for local history and his desire to preserve the town's historical and environmental resources.

Lyman was well known as a local authority on historical landmarks ranging from 18th-century mill sites to downtown buildings, and his was one of the first names mentioned by anyone asked for information about the town's history. In his tribute to Lyman, Clint Clark put it best. "Whenever there was a question about a local event, or a vanished landmark, it was always, 'Ask Lyman, he'll know.'"

Following is a sampling of Lyman's Antiquarian articles.

MIDDLEBOROUGH ANTIQUARIAN
Middleboro, Mass.
VOLUME XXX FALL 1992 NUMBER 1
Jane C. Lopes ..... Editor

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Ben Chapman's Store and Diner

by Lyman Butler

Many remember when Ben Chapman ran the motor and bicycle shop on South Main Street, but I wonder how many remember when he had the variety store on Everett Street between his house and the railroad to Plymouth.

You could buy groceries, soda, ice cream and all kinds of candy as well as small toys and balloons, which the children of that day enjoyed as much as the really expensive toys of today. As Ben ran the bike shop daytimes, his wife took care of the store at home.

She was a very kind and respected lady and all of us kids enjoyed going over for a bottle of pop or some ice cream. At this time Everett Street was old Route 28 and Ben's store did very well. A favorite pastime for us young ones was to get a bottle of pop and set on the banks of the railroad bridge and watch for the trains to Plymouth.

A short time later Ben moved a diner onto a spot where Robert Clark's dwelling stood before it was moved up to the junction of North and Everett Streets when the new Route 44 took the land. This was a very popular place with the teenagers as well as the many motorists that used Route 28 to the Cape.

(Continued on Page 11)

Colonial Middleboro - Part I

by Warren and Marion Whipple

(First in a series of three articles on Middleboro during the colonial period.

The Beginning of a New Community (1676 - c.1686)

Colonial history? Traditionally we concentrate on the Pilgrims coming to Plymouth and then jump to the American Revolution. What happened in between? Specifically, what happed in Middleboro to turn an Indian village into a thriving industrial community of Englishmen? Whatever happened, it all occurred in exactly one hundred years (1676 - 1776).

Nemasket was the most densely populated area of the Wampanoag Indian Federation. The three villages at Muttock, Assawompsett, and Titicut had escaped the ravages of the plagues of 1615 and 1617, so this was the center of Indian power, and from Muttock their trails branched out in all directions. Because of the concentration of Indians here, no attempt had been made by the people of Plymouth Colony to move into this area until all the surrounding lands had been settled. The General Court (legislature) of Plymouth Colony ruled that all purchases here must be made by appointed agents of the Court, and all settlers must, by law, recognize the Indians' right to share the land. Nevertheless, settlers were eager to buy lots and to establish homes, some within sight of the Indian towns. The first Purchase, called the Twenty-six Men's Purchase, was made in 1661. Eight years later there were perhaps as many as forty families living here, this guess being based on the fact that in 1669 the General Court incorporated Middleberry as a separate town. For the next twenty years either name, Middleberry (also spelled Middlebery or Middlebury) or Middleborough, was used on legal documents. After 1700 the latter name was used exclusively. It is strange how our name changed gradually without any official action being taken. Middleberry was the second largest own in area in Plymouth Colony. It included our present-day Middleboro, Lakeville, a corner of Halifax, and a bit of Rochester.

When King Philip's War broke out in 1675, the settlers evacuated to Plymouth to save their lives, but every home was destroyed. All records were burned. Nothing remained of the town, and yet it was assessed L100 as its share of the cost of the war. News of this devastation reached Europe, of course, and the old records that Francis Coombs and Isaac Howland were appointed to "distribute charities from Ireland to such as were impoverished during King Philip's War."

In June of 1677, a meeting of sixty-eight landowners was held in Plymouth to decide what to do with their burned-out property. King Philip was dead, Anawan and Tuspaquin had been executed, the Indian alliance had collapsed. However, even though the war was over, there were still many Indians living in the area. Some estimates place the ratio as high as ten to one in favor of the Indians. Furthermore, the settlers would be widely scattered in a farming community. They would have to be constantly on their guard against a revengeful individual operating as a sniper, as an arsonist, or as a thief. In the next town of Carver as late as 1698 a bounty would be paid for Indian scalps, but the General Court stipulated that in Middleberry the Indians must be left in peace on their reservations and allowed to share the land and its hunting and fishing rights. Reservations had been given to them at Betty's Neck on Lake Assawompsett and at Titicut (North Middleboro) as a gift to the Praying Indians for remaining neutral in the war. Gradually, most of the inhabitants of the Muttock village sold their land and moved to Titicut. Even so, there would still be many natives nearby, and the new settlers would have to be constantly on guard.

If the settlers returned to Middleberry, they would have to cut and saw their own lumber and construct their own cabins. They would need money to stock their farm with sheep and cows. They would have no church, no school, and no doctor nearer than Plymouth, and the road was a rough trail of twelve to sixteen miles traversed on foot or horseback. Despite these discouraging conditions the landowners voted to sign the following statement. "...we said inhabitants at Plimouth on Wednesday the twenty seventh of June (1677) aforesaid do unanimously agree by permission of God and by his gracious assistance to make a beginning again in order unto the repossession of our lands and reedification of our demolished buildings and habitations which some of us were before the late sad warr in actuall improvement and possession of, and to make such orders and conclusions as may hopefully have a tendency unto the laying a foundation of a towne and opius society in the place."[1]

Not every family returned. Some sold their rights. Those who did rebuild were scattered throughout the 100 square miles of town. We know that John Tomson's house was on Thompson Street in Halifax, while David Thomas lived in the Thomastown section along the Weweantic River. Isaac Howland lived in the center near our Town Hall. The Eddy Family gave their name to Eddyville, George Vaughan's land was beside Lake Assawompsett, and Ephraim Tinkham built across the Nemasket River from the Muttock Indians. Neighbors were usually far apart.

We have to assume that these first houses were cabins built of hewn logs with windows of oiled paper. The men had to do the work themselves, with hand tools. The furniture was homemade, too. At the same they had to hunt for food, plant gardens and care for their sheep and cows if they had any. The women had to spin and weave with flax and wool, make all the clothes, towels, and bedding. They dipped candles, made soap, pre-

served food, and did the cooking. Obviously the meals were necessarily simple. Breakfast and supper usually consisted of a porridge of boiled cornmeal served with milk or molasses. Dinner was a hearty repast of meat or fish with vegetables of beans, squash, pumpkin, or beets from their garden. Often this meal was cooked as a stew in the pot hanging in the fireplace. They drank ale, beer, or cider. Like all Englishmen at that time, they were afraid of water that had been known to cause sickness. Illnesses were a constant dread. With little knowledge of diseases and their causes, and with no concern for sanitation, epidemics were common. Yellow fever and smallpox were their worst enemies, more feared than human enemies who were visible, at least.

Life was hard, but their parents had also found it hard in Europe, and they themselves were second-generation Pilgrims who had never known any other life.

We think of Middleberry as a frontier village built in the woods, free if all legal restraints, where local matters were settled by the people themselves. However, it was not that isolated. First, Middleberry was subject to the General Court and Governor of Plymouth Colony to whom they must pay taxes, fulfill military duties, comply with the fencing rules to control sheep and pigs, observe the Sabbath, and obey the hunting and fishing regulations. Because deer were an important source of food, they were protected by hunting restrictions that prevented their extermination. Wolves, bobcats, blackbirds, and crows were considered a threat to flocks and gardens, so a bounty was paid for killing them.

Unfortunately there would always be a need for enforcement and punishment. John Tomson and Isaac Howland were appointed to set up the stocks and whipping post, and make a pound for holding stray animals. The three selectmen settled local disputes and "warned" potential misfits out of town. The office of constable was very important. Serious problems were bandled in Plymouth.

Middleberry had two representatives in the General Court of Plymouth Colony but in order to serve or even to vote a man must own property worth at least 20 and must take and oath of fidelity to the Pilgrim Church and government. According to the Plymouth records only six men had qualified as Freemen at first (1670): Francis Combe, Jonathan Dunham, Samuell Eaton, John Morton, William Nelson, Sr., and Henry Wood. However, every man must obey the laws and pay his taxes.

For the first few years, the men concentrated on rebuilding their own homes. A decade later, they began in earnest to organize the town. In 1693 the General Court spelled out the orders for all towns. They must support a minister and a school. Every March there must be a Town Meeting to elect the selectmen, a clerk, constables, a surveyor of highways, a surveyor of fences, assessors, a tithing man to control disorderly personsin church and also to check the taverns regularly for excessive drinking and loitering, a sealer of leather to supervise tanning, and a clerk of the market to check weekly for the weight of bread being sold. The town must care for its poor, and allow no loafers to remain. The law required that towns regularly "walk their bounds," and Middleberry was having problems with its neighbors, especially Bridgewater. John Tomson, Isaac Howland, and John Soul were appointed (1686) to handle this matter.

Town Meetings were usually held in Isaac Howland's house. Attendance was often difficult for farmers who lived many miles away, but unity was important so attendance was compulsory. The fine for skipping one meeting was two shillings 6 pence.

Plymouth Colony belonged to the British Empire, and its people must obey King and Parliament. The Middleberry settlers might live thousands of miles away from London, but they were under England's authority at all times. The Empire laws dealt primarily with manufacturing, trade regulations, and with defense against the French and Spanish, but of course they could and did deal with all manner of subjects. Under the rule of Oliver Cromwell, Puritan Boston had become almost independent, issuing its own money, ignoring the Trade Laws, and omitting the King's name from legal documents. So, when Charles II was restored to the throne after Cromwell's death, he was determined to re-establish royal authority in America. He sent his special commissioners to assess the situation, and they were publicly insulted. King James II took action! The colonial charters were revoked, and all New England and New York were combined into one large Dominion of New England (1685) under a royal governor. Plymouth Colony with its elected government was wiped out. Our people must pay allegiance to the royal Governor Andros who used Boston as his capital. If it had been inconvenient to travel to Plymouth, now they must go to Boston to pay taxes, record deeds, hold trials. Only two years before, Obadiah Eddy had been commissioned to lay out a road "toward Boston." Suddenly the road was urgently needed. In Town Meeting it was voted not to send a representative to the General Court of Massachusetts because the town was too "few in numbers" and unable to bear the expense.

When James II died, William and Mary came to the throne. They reissued Colonial charters (1691), but Plymouth Colony was united forever to Massachusetts Bay Colony. Under this new charter, each town got two representatives to the General Court in Boston, and Middleberry chose John Tomson and Issac Howland to go – two familiar names!

And so, from the very beginning, Middleberry's residents were surrounded by laws, regulations, and meetings on numerous political issues. They were never allowed to forget that they belonged to the King and the British Empire.

1. Weston, History of the Town of Middleboro, Massachusetts. p. 551.

Middleborough's Tory Story: Simeon Doggett, 1738-1823

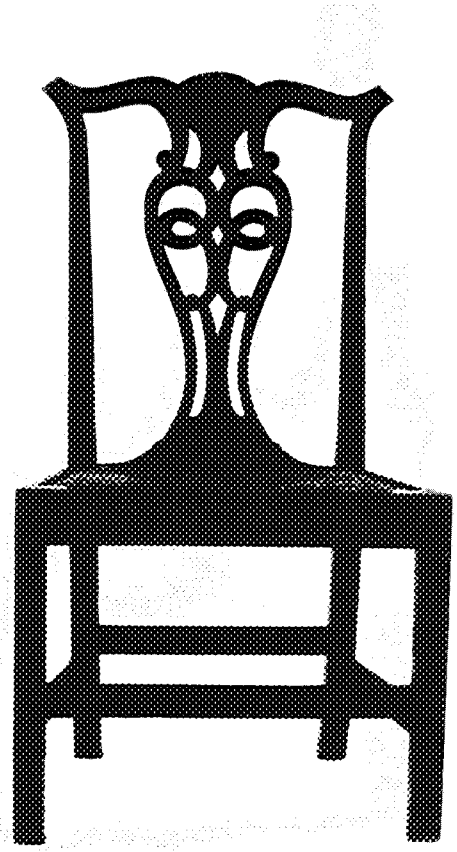
by Margaret K. Hofer

Simeon Doggett's account book, a pocket-sized, tattered vellum notebook in the library of the Connecticut Historical Society, provides a window into the life of an eighteenth-century yeoman and his place within the Middleborough community. The account book and other family papers document Doggett's business as a joiner and housewright, provide insights into the economic and social structure of Revolutionary Middleborough, and offer a harrowing chronicle of one man's political persecution and the ultimate recovery of his reputation.

As a joiner, Doggett crafted a wide variety of wooden objects ranging from chairs, bedsteads, and chests of drawers to feeding troughs, spinning wheels and coffins. His work as a housewright involved erecting, finishing and painting dwellings and other wooden structures, from barns to meeting houses. As was typical for eighteenth-century rural artisans, Doggett also combined his trade with farming. While aspects of Doggett's professional life correspond with what other scholars have learned about the rural craftsman, his religious, political and personal life were markedly different from the typical yeoman. First of all, Doggett was an Anglican in a town composed almost entirely of Congregationalists. In addition, he espoused Tory views and was persecuted by local patriots. Finally, he became dissatisfied with the status quo towards the end of his life and aspired to raise his family above yeoman status.

Doggett's family arrived in Middleborough in 1742, when he was four years old. His family, originally from Marshfield, was probably drawn to Middleborough by cheaper and more plentiful lands. Doggett's father, faced with the task of settling four sons on sufficient land for farming, apparently opted to indenture his youngest son Simeon to a skilled artisan, thereby lessening the need to give him a large allotment of land. Doggett's apprenticeship, to an unknown artisan, probably began in 1752, at the standard age of fourteen; by the time he reached the age of twenty-one, he had completed his training and was ready to work as a journeyman. Doggett must have left his apprenticeship with the confidence that he was ready to earn a living, for his marriage intention was published just five months after he reached his majority and was released from his apprenticeship. In 1760, Doggett married Abigail Pratt, the daughter of David Pratt of Chowan County, North Carolina.

Doggett's account book spans a thirty-year period, from the time he began his business at the age of twenty-four to the time he turned it over to his eldest son in 1792. Close analysis of his accounts reveals a wealth of information about Doggett's professional life, including the types of objects he made and what he charged, the clients he served, the kinds of goods and services which were offered in payment, the seasonal rhythms of his business, and his training of apprentices. Doggett was rarely without additional hands to assist in building houses, making furniture, and of course farming his land. In addition to his own three sons, Thomas, Elkanah, and Simeon, Doggett trained and provided a home for at least seven apprentices during the period he kept his account book. Five of Doggett's apprentices were fatherless at the time they were apprenticed, so Doggett served the role of surrogate father as well as that of skilled master. Doggett must have had a wide reputation as a master, for his apprentices came not only from Middleborough, but also from more distant towns such as Plympton and Plymouth.



CRAFTSMANSHIP shows in the elaborate design of this Doggett chair, probably built around 1798.

The scrawled names and numbers in Doggett's account book are more meaningful when considered alongside surviving

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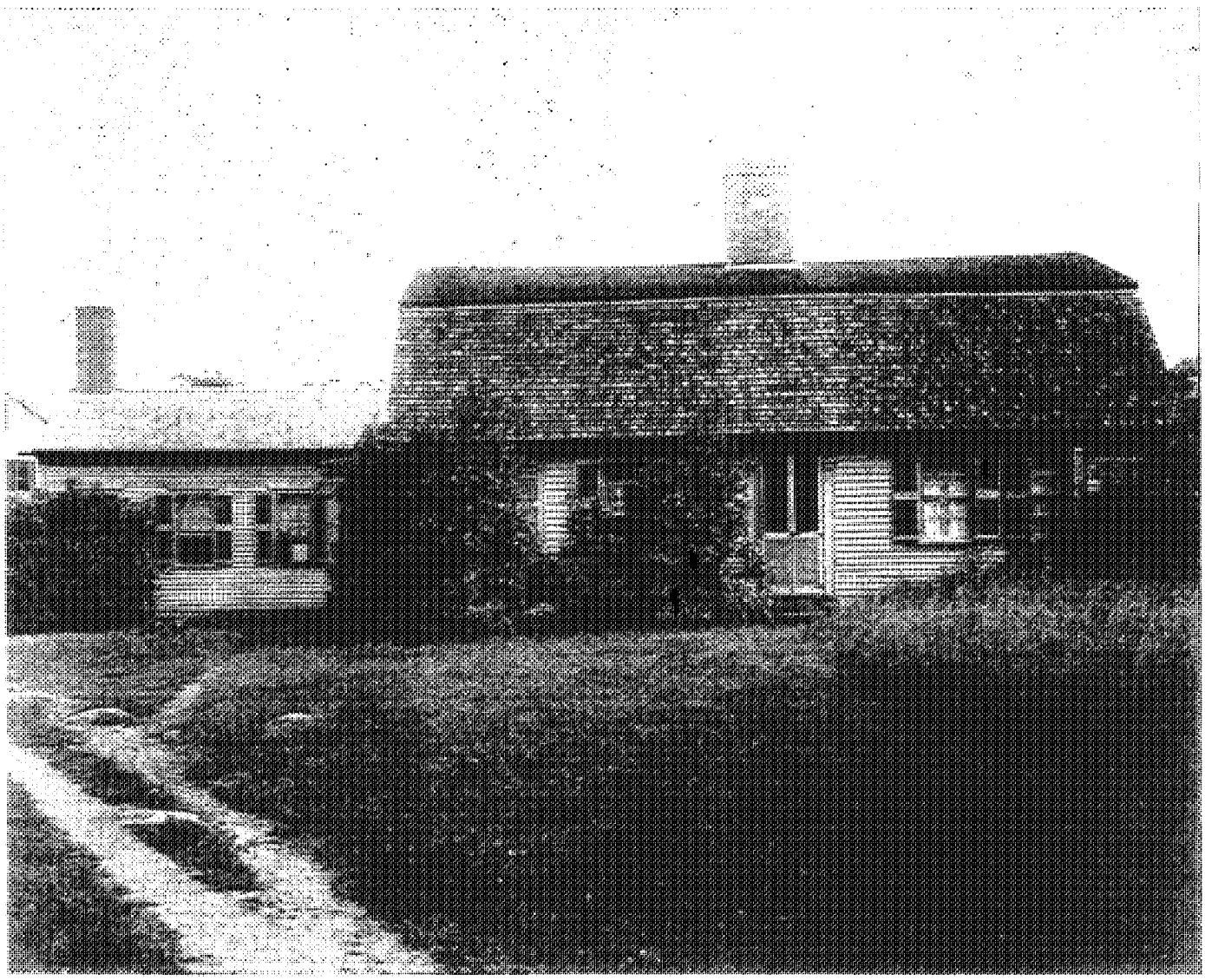


THE MIDDLEBORO HOME of Dr. Peter Oliver, begun in 1767, was one of several local houses that Simeon Doggett helped build that are still standing. Several other examples of his handiwork can be seen on Page 13 of this issue.

Doggett furniture and houses. The chair in figure 1 is still owned by a direct descendant of the Doggett and Weston families. It was probably made by Simeon Doggett as a wedding gift for his daughter Abigail, who married Thomas Weston in 1798. The chair represents Doggett's most elaborate joinery work; for the most part, his clients preferred his more simple and less expensive slat-back and bannister-back chairs. The design of this chair's back-splat is based on similar chairs which were popular in Newport and Providence, Rhode Island several decade earlier.

If the chair represents Doggett's most elaborate joinery work, the Dr. Peter Oliver house (figure 2) is surely Doggett's most sophisticated house-building project. As is substantiated by both Peter Oliver's diary and Doggett's account book, the house was begun in 1767 by Daniel Oliver, Peter's older brother. Daniel died in 1768 during a voyage to the Canary Islands, and Peter Oliver took over the house for himself, hiring many worker to complete the unfinished dwelling. While Doggett was involved in every stage of the building, from erecting the structure in 1767 to finishing the interior in 1770, he was only one of many skilled artisans working on the project. As Doggett was only twenty-nine years old and an inexperienced housewright when he began building the house, he was certainly not the master builder. Instead, he was probably directed by experienced builders whom the Olivers may have brought from Boston. Evidence of Doggett's handiwork is still there today: the twenty-seven window frames and 372 squares of sashes which Doggett recorded in his account book in 1767 are largely intact.

In addition to the Oliver House, one other example of Doggett's housewright activity stills stands in Middleborough. The Silas Wood House on South Main Street was built by Doggett in 1771 for his neighbor and fellow Tory. Unlike the Oliver House, which was a formal Georgian mansion, this cape wasmore typical of the types of dwellings Doggett built for his

(Continued on Page 13)

The Plantagenet Ancestry of the Middleboro Aldens

by George Barden

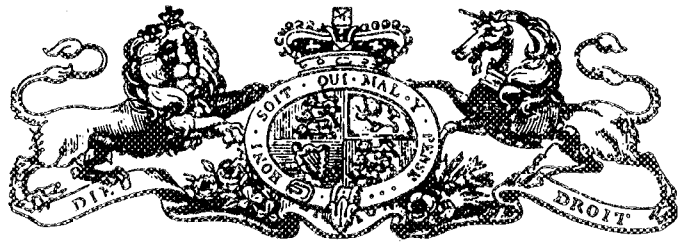
The surname "Alden," once so common in Middleboro, has all but disappeared in this locality in the latter half of the twentieth century, although there are still many who can claim descent from the Elder John who arrived in Plymouth aboard the "Mayflower" in the year 1620. John Alden, grandson of the Elder John and son of Joseph Alden of Bridgewater, was the first Alden to make Middleboro his place of residence, settling in North Middleboro in the year 1700, and his descendants became more and more numerous throughout Middleboro during the next two centuries. One who visits the Purchade Cemetery (the "Alden Cemetery") on Plymouth Street in North Middleboro will notice the grave markers of John, his wife Hanna (White) and literally dozens of their Alden progeny.

There has been much speculation concerning the English origin of the surname Alden but with very little to show for it. The concensus is that the name derives from a Danish family (or Viking raider) who settled in England sometime in the ninth, tenth or eleventh century. There is an Aldene listed in the Domesday Book of 1066 and one Alexander Aldeyn is registered in the "Rotuli Hundredorum" of Oxford in 1279; of John Alden's parentage nothing is known.

The pedigree of John's wife, Priscilla Mullins, is another matter. Her ancestors are well documented, each successive grandparent occupying a high rank on the social ladder. As we scan the record from 1620 backward in time to her earliest known ancestor, Rollo the Northman, we note prosperous tradesmen, members of the nobility and tradesmen, members of the nobility and finally seven rulers of England including William the Conqueror, and before him the five generations of Dukes of Normandy until we arrive at Rollo, the Viking who conquered that part of France known as Normandy (Norman = North-Man) and whose exact place of origin is a mystery (Denmark, Sweden, Norway?). Counting these well-known personages among one's ancestors is not uncommon – rather, it is the rule for anyone who has two English ancestors of the nineteenth century or before. Most genealogists agree that we of English descent are the blood relatives, and probably the direct descendants, of everyone who lived in England at the time of William the Conqueror.

The seven rulers of England mentioned above begin with William the Conqueror and continue with Henry I, Matilda or Maud), and the first four Plantagenet kings – Henry II, John Lackland, Henry III and Edward I – with Eleanor of Aquitaine as an interim ruler after the death of Richard Coeur de Lion.

The accompanying chart lists Priscilla's English ancestors.



PRISCILLA MULLINS
Family line to William the Conqueror

1. William the Conqueror 1027 - 1087
   married Matilda, daughter of Earl of Flanders, 1053
2. Henry I (King of England) 1068 - 1135
   youngest son of William I; reigned 1100 - 1135; married Edith-Matilda, daughter of Malcolm III (King of the Scots)
3. Matilda (a/k/a Maud) 1102 - 1167
   daughter of Henry I and widow of Henry V, Emperor of Germany; married Geoffrey of Anjou (the first Plantagenet) 1129
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5. John Lackland (King of England) 1167 - 1216
   youngest son of Henry II and Eleanor; succeeded Richard the Lion-hearted, his elder brother, to the throne; reigned 1199 - 1216; married Isabella of Angouleme, 1200
6. Henry III (King of England) 1207 - 1272
   Eldest son of John and Isabella; reigned 1216 - 1272; married Eleanor of Provence in 1236
7. Edward I (King of England) 1239 - 1307
   Eldest son of Henry III and Eleanor; reigned 1272 - 1307; married Eleanor of Castile, half-sister of King Alphonso X, in 1254
8. Princess Joan (also "Joanna") 1272 - 1307
   known as "Joanna of Acre"; one of nine daughters of Edward I; married Ralph de Monthermer
9. Sir Thomas Monthermer
   Son of Joan and Ralph; first cousin to King Edward III; killed at the naval Battle of Sluys, June 23, 1340
10. Margaret Monthermer
    Daughter of Sir Thomas; married Sir John Montague, son of William de Monteacuts, Earl of Salisbury

(Continued on Page 12)

BIRTHPLACE OF Lavinia Warren, who married the famous Gen. Tom Thumb, still stands on Plymouth Street in Warrentown.

Old Warrentown Business Locations

by Lyman Butler

Every once in a while I will pick up the Weston History of Middleboro and open it at random and read awhile about whatever is on the pages but it is not long before I turn to the part of the book which tells about the places where I used to live as a young one. The one that I have just been reading about is the Warrentown section of town. Having spent my early childhood in that section I remember many of the spots mentioned.

As there are many people who have not read the history I would like to tell of a few of the industries which were carried on in the Warrentown section of long ago. As the history starts with the Murdock Street area of the Nemasket River so will I. Here was built a grist mill, a shingle mill and a saw mill, all operated by water power. These were built and maintained by Mr. John Warren, a great grandson of Jabez Warren who the locality was named after. Some of the walls of the old mills are still in existence. The old home of John Warren was still in existence when I was young, later it burned. This was known as the John Weston house and was located on the spot where Henry Dutra lives now. The present house was built by Jack McNeece who many remember as working for the registry of motor vehicles in later years. According to history where Snow's Bog is now, used to be a reservoir for water power to operate the hammer shop which was owned by Benji. Warren. The shop where the shovels were made was the building which housed Primo's Pastime when I was a youngster. It is now a dwelling house. The flume and sluiceway of the hammer shop are still in use for controlling the water on the Cranberry Bog known as Snow's Bog.

On the knoll of the Snow place was a carriage shop operated by Venus and Otis Snow, father of Henry who us kids used to know as youngsters. When he passed away his son William carried on the bog for some years. The old carriage shop was used as a screen house and storage for the berries. This building has been gone for years and there is nothing to remind you of a once thriving business in this spot.

The James and Sylvanus Bump family used to operate a slaughter house in a building in the rear of their dwelling on Plymouth Street where Mrs. Tom Thumb was born. This business was carried on by Charles H. Shaw and his son Charles L. Shaw at the turn of the 20th Century. This building has been torn down and all that remains is the cellar hole.

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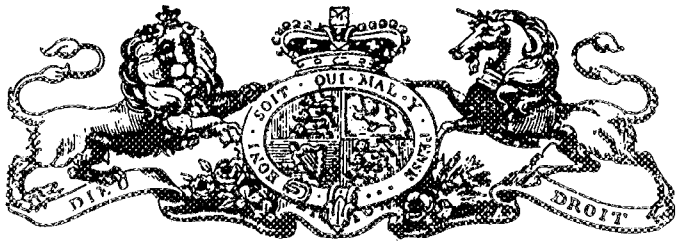

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building when the boys from Warrentown used it for a Club House.

I have given you a rough idea as to what a busy place Warrentown used to be in the old days. There is no doubt but there were other small shoe shops like the one where Carol Washburn lived but the town history does not list every little business, although on the old 1855 map there are many little shoe shops listed here and there all over town.

This may not mean much to a lot of people but anyone who lived in Warrentown fifty or sixty years ago will well remember many of the buildings which housed some of these business ventures.

August, 1965

Ben Chapman's Store . . .

At this time the Model T was very popular as well as some of the so called expensive cars such as Winton Apperson, Packard and others, and traffic was heavy. The diner stayed open for some time but as the summer visitors began to use the new Route 28, business dropped off and Ben closed up and sold the diner.

I went down to the Cape at Hyannis last summer and happened to see Ben. He was nearly ninety years old and although he has lost a leg, he still gets around well and runs a lunch canteen. He is known as the Java man. Ben comes through town occasionally and renews old times with his many friends.

April, 1965

Old Middleboro Merchants

by Lyman Butler

While looking through the old Gen. E. W. Pierce history and directory of Middleboro, 1899 which Mrs. Donald Garnier kindly loaned me, some of the advertisements are really interesting, like the one of a Gideon S. Thomas: Fruit and Confectionery Bazaar, Ice Cream and Oyster Stews served at all hours. Well I like ice cream and I like oyster stew also but the combination is not just what I would pick. He also carried a full stock of cigars and tobacco. Ice Cream at short notice. This store was located on Main Street next to the Nemasket House which at this time was managed by H.E. Penniman. Transients would be boarded at a dollar a day, cheaper if by the week.

The people of today could never have lived back at that era as there were no easy credit terms like we have today. Most stores had to have "Cash on the barrel head" as they say.

At the time there were two newspapers published in Middleboro. The Gazette with J.M. Coombs, Prop. and The Middleboro Semi-weekly News, which was issued on Tuesday and Friday. M.N. Copeland was publisher of this sheet with office on Academy Green which I assume was where Thatchers Print Shop is now. This bi-weekly was $1.50 per year. In 1889 there was no North or South Main Street. From the corner of North and East Main Street to the Lakeville line was just Main Street.

Then there was C.C. Crooker, Agent for Bridal Veil Flour and Standard Java Coffee. This store was at the corner of Main and Water Street so I presume it was where in my day Peckham's Market stood. Another interesting ad is the one of Thomas G. Ford, Horse Shoer and Carriage Smith. It says "We use Dr. Roberg's Patent Hoof Expander for the care and prevention of contraction, Quarter Cracks, Corns etc." Boy those are all new to me, can't remember of any of our horses having corns, but have heard of a bog spavin and the heaves.

Another one is F.W. Hayden Optical Goods, Jewelry, Watches, also Guns, Fishing supplies etc. Lots of these stores carried a varied assortment of goods since in those days, with a smaller population, they could not specialize on just one thing. Today, an optometrist just sells glasses and a jeweler just sells jewelry, watches etc.

Another interesting ad is the one of "Matthews and Ramsey's Hair Dressing and Bath Rooms. Special attention given to cutting and shampooing Ladies Hair." So you see even back in 1889 they had a beauty shop right on Center Street or as the advertisement says you could get a bath before going on that date, even if you did not have a bathroom in your house. I take it that this is the same location and the same Pete Ramsey which I knew as a youngster next to the Pierce Building on Center Street.

There are very few of the advertisers that are still doing business today under the same name as at that time. LeBaron Ice Company is one that is still going only selling oil instead of ice. Another J.L. Jenney Coal Co.

Looking back to the time I was very young I can remember a few who are listed in this book. Atwood Box Mfr.; W.F. Dean who had a wood working shop next to Benson Harness Shop; Dr. W.F. Fryer; E.F. Blake; Jenney Coal; LeBaron Ice; Norman McDermick, teamer; C.H. Morse, Poultry; and Dr. H.A. Smith. I will tell more about this interesting book at some future date.

August, 1973

Webster Street, Circa 1900

Old Popcorn Vendor

by Lyman Butler

Some may say that this title does not have anything to do with history but I believe that at the time these persons were doing business, to them it was as important as if they were running a department store or a grocery. I am referring to "Pop" Heath and T. Quigley who both had popcorn carts. I believe Mr. Heath was the first to start out but Mr. Quigley was not far behind. Mr. Heath had a three-wheeled bicycle rig which he pulled like a cart with a rudder wheel in front.

These carts were familiar at the band concerts that were so popular when the Bay State Band was playing at the bandstand on the Town Hall lot. They also took in ball games which were well attended and any parade or other celebration. I can see "Pop" Heath now with the gasoline fire and the big wire mesh popper that must have held six or eight quarts. This was suspended on small chains from the roof and just the right height from the flame. He would just push the handle gently back and forth and soon the corn would begin to pop and fill the big basket when it was done. Then with a deft motion the popper turned upside down into the corner and a big bin. This operation was repeated until a good supply was made. A big old coffee pot of butter melted over the flame and kept warm by holding it over the fire now and again. A generous amount of this was put onto the bag of corn when sold.

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November, 1973

CENTRE STREET, Middleboro, in the days of trolley cars.

Plantagenet Ancestry . . .

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    Son of Sir John and Margaret
12. John Montague
    Son of Robert; married Agnes More
13. William Montague of Sutton/Montague
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14. William Montague of Somersetshire
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15. Johanna Montague
    Daughter of William; married John Molins
16. John Molins Jr.
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19. Priscilla Mullins 1603 - 1650
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building when the boys from Warrentown used it for a Club House.

I have given you a rough idea as to what a busy place Warrentown used to be in the old days. There is no doubt but there were other small shoe shops like the one where Carol Washburn lived but the town history does not list every little business, although on the old 1855 map there are many little shoe shops listed here and there all over town.

This may not mean much to a lot of people but anyone who lived in Warrentown fifty or sixty years ago will well remember many of the buildings which housed some of these business ventures.

August, 1965

Ben Chapman's Store . . .

At this time the Model T was very popular as well as some of the so called expensive cars such as Winton Apperson, Packard and others, and traffic was heavy. The diner stayed open for some time but as the summer visitors began to use the new Route 28, business dropped off and Ben closed up and sold the diner.

I went down to the Cape at Hyannis last summer and happened to see Ben. He was nearly ninety years old and although he has lost a leg, he still gets around well and runs a lunch canteen. He is known as the Java man. Ben comes through town occasionally and renews old times with his many friends.

April, 1965

Old Middleboro Merchants

by Lyman Butler

While looking through the old Gen. E. W. Pierce history and directory of Middleboro, 1899 which Mrs. Donald Garnier kindly loaned me, some of the advertisements are really interesting, like the one of a Gideon S. Thomas: Fruit and Confectionery Bazaar, Ice Cream and Oyster Stews served at all hours. Well I like ice cream and I like oyster stew also but the combination is not just what I would pick. He also carried a full stock of cigars and tobacco. Ice Cream at short notice. This store was located on Main Street next to the Nemasket House which at this time was managed by H.E. Penniman. Transients would be boarded at a dollar a day, cheaper if by the week.

The people of today could never have lived back at that era as there were no easy credit terms like we have today. Most stores had to have "Cash on the barrel head" as they say.

At the time there were two newspapers published in Middleboro. The Gazette with J.M. Coombs, Prop. and The Middleboro Semi-weekly News, which was issued on Tuesday and Friday. M.N. Copeland was publisher of this sheet with office on Academy Green which I assume was where Thatchers Print Shop is now. This bi-weekly was $1.50 per year. In 1889 there was no North or South Main Street. From the corner of North and East Main Street to the Lakeville line was just Main Street.

Then there was C.C. Crooker, Agent for Bridal Veil Flour and Standard Java Coffee. This store was at the corner of Main and Water Street so I presume it was where in my day Peckham's Market stood. Another interesting ad is the one of Thomas G. Ford, Horse Shoer and Carriage Smith. It says "We use Dr. Roberg's Patent Hoof Expander for the care and prevention of contraction, Quarter Cracks, Corns etc." Boy those are all new to me, can't remember of any of our horses having corns, but have heard of a bog spavin and the heaves.

Another one is F.W. Hayden Optical Goods, Jewelry, Watches, also Guns, Fishing supplies etc. Lots of these stores carried a varied assortment of goods since in those days, with a smaller population, they could not specialize on just one thing. Today, an optometrist just sells glasses and a jeweler just sells jewelry, watches etc.

Another interesting ad is the one of "Matthews and Ramsey's Hair Dressing and Bath Rooms. Special attention given to cutting and shampooing Ladies Hair." So you see even back in 1889 they had a beauty shop right on Center Street or as the advertisement says you could get a bath before going on that date, even if you did not have a bathroom in your house. I take it that this is the same location and the same Pete Ramsey which I knew as a youngster next to the Pierce Building on Center Street.

There are very few of the advertisers that are still doing business today under the same name as at that time. LeBaron Ice Company is one that is still going only selling oil instead of ice. Another J.L. Jenney Coal Co.

Looking back to the time I was very young I can remember a few who are listed in this book. Atwood Box Mfr.; W.F. Dean who had a wood working shop next to Benson Harness Shop; Dr. W.F. Fryer; E.F. Blake; Jenney Coal; LeBaron Ice; Norman McDermick, teamer; C.H. Morse, Poultry; and Dr. H.A. Smith. I will tell more about this interesting book at some future date.

August, 1973

Webster Street, Circa 1900

Old Popcorn Vendor

by Lyman Butler

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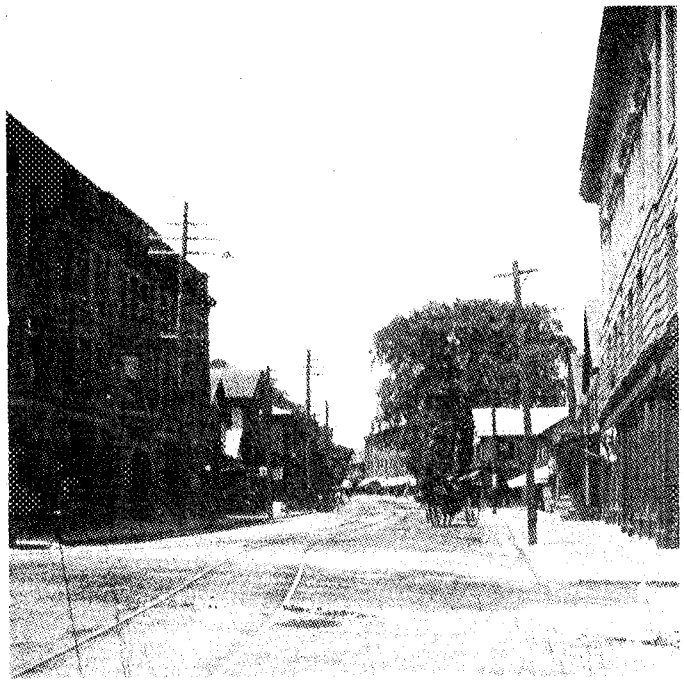
November, 1973



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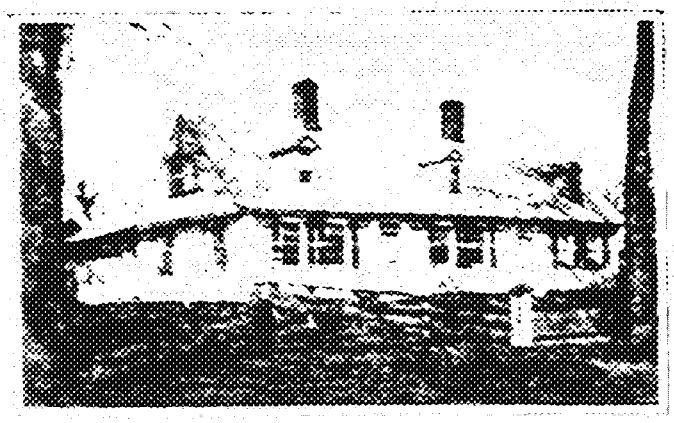
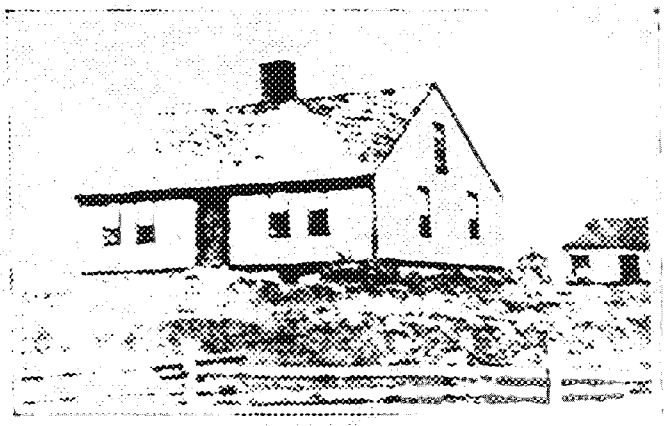


DOGGETT HOUSE



RANSOME HOUSE

regular clients. Most likely the master builder for this project, Doggett worked on the house from July to September with two apprentices, Moses Samson and Walter Richard. Doggett and the boys worked six days a week on the project, probably for about ten hours each day. Other houses built by Doggett no longer stand; his own house (figure 3, left) which took on the site of the Lakeville Rehabilitation Center, and the cape he built for his neighbor Lemuel Ransome (figure 3, right) are pictured in Weston's History of Middleboro. Doggett also built houses for Middleborough residents Ebenezer Blackman, Abner Bourne, Dr. Joseph Clark, Isaac Cushman, Dr. Thomas Sturtevant, John Weston, and Zachariah Weston. In 1774, he traveled to the southern precinct of Plympton (now Carver) to built a meeting house for representatives of the new congregation there.

Unlike today's economy, very little cash changed hands in eighteenth-century Middleborough. Instead, services such as agricultural labor or goods such as iron bars or bushels of corn were the dominant forms of payment. Doggett not only recorded his own work in his account book; he also used it to keep track of work his clients had done for him or surplus goods that they had given him. Doggett's clients undoubtedly kept similar account books which recorded their own credits and debits; periodically, craftsman and client would "reckon" their accounts with each other. For instance, on January 28, 1773, Doggettnoted in his account book: "then rackened and settled all book accounts with Lemuel Ramson (sic) and thare was due to me 0.0.10 to ballence all book accounts." Ransom signed his name to the book, attesting that he owed Doggett ten pence.

The most common form of payment among Doggett's clients was agricultural labor, which included hoeing, weeding, hilling, threshing, harvesting, and numerous other task related to farming. Among the crops that Doggett grew on his farm were corn, wheat, rye, and flax. Since harvest time coincided with his busiest months for house building, Doggett often took advantage of his clients' indebtedness at this time of year. During August and September. many of Doggett's neighbors assisted in the harvesting of his crops. Exchange of agricultural labor often involved the work of sons. When Doggett's sons reached the age of eight, their labor became an exchangeable commodity. For instance, Simeon, Jr., age eight, spent two days on Joshua Reed's farm "riding hors(e) to plow for weeding." The farm work that Doggett's sons and apprentices did at an early age was not exploitation, but necessity. It not only enabled Doggett to manage a large farm while doing carpentry and joinery; it also prepared the boys for their future livelihood as part-time farmers.

While labor was the most common form of exchange recorded in Doggett's account book, iron also appears as an important medium of exchange. While labor exchange was typical for rurallocations, the use of iron as a commodity sets Middleborough apart from other eighteenth-century agricultural communities. The Oliver ironworks, which was producing massive quantities of iron by 1756, profoundly affected Middleborough's economy. Peter Oliver's ammunition contracts with the British Crown provided employment for large numbers at nonagricultural trades, involved the town in a larger market economy, and ultimately produced a local local unit of exchange.

Although Doggett was not directly involved with iron manufacture, his account book and other sources reveal that the industry played an important role in his life and indirectly affected most Middleborough residents. In 1788, Doggett inherited his father's rights to iron ore in Assawampsett Pond. Since the ore in this and other local ponds served as the primary raw materials for the ironworks, Doggett must have profited from his ownership of the rights. While Doggett's use of his rights to raw iron ore is not documented, his account book details numerous sales of refined bar iron. In most cases, iron was sold by the hundredweight for the standard price of 1.6.8. Local blacksmiths such as Elias Miller and Jacob Tilson regularly purchased Doggett's bar iron. Besides selling iron, Doggett often received it as payment for joinery or carpentry. Isaac Cushman gave him 204 pounds of blume iron in 1772 as partial payment for the house Doggett and his apprentices built in 1769. Bartlett Murdock, who operated the Charlotte Furnace inPlympton, supplied two tons of iron hollow ware worth 21.68 as part of the payment towards Doggett's work on the South Precinct Meeting House in 1774. This vast amount of hollow ware, a specialty of the Charlotte Furnace, probably

(Continued on Page 15)

How My Great-Grandfather's Civil War Letters Revealed The Human Experience

by Marjorie Alden Doran

Handwritten letters are the reflection of the way a person feels, acts and expresses oneself. They can reveal so much about the person who wrote them and about the time in which they were written, that they become more than mere correspondence. Of all the things that human beings write in their lives, the most personal must be the letters they send to each other.

My Great-grandfather's Civil War letters, in brown ink, yellowed with age and on any kind of paper he could manage to find, beg or borrow, made him and his time come more alive to me.

The first two letters were written aboard the ship "George Peabody" in January, 1863. The writing is more slanted and different from that of the letters written after his arrival on land in Louisiana.

My Great-grandfather Andrew Alden was in the 4th Massachusetts regiment, Company C; a resident of Middleboro, 24 years of age and a bootmaker. He volunteered for nine months' service starting September 19, 1862. His training was done at Camp Joe Hooker, Lakeville. His regiment, with many Middleboro men included, started for the front, via Fall River, December 30, 1862. On the way to the battle zone the "George Peabody" lay at anchor off Fortress Monroe, Virginia, whence two of the letters were mailed back to Andrew's wife, Abigail Whitman (Thompson) Alden, in Titicut.

During the Civil War the Federal forces never lost control of this important fort or the waters in the immediate vicinity; it handled much of the mail brought ashore and, in addition, "flag-of-truce" prisoner mails exchanged between the Confederate and Union forces. Andrew could see the village of Hampton, VA, from the ship as they lay anchor a quarter of a mile from the fort, "The cannon looking us in the face". He wrote of how wonderful the bread was--bread baked at the fort--and "a tug comes alongside to sell apples, three for 5 cents".

From the "Middleboro Gazette" of February 21, 1863, we learn that the "George Peabody" left Fortress Monroe on January 15th:

"For thirty-six hours they experienced a heavy gale, which kept nearly all confined below. Contrary winds prevented their making their passage by the Hole in the Wall, and for three days they were sailing among the dangerous reefs and rocks of the Florida Keys. On the 26th, the Island of Cuba could be seen." They remained off Pilot Town through the 7th, then sailed up to New Orleans and made camp at Carrollton, thirteen miles by water from New Orleans.

Andrew's letter from Carrollton mentions the celebrated 8-mile shell road that runs to New Orleans..."hard and level as a floor -- perfectly straight". The camp was located on a flat, old sugar plantation. They were under marching orders to start at two hours' notice from Baton Rouge to take part in the capture of skirmishes. Andrew writes: "I often see slaves and talk with them about their masters; they have run away and stay among the soldiers. They offer to wash and iron our clothes." On May 16th he wrote: "2000 negroes came into camp. They set some to work and enlisted others." He thought the rebels were losing ground fast.

Andrew writes that the food was never very plentiful, mostly toast and milk (no butter) for dinner, rice for breakfast and once in a while, eggs. He feels the effects of "jauntice". When on the march they have to rest one day to cook provisions.

The first battle for Port Hudson was fought on May 27th, 1863, and resulted disastrously for the Union. Orders came from General Banks to storm the earthworks, about seven miles in extent. "Forward" was the order and as they emerged from the woods -- such a roar from cannon and mortar, musket and rifle, the whine of cannonball, the shriek of the shell, the sudden "ping" of the rifle ball -- all combined.

Andrew writes that he was "sick on return home and was put on board a steamer with wounded, both Rebels and Union. 250 men wounded on all parts of the body--a hard sight. Our Reg't. was sent back to guard duty. The rest of the Army have followed up the rebels. All I can say is to thank God that He spared my life". This letter was written at Fort Buchanan, near Brashear. Andrew writes again from camp near Brashear: "Mosquitos do a good deal towards keeping us wide awake at nights." His "hips are blue and the skin peels off them --I have layn (sic) on boards so much." He misses good clear water to drink and a good bed to lie on at night.

The skirmishes continued, to quote: "They captured a great many prisoners, drove them just where we wanted to. They left everything behind and burned their boats and set fire to bridges. Wish I could load a wheelbarrow for you with sugar and a hogshead of molasses."

On June 14th another fierce battle took place for Port Hudson. The company lost many men, while the number left in charge of supplies at Brashear City were taken prisoner and sent "up the Red River" to Texas. Among the prisoners was Andrew Alden. The prisoners taken at Brashear City, Louisiana, were paroled (exchanged) on June 23rd; from a story in the "Middleboro Gazette" of June 28, 1863, we find that they underwent a severe journey back to Union lines, after having their blankets stolen from them by the rebels. The regiment suffered severely, 118 of it's number dying from disease alone.

Meanwhile, back in Middleboro the "Gazette" was making Welcoming Home arrangements for "the boys". The date of the mustering out was August 28, 1863 at Camp Joe Hooker in Lakeville.

September, 1992

Middleborough's Tory Story . . .

included items such as pots, kettles, cauldrons and andirons.

While analysis of the transactions in Doggett's account book reveals the particular characteristics of Middleborough's economy, a survey of his roster of clients exposes the structure of the community which Doggett served. In pre-industrial agricultural communities such as Middleborough, one would expect to find an artisan's clientele composed largely of people who shared similar backgrounds and beliefs and who were often members of the artisan's extended family as well. With Doggett's clients, this was not the case. As an Anglican and a Tory, Doggett stood apart from the vast majority of the Middleborough population. The typical Middleborough resident at the time of the Revolution attended the Congregational Church and supported the cause of the patriots. Doggett's clientele does not reflect his beliefs at all, for he served many members of the First Congregational Church, including its minister and several deacons. Also among his clients were a number of prominent Revolutionary soldiers, including Lieutenants Achippus Cole and Elias Miller, Major John Nelson, Captains Nathaniel Smith, Gideon Southworth, and Robert Sproat, and Colonel Ebezener Sproat. Several of Doggett's clients were evenly involved in hispersecutions. Although there were only about fifteen suspected Tories in the town, Doggett did business with at least half of them. Doggett maintained strong business and personal ties with Tories Judge Peter Oliver and his sons Daniel and Peter, as well as neighbors Lemuel Ransome and Silas Wood. Other Tories or suspected Tories among his clients were Josiah Vaughan, Thomas Paddock, Zebulon Leonard, Peter Vaughan and William Canady.

Simeon Dodgett's experience during the Revolution, which is described in detail in surviving memoirs and correspondence, provides a fascinating example of how a seemingly distant international event could have a tumultuous effect on the life of a small-town yeoman. Doggett's Loyalist beliefs most likely stemmed from his religion; as an Anglican, Doggett firmly believed in the supremacy and order of the British monarchy. Doggett's conflict with his patriotic townsmen began soon after the battle at Lexington in April, 1775. Because he refused to "take up arms" against the British, Doggett was confined to his farm for over a year, from July 1775 to December 1776. Subsequently, he was forced to pay a ten pound fine for refusing to service in the army. In June 1777, Doggett stood trial for his beliefs and, being found guilty, was delivered to Boston for banishment. After eight weeks on board a prison ship, Dog-

(Continued on Page 16)

gett was allowed to return home, but an angry mob drove him out of Middleborough. Doggett wandered for more than a year until the fury of townsmen had subsided, and finally returned home in early 1779. In a letter written shortly after the war, presumably to the exiled Judge Peter Oliver in England, Doggett summarizes the treatment he received and the current state of his business:

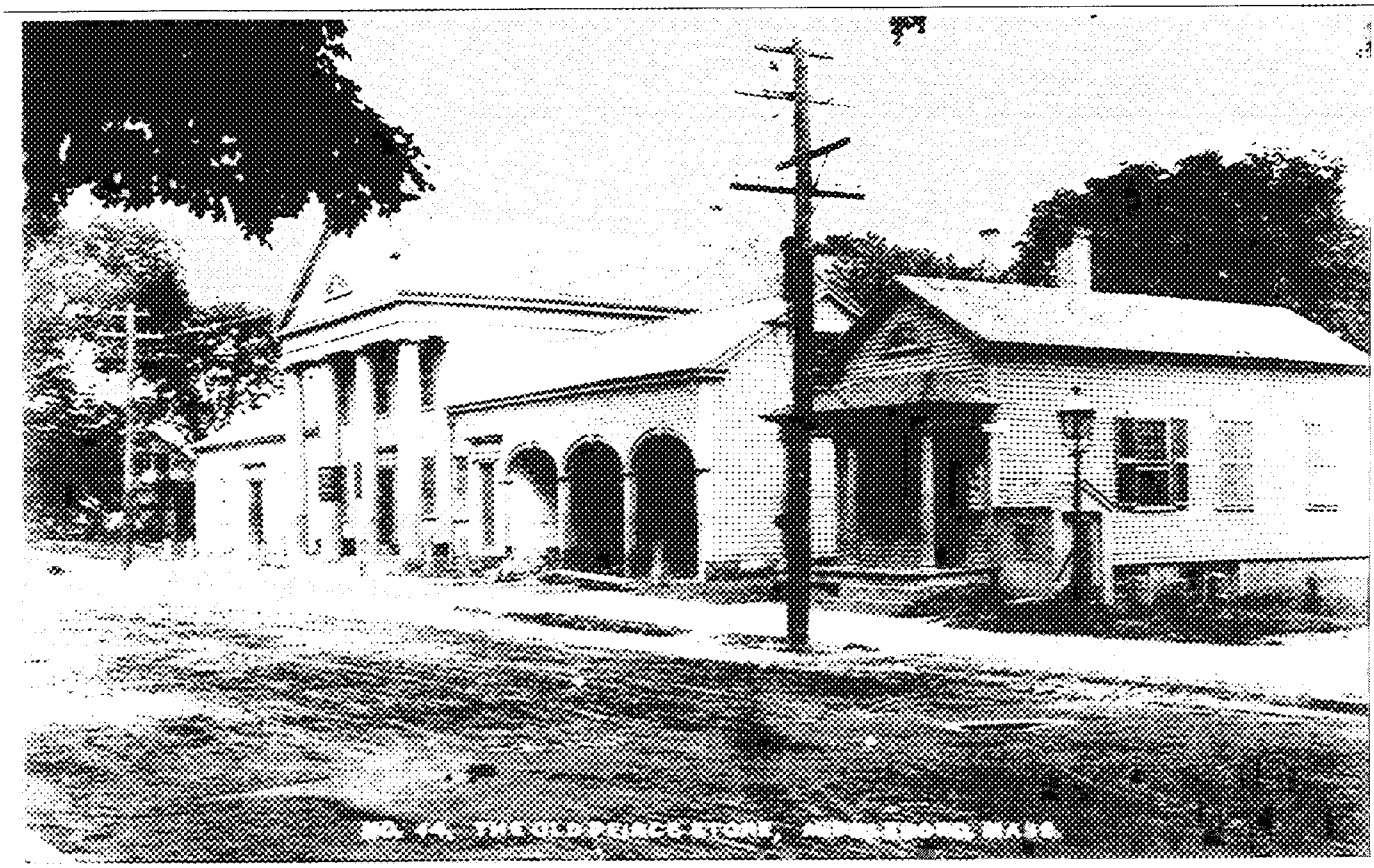
> I have passed through many trying scenes of trouble & difficulty on account of my Loyalty to the...Government of Great Britain; such as being dragged before Committees & the American army then confined to my own farm, insulted, execrated & my life threatened, then impressed into the American army or obliged to pay a heavy fine, then confined a close prisoner on board their ships, then sent home by the then authority, then expelled again from any habitation & drove out of town, in the most ignominous manner, with reproaches, ringing of bells, by my own townsmen to seek my living among these sons of violence...by which means I am rendered poor, & my little interest is much lessened & diminished...My situation in Middleborough is rendered very unhappy & uneasy to me, and I am tempted to seek out an habitation in some place & without insult.

The fact that Doggett did not ultimately leave Middleborough but continued to live there and carry on his business indicates that he was eventually accepted back into the community. According to Weston's History of Middleboro, Doggett and his neighbor Lemuel Ransome "regained the esteem and confidence oftheir fellow citizens" after the Revolution ended. Doggett not only salvaged his reputation after the blow of the War, but even continued to improve his social standing late in his life. Hi family's advancing position within society reflects the broad social changes which were transforming post-Revolutionary Middleborough.

Doggett's recovery and advancement of his social status is evident in his own activities, but is perhaps best summarized by the achievement of his offspring within his own lifetime. Doggett's three sons broke with convention by marrying women from towns other than Middleborough. Thomas, the eldest, carried on his father's trade and remained in Middleborough. Elkanah became a prominent merchant, and died at the age of twenty-seven having acquired the title of "gentleman" and amassed an estate worth over one thousand pounds. Doggett's son Simeon graduated from Providence College (Brown University), served as a tutor there, and became a minister as well as the first preceptor of the Bristol Academy in Taunton. Abigail Doggett, the youngest child, married Thomas Weston, who owned the former Oliver ironworks and later became a judge. In 1798, Abigail and Thomas Weston moved into the Dr. Peter Oliver House, which Doggett had built almost thirty years earlier. With the possible exception of his eldest son Thomas, Doggett's children quickly attained a high level of success, whether it be through business acumen, a good education, or an advantageous marriage.

The amazing level of self-consciousness with which Doggett and his offspring pursued the improvement of their social station is clearly evident in surviving correspondence between Simeon, Jr. and his older brother Thomas. In a series of letters written in 1793 while he was a tutor at Providence College, Simeon, Jr., then twenty-eight years old, expressed concern to his thirty-two-year-old brother about Thomas' apparent disinterest in improving himself and becoming part of the "society" in Middleborough.

> I should advise you, Brother, to contemplate a member of the Society in Middleborough. When you have corrected those bad habits of which I have taken the liberty to remind you, I should suppose you might, with propriety, contemplate being a member. Finding yourself connected with them, you would soon get a taste for reading & improvement...The present is an age of improvement & refinement. By the time you are fifty years old, I think you will find, that a man can't be very respectable, without considerable more improvement, than what now gives respectability. This, I think, is a consideration which ought to have great weight... You would be very unhappy, at fifty, to be sunk in standing to what David Thomas & the Millars & that class of man are now. What has sunk them & raised others above them? It is improvement—improvement in manners & in mind. Twenty or thirty years hence, your family must take their standing from yourself, not from Father, or any of your friends; be very careful then, that you do not oblige them to step down hill, by your neglect.



Middleborough's Tory Story . . .

Although Simeon Jr.'s letters take on the preachy tone of his profession and seem at times unbearably arrogant, they plainly describe the Doggett family's upward mobility and self-consciousness about their position in society. In a previous letter, Simeon, Jr., refers to "the pleasure of looking up to a Father, who, considering the amazing embarassments (through) which he has laboured, is very...respectable man."

Simeon's adulation of his father and some other "respectable" men and his insulting descriptions of other Middleborough families reveal a tension within the society between those on the rise and those "sinking" in status. Doggett's relationships with his clients and neighbors were undoubtedly colored by this tension, which separated not just the rich from the poor, but the "refined" from the common.

Simeon Doggett's account book, memoir, and his family's correspondence produce a portrait of a hard-working, stubborn, and resilient individual who belonged to a community in the midst of change. These sources offer a revisionist view of the rural craftsman, of yeoman Tories, and of eighteenth-century Middleborough in general. The account book dispels the myth of the rural farmer/artisan as an isolated and complacent individual who turned out unsophisticated products for ahomogeneous community. Doggett's persecution as a Tory, brought about by his own unyielding political beliefs, provides proof that not all Loyalists were wealthy aristocrats with a personal stake in British rule, such as the Oliver family. Finally, Doggett's account book suggests that Middleborough was not a rural backwater dominated by subsistence farming, but a vibrant town with an iron-driven economy and a population of individuals looking away from the past and towards the future, eager to better themselves through education and social refinement.

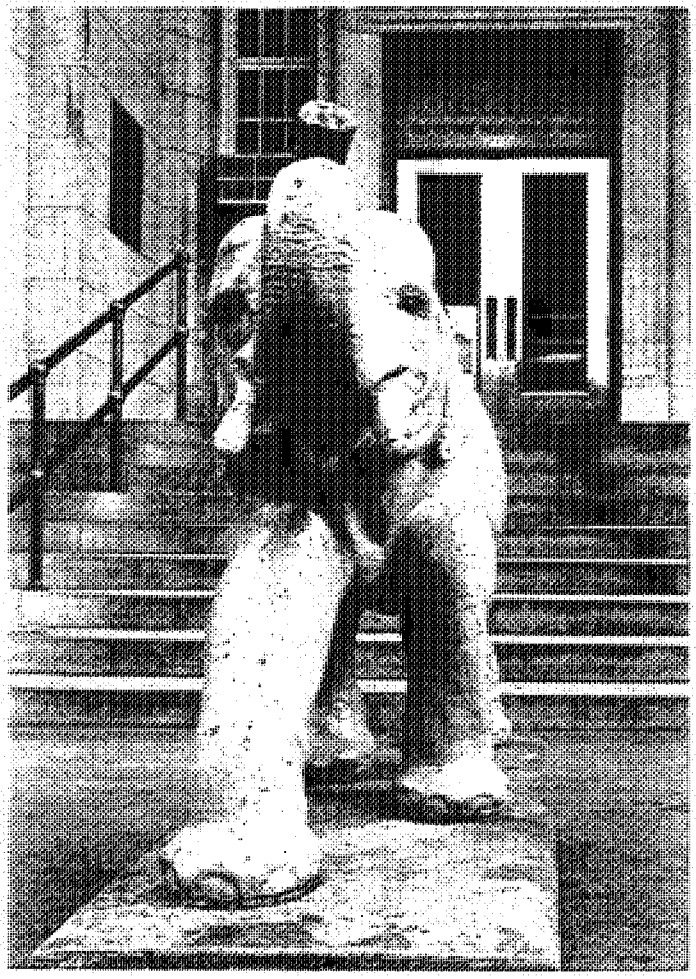
(Margaret Hofer just completed her Master Thesis, The Tory Joiner of Middleborough, Massachusetts: Simeon Doggett and His Community, 1762-1792. She earned her degree from the Winterthur Program in Early American Culture, a program sponsored by the University of Delaware and the Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum.)

Figure 1. Chippendale side chair, cherry, made by Simeon Doggett around 1798.

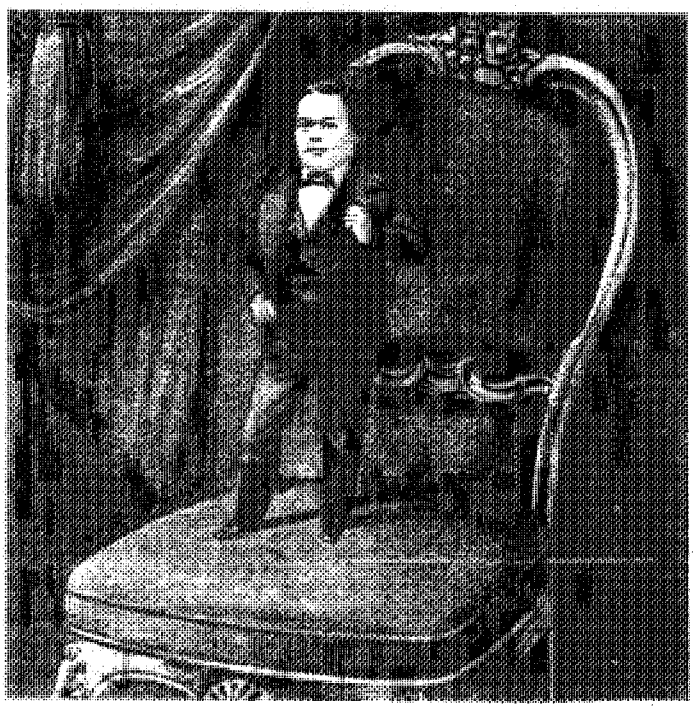
Figure 2. Silas Wood House, 1771.

Figure 3. Simeon Doggett House and Lemeul Ransome House. From Thomas Weston, History of Middleboro.

1. Except where noted, the sources used for this article are the Simeon Doggett Account Book, at the Connecticut Historical Society, and various documents from the Simeon Doggett Papers, at the New England Historic Genealogical Society.



AN ELEPHANT model guards the entrance to the Hertzberg Circus Collection in San Antonio, Texas, which features a collection of Tom Thumb memorabilia.



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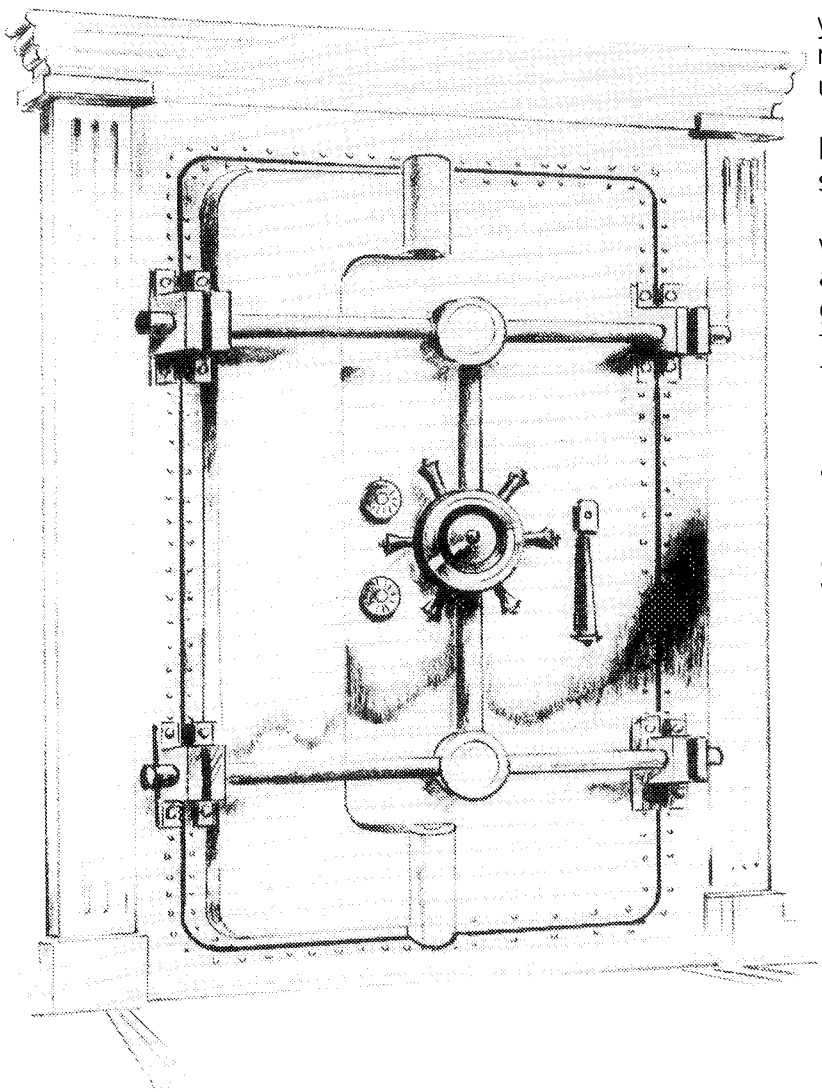

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A message from the Middleborough Historical Association

At present we are still struggling along without an Editor. Over the years, the Middleborough Antiquarian has been a valuable source of information for many people, and we are valiantly trying to keep it alive. We are fighting an additional battle because of the present state of the economy. Our members and subscribers are urging us to continue the fight for survival, but we cannot do it alone! We must have help!

We need an Editor, or a group of people who are willing to work together to continue publication of the Antiquarian.

We appreciate the patience and understanding of all our members and subscribers. We wish to thank Mr. Bob Barboza of the Middleborough Gazette staff for his help in preparing the Fall 1992, and this issue, for publication.

Sincerely,
Robert M. Beals, President

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Middleboro, Mass.
VOLUME XXXI SUMMER 1993 NUMBER 1

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His aunt was Mrs. Tom Thumb

(Portions of this article appeared in the Worcester Telegram, July 21, 1963, and was written by Danielle Day about her interview with the late Benjamin Bump.)

"Can you imagine having a school teacher no bigger than a three-year-old girl?"

Asking the question was Benjamin J. Bump, administrative assistant to the superintendent of schools in Milton. He smiled when he noticed the incredulity that his question provoked.

"Well, my aunt, Mercy Bump, was only that big. She taught grammar school in Middleboro. Then Phineas T. Barnum, the great showman, came along, and she started on a different career. She became Mrs. Tom Thumb, and that's how most people remember her."

Bump stands a good 5 feet 10½ inches tall, and when he mentioned that his Aunt Mercy when fully grown was only 32 inches tall, we couldn't help thinking that if she had been with us, the top of her head would have been just about level with her nephew's belt.

"She was born in 1841. Some people check the arithmetic – I'm 48 years old – and insist that my whole story is a fraud. They say that it wasn't possible for her to be my aunt.

He chuckled. "But my father was 78 when I was born - that's the explanation. He was Benjamin W. Bump, Jr. and his is another story. He served in the Civil War - he was wounded three times but kept going back - and I believe that I am the youngest son in the U.S. of a Northern Civil War Veteran. He died when he was 79, by the way. But now let me tell you about my aunt, Mrs. Tom Thumb."

Mercy Bump was born October 31, 1841, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Banjamin W. Bump, in the Warrentown section of Middleboro. She was a normal-sized baby, but when a still very young child, stopped growing."

Her shortness bothered her, especially since her four brothers were all at least six-footers and two of her sisters were full-sized women. However, her younger sister, Hulda, was slightly smaller than herself."

"I've been told that Aunts Mercy and Hulda had a deficiency of the pituitary gland, and that was the reason for their tiny size," Bump explained.

To give her height, Mercy always wore huge combs that were the fashion of the day. She had a natural reserve which commanded the respect of people, and she was dainty and meticulous. She never considered herself well-dressed unless she wore a lace vestee.

"My aunt always resented being called a midget. The term, to her, meant something misshapen and deformed. She definitely was neither. She was short, that's all. She always referred to herself as a little woman."

When a teen-ager, Mercy Bump made up her mind to do all the things a normal girl of that era did – teaching school, sewing, knitting and cooking. She received good training from her mother in domestic arts.

Benjamin Bump, Mrs. Tom Thumb's nephew, around three years old, models a suit worn by General Tom Thumb when visiting Britain's royal court around 1870.

She became a teacher and though only 17 years old, Mercy Bump maintained excellent discipline in her schoolroom. Nor did the fact that she stood upon a table to teach her third-graders, belittle her in their eyes. She had remarkable control over them.

Her pupils loved her so much that saw to it that she got to school every day. When it was muddy, the bigger boys made a seat of clasped arms and carried her over the puddles. If th snow was deep, they pulled her to school on their sleds.

The summer that Mercy was 17, life changed for her. She and Hula spent their vacations working on a cousin's Mississippi River showboat.

Phineas T. Barnum heard about Middleboro's miniature schoolmarm. He came to her home and talked her parents into allowing her and Hulda to join his troupe of midgets at his American Museum in New York City.

First, however, he changed their names. "No one," he said, "would ever come to see a person with the name of Mercy or Hilda Bump." Through questioning, he learned that the girls' mother's maiden name had been Warren. So Barnum dubbed Mercy and Hulda – Lavinia and Minnie Warren.

"At the museum, my two aunts and two other little people, including Commodore Nutt, gave recitations, sang and danced, all four of them taught by P.T. Barnum."

A romance blossomed, and shortly little Lavinia became the bride of General Tom Thumb, born Charles Sherwood Stratton in Bridgeport, Conn. He received his show-business name from Barnum too.

The wedding took place at Grace Episcopal Church, New York City, on Feb. 10, 1863. The bridal party, with Minnie Warren as bridesmaid and Commodore Nutt as best man, stood on a three-foot-high platform so they could be seen by the guests. Over 2,000 pieces of wedding cake were distributed, and accounts of the ceremony crowded news of the Civil War off the front pages. On their honeymoon, the Tom Thumbs visited President and Mrs. Lincoln at the White House.

Before Long the general and his lady retired from show business. But soon boredom set in. They returned to the stage and once again the four midgets were reunited when Minnie Warren and the Commodore joined them.

They toured Europe for three years and were the guests of royalty in many countries there. Pope Pius IX gave them an audience. In 1872, they made a tour of the world, in addition to return visits to some of the major cities of Europe. The Tom Thumbs were popular and they called on every President from Lincoln through Grover Cleveland.

Lavinia and Tom Thumb always took a tiny Morris chair and a rocker with them so that they could sit in comfort while visiting fullgrown people. They also carried a knock-down teakwood table and dining chairs with them on their travels.

Tom Thumb had a home built on a miniature scale in his home town, Bridgeport. But Lavinia felt a close kinship for her family. Realizing this, the general had a house built across the street from her parents' home in Middleboro. In this big, high-ceilinged, Victorian house, which still stands, the risers of the stairs are the only sign that midgets ever lived there. The risers are only about half the ordinary height.

The Tom Thumbs were hospitable and entertained frequently. To accommodate their normal-sized guests, they furnished their home with standard kitchen and bathroom fixtures in addition to specially made smaller ones for Lavinia and the General.

"My aunt often cooked a meal on her tiny stove, and she enjoyed nothing better than running her doll-like sewing machine. This had been one of her wedding presents," Bump said.

Paradoxically, the Tom Thumbs used regular dishes because they had normal appetites.

Benjamin Bump of Milton displays some of the tiny possessions of his aunt, Mrs. Tom Thumb, collected over the years and eventually distributed to several museums, in a 1963 photo.

They were said to own one of the largest collections of jewels in this country. These were kept in a 1,000-pound safe whose door, when unlocked, had to be swung open by another person as neither Lavinia nor the general were able to move it.

(Part 2 will appear in the next issue of the Antiquarian.)

Colonial Middleboro - Part II

by Warren and Marion Whipple

(Second in a series of three articles on Middleboro during the colonial period.

II. The Formation of an Agricultural Village (c. 1686 - c. 1730)

All of the political changes (see Section I) had occurred in the first fourteen years of our history. Soon thereafter, completing the interval of a generation (20 years), big alterations began to take place in our town as Middleberry grew into a cohesive agricultural village. The town now had a population of about two hundred people, and was required to support a Town Clerk who would record marriages, births, deaths, and run elections. William Hoskins, who had served before King Philip's War, continued in office for the next twenty-four years, and his statistics tell an interesting story. By the way, he was paid with a load of fish! We also rely on family traditions and our own imagination to picture for ourselves these formative years. The people were too busy to write an account of their everyday living experiences, and most of them were nearly illiterate. Usually, they could sign their name on a deed, and read familiar passages from the Bible, and that was all.

We know that one of their first acts was to rebuild the grist mill below the fort on the Nemasket River to save the two-day trip to Plymouth every time they needed to grind flour. Middleberry was blessed with many brooks that could be dammed for water power. Soon, there were sawmills and forges in many parts of town.

It was long trek to the weekly church services in Plymouth because most families had only one horse, and had to take turns riding and walking. There was no road, only a narrow foot-

Please continue on Page 9

Benson's Harness Shop

George Benson operated a harness shop in Middleboro for more than fifty years. His last shop, on Wareham Street, was opened on March 17, 1909, and by the end of the following year, Mr. Benson's was the only harness shop still in business. The harness business on Wareham Street had been previously owned by Fayette C. Norris.

The little shop with its Cape Cod doorway and many paned-windows remained much the same in over one hundred years that it was occupied. The interior, smelling of leather, saddle soap and leather dyes, was lighted by kerosene lamps and heated by a pot-bellied stove. On the walls were posters and prints of many years of advertising buggies, carriages and horse medicines. Several benches were loaded with harnesses, bridles, horse blankets, while the rest of the interior was well-filled with the machinery necessary for the making of harnesses, and to an outsider might seem cluttered.

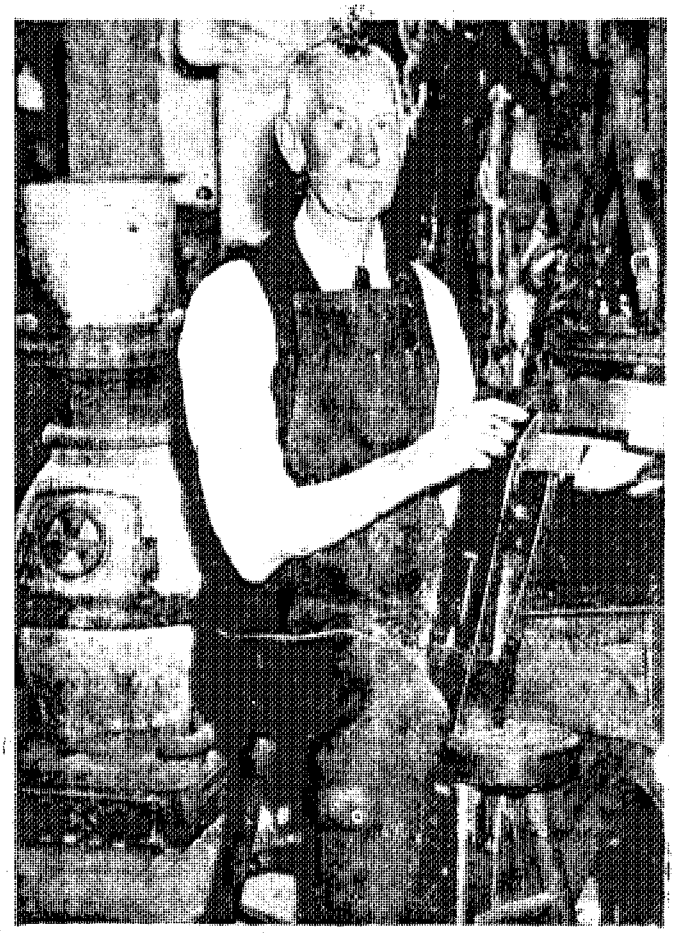
Not so to Mr. Benson, who could immediately put his hand on anything asked for. He was the only harness maker in this part of Massachusetts for several years, and during a weekday outside his shop there would be parked many kinds of vehicles from a chauffered linousine to a farm wagon drawn by horses. He had customers from the farthest point on the Cape ranging from wealthy summer residents to farmers. The late actor James Cagney, who had a home on Martha's Vineyard, came to his shop one day to purchase a buggy harness.

Several years before the Wareham Street location, Mr. Benson had his shop on Everett Street where Count Magri, who married Mrs. Tom Thumb, was among his customers. Also, Otis Briggs of Middleboro, who ran a livery stable; and Charles Thomas and Andrew Miller, owners of the famous racehorse, Mandelina.

Besides making harness, Mr. Benson also sold saddles and horse blankets. During the World War II years, business was very good, since many people had dug out buggies and pony carts to use again, the gas and tire situation being what it was. Commenting on this, Mr. Benson said that little did he believe that he would see the day when the horse and buggy would be fashionable again.

On cool Autumn days, old-timers would gather around the cheerful stove in the shop, and swap tales of yesterday, and persons long since deceased would live again in their tales.

When the little shop where Mr. Benson plied his trade gave way to progress and was moved in 1954 to make room for Cannon Buick, Mr. Benson retired. His wife, Elizabeth, was a very popular English teacher at Bates Junior High School for many years.



(Above). George Benson at work in his shop. Note pot-bellied stove behind him. (Right). The Harness Shop as it appeared as late as 1943.

The Formation of . . .

path. Since 1675 each town had been required to have a "house of worship," but the settlers of Middleberry were too busy rebuilding homes to attend to everything at once, and so they had remained in the Plymouth parish. In 1678 a small group "called" Mr. Samuel Fuller to preach in private homes. He was not ordained, but was recognized as a capable man, son of the Pilgrims' doctor. He did agree to preach, but would not move to Middleberry until a permanent settlement was assured. Two years later the town purchased a houselot and twelve acres of land for him, and he did move here. A small church was built on Plymouth Street about a mile northeast of the present Church at the Green. It was reportedly a very plain building with backless benches to sit on, serving about twenty-two people. The congregation probably grew fast as the families were usually very large, and some people transferred their membership from Plymouth. Rev. Fuller's salary is listed as £20 ($60), to be paid 1/4 in silver and 3/4 in produce. (Corn was valued at 2 shillings a bushel and wheat at 4 shillings.) Rev. Fuller was finally ordained in 1694, and died a year later. During his ministry the membership of the church had doubled. In 1700 a larger building was erected, approximately in front of today's schoolhouse.

The First Church was also the meeting hall for all town business. The early Town Meetings were concerned with laying out roads to neighboring towns. Residents had to donate their labor and bring their own tools or pay a fine. The position of Surveyor of Highways was very important. The Committee for Bridges and Roads consisted of Constance Southworth, Lt. Morton, John Tomson, Joseph Warren, and Isaac Howland.[1] Thus we see who were the leading citizens in the building of our town.

Our forefathers believed in education in order to read the Bible and religious tracts, but for a long time our settlers had been too preoccupied to obey the General Court's recommendation that each town have a school master (no mention of a schoolhouse). Girls were trained at home to spin, sew, cook prepare medicines, make candles, soap, etc. Boys were given the basics of reading, writing, and 'rithmetic when possible. Starting around 1706, the Town Meeting would arrange to hire a man for one year to teach a "free school," meaning town-supported. He was paid a small salary and was expected to rotate around for room and board, staying for three months in each district while holding classes in private homes. However, even this small amount of education was available only spasmodically, and the Grand Jury repeatedly reprimanded the Town for not having a teacher for several terms.

We think the first schoolhouse was built at Muttock by Judge Oliver. Then Eddyville and the West Precinct (Lakeville) had a school. Now that classes were held in a fixed location, transportation from the outlying farms became a problem. Even though the law said that every town of fifty families must have school, attendance was not compulsory. Each school had to be self-sufficient. The older boys cut the wood and tended the fire, carried in a bucket of water from a neighbor's well, and swept the floor.

Probably few boys in Middleberry went to college, although Harvard was within traveling distance. The minister tutored the boys in Greek and Latin until they could pass the entrance test, and age was not a factor. However, a classical education was of no use to Middleberry's farm boys, so (like their sisters), they learned the practical arts at home.

As roads made traveling possible, Middleberry became the center from which the routes branched out to Plymouth and the Cape, to New Bedford, to Wareham, to Taunton, and to Roger Williams' Rhode Island. Inns began to function about twenty miles apart as a resting place for horses and passengers. George Vaughan had received a license from the General Court in Plymouth for an "ordinary" in 1669, and Francis Coombs received a license when the town was rebuilt in 1678. Isaac Howland supported his family of eight children by running an inn (1684). Hell's Blazes (1690) had the strangest name, probably referring to the iron foundry nearby. The most unusual inn was the Hole-in-the-Wall Tavern on the road to Wareham by the Weweantic River. The cook was in hiding, thought to be one of the regicides who voted to execute King Charles I, and forced into hiding when Charles II took the throne. A hand passed out the food through a hole in the wall, and the man's face was never seen. This was another reminder that Middleberry was ruled by England. All of these "ordinaries" were private homes where a meal would be served and the horses could be fed and exchanged. Travelers who wanted to spend the night expected accommodations to be very crowded as they literally became one of the family.

The most prosperous farmers were replacing their crude cabins with comfortable homes, with glass windows, and furnished with a few good imported pieces of furniture and pewter dishes. We know what the houses looked like, – a cozy "Cape Cod" style with a central chimney, a front door with two windows on each side, and a kitchen ell, all oriented to the compass rather than to the road. We know this because some of these houses are still inhabited and others were photographed before they were demolished. The Bennett family dated their house on Plympton Street from 1687. The Ward House (on Stetson Street in Lakeville) is one of the oldest. The Barden House on Barden Hill was originally one of many built on the hill as the family's thirteen childen grew up. There are many others scattered throughout the town.

Chimney fires were a very realy danger. All men were expected to respond to the alarm bringing a bucket. Every family must have a ladder handy, and chimneys had to be inspected regularly.

Although every man in Middleberry must have owned a gun and ammunition, the town was slow to organize the militia. In 1681 Plymouth Colony's General Court ordered Middleberry to choose a man "to exercise their men in armes," and to check theire arms and ammunition.[2] Two years later the town was again commanded to fulfill its military responsibili-

Please continue on Page 10

The Formation of . . .

ties. It was specifically ordered that "Middleberry choose some Officers to lead theire Military Companies and Instruct them in Marshall disiplyne."[3] The law was that every man between sixteen and sixty years of age must serve in the militia and be prepared to respond immediately to the signal of three shots. The law didn't mention this, but each man also had to supply his own food and blankets as needed.

James Soule gave two acres at the Green for the mustering field. Training Day became a holiday when everyone turned out to watch the drill and to socialize afterwards. The local Indians were no longer a threat, but England's enemies of Spain, France, and Holland were always a potential danger. And then it happened. When William and Mary took the throne, England started a series of wars with France, and the French and Indian Wars began in America. Our town was far from the fighting front, but we had men serving in every war. For King William's War (1689-1697), Middleberry was assessed for one soldier and gun, and £14 to be paid 1/3rd in money, 1/3rd in grain, and 1/3rd in beef and pork. Later we sent a man to Albany and three sailed to Quebec on a mission that failed. Tradition says that our men were also sent north to Maine with Capt. Benjamin Church. We knew Capt. Church from King Philip's War, so maybe some of our men went to Nova Scotia with him and Gen. Winslow when these men carried out the command to disperse the Acadians who had betrayed some British soldiers that sought shelter with them. Very likely some Acadians were dropped off here to begin their new life under the English flag. Certainly there was much talk about this first war whenever our people gathered for church services or stopped at a tavern for news.

This first was was followed by Queen Anne's War (1702-1713), King George's War (1744-1748) which included the famous attack on Fortress Louisburg by New Englanders including men from Middleberry, and the Fortress Louisburg by New Englanders including men from Middleberry, and the French and Indian War (1754-1763) when young George Washington saved the remains of Gen. Braddock's army at Fort Duquesne. Once again Louisburg had to be captured. "Wars and rumors of war" were frequent here in Colonial Middleborough, but finally Wolfe defeated Montcalm at Quebec, the wars with France were over, and Canada belonged to Great Britain. (England and Scotland had been united in 1707.) Except for Flordia, all of North America from the Atlantic to the Mississippi River was at peace and prepared to grow in prosperity as the largest part of the British Empire. Little did anyone guess that in two years the Stamp Act would start serious trouble between London and America.

[1] Weston, *History of the Town of Middleboro, Massachusetts.* p.505.

[2] Weston, *History of the Town of Middleboro, Massachusetts.* p.505

[3] Ibid. p.194.

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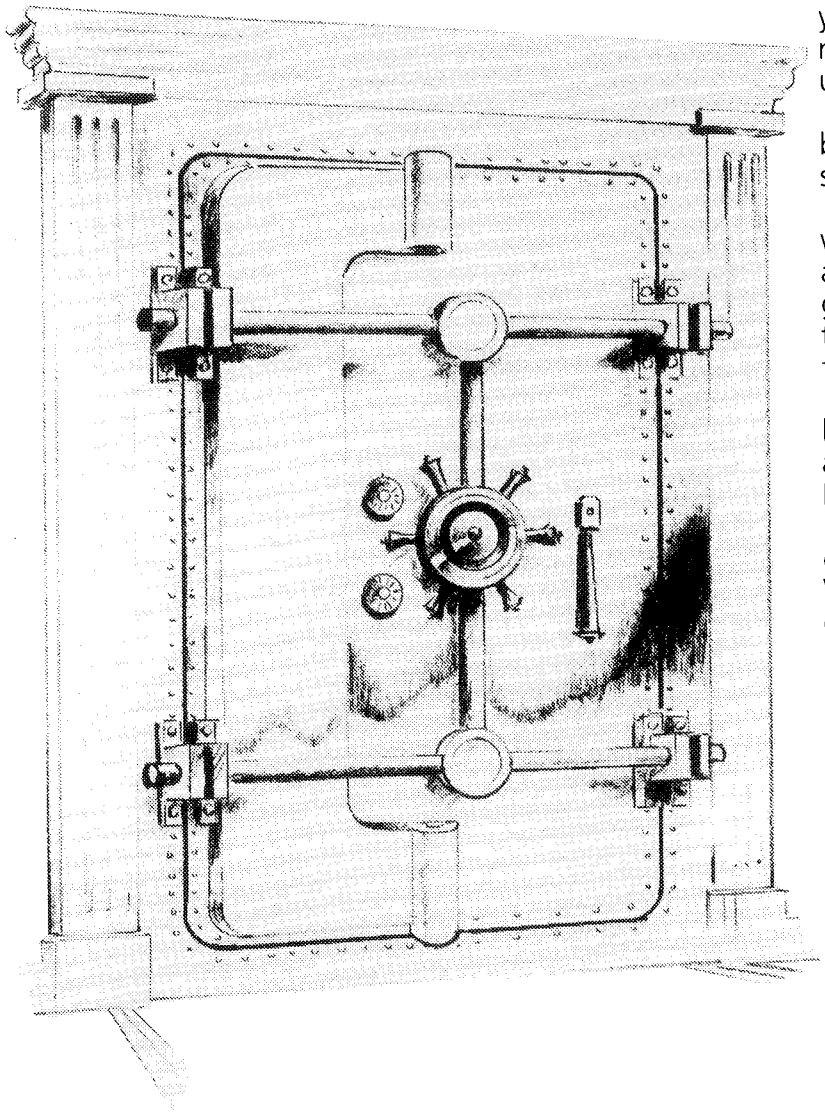

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VOLUME XXXII WINTER-SPRING 1994 NUMBER 1

The Soule School, 1902

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An appeal from the Middleborough Historical Association

As we go to press with this issue of the Middleborough Antiquarian, we are still without an Editor. We realize that the job of being an Editor is not an easy one, but the duties could be shared by a committee. Surely there must be someone who could offer an article now and then. We are grateful to Mr. & Mrs. Warren Whipple for their cooperation and efforts in this way. And we were so pleased to have the information and pictures about the Soule School from Mrs. Alberta Soule.

Now more than ever we realize how much our late Editor, Mertie Romaine, gave of herself to this publication over many years.

There is a wealth of history out there for us to draw on. Please help us keep the Antiquarian alive!

Sincerely,
Robert M. Beals, President

MIDDLEBOROUGH ANTIQUARIAN
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VOLUME XXXII WINTER-SPRING 1994 NUMBER 1

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Colonial Middleboro - Part III

by Warren and Marion Whipple

(Third in a series of three articles on Middleboro during the colonial period.)

III. The Transformation into an Industrial Town (c. 1730 - 1776)

As the 1600's drew to a close, the agricultural village of Middleberry was ready to change into the bustling industrial town of Middleborough.[1] The first pastor, the Rev. Fuller, had died; and after an unfortunate interval with Rev. Palmer, who was dismissed for intemperance, the First Church began two exceptional ministries under Rev. Peter Thacher, Jr. (1709-1744) and Rev. Sylvanus Conant (1745-1777). The Green was truly the center of town activities. Here Town Meetings were held in the church, the militia drilled on the mustering field, and a school was built. Although the Old Burial Hill (Nemasket Hill Cemetery) had been set apart in the first Purchase, now the "new" cemetery was started in the church yard as was the custom. In 1700 James Soule built a home that soon became the Sproat Tavern at the intersection of the five roads. The Green was a busy center.

Only a mile and a half away, on the Nemasket River, Peter Oliver of Boston was buying up land and river rights for a complex of mills that would eventually employ two hundred men and would establish the industrial atmosphere of the town. In addition to farming, there were now opportunities for storekeepers, lawyers, woodsmen, charcoal burners, tanners, drivers, inn keepers, and iron-mongers. Forges had sprung up along our many rivers, and bog iron was found in many locations, but especially in Lake Assawompsett. It was raked from the lake bottom using small boats. Each year the Town Meeting sold these ore rights and the herring fishing rights as a source of steady income for the town.

Great Britain had been lax in enforcing her trade laws, and had shut her eyes to smuggling, but in the 18th century policies changed. Middleborough was affected by the fact that iron was on the list of "enumerated articles" that could be sold only to or through England. Furthermore, it could only be refined into bricks that would be shipped to England, and there reworked into salable items of cookig pots and cannon balls, giving work to England's people. While this was an aggravation to our small forges, Judge Peter Oliver was such a high-ranking official – (Chief Justice of Mass. Bay Colony) that he had a special license to manufacture goods and military supplies. Thus he had a monopoly, shared only with the Winthrop foundry.

As people earned money, they began to build the comfortable "Cape Cod" houses, and also they built the stately two-story homes, both of which are common sights in town today. The Hoar house on Main Street in Lakeville is a good example of the two-story style. Weston's *History* has a picture of the large Morton house on South Main Street that reportedly had a second floor dance hall and "guinea rooms" for slaves.

When did the first slaves come to town? We don't know. Obviously there was not disgrace attached to owning slaves, since the minister, Rev. Peter Thacher, had a slave named Sambo. Economically, only a few families could afford them, but the Olivers must have had quite a few as household servants and gardeners. At young Dr. Oliver's house, they slept in the attic, out of sight. Middleborough never had rows of cabins as the Southern plantations did.

Education had now become a necessity for many young men. Middleborough built a one-room school in each district. (After the Revolution our neighborhood schools quickly escalated to forty!) Enough girls were now being educated to provide man of our teachers. The school year was divided into quarters, and the teacher rotated around the four districts, boarding and teaching in each for three months. Lakeville eventually developed portable buildings that were moved by ox team wherever needed.

By the middle of the century, we had families who wanted to send their sons to college. In addition to Harvard (1636), New England also had Yale (1701) and Dartmouth (1769) within traveling distance.

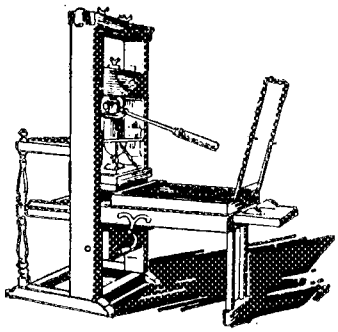
Into this fast-growing town came George Whitefield (1746) to preach and to start a religious revival. The First Church too in 460 new members. The congregation had just built its third Meeting House. Now that the town was thriving, this building was done in the best Colonial tradition with a high pulpit and pews. The Hon. Peter Oliver, Esq. was one of the proprietors of the Meeting House, and was voted permission to build a special pew for his family and guests. Famous people would worship here in the next thirty years, mingling with the townspeople – such well-known names as Benjamin Franklin, James Bowdoin, Samuel Prince, Governor Hutchinson, and all of the high society of Boston. The church would play an important role in shaping our town's reaction to the American Revolution.

Meanwhile other congregations were starting their own church for the convenience of their neighborhood. The West Precinct (Lakeville) established its church in 1725, and this w followed by Halifax. The inhabitants of Tituct (North Mi dleboro) had repeatedly begged the General Court to make it a separate town or at least a precinct, claiming that it was a hardship to travel to the Green for services and businesses. About 1750 their wish for a meeting house was granted – to the

The Transformation . . .

consternation of the First Church, whose members didn't want to lose so many people. Three Indians from the Titicut reservation gave the land for the church and its cemetery, and Isaac Backus, a farmer and itinerant preacher who lived just down the street, was frequently asked to speak. His house still stands at #60 Plymouth Street.

During the Great Awakening that had been inspired by George Whitefield, many congregations were split into the "New Lights" and the "Old Lights" on such matters as infant baptism and closed versus open communion. Elder Backus, his wife, and four others withdrew from the Congregational Church to found a new Baptist (Separate) Church. Since this was not recognized as a Standing Church, he and his members were required to pay a religious tax or risk the loss of property and/or jail. Thus Elder Backus found himself concerned with the political issue of taxation in the growing conflict between the American colonies and England.



The British government needed to raise money to pay for the French and Indian Wars, and after consulting with Benjamin Franklin, who happened to be in London, Parliament passed a Stamp Act which required a tax to be paid on newspapers, pamphlets, and on all legal papers such as deeds, wills, contracts, and bills of sale. This was a *revenue* tax which many Americans felt was the exclusive right of their local assemblies, or as we later said, no (revenue) taxation without (direct) representation. Parliament could assess only *regulatory* taxes on empire business such as trade. Americans were enraged over this Stamp Act, feeling it interfered with their rights as Englishmen. While nine colonies were meeting in New York at the request of Massachusetts to draw up a Declaration of Rights and Grievances, a mob in Boston was vandalizing Lt. Gov. Hutchinson's home.

There must have been lively discussions held at the various taverns around town. Ebenezer Sproat owned the tavern on the Green where the members of First Church gathered to talk between services, and where Deborah Sampson listened to conversations as she did her weaving in the corner. Capt. Sproat had the temerity to hand out a tavern sign that proclaimed: "Entertainment for all sons of Liberty." As a businessman catering to the public, it was unusual for him to declare his political position so openly.

Concerning the Stamp Act, a Town Meeting was held at the Church at the Green to discuss the situation. Our delegate to the General Court at Boston was Daniel Oliver, son of the Judge. He was instructed that "we Look upon the aforementioned act to be a Grevious and Intolerable Burden upon us, and an infringement on our Charter Rights and Priveleges... and by all Lawfull means Consistent with Layalty To the King you oppose Its Talking Place Till we Can Know what will be the answer To the Prayers, Tears, Petitions of the whole Continent for Relief."[2] Everyone could sign this letter in good conscience while they waited for further developments.

Although Judge Oliver was American born and bred, he had risen to the top of the royal government in Massachusetts, and he remained loyal to King and Parliament throughout his life. Many of his workmen and neighbors must have been persuaded that such an important man knew best. In opposition to him, Zachariah Eddy and Rev. Conant, also important men in town, believed that England was abusing her colonial people, who still possessed the rights of Englishmen.

Tradition says that Judge Oliver and Zachariah Eddy held many lively political debates at the Sproat Tavern while each family in Middleborough was deciding which side to support. Some objected to the quartering of soldiers in private homes, some objected to revenue taxes without direct representation, and some complained about the manufacturing and trade regulations. Others remembered with bitterness that England had returned the Fortress of Louisburg to France in a deal for land in India, and had given Ohio to the recently conquered Quebec. Some Americans were new immigrants from other countries who felt no loyalty to the British Empire anyhow, while many others had family traditions and relatives that bound them to the mother country.

Our first open act of defiance was the decision taken in Town Meeting (1767) to make our own paper. As one of the materials controlled by the Manufacturing Act, the right to make paper was legally reserved for the Mother Country.

The Stamp Act was repealed, but it had started the movement to divide the colonists into Whigs and Tories. Other acts followed to widen the breach. The Townshend Duties, which looked like trade taxes but were in reality revenue taxes, and the Boston "Massacre" in which five people died, kept the issues alive. Our own Chief Justice Peter Oliver presided at the trial of the soldiers accused of starting the shooting at the "massacre."

Meanwhile, the Olivers continued to entertain lavishly at their mansion – perhaps the most handsome home and grounds in New England. In 1770, when Peter, Jr. married the governor's daughter, the family had a suitable estate with gardens built for the young couple down the river from the mills. This home is still standing, and once again is owned by descendants of the Judge's brother. Across the street, James Bowdoin owned another fine home, and he invested heavily in the Oliver mills. All this social grandeur and financial opulence made Middleborough an important town.

When more troops arrived in Boston to control that city after the riot of the "Massacre," Middleborough sent Capt. Ebenezer Sproat and Capt. Benjamin White to a meeting in Fanueil Hall

(Continued on Page 7)

The Transformation . . .

concerning the quartering of troops in private homes. At the same time all churches in our town were notified that next Tuesday would be a "day of solemn fasting and prayer." Englishmen had a strong tradition that a "man's home is his castle," and soldiers not only could spy on their host family, they usurped the best bedroom, and had to be fed breakfast and supper at the family's expense.

Samuel Adams tried to unify the colonial cause by establishing Committees of Correspondence from Maine to Georgia. Middleborough dragged her feet on this move, and took two years before voting that the selectmen should be our committee to communicate with other towns. With the powerful Judge Oliver employing so many men, it was to be expected that the town would remain loyal to King and Parliament, but at the same time the minister and the tavern keeper were speaking out boldly for "liberty." Obviously the Town Meeting was attempting to remain neutral. Young Dr. Oliver entertained Benjamin Franklin for three days (1773), trying to influence him to support the King. Dr. Franklin also attended Rev. Conant's church and discussed agriculture with the patrons at Sproat Tavern. We like to think that it was here in Middleborough that he decided to cast his lot with the "rebels."

The Boston Tea Party brought the debate to a climax. The punishments inflicted on Boston aroused America as no other event had. Middleborough sent Abner King, Tory, and Zachariah Eddy, Whig, to the meeting of the General Court held in Salem with instructions to move with caution to maintain good government. Also, the town sent a letter of sympathy and eighty bushels of grain to the starving city of Boston.

The First Continental Congress, attended by all the colonies except Georgia, met at Carpenter's Hall in Philadelphia on Sept. 5, 1774. Elder Backus of North Middleborough packed some of his books in his saddlebag to sell along the way to pay for his travel expenses, and set off for Philadelphia to represent the Separate Baptists who were opposed to religious taxes. He failed to convince the Massachusetts delegates (John and Sam Adams, Robert Treat Paine, and Thomas Cushing) that this touchy subject should be added to America's list of complaints, but Elder Backus worked for the rest of his life to have freedom of religion included in the State constitution and the national Bill of Rights.

The Congress sent a letter to King and Parliament asking that all laws be rescinded back to 1763 (end of the French and Indian Wars) to give both England and America a new start based on a better understanding of their respective viewpoints. They also adopted an embargo against all trade with England. Com-

(Continued on Page 8)

The Tom Thumb Mansion, Bridgeport, Connecticut by Gladys M. Beals

Soon after returning from this first trip to Europe with P.T. Barnum, General Tom Thumb had amassed such a fortune that he and his parents built a magnificent home in Bridgeport, Connecticut, at 956 North Avenue, where the Strattons lived for the rest of their lives. Tom stayed there whenever he was in Bridgeport, to rest between tours or other business.

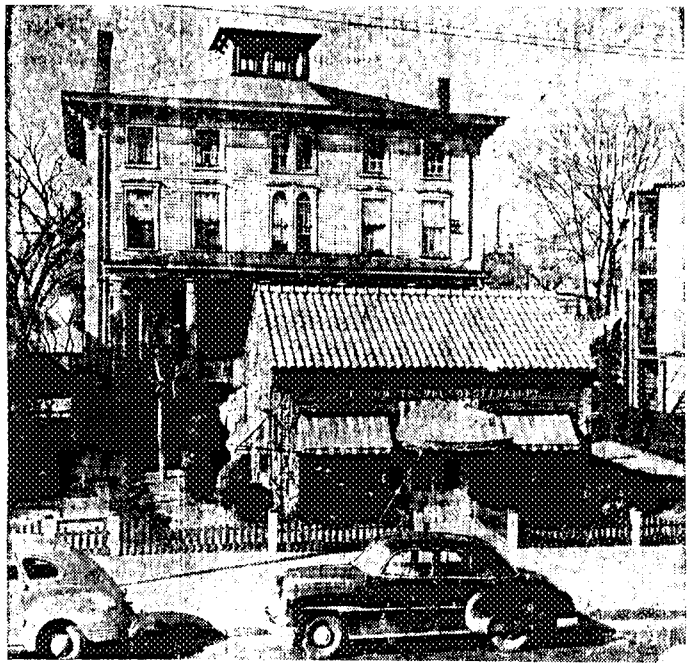
The first and second floors were built for Tom's parents. The third floor was built and furnished to accommodate his tiny form. After he and Lavinia Warren were married, they spent some of their time there.

The rooms were big and the ceilings high, as they were in most large mansions of the day. In every other respect, the third floor was like an elegant doll house. The window sills, doors knobs, cupboards, counters and fixtures, all were built so low that a normal sized person would have had to bend almost double to reach them. To the General and Lavinia, 36 inches and 32 inches tall respectively, they were "just right." The grounds were surrounded by an iron fence.

The couple spent very little time there after they built the Tom Thumb mansion in Middleboro, Mass. Here they retreated between tours and for rest periods. From the time on, —this was their "haven," —their prime residence.

After Tom's death in 1883, Lavinia sold the mansion in Bridgeport. Eventually it was remodeled into a regular home, and in later years became hemmed in by several business establishments. The history of the famous tiny tenants was almost forgotten. Several years later, a florist shop was built in the front yard.

In early 1953, the property was sold and the building razed to make way for a drive-in bank and a parking lot.



TOM THUMB'S HOUSE, which he built after visiting Quee.. Victoria, was torn down for parking area. It was located at 956 North Avenue in Bridgeport.

Thus ended the years of the Tom Thumb mansions in Bridgeport, Conn.

The Transformation . . .

mittees in every country and town were to enforce the embargo. Then Congress adjourned until May, facing a long winter of waiting for an answer, knowing that the militia units would be training in earnest in case they were needed. Some towns suffered acts of violence that winter, with rioting and tarring-and-feathering. Middleborough remained outwardly calm while tensions grew dangerously strong. A Liberty Pole was raised at the Green. The annual Training Day must have been a nervous time for everyone. Middleborough, with a population of over 4,000 now, had four militia precincts, and made each district responsible for having its men and ammunition ready. When would these militiamen be called upon to fight for their beleifs, and which side would each man support? Rev. Conant performed the installation service (Oct. 1774) for the new officers and presented them with the pikes. He was standing under the Liberty Pole as he prayed and preached for liberty. This appears to be the first public demonstration that Middleborough had made its choice. Judge Oliver had already fled to Boston to live under the protection of the British army.

Before the Second Continental Congress could assemble in May, the battles of Lexington and Concord were fought, and the American Revolution had started. The militia were now the minutemen, ready to respond at a moment's notice to defend their cause. About one hundred men marched from Middleborough to the defense of Bunker Hill, and three companies occupied Marshfield to prevent a Tory take-over there. The few families in our town that still remained loyal to King George III were placed under home arrest. Soon the issue would change from the question of our colonial rights to the move for complete independence from Great Britain. After one hundred years, the British flag would no longer fly over Middleborough.

[1] For twenty years the town was called Middleberry. Gradua' the name changed to Middleborough, which form was used e. clusively after 1700.

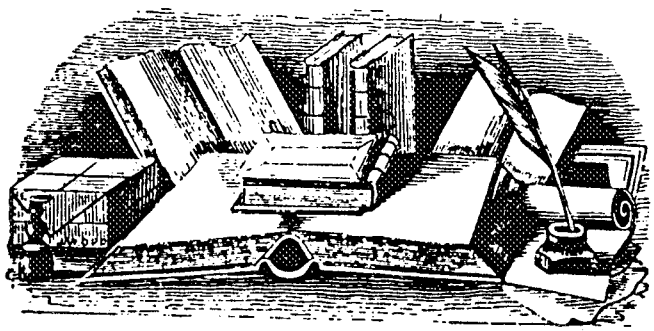
[2] Weston, *History of the Town of Middleboro, Massachusetts.* p. 107.

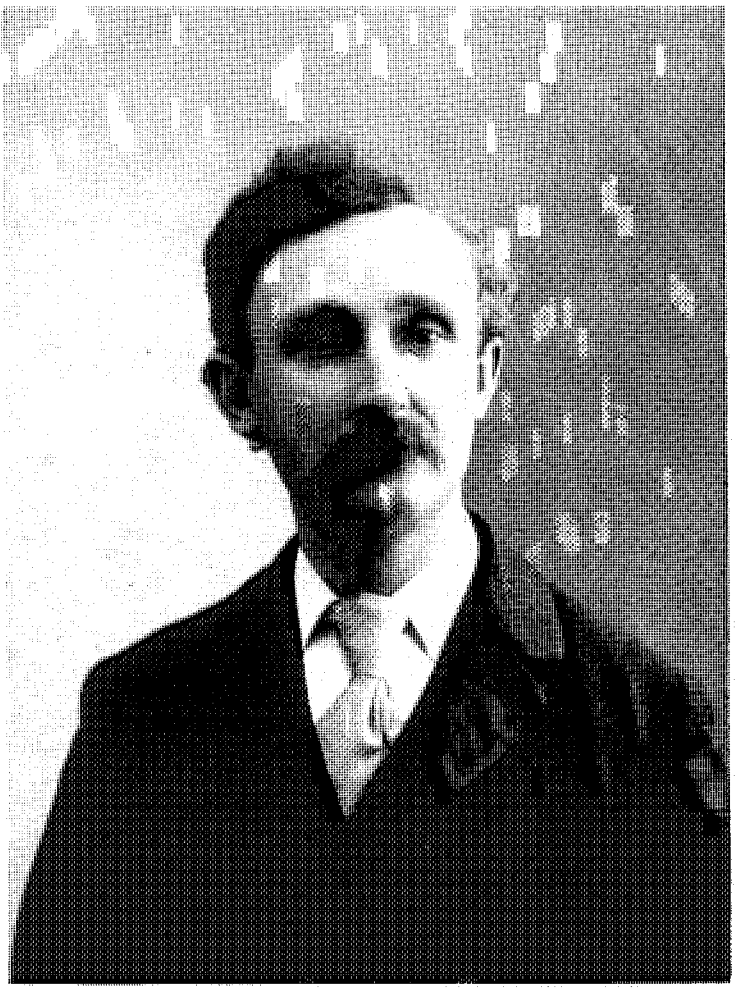
The Soule School

The Soule School was located on Winter Street in the East Middleboro section of town. The name "Soule" school was derived from the fact that this was the Soule neighborhood where many families of that name resided.

The building was constructed probably in the early or mid-1800's and was discontinued as a school in 1902. The school teacher, pictured at the right, was the late Miss Carrie Soule. Seated, second from right in the front row, is the late Albert F. Soule, who became a very popular and well-respected citizen of this town.

The Middleborough Historical Association is indebted to his widow, Mrs. Alberta Soule, for the use of this information and picture, and the cover picture, so that they could be included in this issue of the "Antiquarian."





WALTER SAMPSON
1862 - 1931

An Outstanding Educator

Walter Sampson was born on the family farm on Highland Road in Lakeville, December 13, 1862. He attended early school near his home, and later was a student at the Pierce Academy in Middleboro. In 1880, he entered the local high school and finished the four-year course in two years. During his attendance at high school, he walked back and forth daily between the school and the farm, a distance of fourteen miles.

He entered Dartmouth College in 1882, and was considered an outstanding student. He was elected to Phi Beta Kappa and had three degrees conferred upon him. On January 3, 1883, he married Miss Emma Stevens of Lyndon, Vermont. He was principal of the Academy at Lyndon from 1886-1890.

In the latter year, the Sampsons came to Middleboro and he served as principal of the high school until 1923, over thirty years. Under his leadership, the school grew and every year sent graduates to various colleges and other schools of higher learning throughout the country. When the new Memorial High School was built in 1926, the auditorium was appropriately named the "Walter Sampson Auditorium."

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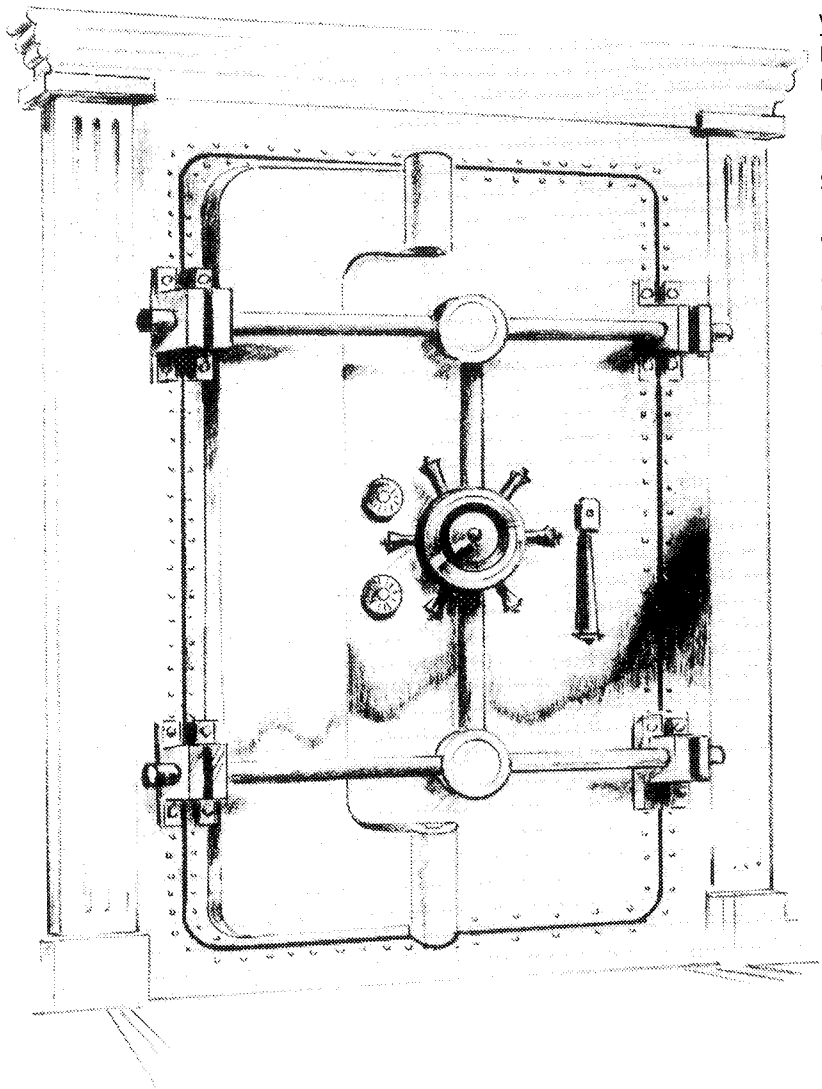

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VOLUME XXXII FALL 1994 NUMBER 2

Four Generations of Thatchers

***A FAMILY PORTRAIT** taken around 1882 shows four generations of Thatcher men, prominent figures in early Middleborough history: (left to right) Allen Crocker Thatcher, Henry L. Thatcher, Allan R. Thatcher, and Levi Peirce Thatcher. Born in 1783, the elder Thatcher was approaching 100 years old when he sat for the family portrait in a Middleborough studio.*

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A Message from the President

Even though we still do not have an Editor for the Middleborough Antiquarian, the appeal for articles for this and future issues has been gratifying, and we can keep going for awhile. BUT, we still need more! We certainly appreciate the help of Bob Barboza in preparing this issue for publication.

Best wishes to all of you from Gladys and me for the Holiday Season and 1995.

Sincerely,
Robert M. Beals, President

MIDDLEBOROUGH ANTIQUARIAN
Middleboro, Mass.
VOLUME XXXII FALL 1994 NUMBER 2

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The Young Mechanic No. 6

by Robert M. Beals

During the last week of October, 1979, this fine example of an antique fire engine was returned to Middleborough. This was as the result of negotiations between Ted Eayrs, Jr., who was Director of the Middleborough Historical Museum at the time and the late Franklin Reed. The rig had been stored at the Jacobs Farm in Norwell for many years. It had served on the Middleborough Fire Department, after being purchased from the City of New Bedford in 1864, and was quartered in a building on Oak Street near the corner of High Street.

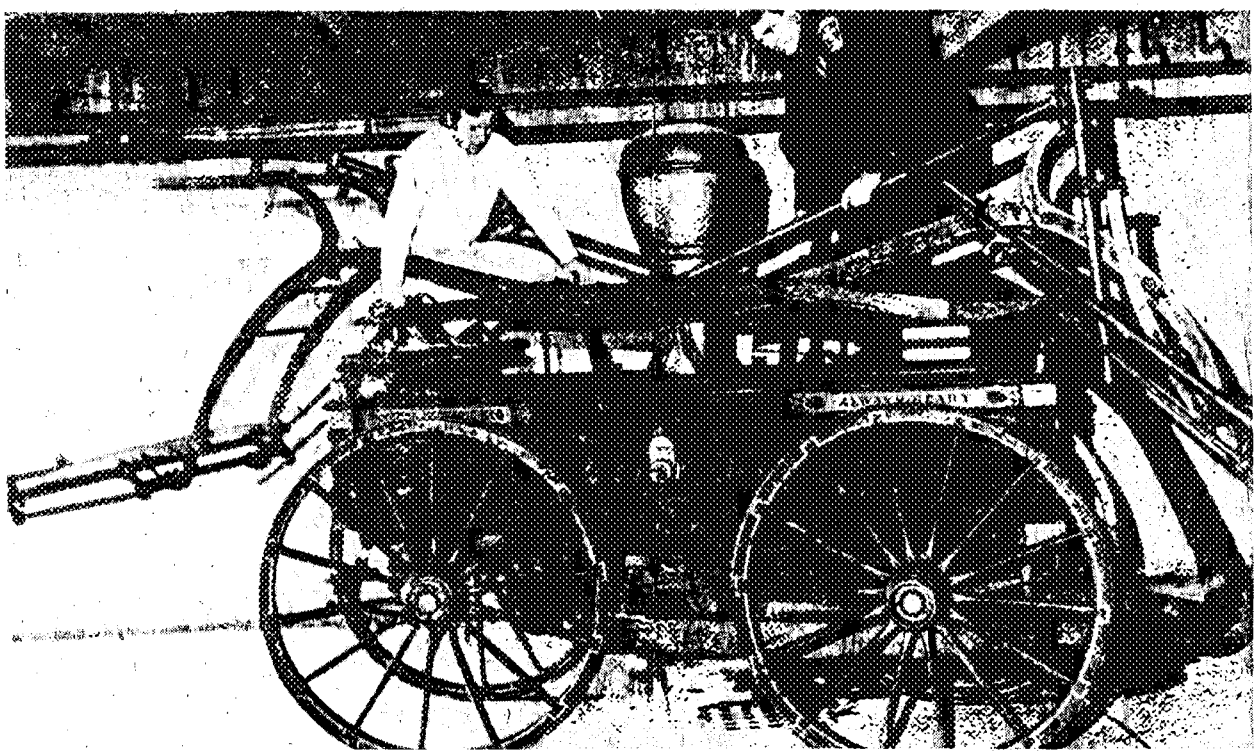
The history of the "Young Mechanic No. 6" goes back to 1854 when it was delivered to New Bedford.

According to the "History of the New Bedford Fire Department," published in 1890, the morning of September 27, 1854 was a very exciting one. The day had come, and with it the new machine from Philadelphia. For twenty years, the John Agnew firm had furnished fire engines to the fire department, and they had in every instance given the highest satisfacation.

The company met at the engine house on Purchase Street at 7:00 AM, arrayed in new uniforms of red shirts, faced and trimmed with blue, belts, blue caps and black trousers. The New Bedford Brass Band arrived and entertained with fine music, as the company of 47 men rolled the veteran engine from the house. After a parade through some of the main streets, the Old Mechanic was taken to a building on North Second Street, which was a repository for engines to be placed in reserve status. The faithful and venerable machine was given three hearty cheers as a parting gesture. The line of march then continued to the freight depot.

All expectations were fully met when the new engine was drawn from the freight car and brought to the gaze of the admiring crowd. It was built on the well-known model of the Agnew make, 8-inch cylinder, length of stroke 8½ inches, and furnished with all the "modern appliances then known." The engine was a double-decker with extension brakes, a powerful suction, and all the qualities of a first-class engine. It was elegantly mounted with polished brass, and painted in excellent taste. On either side of the tower appeared the name, "Young Mechanic," with the company motto "Always Ready," and that of the State, "Ense petit," etc., handsomely wrought.

A new hose carriage, built by Gray & Barker, with iron work by Joseph Brownell & Co. was a fitting companion to the new engine.



TAKING STOCK of the antique pumper once used in Middleborough are (left to right) former museum director Ted Eayrs, Jr. and firefighter Philip Hollis. (Clint Clark Photo)

The Young Mechanic...

The apparatus was pulled and pushed to the Pope Street reservoir. Later the company proceeded with the band for a demonstration near Rodman's farm, where the party was welcomed in a "hearty speech" by Hon. J.H.W. Page. When the festivities of the day were concluded, the company returned to their hall and was dismissed.

The company's record of the day closed with these words, "May the course of the Young Mechanic be as glorious and her end as pleasant as those of the namesake." The price paid was $1,850.

The full organization of the Young Mechanic No. 6 for the year 1854 included six officers, eighty-seven firemen, and two torch-boys.

The performance of the machine gradually grew into positive dissatisfaction. When put to its regular work it failed to accomplish what was expected and promised by the builder.

Mr. Agnew visited the city on May 21, 1856, and the company worked the engine under his instructions. The verdict was, "all right at all points," and that settled the matter as far as Agnew was concerned.

However, the dissatisfaction continued and in time reached a boiling point. On August 7, 1856, the company requested the Board of Engineers to return the reserve engine to them, which was approved. A contract was then made with the William Jeffers Co. of Pawtucket, to put new works in the "No. 6." The old engine had been repaired and christened "The Veteran No. 1," and did service until the remodelled engine was returned on March 4, 1858. It was then subjected to rigorous testing at a reservoir near the Custom House where it performed satisfactorily under the direction of Mr. Jeffers.

The following is a partial list of the record of the Young Mechanic No. 6.

Feb. 5, 1855 - Fire at 6:30 PM, from the North Christian Church opposite the Parker House. Damage slight. Six out first and first water.

June 4, 1855 - Fire at piano manufactory on William St. Six out first, and Five first water.

Aug. 25, 1855 - Fire at Mountain Brow, Perry's Neck. Five out first. Six passed her and led more than two squares in going to Rodman's farm.

July 22, 1859 - False alarm of fire at 9:30 o'clock P.M. Five out first. Six passed her on 5th Street. Five, in attempting to pass the Six, locked wheels, so that she was under the necessity of taking off one of her wheels to get out of the mess.

The Young Mechanic No. 6 served the New Bedford Fire Dept. faithfully until 1864, when the city began the purchase of steam fire engines. It was then purchased by the Town of Middleborough. Further rebuilding was done by the Jeffers Co., and the machine was used locally until 1880.

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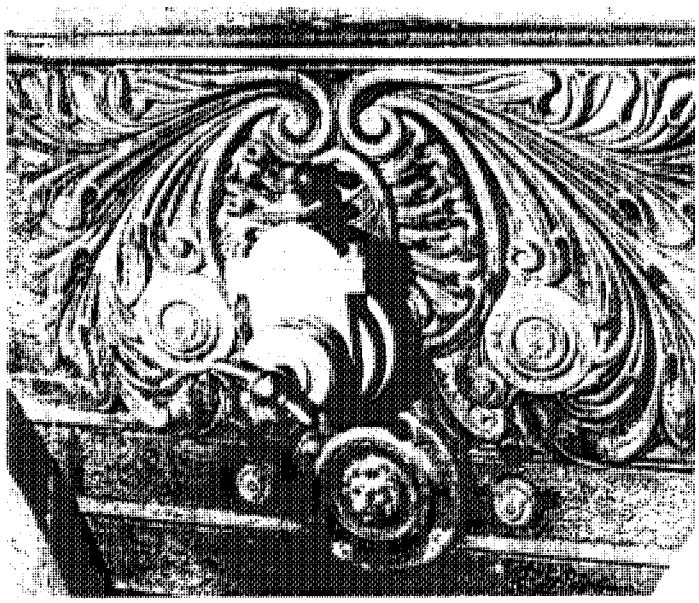
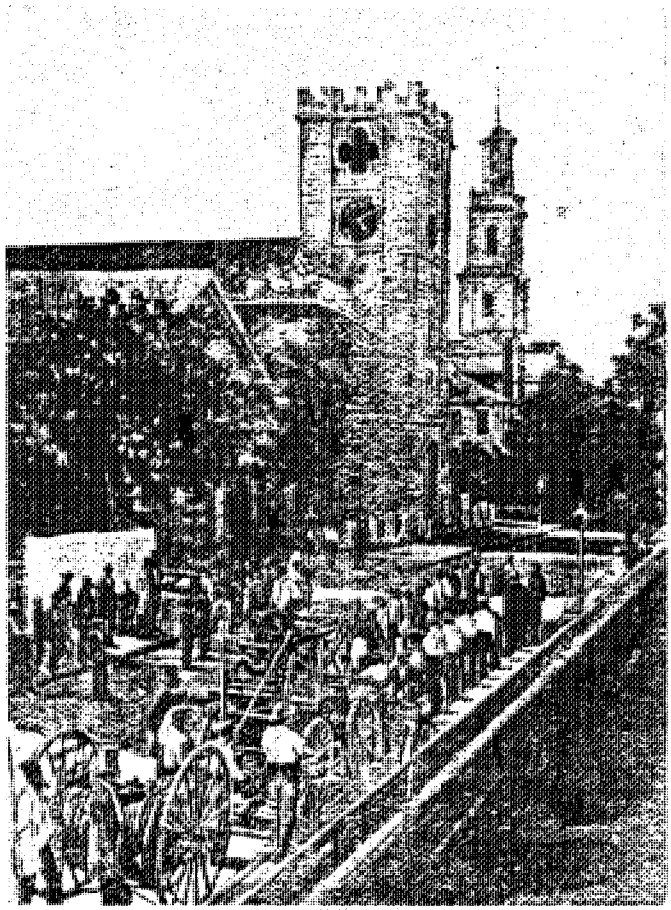


***THIS CLOSEUP PHOTO** shows some of the elaborate wood carvings that decorate the 1854 pumper acquired by the Middleborough Historical Society. (Clint Clark Photo)*

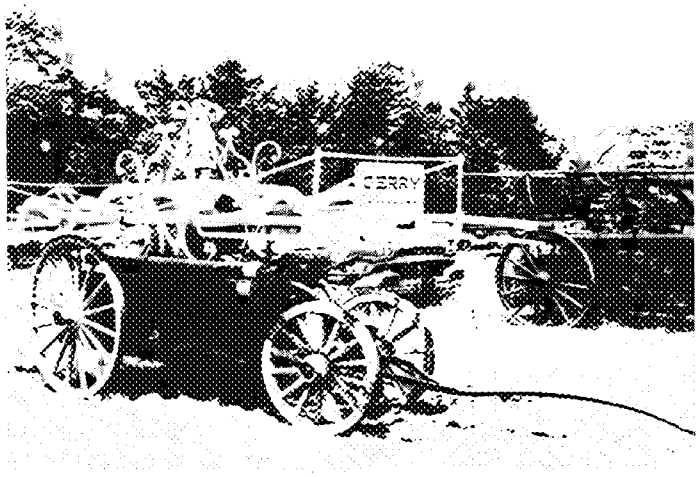


***YOUNG MECHANIC NO. 6** is shown in an 1855 photo returning from service battling a fire on Purchase Street.*

The Young Mechanic...

I have no knowledge of what happened to the engine from that time until about 1974 when I visited the Jacobs Farm in Norwell, after learning that several pieces of antique fire equipment were stored and on display in various buildings on the farm property. I found that most of them had been moved to the New England Fire & History Museum on Cape Cod, but the Young Mechanic No. 6 was one of those remaining. I took a picture of it, and the next time I was in Middleboro, showed it to members of the fire department, including the chief at that time. I could not seem to generate any interest at that time.

I was pleased to learn in 1979 that Ted Eayrs, Jr. was able to procure it for the Middleborough Historical Museum. For a short time, it was necessary to keep it in the basement of the Central Fire Station. After the Whistle House was moved to the museum grounds, placed on a concrete platform. and remodelled into a two-bay fire house, the Young Mechanic No. 6 was moved there, while the other bay houses a 1934 Maxim pumper that served Middleborough from 1934 to 1973. A dedication of the "Whistle House" was held on June 30, 1981.



THE HUNNEMAN hand-pumper, pictured here, is similar to Bay State No. 1, the first firefighting apparatus owned by the Middleboro Fire Department.

A Middleborough Printing Business

by George Barden

When the H.L. Thatcher & Co. printing business was sold to Kevin Heaslip in 1972 and moved to Wareham there came to an end an enterprise that had lasted exactly one century and extended over three generations. The business had been started as a hobby in 1872 by Henry L. Thatcher and his brother-in-law Louis K. Harlow when both were employed at the steam mill of Louis' father, Ivory Harlow. The initial success of the venture persuaded them to pursue the business on a full time basis under the name "Harlow and Thatcher's Steam Printing Office," with their plant located near Vine and West Streets opposite the railroad station. The machinery in this plant was steam driven, the steam engine outside the building driving the system of overhead pulleys and belts inside. The business was next located for a short time on the second floor of the Jenks Building at the corner of Clifford and Wareham (then Water) Streets, but upon the establishment of Thatcher's Row, Harlow & Thatcher moved the old building from Vine Street around 1880 to this new site. This was the first building to be erected on Thatcher's Row and here the business was to be located for the next nine decades.

A steam engine located in a small outbuilding still powered the maze of belts and pulleys inside the printing plant, but it was soon superceded by an electric motor. Type was set by hand and most of the other shop operations were done manually as well. Later on, each machine was powered by its own electric motor as modernization of the plant was slowly effected. About this time Louis Harlow withdrew from the business and the firm became known as the H.L. Thatcher Printing Co., the name it bore until the end.

The Thatcher family of Middleborough has its roots in the little village of Queen Camel, Somersetshire, England, which is believed by some to be the site of King Arthur's Camelot. When this writer visited Queen Camel recently the narrow streets lined by thatched cottages looked just as they must have looked four centuries ago when Anthony Thatcher plied his trade as a "tayler" there. Anthony came to America in 1634/35, finally settling in Barnstable County, where the next three generations of Thatchers resided. Allen Crocker Thatcher, the first Thatcher to settle in Middleborough, was the fifth generation from Anthony and came here from Rochester; he married Elizabeth, the daughter of Maj. Levi Peirce who founded Peirce Academy, and maintained extensive greenhouses behind his home on South Main Street opposite the Congregational Church. His son, Levi Peirce Thatcher, was a noted musician, mostly in the field of religious music. Just before the turn of the century Levi purchased from the estate of Philander Washburn the house that is now the home of the Gas & Electric Company on South Main Street and this became the home of his son, Henry L. Thatcher.

Henry's bout with scarlet fever left him totally deaf, but he overcame this handicap by becoming an expert at lip reading. When conducting business over the phone he had his pressman Roderick Matheson speak with his customer, pretending that he was Mr. Thatcher, then form the words silently with his lips for Mr. Thatcher to read and finally relay Thatcher's reply to the unsuspecting customer. He had an impulsive temper to go with his good business sense: on one occasion, finding that an unnamed pressman was slightly drunk, he fired him on the spot. The culprit left by the back door but as he came around the building by the front door, Henry growled. "Where do you think you are going? Get in here and get to work!" Henry's son Allan had been with the business since graduating from Brown University and upon Henry's death in 1930 Allan managed the firm until 1948, when his son Ronald took over. During the next twenty-four years Ronald Thatcher managed the prosperous business, adding many state-of-the-art machines to increase the efficiency of the operation. When the business was finally sold upon Ronald Thatcher's retirement, the equipment included a Miehle Vertical Press, a Davidson offset press that could print 6,000 sheets an hour, a Lawson hydraulic cutter capable of cutting 500 sheets at once, a Ludlow typecaster and a Baum folder that could handle 18,000 pieces per hour. Typesetting was done at the building on Thatcher's Row, but much of it was farmed out to subcontractors such as the Middleborough Gazette.

The bread and butter work of H.L. Thatcher Co. consiste of printing business forms for banks, brokerage houses and the like and an office was maintained in Boston to service such customers. George Farley managed the Boston office and Arthur B. Monroe commuted every day from Middleborough

Continued on Page 10

***THE THATCHER FAMILY** traces its roots to the quiet Eng.. village of Queen Camel, Somersetshire, shown in this recent photo by the author. Anthony Thatcher labored as a "taylor" there until emigrating to New England around 1635.*

THE NEWS LEADER Wednesday, Jan. 18, 1912 RICHMOND, VA.

Mrs. Tom Thumb on How to Keep Young

"How do I keep young?" said Mrs. Tom Thumb yesterday, when seen at a local hotel, "why, by being happy and making others happy." And she crossed her little arms in front of her, and beamed at me with the brightest, youngest little eyes in the world. She is appearing at the Colonial theatre here all this week.

"That's all I do," she continued; "no creams, no lotions, no nothing! I am never depressed, and I am always busy—and interested, too; interested in everything going on about me in the world. I am 71 years old, but I enjoy life just as much as I ever did, and I am just as full of energy."

And after listening to her talk for twenty mintues, it was perfectly evident that she was not exaggerating in the least. The strongest feeling that you have about Mrs. Tom Thumb, after talking to her, is that she is a perfectly normal person. You almost forget her size. If you could shut your eyes you would think you were talking to a natural, bright and widely interested woman. It is the most uncanny thing about her, this perfect normality of her brain.

"Tell other women to live as I live," she said, "every faculty alert and alive, and they, too, will keep young. See," she exclaimed, in her animated little way, "I have hardly any wrinkles, no gray hairs. I use a little dry rouge when I am on the stage, because of the glare of the footlights, and I take fine care of my health; but, believe me, youth comes from the inside. It is in the heart.

Her Wrinkled Brother.

"Now, take my brother, for instance. He is four years younger than I am, and he runs my farm for me in Middleboro, Mass., where I go and rest in the summer. He is an old man, gray, wrinkled. I laugh at him, and try to stir him up when I am at home, and show him how quick I am, but he only shakes his head. He says he is old—I know I shall always keep young—with a confident toss of her tiny head—until the last days of my life.

"Maybe I shall retire from the stage some day. But it will be a long way off. When I am at home I am always restless. In the evenings I can't keep still. I love the world and love to travel, and you know, of course, that I have been in every country, practically, in the last fifty years of my life. They have been good to me everywhere, but America is the best, and, of course, it's my country you know. I am a Puritan, and was born in Massachusetts. They are slow on the other side, you see, and I like to do everything quickly. Why, I was traveling ten days in Italy to give four performances." She turned to her tiny husband, Count Magri, for confirmation of this statement, and he nodded sagely. He had been standing by her side all the while, but he was evidently a very well-trained husband, and left all the talking to his wife.

LAVINA WARREN, born in North Middleborough, was better known as Mrs. Tom Thumb.

Long On the Stage.

She explained, in the course of the interview, that she has been on the stage since she was seventeen years old. She has been married twice, her first husband (Tom Thumb), has been dead many years. She married her second husband about twenty-five years ago. There were seven other children in her family, of which all but one sister, Minnie, were normal in statue. She has appeared before most of the crowned heads of Europe, including Queen Victoria, and will probably go abroad again this summer, but only on a pleasure trip.

Somehow, listening to her talk you feel that hers is a big soul, even if it is in a midget body.

After all, there is a little halo of romance and charm about "Mrs. Tom Thumb" to all of us. She is a wonderful, old, childish memory to almost everybody, along with "Punch and Judy," and glorious circus ladies, and Buffalo Bill, and all the rest. She is indelibly associated with the past, but here she is so much the present. And so exactly the same that you can feel again stealing over you when you see her your old childish wonder, and awe, and joy. May she live seventy years more!

—C.T.A.

A Middleborough...

to Boston as a sales representative. The printing of social calling cards, business cards, Christmas cards, school programs, the "Antiquarian," church bulletins, etc. kept the presses humming in between the large commercial orders. In the 1870's and 1880's the firm advertised in many mid-western newspapers, thus garnering a large mail order business from commercial institutions in that area. The peak years of the business came during the first two decades of the 20th century and this was when the number of employees was the greatest; the number decreased gradually as more efficient machines were employed. Some of the more recent employees include Raymond Nourse, a foreman for many years; Winsor Carver, Stanley Fowler, Wilmoth Waterman and William Casey, pressmen, and Marcus Merrick, typesetter.

There are examples of H.L. Thatcher's art in many a Middleborough home, some of these printed programs and pamphlets dating from the last century. The hard bound "History of the Church of North Middleborough" printed in 1876, old High School graduation programs and the "Antiquarians" from 1962 through 1972 are cases in point.

When, in 1972, it became time for Ronald Thatcher to retire there were no fourth generation Thatchers to take over the management of the firm, and so it was sold in its centennial year and the H.L. Thatcher Company became part of Middleborough's varied and colorful history.

R A G S.

THOSE who wiſh well to the proſperity of the PAPER MANUFACTORY in this State, are kindly ſolicited to ſave their Linen, and Cotton and Linen RAGS, which will amount to ſomething at the year's end; if not more than to purchaſe a Bible, Teſtament, Spelling-Book; or, a few quires of Writing-paper, &c. is far preferable than to ſweep them into the fire, or out of doors — and in the end render their country an eſſential ſervice, and benefit themſelves too.

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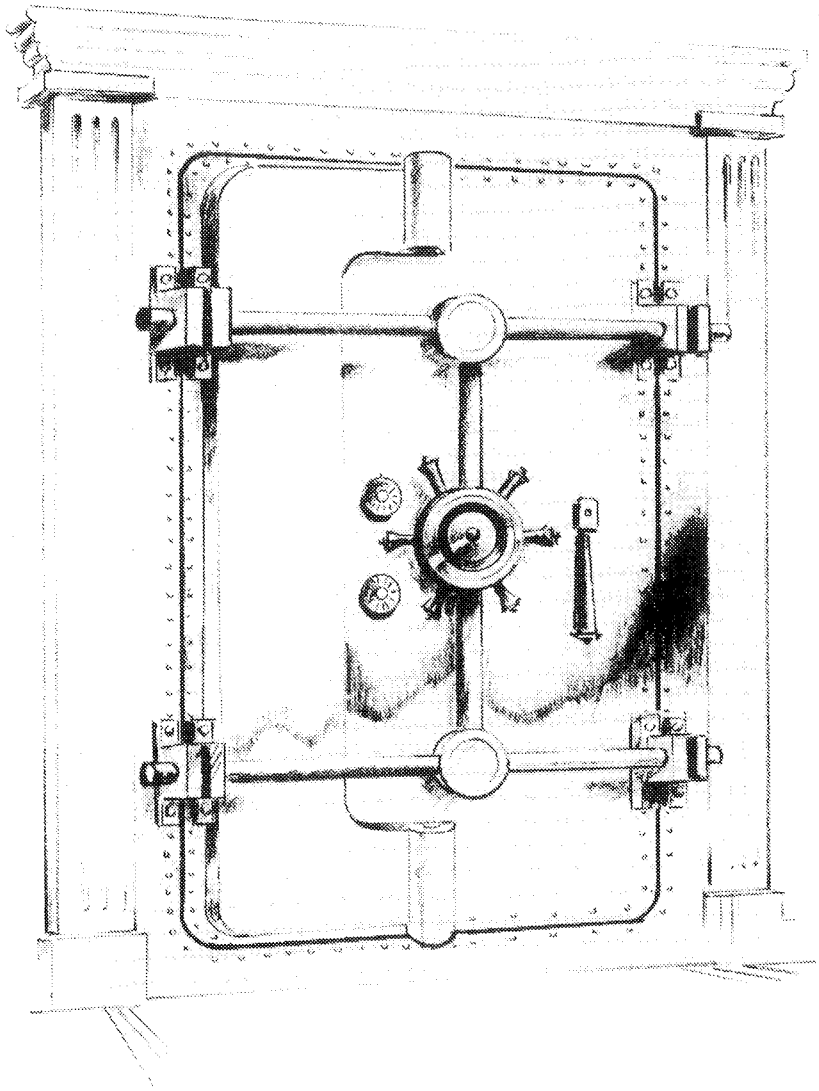

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Middleborough Antiquarian

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BORN IN MIDDLEBOROUGH in the year 1841, Mercy Lavinia Warren Bump became internationally famous as Mrs. Tom Thumb, traveling all over the world in tours organized by the equally famous P.T. Barnum. Her memory lives on at the Middleborough Historical Museum, where many artifacts of her life are on display.

A Message from the President

The feature story in this issue of the Middleborough Antiquarian is about the "Little People." As we all know, Mercy Lavinia Warren Bump was born here in Middleborough on October 31, 1841.

At the Fall Meeting of the Association, we honored the memory of this lovely little lady who brought so much fame and attention to the Town of Middleborough in a dignified and gracious manner.

It is a joy and privilege to perpetuate her memory, and that of all the "Little People," with whom she was associated.

Sincerely,
Robert M. Beals, President

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MIDDLEBOROUGH ANTIQUARIAN
Middleboro, Mass.
VOLUME XXXIII WINTER 1995 NUMBER 2
Robert Barboza, Editor

Historical Association Annual Membership

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Membership includes each issue of Middleborough Antiquarian. Subscriptions $10.00 per year. Single copies $3.50.

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General Tom Thumb and the Turkey

The Editor of the "Courier and Enquirer," Colonel Webb, when the General visited him soon after his arrival in New York in 1841, thus describes him in that paper: –

SOMETHING NEW UNDER THE SUN. – While quietly discussing our dinner, we were honoured with a very unceremonious visit from no less a personage than the distinguished GENERAL TOM THUMB. We were somewhat annoyed at the interruption at first, but discovering its cause, once the honour was conferred upon us, very quietly proceeded at the operation of carving a turkey, which Mr. Barnum, who accompanied the General, assured us weighed more than His Grace. We were somewhat disposed to question this; but, when informed that General Thumb weighs precisely fifteen pounds, two ounces! we admitted the truth of the assertion, and placed the General alongside of our plate to superintend the operation of carving. He took his station with great "sang-froid," and amid the roar of our little ones, quietly kicked aside a tumbler of water, which he considered dangerous in the event of his falling into it. As soon as we had carved the turkey to his satisfaction, he very gracefully walked around the table, at the risk of being drowned in a wine glass, paid his respects to all who were sitting around it, and selected a seat for himself in which he ate a very hearty dinner, and drank to the health of all present in a glass of Malmsy. All this may appear fiction to the reader, but it is the sober truth. General Tom Thumb weighs fifteen pounds, two ounces, and is exactly twenty-eight inches high!

From SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF CHARLES S. STRATTON KNOWN AS GENERAL TOM THUMB, published in 1847

A Yankee Yarn

(Portions of this article were written by Alton H. Blackington in 1945)

The story I have for you here is a real honest-to-goodness fairy tale, if ever there was one.

But in the Town of Middleborough, Massachusetts - where the fairy tale began in a big New England farmhouse and ended in a mansion filled with trophies from all over the world, the thrilling romance of an international famous foursome is all but forgotten.

There are very few residents of this town who ever heard of the beautiful Bump sisters, Lavinia and Minnie. I'm going to tell you briefly about Lavinia and Minnie Bump, and how their names became bywords in every American home and why their pictures were printed and purchased all over the world.

Come with me, then, to Middleborough on a warm, sleepy Sunday morning about 1850.

The faint breeze that stirs the drooping, dust-laden trees is tinged with the perfume of new-mown hay drying in the sun, and the still air is filled with clouds of dust rising from the carriages that move slowly along the country roads towards the First Congregational Church at the Green.

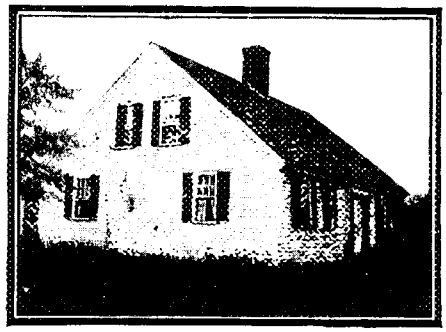
After the horses have been tied up in the shed behind the church, men and women pair off into little groups for a bit of gossip before going inside the church.

Suddenly all talking stops as a tall black-bearded man in a beaver hat steps into view, with his wife, almost as tall as he, followed by a little girl between two strapping young men.

"Howdy, Brother Bump. How's crops in Warrentown? Good corn weather, eh? Bet we'll get a shower 'fore the day's over. Howdy, James and Benjamin. My goodness, you fellers are almost as big as your father!"

If Mrs. Bump noticed the slight, she said nothing. If she saw that all eyes were on her little girl, Lavinia, she gave no sign.

LAVINIA WARREN, pictured at eight years old, became Middleborough's most famous daughter.



PLYMOUTH STREET was home to Mercy (Lavinia) and Huldah (Minnie) Bump in their early years.

She must have known they did look strange, all of them so tall, and little Lavinia only two feet high.

With her round sweet face and bright dark eyes, and tiny hands, she looked more like a doll.

"Just like a doll," one woman whispered. "You know, there's something the matter with that child. She's going on ten, and she's a foot shorter than a yard-stick. She's pretty as a picture, and they say she's smart. . . but I think she's a dwarf! What a burden she'll to be the Bumps, being as how she'll never be able to do much of anything."

When Mercy Lavinia Warren Bump was born on October 31, 1841, she weighed a normal six pounds, but she didn't gr or gain weight as fast as other children. When she was ten, s... was just twenty-four inches high, and weighed only twenty pounds.

When her sister, Huldah Pierce Bump, was born in 1849, she was even smaller, and together the two tiny sisters, perfectly formed in every way, became the pets of the family and the neighborhood. They detested being called "cute" and "cunning" and determined at a very tender age to let nothing keep them from a healthy, normal existence.

Lavinia didn't go to the little red schoolhouse a short distance from the Bump home until she was nine years old, and by that time she knew as much as the teacher. Her proud aristocratic Yankee mother had taught her so well that she was always ahead of her normal-sized classmates in school. She left school and was taught how to cook, sew and take care of a home by her mother.

A few years later, when Lavinia was sixteen years old a distant relative, Col. J.H. Wood, visited the Bump family and told of his travels on a Mississippi River Show Boat. Lavinia's big dark eyes sparkled.

"Oh, please take me with you!" she begged. "I do so want to travel and see things and people."

So it came to pass that in 1858, Mercy Lavinia Warren Bump packed a tiny trunk and set forth to see the world.

She toured the West and South, and there she met Gene... Grant and Stephen A. Douglas, who picked her up like a and attempted to give her a fatherly kiss. Blazing with embarrasment, Miss Bump informed him that she was eighteen years old, and not in the habit of kissing strange men.

Lavinia was playing in Montgomery, Alabama when the Civil War broke out, and upon the advice of her manager, took the first train north. She had hardly time to settle down on the farm in Middleborough when she was asked to teach in the little schoolhouse she had attended briefly several years earlier.

Soon after, she received an invitation that changed her entire life, and brought fame and fortune to herself and her family - and to Phineas Taylor Barnum.

P.T. Barnum had already made a lot of money with his two male "little people," Commodore George Washington Nutt and Charles Sherwood Stratton (known to millions as General Tom Thumb), and when he heard about the diminutive Lavinina, he asked her parents to bring her to Bridgeport, Connecticut.

Barnum had traveled all over the World and met all kinds of people, but when he saw little Lavinia, he was swept off his feet by her charm, grace and youthful beauty.

So the tiny country girl who "did so want to travel and see things and people" signed a contract for five years, and Barnum rushed off to find a dressmaker who could fashion the costliest "doll's clothes" ever designed.

Then Lavinia learned pieces to speak and songs to sing and rehearsed a skit with Commodore Nutt - and overnight they became the sensation of Barnum's American Museum in New York City. Barnum also convinced her to change her last name to Warren, her mother's maiden name, which he considered more suitable for theatrical purposes. Later, when little sister Minnie was employed by Barnum, she also changed her last name to Warren.

Tiny Commodore Nutt was several years younger than Lavinia, but that didn't prevent him from falling in love with her. She considered him "just a little boy" and brushed him aside.

Then one fine, fall day, Tom Thumb arrived from Bridgeport all dressed up in his yachting costume, gold braid, gold buttons and everything. He took one long look at the angel-faced little lady from Middleborough, and marched into Barnum's private office.

"Look, P.T.," he said, "look old man, I've fallen in love. Yes I have; it's really hit me. I'm in love with Lavinia Warren. No, of course she doesn't know it. We haven't met yet. But I must marry her. Will you help me?"

I'll introduce you, Tom, but you'll have to do your own courting," Barnum replied.

HE LITTLE PEOPLE who helped make Middleborough famous – Charles Stratton, also known as Gen. Tom Thumb, and Lavinia (Warren) Bump – made front page news on Feb. 10, 1863 with what was termed The Fairy Wedding. Commodore George Washington Nutt (left) and Minnie Bump attended the happy couple at the celebrity wedding, reported in newspapers all over the world, thanks to the promotional efforts to their employer, showman P.T. Barnum.

A Yankee Yarn...

RETIRING FROM SHOW BUSINESS, Lavinia Warren returned to the family home in Middleboro in the late 1800's with her second husband, Count Primo Magri. She lived here until her death in 1919 in her seventy-eighth year.

"What a relief," sighed the General, wiping his brow with a postage-stamp sized handkerchief. "P.T., in me you see a new man. I'm all done with the horses, sporting and yachting. From now on, I shall devote my entire time to Miss Warren."

Barnum opened the door that led backstage, and General Tom Thumb, walking like a bantam rooster on a pink cloud, went into the wings to meet little Lavinia.

Barnum, of course, was tickled pink at this sudden turn of affairs, for he knew a wedding between the Little People would bring thousands to the museum, and create new interest in the General, whom he had already shown all over Europe.

A few days later, he said to Lavinia, "Why don't you run up to Bridgeport with me for the week-end, and get a little rest from the city?"

Lavinia thought that "would be just fine," and Commodore Nutt, smelling a rat, said he guessed he'd go along too. He'd go up by the late train, and Lavinia could wait up for him.

When Lavinia and Barnum arrived in Bridgeport, Tom Thumb met them with his coach and four, and he rushed Lavinia all over the city, introduced her to his mother and the mayor, and showed her the real estate he owned, and the beautiful home he had built, with rooms scaled down to their size.

She was quick to see that here was a man of wealth and imagination, and she just loved the tiny expensive doll-sized furniture and fixtures.

Barnum had them at his house for dinner, and after cigars and coffee, he pretended he was tired, and left the little couple playing backgammon.

"Don't forget the Commodore," he said as he went upstairs to bed. "He's coming on the late train."

The moment P.T. was out of sight, Tom Thumb pushed his chair close to Lavinia's and slipped his arm around her tiny waist.

"Why, Mr. Stratton," she said with a blush, "what are you doing?"

"Lavinia," he said, "Are you going to London with Mr. Barnum?"

"Indeed I am, Mr. Stratton. And I'm to be received by the King and Queen."

"I know all about it," said Tom Thumb. "I've met them three times already. The King's a fine man and the Queen held me on her lap. But there are a thousand big rooms in Windsor Castle, and you might get lost. Don't you think I ought to go along to take care of you? I know all about Europe."

"Well, that would be nice," she whispered, with a faraway look in her eyes.

Tom Thumb moved closer and tightened his grip. "Lavinia," he whispered, "why can't we go as man and wife? I love you, Lavinia, won't you marry me?"

The sound of a carriage coming up the drive broke the spell, and almost broke Tom Thumb's heart too. "Say you will, Lavinia. Will you?"

She laid her little head on his manly shoulder, and whispered, "Yes."

A stamping in the hall, the ringing of the bell, and there was stalwart Commodore Nutt, with flowers and a heart full of love for Lavinia, now lost forever (but he didn't know it) to his rival, Tom Thumb.

"Humph," he glared at Stratton. "Do you live here? Where's Mr. Barnum?"

"He's gone to bed," Lavinia said, "but there's lunch for you."

"I don't feel like eating now," he said, and stomped off to his room.

After a quick goodnight kiss, the little lovers parted, and Tom Thumb, struggling to get up over the big stairs, pushed into Barnum's room and whispered, "Wake up P.T.! We're engaged! She said 'Yes' and I'm the happiest and luckiest man in the world. But, darn it all, P.T., I've got to go to Middleborough on Tuesday and ask her mother."

Mother Bump also said "Yes," and the wedding was set for February 10th, 1863, in Grace Episcopal Church in New York City. Thanks to P.T. Barnum and the newspapers, all America knew about the wedding, and everyone but Commodore was thrilled and happy.

He was a good sport, though, and stood up with the happy couple along with Lavinia's sister, Minnie Warren. Brady, the famous Civil War photographer, made the official photograph that was called "The Fairy Wedding," and it was said that one hundred thousand copies were sold.

Crowds lined the streets around Grace Church for hours, waiting to catch a glimpse of the tiny sweethearts.

Lavinia wore white satin with a flounce of costly point lace, and a long train to match. Her hair was covered with a bridal veil and orange blossoms.

General Thumb and the Commodore were in full dress suits, with white silk vests. Three thousand boxes containing pieces of the wedding cake were distributed.

Their beautiful wedding presents were on display, guarded by a squad of detectives, in the Metropolitan Hotel.

Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt gave them a gold and coral brooch, and earrings and studs of the finest workmanship. Mrs. August Belmont sent a costly sterling silver set, and from President and Mrs. Lincoln came a set of Chinese fire screens, and an invitation to visit the White House in Washington, where some time later President Lincoln gave them a big dinner and a grand reception.

In 1864, Lavinia's wish to see the world came true. With her husband, Tom Thumb, and her sister Minnie Warren and Commodore Nutt, the little lady from Middleborough left the United States for a triumphal tour of Europe that lasted for three long years.

In England, France, Belgium, and Germany, they were royally entertained and showered with gifts delicately designed and decorated for the doll-sized celebrities.

Returning in 1867, they toured the West and then sailed for the Orient, visiting the principal cities of China, Japan, India, and Russia. They sailed up the Yangtse and rode the Rajah's favorite elephant - and again came home to Middleborough, loaded down with inlaid furniture, rare silks, precious stones, and ivory elephants.

Tom and Lavinia had twenty wonderful years together. He died on July 15, 1883, at the age of forty-five.

Two years later, Lavinia married Count Primo Magri, and when their theatrical days were over, and they were little old folks, they returned to Middleborough to the scenes of Lavinia's childhood, among her relatives and many friends.

Next time you are in Middleborough, go into the Public Library and look at the life-size oil portraits of General Tom Thumb and his wife, Lavinia, who lived until 1919, intelligent, dignified, gracious, and VERY proud - a tiny little lady whose fairy tale dreams came true when she traveled in far-off lands.

That tiny couple captured the imagination of millions in many lands, because although they were small, they made a big impression as Ambassadors of Good Will.

PLEASE NOTE

And, visit the Middleborough Historical Museum on Jackson Street during the summer months, and you will find one of the largest collections of their memorabilia in the whole world.

Eaton's Family School

By Robert M. Beals

Mr. S. W. Marston established a boarding school for boys on East Grove Street about the year 1854. About the year 1859, he was succeeded by the Rev. Perez Lincoln Cushing, whose school was attended by pupils from different parts of the state.

Rev. Cushing was assisted by his wife, the former Miss Lavinia Parker, a preceptress of the Peirce Academy for many years. They took pupils into their home for instruction and to experience family life. However, pupils came in such numbers from Cape Cod and surrounding towns that the day pupils far exceeded those who boarded with the Cushing family.

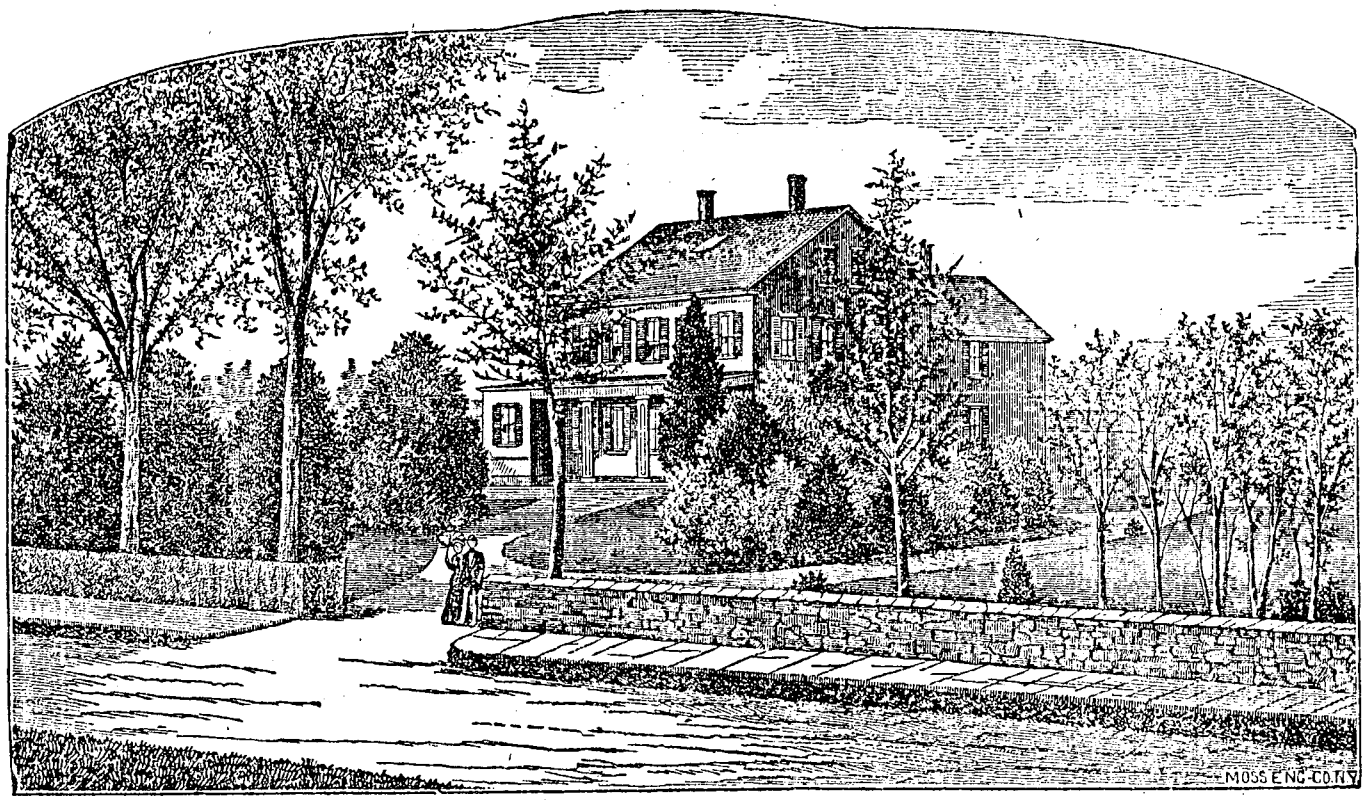
Upon the death of Rev. Cushing, the school was purchased by Amos H. Eaton in company with his father, Rev. Herrick M. Eaton. They came from Norridgework, Maine. It became the Eaton Family School.

The fine reputation of the school brought pupils from all parts of the New England States and as far away as Virginia and New Brunswick. The Eatons continued to conduct the institution until 1897. The following year, Mr. Eaton was appointed town clerk, treasurer and collector of taxes for the town of Middleborough, positions he held until his death in 1910.

Over the years, many families have made this their home. I spent many years of my early life, beginning in 1928, at the home of my paternal grandparents at 14 East Grove Street. I remember the Owens family (well-known movers) living there until they moved to another home on Peirce Street. Other families - Hadsells, Bracketts, Wilcox, and a Mrs. Krawshaw lived there.

I also remember the large classroom on the first floor of an "el" that extended from the main house back to the barn. Some of the blackboards were still in place and we used to play school and write on them with chalk. On the second floor were several small rooms where pupils slept many years ago.

The "el" and barn were demolished a long time ago. The main house has undergone several changes over the years, but basically remains as it appeared in its original form. Heritage Oil Company is the current owner.



THE EATON FAMILY SCHOOL, founded about 1854 as a boarding school for boys, attracted students from all over New England until it ceased operations in 1897. The building on East Grove Street housed many local families over the years before being returned to business use. It currently serves as the headquarters for Heritage Oil Company.

Alphabetical Rhymes

This "bit of poetry" was found inside the bandsman's hat of John Carter, from the Middleborough Commercial Band. The year is unknown. The hat was donated to the Middleborough Historical Museum during the summer of 1995.

While walking the streets one fine summer day,
My thoughts fell to rhyming in a curious way.
Of the men of influence I knew in town,
And lest I forget them, I noted them down.

A stands for Alden, of Straw Shop renown,
Whose works are sent for from every town.

B stands for Bowen, our Baptist Divine,
You all ought to hear him, he preaches so fine.

C stands for Carter, who plays in the band;
Also for Chandler, our favorite hack-man.

D is for Doane, who would call your attention,
To all kinds of goods, too numerous to mention.

E is the Editor, who walks about town,
To gather the items of news floating around.

F is for Fryer, who cures all the ills
Of his patients, by giving them small sugar pills.

G stands for Grant, who preaches the word;
In the Congregational Church he is heard.

H is for Hayden, who will mend a clockspring,
And sell you a watch, or a fine gold ring.

I is for ice cream, we all like so well,
Tripp and Barden both have it so well.

J is the Jones Brothers, they say it is certain,
They will put down a carpet or hang up a curtain.

K is for Kingman, who has such lovely flowers
That the ladies go there and tarry for hours.

L is for Leonard, who makes shoes and boots,
A good place to work, if you happen to suit.

M is for MacBurney, who points us the way
To Jesus, our Savior, if we will obey.

JC

N is the Nemasket, whose waters so sweet,
Flow through our town on every street.

O stands for Osborne, who has tickets for sale,
To all who wish to travel by rail.

P is for Pierce, who sells hardware and tin,
And everything else, it will pay to go in.

Q is the question, What shall be done?
To drive the Rumseller out of our town?

R stands for Ryder, who sells dry goods and toys,
And dolls for the girls and books for the boys.

S stands for Smith who doctors the ills,
And for Shaw who puts up his powders and pills;
Also for Soule who carries off the dead,
And for Surrey who puts up a stone at the head;
Also for Sullivan who will read you the will
When the funeral is over and all is still.

T stands for Thatcher who sings loud and clear;
He is going away, we wish he would stay here.

U is our Union, may the flag ever wave,
O'er the land of the free and home of the brave.

V is for Vaughan who lives on School Street,
A carpenter and does his work very neat.

W stands for Wood, there are many to be seen,
But Andrew Cobb Wood is the one I mean.

X is the crosses we all to share,
Y is for Young, who shaves and cuts hair.

Z is for Zoeggele, who drives through the town,
And sells pastry and white bread and brown.

& the letters are ended, my story is done,
Sometime I may write a better one.

Author Unknown

A B C D

Recollections of the Peirce Brothers

Charles, William R., James E., and Thomas S.

by William H. Crapo

These notes are from the memories of a boy who lived in one of the Peirce houses on Jackson street, whose spare time was spent enjoying the fields, meadows and river that bordered sections of the Peirce estate.

In those days there was a large stock barn with twenty or more head of milch cows, two pair of oxen, and a number of young stock. Twenty-five to thirty pigs lived under the barn. The bay horse, however, the constant companion of William R. Peirce who ran the farm, was housed on the hill at the Peirce residence.

William R., or Bill as we knew him, always wore a Prince Albert coat that reached his knees. He rode his Goddard buggy over the vast farm lands but seldom walked. I once saw him take a rather long walk from the upper hay field (now the ball field) to the hydraulic ram located in a spring hole fairly deep in the meadow toward the Star Mill. This for Bill was a long walk. Apparently the ram was not functioning properly at the house where tanks stored water for the store and barn, and required immediate attention. As boys we could never understand how this ram, with its tick, tick, ticking, like a grandfather's clock, could keep pumping day and night apparently with no engine or fuel.

Even after the arrival of city water, this system continued to supply the barn where the herd of Guernseys was washed every morning before going out to pasture. The rich milk was dispensed by Mrs. Gideon Thomas who lived in one of the Peirce houses on Jackson street too. The entire supply, with the exception of one four quart can, was sold at five cents a quart. Some of it was delivered to select customers by Harold Thomas in a four-wheeled cart. Harold in later years owned a grocery store on Centre street known by the firm name of Lucas and Thomas.

The cows were of course milked by hand. The milk was strained into a tall metal container. It was pure warm milk—no pasteurizing , or homogenizing—with the original vitamins intact, for five cents a quart. The farm was managed by overseer Bill Peirce, boss farmer William Shaw, assistant head workman David Thompson, and workmen farmers Elisha Shaw and Mike McBarron, the latter a recent immigrant from Ireland.

I remember one haying time when a number of us boys were on hand to tread the hay as it was pitched on the long twenty foot wagon. When it was time to bring up the other team of oxen, Mr. Shaw suggested that I bring them in from the lower pasture near Charlie's Rock some distance away. I jumped at the chance, as this was considered a great honor. Dave Thompson handed me the long rawhide whip, and I marched bravely off toward the white faces. However, when they saw this boy coming, they lowered their heads and lumbered to meet me at a rather quick pace. I jumped aside, and tried again to lead them, but they chased me a ways up the hill. I concluded it was time to give up. Looking back I saw the workmen all laughing, Bill Peirce with the others, all slapping their knees in glee over my inglorious defeat. Giving Elisha Shaw the whip, I watched him drive the docile white faces up the slope to the waiting gear. The oxen would have no part with a small boy directing them.

Charles was often seen in the store but did not have a partnership in the farm or business at that time, James was one of the partners but was very different from Thomas, who in his slow deliberate way, accomplished far more. The store was stocked with bolts of cloth and the usual line of dry goods of the period, besides a limited amount of hardware and fruit. Thomas S. Peirce was the real head of the store, and it was his money that built the Peirce Block and the Public Library. At his death he left over half a million dollars to the town. Although it has been stated that much of the Peirce estate came through the sale of liquor, there was no evidence of it during my life.

Tom Peirce, as we called him in those days, always wore a tall grey beaver hat and a mottled vest. The vest had four pockets filled with coins—large one and two-cent pieces, half cents, two sizes of three-cent pieces and half dimes—from which he would always flip the customer the right change, without looking at it.

All in all, the Peirce brothers operated a pretty successful farm and store.

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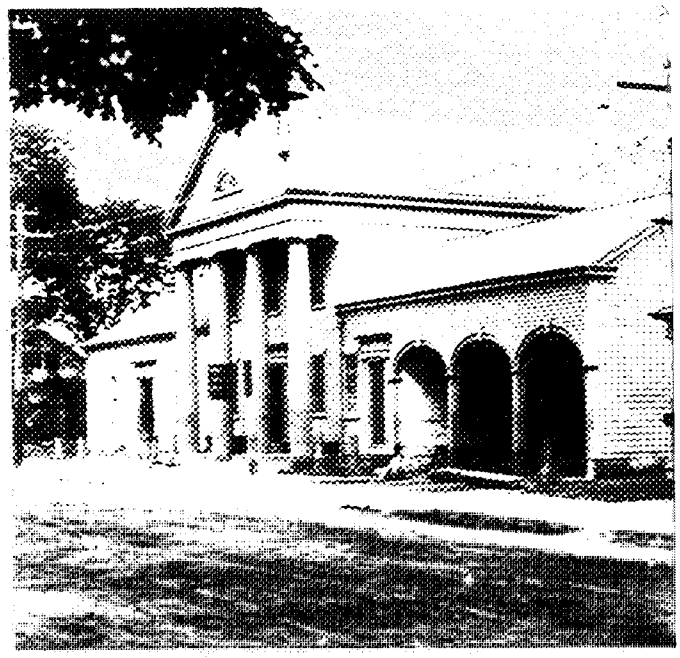
—April 1959—



THE FORMER PEIRCE STORE on North Main Street once housed the Fourth District Court, and currently serves as headquarters of the Middleborough Police Department. Samples of the store's old-time inventory can be found in the Historical Museum.

The Early Meetings with the Wampanoags

By Robert Barboza, Editor

The earliest meetings between Europeans and the Native Americans who made up the Wampanoag Federation will probably be lost forever to verifiable history, though enough scraps of information remain to suggest a tantalizing array of theories about the earliest "clashes" of these two cultures.

For centuries now, historians and archeologists have debated the comings and goings of Norsemen, early Portuguese explorers, and the English adventurers who proceeded the first English settlers in southeastern Massachusetts.

In the mid 1800's, a Rhode Island professor published a theory suggesting Norse explorer Lief Erickson visited Cape Cod and the area around Bristol, Rhode Island sometime between 1007 and 1010 AD with 160 men in three ships, and wintered over on the shores of Mount Hope Bay. Runic figures carved into a rock on the shore of a farm in that town prompted the interest in the Norsemen, but were not the only evidence the professor could muster.

A description of what could have been Cape Cod Bay or Narragansett Bay in the 13th century writings "The Norseland Sagas" was offered as further evidence, along with passages which tell of Thorfinn Karlsefni's death in 1010 AD in Vineland. Could that have been near the Rhode Island farm, or perhaps in the area of Kingston known as Rocky Nook, a peninsula where a Norse axehead was found in 1921, along with artifacts including a Scandanavian weaving tool?

Perhaps Thorfinn perished on a riverbank near the junction of the Taunton River and Mount Hope Bay in Fall River, where an ancient skeleton was found in a sandbank in 1831 clad in bronze armor, of the same composition of 10th century artifacts from Denmark, and with other indications of Viking burial practices.

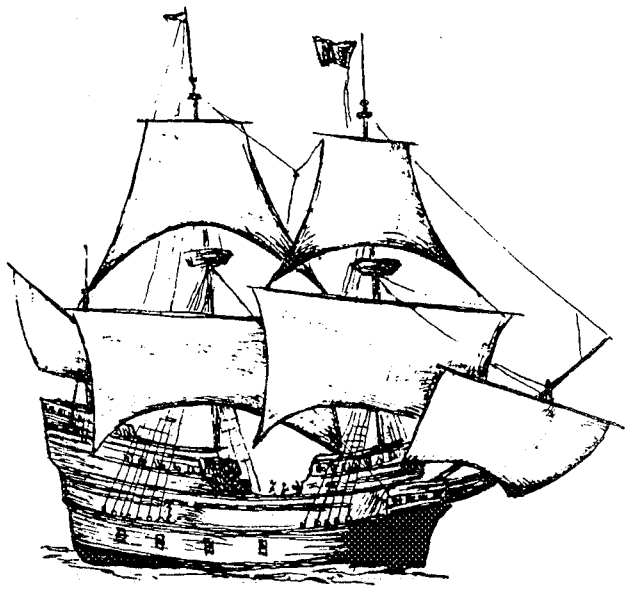
We'll never know the truth, or exactly what kind of relations those windblown Scandanavians could have had with the Wampanoags known to reside in these neighborhoods. We can only guess, aided by the discoveries of the archeologists.

More detailed records, letters and maps document the exploration of New England by Portuguese explorers dating back to 1472, when John Vaz CorteReal returned to Lisbon after discovering "The Land of Cod" (Newfoundland). The reports of plentiful fish and more abundant natural resources earned CorteReal the governship of the Azores, and royal support for another 20 years of exploration along the shores of this new land.

His son, Gaspar CorteReal, voyaged to Newfoundland in 1500, and sent back one of his two ships with samples of his New World discoveries, including about 50 natives, probably from Canada or northern Maine, described in a 1501 letter sent home by an Italian spy in Lisbon shortly after the ship's arrival.

"They kidnapped nearly 50 of the men and women of that land by force, and brought them to the king. I have seen them, touched and examined them," the spy wrote. "They are bigger than our people, with well-formed limbs to correspond. The hair of the men is long, as we wear it, letting it hang in plaited rings. . . their speech cannot be understood, but there is no sharpness in it, and it is altogether human."

Although they were "naked except for a small covering made of deerskin" these Native Americans may have been members of the Abeneki Nation of Maine or southern Canada, but probably did not include any Wampanoags from this area. That contact was possibly made later, as Gaspar CorteReal continued his explorations along the New England coastline.



When he failed to return from those explorations southward, Gaspar's brother Miguel prepared a ship and set off to find his lost sibling, sailing for the New World in 1502. Miguel CorteReal also disappeared, never to return. Shortly after the English began their migration inland into southeastern Massachusetts over 100 years later, however, the new settlers began to hear tales of other white men coming to these shores long ago. Could it have been one or both of the CorteReal brothers?

Some historians believe the evidence lies on the shores of the Taunton River, where the "Dighton Rock" contains inscriptions believed to be a message left by Miguel CorteReal in 1511. Along with his name and the date, carvings representing the Portuguese royalty's coat of arms have been deciphered.

The Rev. John Danforth, in the process of acquainti himself with the folklore of his Wampanoag neighbors, wrot this in a 1680 letter: "It is reported from the tradition of the old Indians, that there came a wooden house swimming up the

Please continue on Page 13

The Early Meetings...

river Asonet, that fought the Indians and slew their Saunchem. Some interprete the figures here to be hieroglyphical. The first figure representing a ship, without masts, and a meer wreak upon the Shoales."

The violent clashes with Europeans would become all too familiar to the local Wampanoags, although the English that came sailing along their coastline may not have been too hostile at first. Records show Sir Francis Drake (1586) and Bartholomew Gosnold (1602) sailed along Buzzards Bay and Cape Cod Bay and had some meetings with the Wampanoags on Martha's Vineyard, the Cape area, and the South Shore.

Expeditions continued, with Captain Thomas Hunt reportedly carrying off a number of native prisoners during his visit in 1614. Included in the group later sold into slavery in England was a young man who would come to be known as Squanto, the friend to the Pilgrims. He lived with a merchant named Slaine until 1619, records indicate, when he boarded Captain Thomas Dermer's ship for a journey back to his homeland.

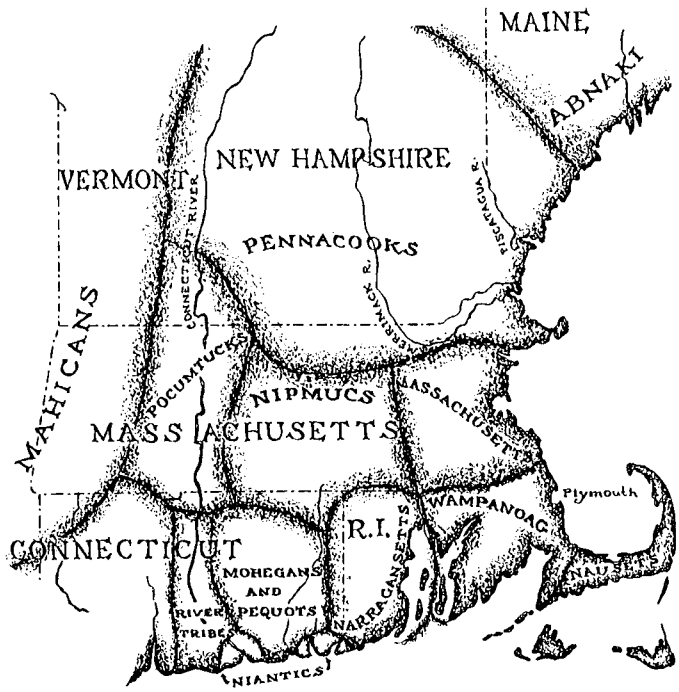
The good captain was probably the first Englishman to get to meet Massasoit, the Grand Sachem of the Wampanoags. His account of his movements ashore included a landing at Patuxet, Squanto's old home, where they found a deserted village apparently struck by "a great sickness" that had felled all the inhabitants. The Pilgrims would later settle on that spot.

Traveling into the forest from Plymouth, they went west "a day's journey, to a place called Nemasturghurt (the area near Middleboro center) and met with the people there, Dermer wrote. Through Squanto, he "dispatched a messanger a day's journey further west to Pokonokit, which bordered on the sea, whence came to see me two kings, attended with a guard of fifty armed men, who being desireous of novelty, gave me consent in whatsoever I demanded."

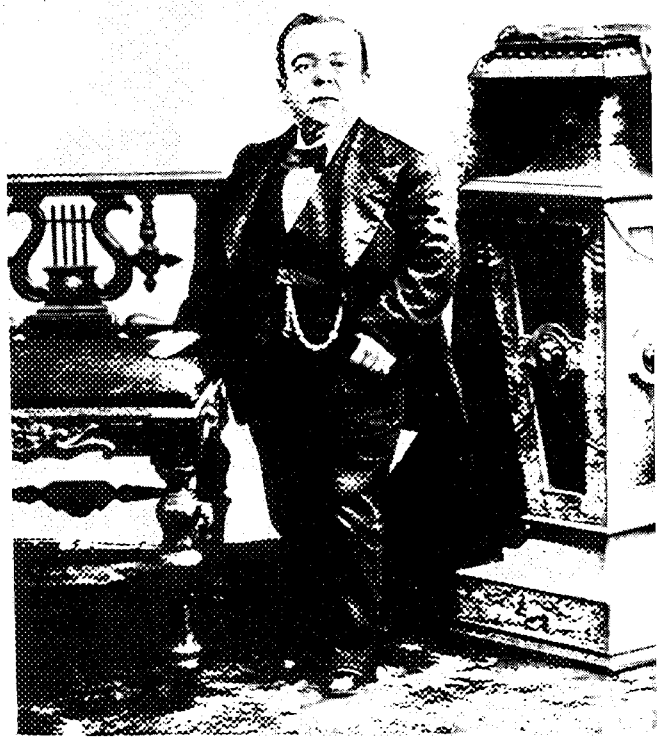
Historians believe those two kings were none other than Massasoit, grand sachem of the Wampanoags, and his brother Quadaquina. As a footnote, Capt. Dermer reported he believed the natives would have killed him if it had not been for his guide, Squanto.

Another report of that same expedition includes the details of the recovery of two Frenchmen who had been shipwrecked on those shores three years earlier, and had been cared for by the Wampanoags since that time.

Two years later, in July of 1621, a pair of English settlers, Edward Winslow and Stephen Hopkins, would journey to Sowams, one of Massasoit's principal dwelling places (present-day Warren, Rhode Island), on a trade mission. They brought gifts and opened negotiations for regular trade between the settlers and their gracious hosts. A whole new chapter in the story of the relationship of these two cultures had just been opened.



NEW ENGLAND TRIBES

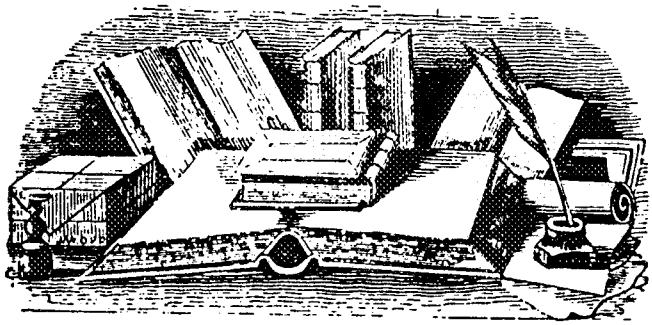


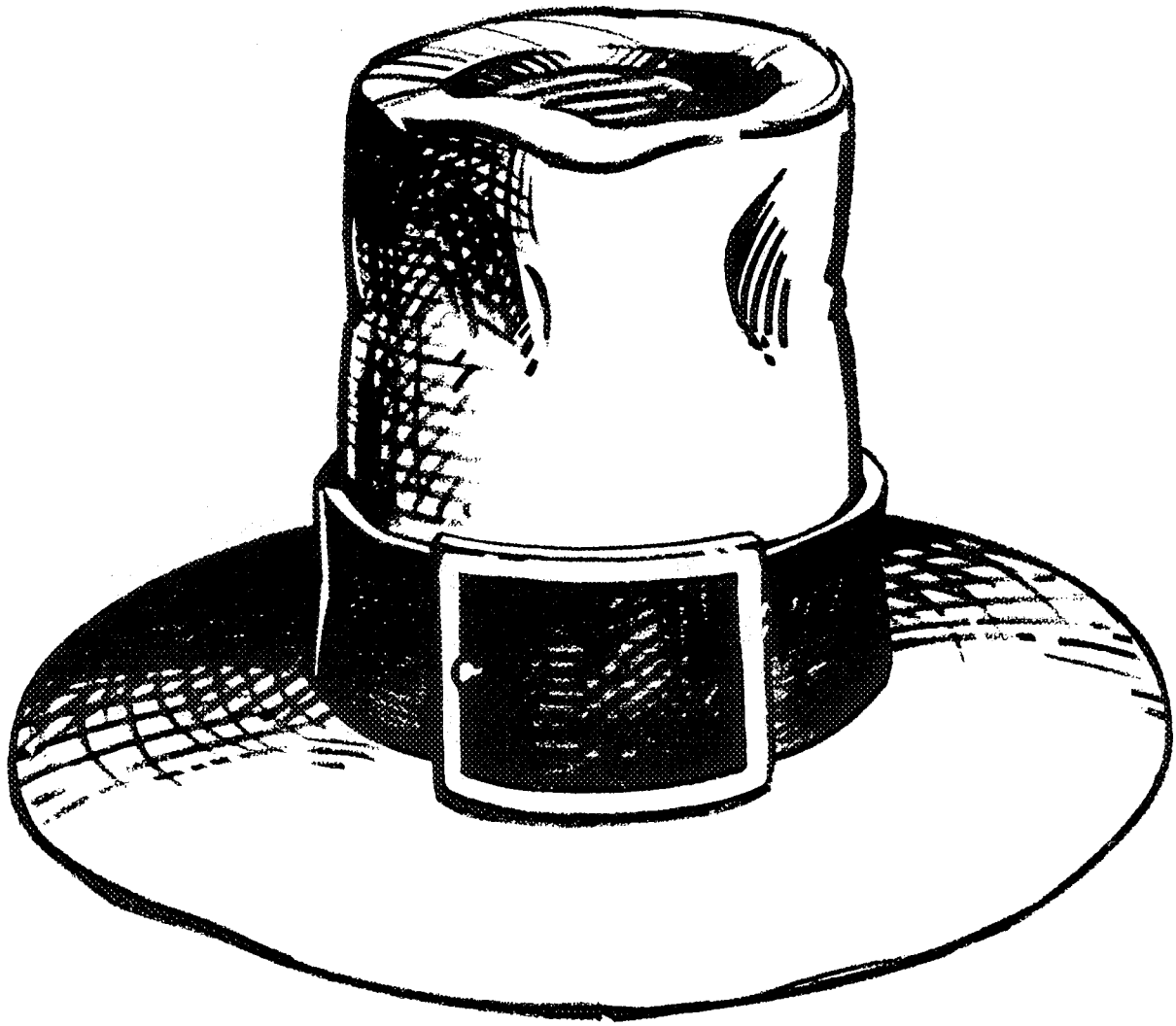
LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT was how P.T. Barnum's star attraction, Gen. Tom Thumb, described his initial meeting with his future bride, Middleboro's Lavinia Warren. Together, they travelled the globe entertaining thousands over the years.

My Job

It's not my place to run the ship
It's not my place to say how far the ship's allowed to go
It's not my place to chart the course nor even toll the bell
But let the damn thing start to sink
And see who catches hell!

Composed many years ago by the late Austen L. Beals, father of Robert M. Beals, President of the Middleborough Historical Association.





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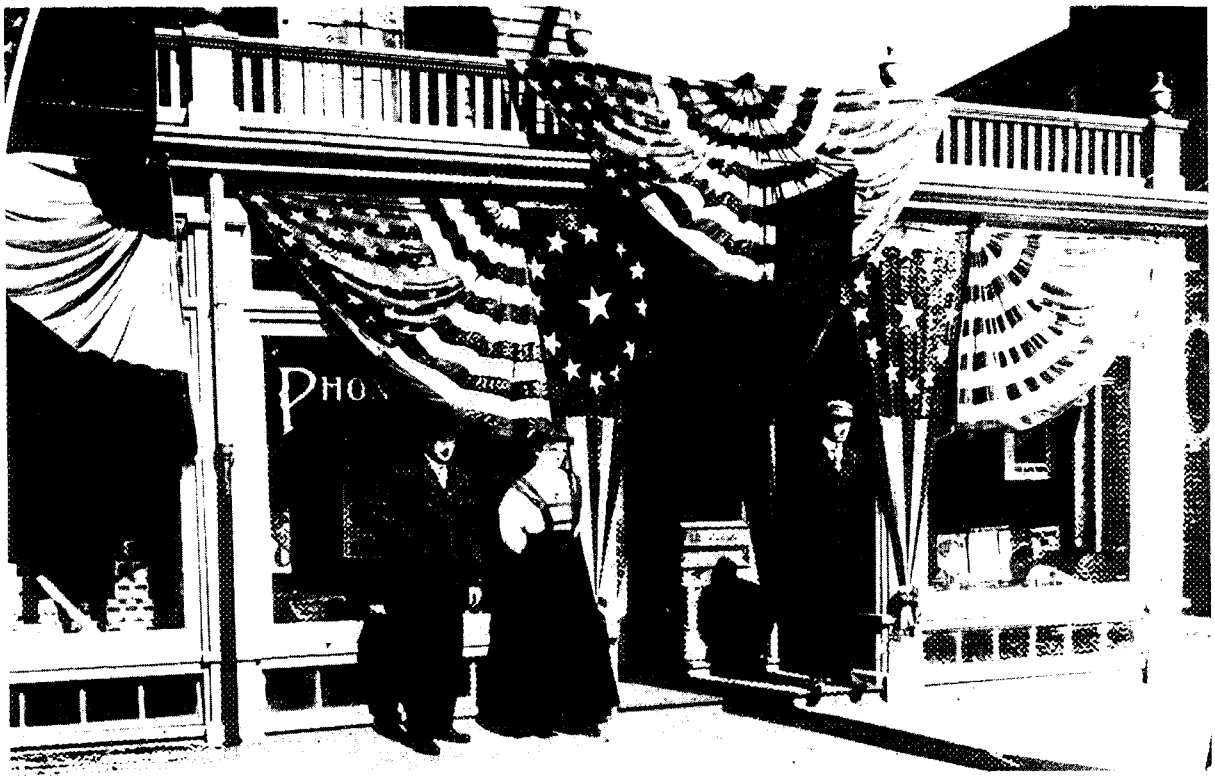
VOLUME XXXIV FALL 1996 NUMBER 1

IN HIS DIARY, Elder Isaac Backus recorded the fact that he had a "likeness" made for $3.00 and later had his portrait painted. This picture is a copy of the likeness Weston used in his history of the town.



WENTWORTH'S Music Store on South Main Street, founded in 1918, was originally located on Center Street. It is decorated for some patriotic holiday in this old photo.

A Message from the President

My sincere thanks to the advertisers in this issue of the MIDDLEBOROUGH ANTIQUARIAN. Some have been with us in previous issues and others are new. Their donations are making it possible for us to continue publishing the MIDDLEBOROUGH ANTIQUARIAN, and you are asked to return the favor by patronizing them.

Sincerely,
Robert M. Beals, President

MIDDLEBOROUGH ANTIQUARIAN
Middleboro, Mass.
VOLUME XXXIV FALL 1996 NUMBER 1
Robert Barboza, Editor

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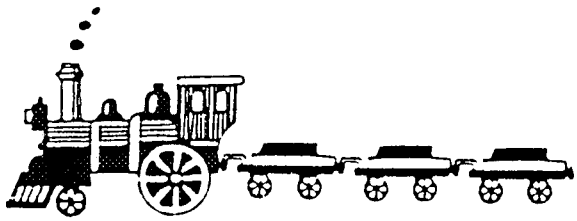


The Tom Thumb Locomotive

The first American railroads were powered by horses, the same as wagons and even boats along canals. The railroads had a distinct advantage over the others, however. Over the rails the horses could pull 20 times more of a load than over a dirt road. Canal and railroad horses could pull the same weight, but the railroad cost much less to build and maintain than did the canals.

The Baltimore and Ohio railroad was the first public railway carrier in regular service in America. It was chartered on February 28, 1827.

In 1829, Baltimore businessmen and railroad directors met often as they grew more concerned about the progress of new railroads as well as canals. It was into one such meeting that Peter Cooper strode.

Peter Cooper, a merchant from New York City, had investments in Baltimore and thus he too was concerned. He told the directors he believed steam locomotion was the answer and that he would put together a working steam locomotive for testing on the rails.

The directors, feeling that they had nothing to lose, gave Mr. Cooper his chance. Peter Cooper, who owned a foundry and was known to be handy with tools, went to New York where he purchased a little steam engine with a cylinder 3¼" by 14½". Upon returning to Baltimore he built a boiler that was as big as an ordinary wash boiler of that time, and used two old musket barrels for boiler flues when iron pipes could not

Continued on Page 11

Who was Elder Backus?

By Warren and Marion Whipple

In the days of the American Revolution, the name of Elder Backus was known from Maine to Carolina. He was as famous as Thomas Jefferson. However, by the time Thomas Weston wrote the *History of the Town of Middleboro, Massachusetts,* the memory of Elder Backus' life and deeds had faded. Who was he? What did he do?

Brown University published a 3-volume annotated diary and biography of Elder Isaac Backus, edited by William G. McLaughlin, in 1979. This scholarly work of research answers basic questions that are not addressed in Weston's *History.*

I. Why did the Titicut Church in North Middleborough call a Connecticut farmer to be its pastor?

Isaac Backus grew up in Norwich, Conn. in a large family of eleven children. His father was a well-to-do farmer and community leader. Isaac worked on the farm and therefore was able to attend school only in the winter months. Consequently his formal education was limited to the elementary level. As a young man, has was strongly moved by the preaching of George Whitefiled during the Great Awakening. Isaac felt that he himself was called to preach. In later years, there would be serious debates about the right of laymen to preach without the benefit of college training, but in Colonial days, itinerant ministers provided a popular source of ministerial service, and so Isaac Backus began a lifetime of travels of two to three weeks each, holding meetings in private homes. One of the circuits took him to Bridgewater, Raynham, and Titicut (North Middleborough). He was a large, impressive man who spoke with sincerity, and although the audience was small, he soon developed a loyal following.

In 1749 Issac Backus married Susanna Mason of Rehoboth, and they lived in Bridgewater while Isaac negotiated to buy the thirty-two acre farm owned by James Keith in Titicut. He and Susanna made this farm their home for the rest of their lives, and here they raised a family of nine children. Thirty years later, he demolished the house and rebuilt on the same site. This second house still stands at 60 Plymouth Street.

Isaac was a good farmer. He raised sheep as well as grain crops to sell, and continued his work as an itinerant preacher, averaging about 2,000 miles per year on horseback. On his travels he sold iron tools and household goods made in local foundries and in his brother's ironworks in Connecticut. He also sold books that he had written and second-hand books that he bought in Boston.

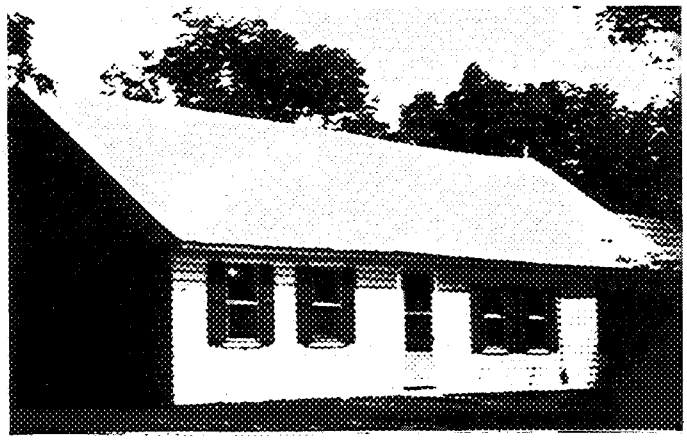
The people of Titicut had often petitioned the Colony's General Court for permission to form a town of their own because they lived too far from the First Church at the Green to always attend services and town meetings as required. Although Titicut was never allowed to be a separate town, in 1743 it was made a church precinct. The parishoners met in private homes while they slowly constructed a Congregational Meeting House. They had no settled pastor, so it was convenient to often ask their neighbor Elder Backus to preach, and gradually this was referred to as his church. When he was ordained and held the title of Reverend, he preferred to use the title of Elder which distinguished the clergy of minority churches from the leaders of the Established Churches.

II. Why did Elder Backus split the Titicut church and found a Separate Baptist Church in the community?

From the beginning there was friction between the "Old Lights" and the "New Lights" concerning questions of infant baptism and closed versus open communion. After years of soul searching, Elder Backus withdrew his membership from the Congregational denomination, and formed his own First Baptist (Separate) Church, an offshoot of the Standing Baptist Church. Apparently there were no hard feelings in the Titicut parish because he participated in an ordination service for a permanent minister, Solomon Reed, at the Congregational Church.

III. Why did Elder Backus, a minister and a farmer, enter the field of politics?

According to the New Colonial Charter of 1691 under William and Mary, the members of the four "Standing" Churches (Congregational, Baptist, Quaker, and Anglican) were exempt from the religious tax. However, all "Separate" Churches were still forced to pay the tax which supported the Established Churches. Those who refused to pay as a matter of conscience faced jail or seizure of their property. Elder Backus, who was now a member of a "Separate" congregation, became a crusader for freedom of religion for a political reason rather than for a religious reason.

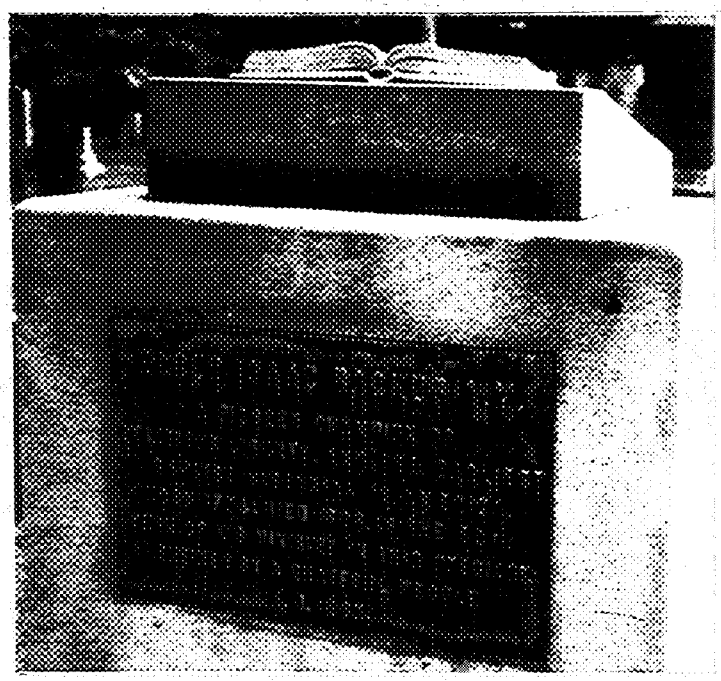


THE BACKUS HOUSE in North Middleborough was built about 1780, but Elder Backus replaced the old farmhouse with this comfortable home, located at 60 Plymouth Street.

IV. Why did Elder Backus go to the Continental Congress in Philadelphia.?

When the members of the Warren Association of Separate Baptist Churches unanimously asked Elder Backus to go the Continental Congress to represent their interests and donated toward his expenses, he bought a horse, packed books in his saddlebag to sell along the way, and started for Philadelphia accompanied by Elder Gano and Elder Van Horn of the Association.

The three ministers didn't know how to present themselves to the Congress. Eventually sympathetic friends arranged a meeting with the Massachusetts delegates: Thomas Cushing, John Adams, Robert Treat Paine, and any other people who wished to attend. When the delegates learned that the Baptists were seeking "freedom of conscience" that would exempt them from the regligious tax, they were very cold to the Backus group. There were already many issues before the Congress concerning America's relations with England, and the Congress was trying to tread carefully so as not to make it impossible to reconcile the colonies to their mother country if they failed to obtain their objectives. Religion was an especially sensitive area that concerned the Established Church. Consequently Elder Backus came home with only a vague promise that the delegates would "endevour to do all in their power to obtain a redress of our grievance." Nevertheless the issues of religious freedom and the separation of church and state had been brought to the attention of the American colonies.



THIS MEMORIAL to Elder Backus was placed in Middleborough's Titicut Cemetery in 1893 by the Old Colony Baptist Association.

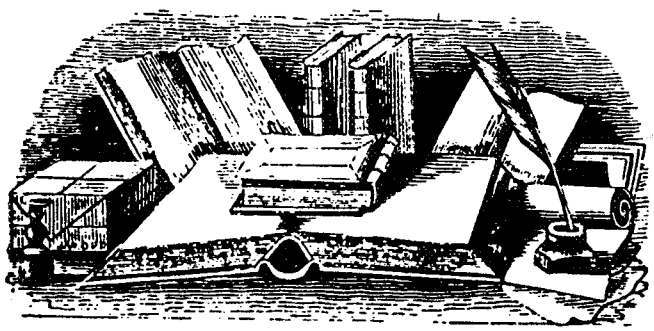
V. What did Elder Backus "do" to earn national fame?

In the summer of 1779 the Middleborough Town Meeting voted to send Elder Backus as a delegate to the Massachusetts Constitutional Convention that would create a permanent government for the State. It was most unusual to elect a minister to a political position, especially a minister of a minority church. This was Elder Backus' first elected position. It proves that he was held in high esteem throughout the town, and reflects the growing membership in the Baptist Churches in Middleborough.

Isaac Backus introduced two issues for the proposed Bill of Rights in the State Constitution: no bribery in elections, and the liberty of conscience (as freedom of religion was called), although the Convention members decided to follow John Adams and Robert Treat Paine in continuing the practice of religious taxes. In the years ahead, Elder Backus continued to fight with his pen for political equality for the members of all persuasions. He corresponded with leaders of all denominations throughout the thirteen states. Thus he became known as a Founding Father in moral matters throughout the U.S.A.

By 1787 the United States under the Government of the Articles of Confederation was disintegrating, and a new constitution was written. Middleborough sent four delegates to the Massachusetts convention to approve its adoption. Again Isaac Backus was chosen to go. He expected to vote in opposition because there was no Bill of Rights to guarantee religious freedom, but after hearing the debate, he changed his mind, decided it was necessary at this time to preserve the Union, and he voted yes.

Elder Backus died in 1806 at the age of 82, and was buried in the Titicut Cemetery beside the site of his first church and within view of his home and farm. The Old Colony Baptist Association erected the imposing memorial of an open Bible on a pulpit. In addition to answering basic questions about Elder Backus, his *Diary* conveys a picture of everyday life in our town in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The extensive footnotes identify the people and events in Middleborough during these formative years. For our town, the *Diary* is a valuable resource.



Sampson's Tavern . . . A Local Landmark

By Elmore P. Haskins

One hundred and seventy-five years ago before the Eagle Tavern, later known as Sampson's Tavern, opened its hospitable doors, there was a hostelry near Assawampsett pond.

The name of the proprietor was Pamantaquash, chief of the local tribe of Indians and a favorite Sachem of Massasoit.

Assawampsett was the Indian name for "the place of the white stone."

When Massasoit went to visit his new found friends at Plymouth to sign the famous treaty, he doubtless consulted with Pamantaquash, dined on his samp, nokake and kippered herring.

After Massasoit came Philip; after Pamantaquash came Tuspaquin in the early deeds spelled Tispiquin, also called Watuspaquin.

He also entertained Princesses and kings, for one day the Indians who lived near King Philip's lookout, and what later became known as Betty's Neck, and near Sampson's Cove, were bidden to a wedding feast. Tuspaquin had married into the royal family and had chosen for his bride Pincess Amie, daughter of Massasoit, the daughter of a king. With painted faces, adorned with feathers, beads and wampum belts, their weird cries resounding through the forest they danced their wedding dance before the wigwam of their chief.

Friendly to Whites.

Massasoit and Pamantaquash were kindred spirits; both were friendly to the whites. Philip and Tuspaquin, their sons, were also one in temperament and in motive, but they hated the settlers and together planned their extermination. Tuspaquin was a cruel savage and was one of Philip's most efficient chieftains in King Phillip's war. He was captured, taken to Plymouth, tried and executed. Tuspaquin pond and Squin brook perpetuate his name.

Daniel Ricketson writes, "Our river takes its rise in a richly wooded dell about ten miles from New Bedford and for some distance on its course is known by the humble name of Squin's brook, so-called from Watuspaquin, a noted Sachem of the Nemasket or Middleboro Indians.

In 1673, Tuspaquin and his son, William, gave to one John Sassamon, an Indian, 27 acres of land for a home lot at "Assawampsett Neck." Dec. 23, 1673, Tuspaquin and his son "with the consent of the chief men of Assawampsett" gave to Assawetough, daughter of John Sassamon, 58 acres of land adjacent.

The settlers changed the name "Assawetough" to the English name "Betty." To this day, the land not far from Sampson's Tavern is known as Betty's Neck.

A Noted Preacher.

The Indian, John Sassamon, was the most noted and eloquent preacher of his day. He had studied at Harvard and had assisted the Rev. John Elliot in translating the Bible into the Indian tongue. He had written letters for Philip at Mt. Hope and was pastor of the Indian church at Assawampsett, at the head of Sampson's Cove.

Philip believed that Sassamon was informing the authorities at Plymouth of the plans that he was developing for the annihilation of the Colonists, and ordered his destruction.

One winter day in 1675, when Sassamon was fishing through the ice in Sampson's Cove, three Indians approached him. We can almost hear the conversation, with the courteous replies of the preacher regarding his success. We see them count the pickerel in the basket beside him. We see the stealthy savage step behind Sassamon and the foul blow that ended his life. These emissaries of Philip then concealed the body under the ice. There was, however, an actual witness to this deed, for a friendly Indian named Patuckson saw the tragedy.

Saw It from Lookout.

A little way up Highland road, the north boundary of the tavern land, is a hill known as King Philip's Lookout. It was from this eminence that Patuckson saw the deed, and so testified in the courts at Plymouth. A jury composed of 12 whites and five Indians, pronounced the prisoners guilty. Two were hanged; one upon confession was reprieved.

The execution of these two Indians so enraged Philip that he began his war of extermination a year sooner than he had intended.

One other event associates the tavern with King Philip's war.

South of the farm is a small stream of water that connects Assawampsett or Great Pond with Long Pond. Captain Benjamin Church, of Dartmouth, with his 40 men, 22 of whom were Indians, were fired upon at dusk one night, while crossing this brook. They chased their assailants into the swamp where in the gathering darkness the Indians escaped. Captain Church encamped that night on the farm of the late Sydney Nelson, in front of whose former residence is the sign "Nelson Homestead, 1714."

Later they were again fired upon by the scouts of Tuspaquin, and, not caring to risk an engagement, retired in the night toward Acushnet.

To the credit of the settlers of the towns of Middleboro and Taunton, be it said, that because of their humane treatment of the natives, King Philip ordered that the inhabitants of these towns should be the last to be destroyed.

Gradually Returned.

After the close of the war, during which every dwelling and nearly every building in Middleboro had been destroyed, the former settlers gradually returned.

On June 27, 1677, 68 of the former inhabitants and landowners, "proprietors of the town of Middleberry" at a meeting in Plymouth, "agreed to make such orders and conclusions as may hopefully have a tendency unto the laying a foundation of a towne and pious society in that place."

Six years before King Philip's War, Middleboro had sepa-

rated from the town of Plymouth and in 1669 had become an independent township.

Its first town clerk was William Hoskins (now spelled Haskins), who held the office for 24 years. There was a salary attached for his record reads: "The town hath agreed that their Clarke shall have a load of fish (herring) brought to his field at Lakenham, at their charge, for his services the year past and so yearly as long as he remains their Clarke and to be brought in season."

Two hundred and fifty years afterwards his descendent, William Haskins held an important public office in the town of Middleboro, having first served 12 years as selectman and having been elected for three successive terms as a member of the Legislature.

After the destruction caused by King Philip's war, the town to whose foundation the 68 proprietors looked forward with so "hopeful a tendency" grew slowly. It was 120 years after the proprietors agreed "to make their orders and conclusions" before the tavern, or "ordinary" as it was then called, was opened by Elias Sampson, in 1798.

By 1770 this part of the town had increased in population more rapidly than any other portion, and had a large number of substantial houses of Colonial type. By 1800 it had more inhabitants than the present center of the town of Middleboro had at that date.

In the diary of Miss Rebecca Scollay we find:

"I remember my first visit to where is now the village of Four Corners.

Not a House There Then.

"There was not a house there then, there was several houses scattered on the way between there and Muttock village."

"Morton town was quite a neighborhood with a goodly number of houses. There was a tavern there, kept by Mr. Levi Wood and called Wood's Tavern."

"There was also a hall at the Morton house where the young used to assemble and have their dances and winter pastimes."

"This in 1775! It is hard to realize that the enterprising and flourishing Center of the town was then a densely wooded tract with a few houses at Court End." (Weston History).

The Morton house was built soon after King Philip's War of 1676 and torn down in 1868 when it interfered with the straightening of the road.

It was not considered strong enough to be moved to a new location.

The lumber, however, was used in the construction of houses on Crossman street, as was the sound old timbers of the Pilgrim fort employed in the building of Harlow house, still standing, in Plymouth, on Sandwich street.

What a shrine this "venerable pile" would have made for the

Sampson's Tavern...A Local Landmark

descendants of the Morton family, or a museum for the town of Middleboro, with the furniture of the period in its ancient rooms, the old ornaments upon its walls, and the simple furnishings in the attic, which was once occupied by the slaves belonging to its earlier owners.

The Sampsons were among the prosperous men of the colony from its very beginning. Henry Sampson, who came over in the Mayflower, was assigned land in 1623 and cattle in 1627. He owned a share in the "sixteen shilling purchase" when nearly all of the present town of Lakeville was bought for $267.

Purchased by Mile.

We buy land by the rod and are assessed by the foot. Henry Sampson and his associates purchased their land by the mile.

In 1669, with three others he bought a tract, one and one half miles in length and one-half mile in breadth, this deed reads in part: "To all to whom these presents shall come, Wee, Tispiquin, alias Black Sachem, and William, Sonne of said Tispiquin, Indian Sachems, send greetings. We doe acknowledge ourselves Jointly and Severally payed and fully Sattisfide."

The line ran: "One and one-half mile from ye sd Dartmouth path into the woods and from ye said path to extend home to aforesaid pond wch pond is to be the bounds of one end of sd land."

Sproat's tavern, which entertained its guests for two centuries, and Putnam's Meeting House, nearby, were built on the land covered by this deed.

It contains the marks of Tispiquin – William his Sonne – The Samuel – Daniell ye Indian: the mark of old Harry ye Indian, not the first, nor the last time the Old Harry has made his mark and was signed by Wm. Crowe. Possibly the William Crowe whose tablet is the second oldest original stone on burial hill.

Abraham Sampson, who came over in 1630, was probably a brother of Henry, who came in 1620.

He was surveyor of the Colony of highways, constable, freeman of the Colony in 1654. He had five children. His grandson, Isaac, was the father of 11 children. His son, Uriah, father of Elias, who opened the tavern in 1798, also had 11 children.

Born Tavern Keepers.

This particular branch of the Sampson family were born tavern-keepers. They possessed that happy combination of genial, attractive personality combined with business abiltiy that makes the tavern-keeper a success.

Their inn was not only popular, but its fine reputation reflected the high character of its proprietors.

The opening was an event in the neighborhood. The stage coaches had commenced to run daily between New Bedford and Boston the year before. The new Pond church was in a flourishing condition. This new venture was an added stimulus to the prosperity of this growing section of the town. Mr. Sampson's friends and neighbors looked forward to the long winter evenings with games of checkers; to neighborhood gossip over their pipes and cider; and to seeing frequent copies of Boston and New Bedford papers.

The soldiers in the neighborhood anticipated the pleasure of comparing experiences in the late war; for the War of the Revolution had ended but seven years before. Some had been in Captain Washburn's company of eight officers and 49 men, who enlisted from this section of the town for the relief of New Bedford when, in September, 1778, it was invaded by the British and its shipping and many of its buildings were burned.

An Old Advertisement.

There is an old advertisement which reads: "New Bedford stage sets off from Waltons and Gales, Bloomfield Lane, Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 4 A.M., and arrives at New Bedford at 4 P.M.; leaves New Bedford, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday at 5 A.M. and arrives in Boston at 4 P.M."

Mr. Abraham Russell's daily line of coaches ran upon the same scheduled time, except that they left New Bedford at four o'clock in the morning instead of 5 A.M.

The stages would arrive at "Sampson's" in time for a substantial breakfast; returning they would reach the tavern about noon time. The distance from New Bedford to Sampson's tavern was 14 miles; 52 to Boston. The fare was three dollars each way.

It was on these coaches that the first four-horse hitch ever seen in New Bedford was used. Mrs. Russell had seen such a team in Philadelphia, her native place, and the harnesses were made under her supervision. (Ricketson's History).

These were the days of small things, there were but 4,361 inhabitants in New Bedford in 1800. But our population gradually increased; there was more and more travel between the two cities, not only by public stage but by private conveyances.

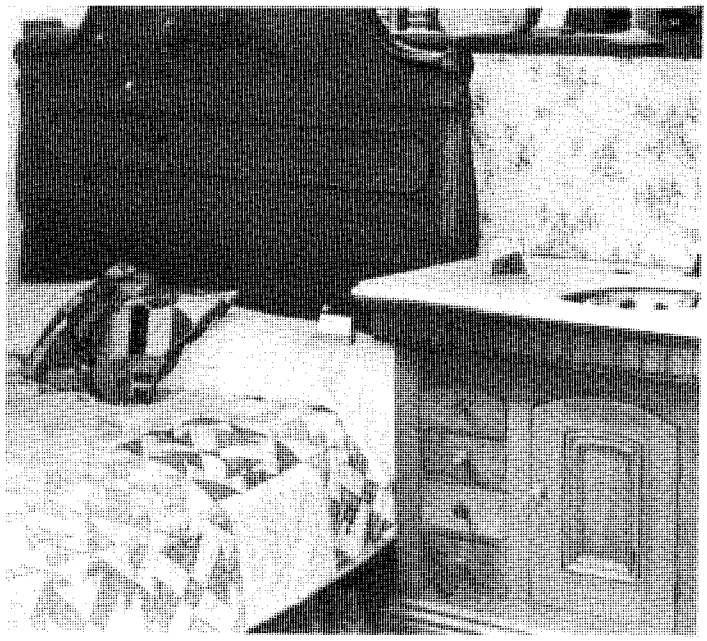
The fine location of this tavern overlooking the largest body of fresh water in the State; its broad expanse fringed with forest

trees, the white cliffs gleaming in the sunlight on the farther shore, formed a picture that delighted its patrons. It was first known as the Eagle Tavern, and an iron eagle, still preserved; was fastened to an elm tree in front of the inn. This may have been made from iron taken from the ore bed in the pond, about a third of a mile from the shore, in front of the present Taunton pumping station. It is recorded that 500 tons of ore a year were lifted by tongs into boats later to be carted to iron furnaces in Middleboro and adjoining towns. This ore was superior in quality to the "bog ore" obtained from the swamps in the town.

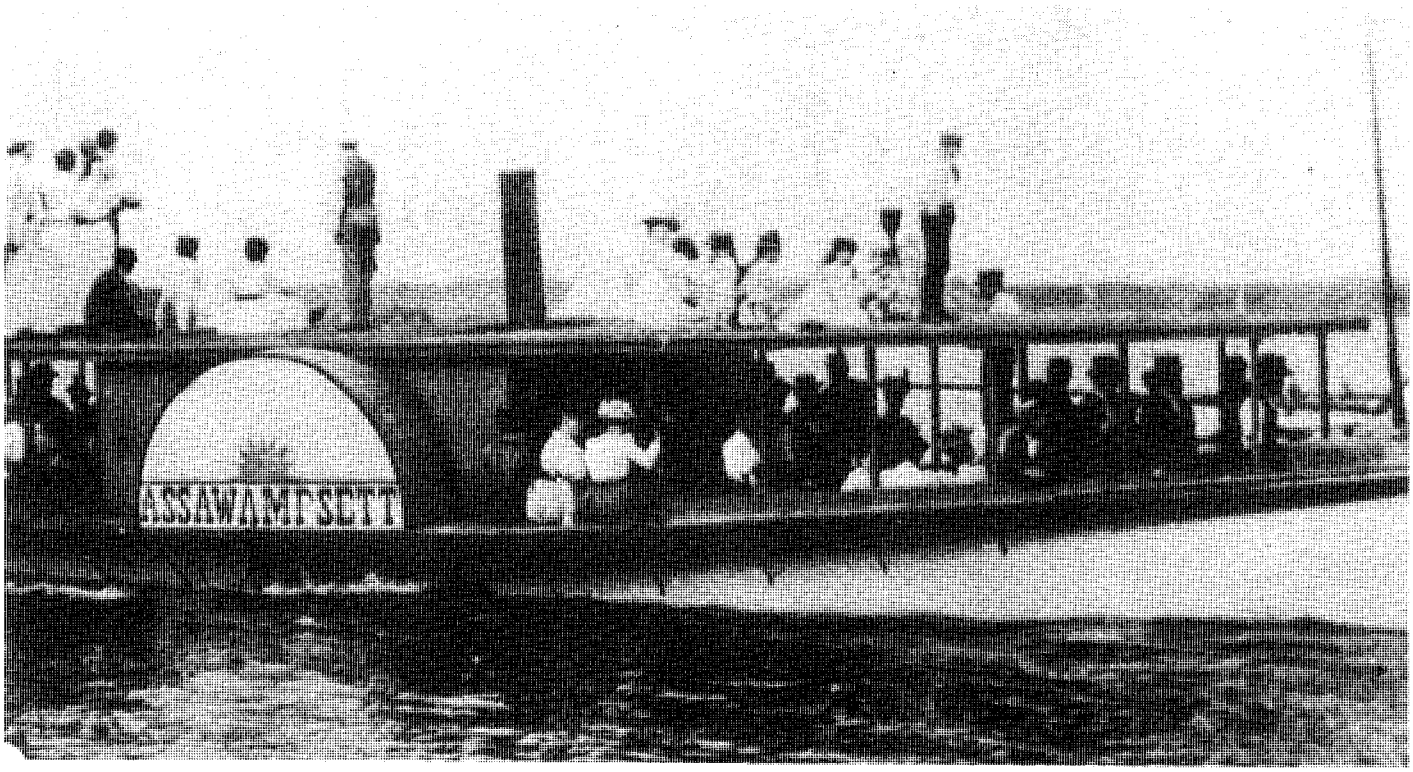
Sampson's was always a sportsman's tavern. Daniel Webster was an occasional guest and fished on Assawampsett pond. There were plenty of fish in the pond and plenty of game in the woods. Fox hunters, bird hunters, rabbit hunters gathered there.

In the cool autumn evenings through the smoke of the corn cob pipes, we can see the tired hunting dogs stretched out before the fireplace; we see the mugs of cider in a row upon the hearth. The number of quail and rabbits, the result of the day's sport, is counted over. After the mugs of mulled cider are emptied, the perch and pickerel caught during the day increase gently in size, and somewhat in number. One tremendous fish the largest in the pond, was hooked but got away! It was ever thus since the memory of man runneth not back thereto.

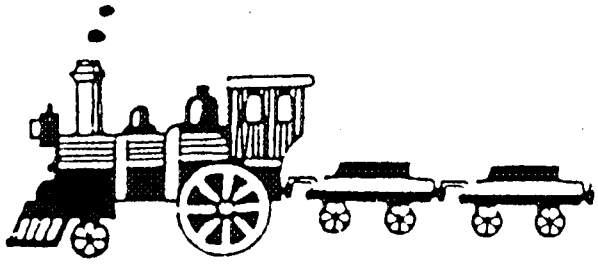
Reprinted from Old Dartmouth Historical Sketches, No. 51, the journal of the Old Dartmouth Historical Society. (April, 1921)



ON DISPLAY in the Lakeville Historical Museum are items such as this bed from Sampson's Tavern, torn down just after the turn of the century.



THE LARGEST BODY of fresh water in the state brought visitors from near and far to Lakeville over the years, with Sampson's Tavern being a favorite stopping point in the early days. Later, the steamer Assawampsett carried vacationers across the pond to enjoy cool summer breezes.



The Tom Thumb Locomotive

be found. He then constructed his locomotive in a coachmakers shop and, because of its size, named it "**Tom Thumb.**"

Peter Cooper did not intend his little locomotive for actual service, but rather to show the directors that, first, short turns could be made; and second, that rotary motion could be obtained without the use of a crank.

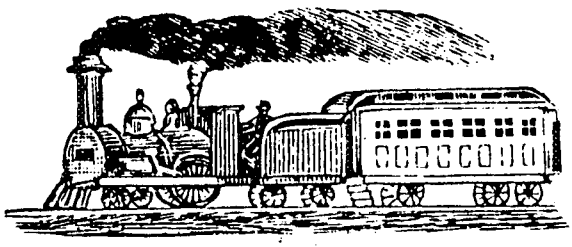
Finally, the Tom Thumb was ready. On Saturday, August 28, 1830, six men climbed aboard the engine and thirty-six more were towed in an attached car as Tom Thumb began the first trip by an American-built locomotive. In the one hour and twelve minute trip, it made an average grade of 18 feet to the mile.

It was on the return trip from Ellicott's Mills that an important event took place in railroad history. The Tom Thumb arrived at the halfway home point to be refueled. There, on the second track, was a horse hitched to an enclosed passenger car. Stockton & Stokes, who supplied the horses for the B&O, were fearful of the success of the steam locomotive and arranged this "race" to prove their worth.

Amidst cheers the two started neck and neck. The first advantage was to the horse whose power was used at the instant, while the little locomotive waited until the rotation of the wheels set the blower to work. When the horse had gained a ¼ mile on Tom Thumb, the engine valve lifted as clouds of steam blew and the pace increased. Soon the engine passed the powerful steed as shouts of hurrah went out.

But, just as the horse's driver was about to give up, a band for the pulley that drove the forced-draft blower slipped off the drum, and the safety valve ceased to scream. While the horse gained and passed the little locomotive Mr. Cooper tried again and again to replace the band. Although it was replaced, and the steam locomotive did its utmost to regain its lead, the horse had put too much distance between the two and became the winner.

All was not lost for Peter Cooper, who had proven his little engine did work. He adjusted the belt so as it would not slip off, and was on the rails again. For weeks Tom Thumb gave demonstrations on the railroad. It's 1.43 horsepower engine proved to be quite powerful as it managed to pull a load of 42 people, even up a slight grade!



Rise To Fame...A History of Washington, D.C.

(Editor's Note: In the late 1700's, when Middleborough and Plymouth were already bustling New England communities, America's new leaders began work on an official capitol city and an accompanying mansion to be the official home of the President of the United States. This entertaining and informative article on Washington is excerpted from a report done by Elizabeth Snow of Carver, a past contributor to "The Middleborough Antiquarian" who is a long-time member of the Middleborough Historical Association.)

The centuries passed, the white man came and sailed up to the Potomac River, which was also known to the Indians as "Co-hon-go-roo-ta," to the Spanish as "Espiritu Santo," to the English as "Elizabeth," and to Lord Calvert's pilprims as "St. Gregory."

The Indians drifted west under pressure of the pale face and a severe small pox epidemic. Today however, a tribe of Potomacs, numbering about a hundred and fifty, live forty-five miles from Washington.

History tells us that the first white men to explore this river of many names were Pedro Mendendez, who reached a point some twenty-five miles below Washington in 1571. In 1608, the renowned Captain John LSmith also entered the region, though he is not supposed to have actually landed upon Washington soil.

Twenty-one years later George Calvert received a royal charter from King Charles I. It was "that part of Virginia north and east of the Potomac River between 38 and 40 north latitude," which is now known as Maryland. In 1634 Calvert arrived in Chesapeake Bay and anchored near the mouth of the river. He soon went on a trip up-stream to establish good relations with the Indians. They were hostile however, and Calvert returned to settle "the Cittie of St. Mary," the first capital of Maryland. From this time on, colonization was rapid and peaceful. The manorial system prevailed and many of the most aristocratic families of the South established their home sin this region upon which the gods of earth had smiled.

The earlier homes were probably of a simple type, much like the story-and-a-half cottages of England. The district which later became known as Washington was called during the early period, "New Scotland Hundred." Each settler named his tract of land, appropriately or otherwise, for instance: "Argyle," "Lorne," "Rock of Dumbarton," "Green Hill," and "Widow's Mite."

"Long before towns began to have any importance in the region the social life of the great landowners was varied and delightful. Tobacco had brought vast walth to the gentlemen planters of Virginia and Maryland, and the abundance of slaves had given them ample time for leisure. The gentle folk lived much in the saddle, "thinking little fo riding five, ten, even more miles to pay a social call or to dine with a neighbor. Every house was a house of entertainment, for hotels were almost unknown. Any decent stranger was sure of welcome." "Card parties, horse races, shooting matches, athletic sports, fencing and other gentlemenly tests of alterness and skill, river parties, hunting meets and riding matches etc.----all were pouplar in due season. The tables of gentlefolk gave evidence of abundance and good taste. Liquors were to be had in every variety and hospitality was so open and sincere that it was a rare day when some stranger did not sit at the family table. George Washington records that his family did not once sit down to dinner alone for twenty years."[2]

The small sprawling communities gradually grew into townships, some of which are today known as Annapolis, Alexandria, Georgetown, and Marlborough. The French and Indian Wars were fought, the Revolution came and the leaders of the ever-growing colonies realized the need for a central and staple government. After the wandering of the Continental Congress from Princeton to Annapolis, to Trenton and thence to New York, the members of the First Constitutional Convention decided that a wandering capital would be looked upon by foreign powers as a sign of weakness. They decided that the first Congress, elected under the new constitution should choose a permanent home for the government. This proved to be a difficult task, and became a matter of contention between the North and the South. It was agreed that a central location wa indespensible that this "Federal Town" should be on a navigable river, yet inland far enough to be safe from foreign invaders. Disagreements arose as to the right of the nation to own land, and the amount of acerage upon which to build. New York had just remodeled its city hall for the use of Congress and saw no reason for Congress to move out. Robert Morris owned large tracts of land near Trenton and favored a site on the Delaware River. Others wanted to have two capitals, one in the Nor and one in the South, "with Congress oscillating like a pendulum between them."[3]

Maryland and Viginia offered a joint piece of land upon the Potomac. Virginia further offered Williamsburg, which was rejected as being too remote. The former comprised a y-shaped area formed by the junction of the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers. The gently rolling land climbed slowly to meet the encircling hills. In the eastern section a plateau of eighty feet rose above the river, part of which was known as Jenkins Hill. Along the base of this hill through a marshy woodland flowed the Tiber Creek. At last through the efforts of Hamilton and Washington it was voted to accept this territory, a tract ten miles square.

It is here that Major L'Enfant entered the scene. He had followed Lafayette to America and had been acclaimed as an engineer in the Revolution. Following the war he engaged in civil work and thus became better acquainted with Genera'

[1]Nicolay, "Our Capital on the Potomac," p. 8

[2]W.P.A. "Washington," p. 39

[3]Nicolay, "Our Capital on the Potomac," p. 26

Washington, who though well of him. Learning that this new nation was to have a capitol, L'Enfant asked to be allowed to 'st in the undertaking. Washington as agent for the enter-ize, employed the Major to lay out the city, and one Andrew Ellicott to survey the boundaries.

The local landowners agreed to sell any land the government wished to purchase for buildings at $25.00 per acre, to allow the rest of the city area to be divided into lots and sold, the proceeds of every other lot to be given to the government. It was further agreed that land needed for highways was to be free of charge.

L'Enfant began his planning and all went well 'till it was learned that his proposed streets were to be a hundred feet wide, avenues hundred sixty feet in width, with one "grand" avenue four hundred feet wide and a mile long. In fact fifty-four per cent of the area was to be devoted to streets and avenues. Thsi plan immediately met with hearty disapproval from the residents round about who had an idea of making a little profit from the federal enterprise.

The politicians grumbled and Washington had difficulty in trying to persuade the landowners to sell. There was one Davy Burns who "would 'nae do business wi no one. The government offered $125.00 an acre, and George Washington himself went to argue.

'Nae on ye life, mon,' said the irasible Mr. Burns.

Washington's thin lips tightened.

'Had not the Federal City been laid out here, you would have died a poor farmer, Mr. Burns,' he said.

'Aye, mon,' retorted the little Scotchman, 'an' had ye nae married the Widow Curtis ye would 'a' been a land-surveyor today, and a dom poor one a' that.'

Washington's dignity was greater than his sense of humor and he stalked away in a towering wrath. Next day he threatened to seize the property by right of eminant domain, and Burns capitulated and sold everything but his own small cottage which stood for years near the Pesident's Palace, on the site now occupied by one of the loveliest buildings in Washington---the Panamerican Union."[1]

L'Enfant would concede to no one and Washington finding it impossible to deal with him any longer, dismissed the "crazy Frenchman" in 1792. In planning the city L'Enfant had given careful cnsideration to the best sites for the most important buildings. The Capital was situated on Jenkins Hill, close to the center for the city area, which L'Enfant describes as "a pedestal waiting for a monument." The President's House he located one and a half miles to the northwest, near the marshlands along the Tiber Creek. He then fixed a site for a monument to Washington and designed a "Grand Avenue," the present Mall. He laid out a system of streets in the usual gridiron pattern and imposed upon them wide diagonal avenues or, "lines of direct communication." The intersections of two or more of these avenues he designated as state squares to be "equally distributed over the whole city." Jefferson is supposed to have named the first great avenues, and L'Enfant on the advice of the commissionersc numbered and lettered the streets as they are today---those running north and south are numbered, while those running east and west are lettered. Other features included a National Church, five fountains and grand cascade as the bottom of Capitol Hill and the canalization of Tiber Creek.

Let us look at Washington when the government first moved in. November, 1800---the officials entered the north wing of the capital, this being the only part completed. Secretary of the Treasury, Wolcott describes the scene, "There are few houses in any one place, and most of them small, miserable huts, which present an awful contrast to the public buildings. The people are poor and as far as I can judge they live like fishes, by eating each other. You may look in almost any direction, over an extent of ground nearly as large as the state of New York, without seeing a fence, or any object except brick-kilns and temporary huts for laborers."[2]

A mile away from the capital was the only other building of distinction, the "President's Palace," designed by James Hoban, and built of buff freeztone similar to other large plantation homes of that day. This was also unfinished, and Abigail Adams is to be remeberd for her willingness to make the most of "a beautiful spot, capable of any improvement."

It was in these early days that an Irish immigrant set up a harness making establishment and hung out a sign which read, "Peter Rodgers, Sadler from the gren fields of Ireland and tyranny to the gren streets of Washington and liberty."[3]

By 1814, the capital city might still have been called a "lodge in the wilderness," and it seems rather pathetic that the British found it necessary to destroy what little magnificence the city held. To their credit, their rath was vented only upon the public buildings, the citizens being allowed the unhappy privilege of remaining in their homes to watch the conflagration.

That intrepid first lady, Dolly Madison, after saving the Declaration of Independence, silver andother valuables, including Stuart's picture of Washington, (which she cut out of the frame and wrapped in a tablecloth) was almost denied admission to a tavern in a nearby town, so unpopular was the President at this time.

In 1815 reconstruction work was begun. A new capital was built on the same site, while a new Executive Mansion rose within the first-blackened walls of the old. The walls had been so badly marked by fire that they were painted white, and people began to refer to the building simply as the White House, as is customary today. From this time until Civil War Days, little was done to improve the city. A few government buildings were added, population increased, and foreign diplomats were definitely impressed by the parodoxical appearance of the place and the crudities of the tobacco-chewing politicians.

"Washington is and always has been a city of extremes. For a long time it was a place of grandiose pretension and absurd realization, of marble halls and Negro hovels, of wide boulevards and slummy alleyways. The inhabitants also were a strange mixture of contrasts. There were the southeren planters --aristocrats with their black slaves, long-haired congressmen from the Wild West in cowhide boots, scholarly New Englanders, shedding disapproval on all and sundry in Washington

[1]Early, "And this Is Washington," p. 4

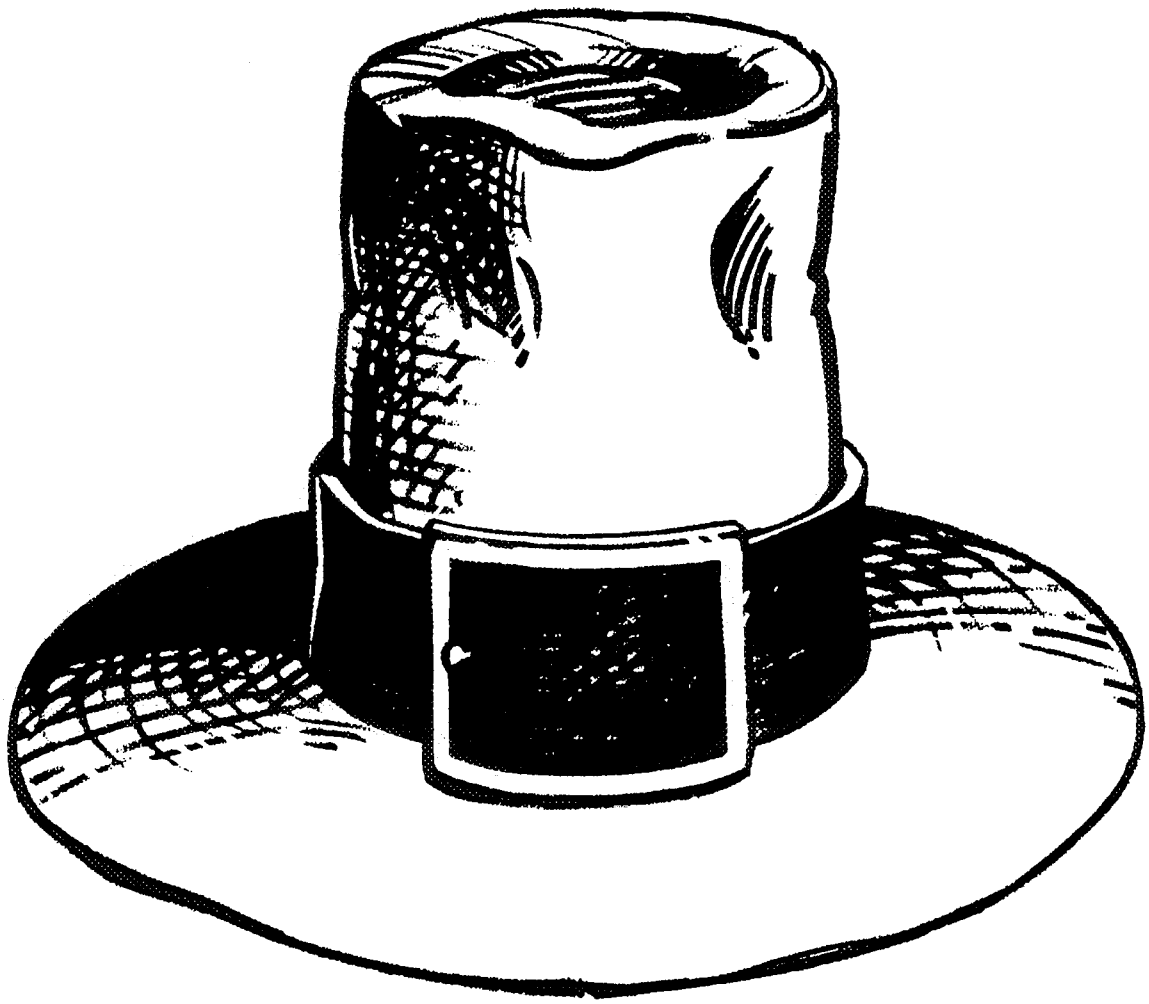
[2]W.P.A., "Washington," p. 47

[2]I bid.

Rise To Fame . . .

like Hebrew prophets exiled in Babylon. Other exiles were the Irish immigrants with the smell of peat smoke still in their clothes, British travelers coming to poke fun at the place and its people, members of the diplomatic corps from all corners of the world, serving a term in what they all agreed was the most barbarous capital on the face of the earth."[1]

[1]Stevens, "Washington," p. 4



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1918-1996

In Memoriam

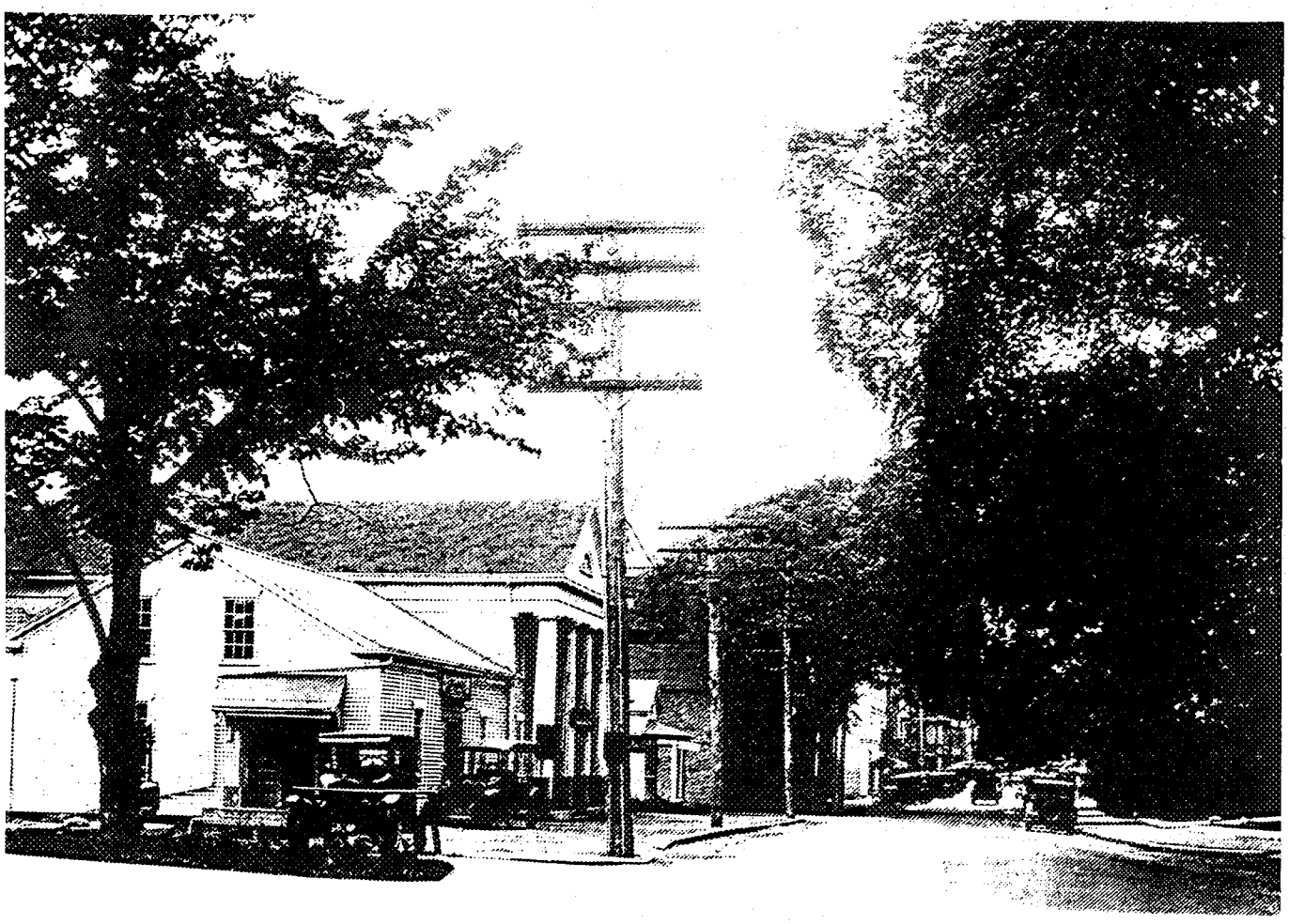
Robert M. Beals was a soft-spoken gentleman whose love for history was displayed in many ways. He led the Middleborough Historical Association for several years as its President. He and his wife Gladys, reached out to the community with their slide presentation on the Little People. One slide in that presentation that often brought a smile to the faces of the audience was the one that showed Bob, as a young boy, playing the role of Tom Thumb in a local performance. They spent their summers at the museum sharing the history of the town with visitors.

Bob oversaw the publication of *The Middleborough Antiquarian*, which without his contributions, had not been printed during the past year. His greatest love, however, was for the 1934 Maxim fire truck, which he drove with pride in the various parades in Middleborough.

The members of the association and the community benefitted from his dedication to the preservation and interpretation of the history of the town of Middleborough. As Bob often said, we will continue to "go forward with the past".

The History of Middleborough Police Department

by Sgt. David Mackiewicz



ORIGIN OF THE DEPARTMENT

The Middleborough Police Department was "born" on March 1, 1909. On that date Town Meeting authorized the appointment of a Chief of Police. Prior to that time public safety had been handled by a loosely organized **night watch system** administered by a three-person appointed "Committee for the Suppression of Crime." It was a system of constables and night watch officers, reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses, to provide public safety exclusively in the downtown area. The formal organization of the Middleborough Police Department took place on March 12, 1909, with the appointment of Harry W. Swift as the first Police Chief.

Although the department was formally organized in 1909, technological innovations came slowly. Keeping up with the trend towards motor vehicles early in the century, the department added a **motorcycle**, not an automobile, for department use in 1925. This apparently, according to records, was used only for traffic enforcement. Patrol in those early days was done on foot. Calls for service from the outlying districts of town led to the hiring of an automobile from a local company. Much mention of this fact is made in the early departmental reports, with the recommendation that an automobile be purchased by the town. The practice of hiring an automobile, however, was to continue for many years.

The second motorized addition to the department was an **ambulance** purchased in 1934. Although primitive by today's standards, it was a leap forward in providing transportation for the sick and injured in those

early years. It was not until 1936, the same year that the department occupied its new police station, that the first "**cruiser car**" was added to the department's fleet. Today the motorcylce is gone and the ambulance service has been privatized, but the town maintains a fleet of "cruiser cars" to respond to calls for service all over town.

Communications have also changed dramatically over the years. Telephone communication for the department began with the installation of a telephone in both the police station and Chief Harry Swift's residence. Over the years much praise and thanks are given, in the chiefs' annual town reports, to the **telephone operators** in town. This was a far cry from today with the department's use of Enhanced 911 service and multiple phone lines to provide almost instantaneous response to calls for service.

Police communication has also changed with the times. In 1917 the first "call box" system was installed to provide communication among officers. It consisted of telephones at the Four Corners, Everett Square, the police station and the chief's house. In 1930 this system was replaced by a new **Gamewell System**. Many townspeople today can probably remember seeing the blue light boxes in various locations on Center St. The system served the town adequately until the late 1960's when it was replaced by hand-held portable radios. The first two-way radio system between "cruiser car" and the police station went on line in 1945. Today, with the advent of computers and mobile data terminals in the cuisers, the department has instantaneous communications with other agencies throughout the USA and Canada.

HISTORY OF THE POLICE STATION

Prior to occupying this building, the police department had for many years been quartered in the **Peirce Academy** building. In 1932 the Peirce (pronounced "purse") Academy was razed to make way for the current U.S. Post Office on Center St. In the interim the police department was housed in a vacant storefront on North Main St.

The Peirce General Store, because of its location next to the fire station and opposite the Public Library (both new buildings at the time) and proximity to other central locations, made it desirable as a new home for the police department. Discussions to that end began in 1932 and culminated in a Town Meeting vote on April 8, 1935. At that time the "Committee on New Police Quarters," of which then Police Chief Alden C. Sisson was chairman, recommended that the town purchase from the trustees under the will of Thomas S. Peirce, the Peirce Grocery Store property on North Main St. and remodel the building into quarters for both the Police Department and the **Fourth District Court** of Plymouth County.

The town voted to accept the recommendation of the committee, and at the same town meeting, voted to appropriate a sum of money for the purpose of purchasing and remodeling the building. The original estimated cost of renovations was $46,000, but like many other renovation projects before and since, conditions developed requiring additional monies.

The total cost of the new police station and courthouse as it stood in 1936 was **$65,000**. Of that total, the Town of Middleborough contributed $38,500; the United States government as a Public Works Administration project contributed $20,700; and the Peirce Trustees contributed $5,800.

All of the alterations were done to the inside of the building. The exterior is essentially the same today as it was in the days of the store owned by the Peirce family.

When the building was dedicated on September 1, 1936, it was noted by then Town Manager and Clerk of the Building Committee H. J. Goodale, "*it seemed fitting that the old Peirce Store, in which the fortune was accumulated which later became the Peirce Fund, and which has been of so much benefit to the Town, should be remodeled into quarters for the Police Station and for the Fourth District Court, thus converting it into a memorial to the Peirce family.*"

Structurally, the building remains largely unchanged in the intervening 61 years. A major change has been the departure of the Fourth District Court to a new building in Wareham in 1978. At that time the police department took over the courthouse wing and occupied it as administrative office space. There have been many minor changes to the police station since, many of which were financed, in part, by the same Peirce Fund that provided for the original building.

POLICE PERSONNEL

There have been many changes in the makeup and numbers of personnel since Chief Harry W. Swift and a handful of dedicated part-time officers provided service to the town. In fact Chief Swift, in his first annual report to the town in 1909, recommended the size of the police department be increased. This, he said, was due to the fact that the "**west end**" of town in Everett Square was not receiving adequate protection, as the beat officer was already walking 15 miles on his beat downtown.

Through the years the use of professional full-time police officers has increased. In the early 1940's, due to **World War II**, the regular force of full andpart-time officers was augmented by the creation of an Auxiliary Police unit. The use of specials and auxiliaries continues to this day.

ment proved not to be immune from the money problems that beset many work forces. This resulted in

layoffs of six permanent full-time officers in 1991. Although these positions have not been fully restored yet, most of the laid-off officers have been rehired through normal attrition of the remaining department personnel. Two other significant personnel events occurred in 1973 with the appointment of the first **officer of color**, and in 1977 with the first **female officer**.

There have been only ten chiefs in the 88 years of the departmental history. They are: Harry W. Swift, 1909-14; Louis Hathaway, 1914-19, Smith T. Sharples, 1920, Alden C. Sisson, 1921-49; Charles E. Rogers, 1949-54, William E. Gardiner, 1954-63; Lawrence Carter, 1964; Harold E. Tower, Jr., 1965-66; William E. Warner, 1967-95; and Arnold C. Salley, 1995 - present.

The makeup of the police department has changed over the years with the addition of a deputy chief and a captain at different times. Both positions have since been eliminated. The current makeup of the department consists of the chief, two lieutenants, five sergeants, two detectives, one D.A.R.E. officer, and 21 patrol officers.

Frederick Lobl

Teacher, Writer, Salesman, Entrepreneur, Inventor

by Sandy Ward

On May 22, 1886, in a little town of Snorow, Province of Moravia, Austria, Mr. & Mrs. Bernard Lobl became the parents of a son, Frederick. He was the second of six children — all boys — born to Bernard Lobl (born in Pressbourg, Hungary) and Fannie (Gaurel) Lobl (born in Hradich, Austria).

His grade school education was in the local elementary school. At the age of 11, he moved to Vienna where he entered the Gymnasium, also known as the "Latin School". This was an eight year school, similar to an American prep school, where Greek, Latin, geography, history, mathematics, geometry, natural history, and physics was taught. Even though this was an eight year school, most students left after four or five years to pursue specialized studies (the arts, sciences, business, etc.). Frederick did well at the Gymnasium and was awarded a citation of merit along with a small scholarship. From here, he went on to the State Technical School. Here, he studied sugar refining, beer brewing, forestry, and agricultural machinery construction. These subjects interested him because his hometown of Snorow was in an agricultural section of Austria. Other studies included industrial chemistry and mechanical engineering. Frederick also completed a course at a school of commerce and business administration. Further education earned him his Ph.G (Graduate in Pharmacy).

Frederick was old enough by this time to be self-supporting. He worked many nights as a teacher to the children of some wealthy families. He also wrote essays, monologues, comic skits, and a 3-act operatta titled "Follow Me to Moulin Rouge" (This later had music put to it by composer Victor Hollaender and performed in the theater). The first money earned as a writer was by accident. Mr. Lobl had written and mailed an essay to a magazine. Fortunately, for him, he sent it registered mail. The essay never reached the magazine and the post office had to pay the allowed amount of $25.00. The monologues and comic skits were used by local entertainers, amateur shows, and social and charitable organizations.

Frederick liked the theater and through several con-

tacts, met various performers. Among them: Louis Treumann, operatta actor; Franz Lehar, writer of military marches and operattas, orchestra conductor; Franz Drdla, piano and violin player and concerto composer; Leo Fall, operatta composer; Oskar Straus, operatta composer; Alexander Girardi, actor in operattas, comedian and "Girardi" hats (low-top straw hats such as Maurice Chevalier wore) stylist; Leo Slezak (Walter Slezak's father), opera tenor; Johann Struass's widow; Karl Maria Ziehrer, the "Waltz King II"; and Victor Hollaender, operatta composer. Frederick Lobl suggested the use of miniature stage settings to make rehearsal changes on. He was never given credit for this advancement in theater production.

Frederick Lobl's work in the medical field started by a chance finding of a newspaper on a park bench. He spotted an ad for "Lexan Pills" and told the advertiser, Dr. Franz Stohr (Stohr Laboratories), that it needed to be changed, both in design and location. The new design, called a "four-liner" (a small, four-line jingle), did so well that it was also used by another large manufacturing firm, Jack Schnable & Co. Frederick Lobl was hired by Dr. Stohr as an assistant. He proved himself worthy and for his twenty-fifth birthday was given a certifiate of junior membership in the firm, Stohr Laboratories. He was later sent to Ameria to expand Dr. Stohr's business.

Frederick Lobl arrived in New York City in the beginning of May, 1914, and was to return to Austria the end of July. He never did. On June 28, 1914, Frederick received a cable from Dr. Stohr: "War started — business relations severed — cannot do anything any more."

He and his wife, Manja, whom he had met and married after arriving in New York City, were now in a strange country, not knowing anyone and without any source of income. Upon the advice of a German restaurant owner, Mr. Hertzka, the Lobls immediately left for Boston, MA.

They arrived in Boston late on a Friday afternoon. Eight days later, Frederick Lobl and Manja had moved into four rooms, unfurnished, of a 2-story office building (ten stores on the street level and ten offices above). They had purchased furniture and a 2-burner cookstove. Frederick had gotten an order from the barber downstairs, ordered and received the necessary equipment and supplies to fill it, delivered it, and had made over fifty percent profit!

Mr. Lobl wanted to sell his barber tonics nationally. There was a problem. The war was causing transportation problems and shipping one-gallon glass bottles full of liquids was difficult and expensive. He had to think of a better way. He put the dry chemicals and scents into a tablet form and told the barbers to add their own liquids (3 quarts of water and 1 quart of alcohol). Thus, the invention of "Tonico Concentrates" tablets. Twelve tablets packaged for shipping would not be any larger than the palm of a hand.

Frederick Lobl continued inventing products needed by the hospitals, due to illnesses and the war. Among these inventions were heating pads, hot water bottles, ice bags, inhalers, and rubberized cloth products. One of the best known of these products was the "Wireless" ice bag.

All of these inventions required more room for machinery. Mr. Lobl advertised in the newspapers for factory space. One of the replies came from Judge Dennis D. Sullivan, who was a member of the Industrial Commission of the Middleboro Chamber of Commerce. He persuaded Mr. Lobl to look at a building that he owned and drove him to Middleboro so he could. Frederick Lobl bought the building and passed papers on December 24, 1916.

His new products were sold nationally in about a year, among the buyers was United Drug Company owned by Louis Liggett. By 1919, Lobl Manufacturing Company employed sixty people and the products were being sold internationally (Canada, Ireland, Portugal, and South America).

Mr. Lobl continued to produce "Tonico Concentrates" tablets until about 1918 when the Armistice and the Volstead Act restricted the sale of alcohol. The barbers could no longer mix their own tonics.

On July 29, 1919, Mr. Lobl was in Boston. He did not know that when he returned home that night that a disaster would await him. It was a windy day and embers from the engine of a passing freight train blew into a ground floor open window of the nickel-plating room of the plant. The sawdust on the floor that was saturated with acid and other chemicals ignited. The flames quickly went to loose paper, cardboard cartons, and other combustibles. The floors gave way under the weight of all the machinery. Within three hours, the 3-story plant had collapsed into the cellar hole. There had been no hope of saving the factory because of the intense heat, and lack of water pressure. All the firemen could do was protect the nearby buildings, including the Bryant and Soule grain elevator that was 100 feet away. A heavy rain, the next day, finished putting out the smoldering ruins.

The building had not had any fire sprinklers, consequently insurance rates were high. The insurance coverage for the building and contents was $35,000.00. The loss was estimated at $60,000.00. The check just about covered the exisiting debt.

The fire was reported in the newspapers. Mr. Lobl received many telegrams, telephone calls, and letters from friends, suppliers, and customers offering help. The local merchants offered moral and material support; suppliers offered to replace the machinery and supplies on Mr. Lobl's terms of payment. Other cities

(Cambridge, Waltham, Worcester) offered tax-free status if he would move the business there. Mr. Lobl chose to stay in Middleboro and with the help of the local people was able to purchase the Murdock Parlor Grate foundry. This basically was a 4-story shell of a building – it did not have any electrical wiring, fire sprinklers, heat, power, sanitary facilities, or water. Work started on the old building.

Meanwhile, Mr. Lobl contacted all his customers (duplicated records were kept at the New York City office in the Flatiron Building, 5th Avenue and Broadway and 23rd Street) and assured them that he would rebuild and that their fall season orders would be filled. By mid-September, the company was shipping their products as promised.

Lobl Manufacturing Company became Lobl Manufacturing Company, Inc. in 1919 when Fred L. Bowman, Arthur L. Griffin, Harry Loewenberg, and Simon L. Pilshaw joined the firm.

In the early 1920's, Frederick Lobl invented and patented a rubber hot water bottle that converted to a fountain syringe, ice bag, or internal douche. He called it All-In-One The Little Nurse in the Home. They were sold door-to-door locally for $3.50 each ($1.00 for sales commission and $2.50 for Mr. Lobl) by a New Bedford grandmother in her 30's, Mrs. Minnie Wood. Her sales were so successful that the product went national within three years. Salesmen were hired and kept informed by a newsletter, *The Friendly Chat,* that Frederick Lobl put out. The newsletter contained educational and entertaining articles. The All-In-One continued to be sold until the depression caused sales to drop off.

This business was not only good for Lobl Manufacturing Company, Inc., but also for Middleboro. The constant high volume of mail from the mail order business between 1924 - 1929 met the postal standards for a first class post office. The post office status was raised from second class to first class just before the depression. The post office moved out of a rented section of a building and into its present location in 1932.

In 1937, Frederick Lobl was made an honorary life member of the Middleboro Chamber of Commerce.

Sadness struck in 1938. Manja had been having dizzy spells and headaches for several months. Doctors could not determine the cause. Finally, she was diagnosed to have a brain tumor. Manja died on January 14, 1938, at the age of 46.

Frederick contacted his family in Austria and encouraged them to come to America and stay with him. His mother died two weeks before departure, but his father (84), and three of his brothers (Otto, Robert, and Paul) did come over. They arrived just before World War II started. (Otto owned Hero Manufacturing in Middleboro; Paul served in World War II and is on the Middleboro roster; Robert went to New York City).

U. S. PATENT OFFICE

MARCH 7, 1944

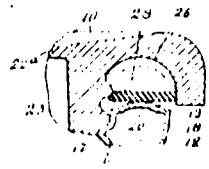
2,343,512

ICE BAG AND CLOSURE THEREFOR

Frederick Lobl, Middleboro, Mass.

Application March 7, 1942, Serial N0. 434,999

2 Claims. (Cl. 150—8)



1. A closure seal for two rotatable interengaging members comprising a convex annular abutment on one of said members facing the other member, and an annular groove in said other member open toward said annular abutment and deeper and radially wider than the depth and width of said abutment and adapted to receive said abutment therein, and a normally flat ring of resilient material materially thinner than the depth of the groove and having radial extent approximately equal to the radial width of said groove fitting within the entrance of said groove above the bottom thereof and movable bridging said groove from side wall to side wall thereof and having its inner and outer edges only seated on the inner and outer side walls of the groove and positioned in the path of movement of said abutment, the groove walls being convergent toward the mid part of the groove and being smoothly continuous at least in substantial part to the bottom of the groove so that a seated edge of the ring is free to slide along the wall with increasing transverse flexure thereof when the ring is forcibly engaged by said abutment, amd means interengaging said members being arranged upon relative rotation of the members to gradually draw the members together to force the top of said abutment against the mid part of said ring and to flex said ring about its inner and outer edges into the groove with decreasing radial width of the ring and increasing resistance to flexure, said resilient ring simultaneously maintaining sealing pressure between said abutment and space apart surface portions of said groove by reason of the flexed condition of said resilient ring, the relative dimensions of said groove, ring and abutment being such that the ring is pushed bodily deeper and deeper into the groove with increased flexure of the ring and is free of pinching against the side walls of the groove.

In 1954, the Lobl Manufacturing Company, Inc. merged and became a subsidiary of Faultless Rubber Company of Ashland, Ohio. Two years later, 1956, Northern Electric purchased the Lobl portion and moved the business to the mid-west.

Mr. Lobl contributed greatly to his community. He was a member of the Middleboro Elks, member of the Middleboro Lions, and founder of the Council on Aging. He was instrumental in bringing several businesses to Middleboro. He contributed to such causes as elderly housing and an addition to St. Luke's Hospital. He was also appointed Chancellor to the President of Brandeis University.

In retirement, Frederick Lobl again turned to writing. The title of his first Book, *Don't Pay for Water,* originated from his first advertising campaign for "Tonico Concentrates". The book was published in 1959. A second book, *Life is a Bargain An Intriguing Legacy of Living History from a Newspaper on a Park Bench,* was published in 1969.

Frederick Lobl died while on vacation in Miami, FL on Sunday, February 14, 1971 at the age of 84. He is buried in Taunton at the Mount Nebo Cemetery.

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U. S. Patent Office Official Gazette - various years

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Frederick Lobl
1959
Vantage Press, Inc., New York

History of the Town of Middeboro, Massachusetts
Thomas Weston, A.M. of the Suffolk Bar
1906
Houghton, Mifflin and Company, Boston and New York
The Riverside Press, Cambridge

History of The Town of Middleboro, Massachusetts
Volume II
Mertie E. Romaine
1969
Reynolds-DeWalt Printing, Inc., New Bedford, MA

History of Plymouth, Norfolk and Barnstable Counties, Massachusetts
Volume III
Elroy S. Thompson
1928
Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Inc., New York

Life Is A "Bargain" An Intriguing Legacy of Living History from a Newspaper on a Park Bench
1969
Liveright Publishing Corporation, New York

Newspapers:

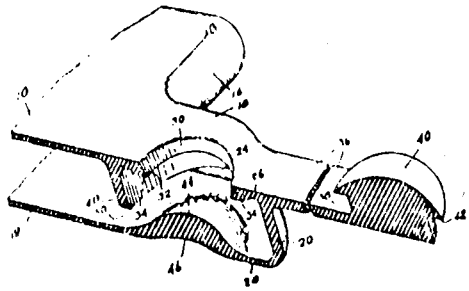
Boston Globe February 16, 1971
Boston Herald February 16, 1971
Midleboro Gazette August 1, 1919
Middleboro Gazette January 14, 1938
Middleboro Gazette March 10, 1960
Middleboro Gazette February 18, 1971

FREDERICK LOBL

U. S. PATENT OFFICE

MARCH 14, 1940

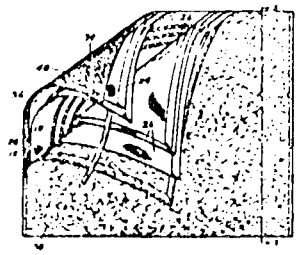
2,200,395
CONTAINER
Frederick Lobl, Middleboro, Mass.
Application November 19, 1937, Serial No. 175,445
4 Claims. (Cl. 150—8)



1. A molded rubber hot water bottle having top and bottom flat walls, the top wall having an opening through which the contents of the bottle are adapted to pass, a flexible tab integral with the body of the bottle and projecting outwardly therefrom, the tab carrying a sealing member which is conformed to the configuration of said opening and is arranged to enter and plug said opening upon the flexure of said tab, said opening having a flexible circumscribing lip projecting from the inner face of the wall into the interior of said bottle which grips the sealing member circumferentially, and said sealing member haveing a circumferentially continuous outstanding head adapted to pass through said opening and to overlie and be seated upon said lip, all parts being integrally molded in one piece and all composed of the same material.

JULY 6, 1943

2,323,478
ELECTRIC HEATING PAD
Frederick Lobl, Middleboro, Mass.
Application May 3, 1941, Serial No. 391,728
9 Claims. (Cl. 219—46)



1. An electric heating pad having opposed covers each arranged for alternate engagement with the body of the user and an interposed heating element, one cover having flocked surface upon relatively impervious backing and the other cover being pervious and presenting a surface of long loose fibres.

Memories of the Third Calvinistic Baptist Church at Rock

by Marion Thomas Whipple
Photography by Warren B. Whipple

The history of the Third Calvinistic Baptist Church begins, not at Rock, but at South Middleboro.

When the Town of Middleberry was incorporated in 1669, the southern district was still sparsely settled. It was rural country where large farms covered many acres and there were extensive woodlots. For nearly one hundred years, the settlers along Wareham Street and along the Weweantic trail had to travel eight miles or more to the Green for church services, town meetings, burial services, and social events. Occasionally an itinerant minister would hold a service in a private home, but South Middleboro was slow to develop a cohesive village life of its own.

In 1761 ten persons organized the Third Baptist Church of Middleboro under the dynamic leadership of Rev. Ebenezer Jones who attracted members from South Middleboro, Carver, Rochester, and Wareham. Meetings were held in private homes until a meetinghouse could be built on the site of the present Methodist Church with the village cemetery in the church yard. It was called the Spruce Meetinghouse, and became the social center of the suddenly fast-growing village of South Middleboro.

While the church was the social and spiritual center of life in South Middleboro, the Stillwater Furnace on Black Brook was doing a big business in military supplies for the French and Indian Wars. Several hundred people were employed in a wide variety of jobs, thus creating a financial base for the rapidly growing village.

After a brief interval, Rev. Jones was followed by Rev. Asa Hunt. Mr. Hunt of Braintree had served in the French and Indian Wars and was searching for a permanent vocation when he joined Elder Backus' congregation at Titicut (North Middleboro). He became an itinerant Baptist preacher, and two years later (1771) he was called to be pastor at South Middleboro. He and Elder Backus worked together for religious liberty in America, and frequently exchanged pulpits for the enrichment of their parishes. Rev. Hunt also continued to travel extensively as a representative of the Baptist (Separate) Church in southeastern New England. Many new members were attracted to his Church, including Deborah Sampson who was a bond servant on the farm of Jeremiah Thomas in Middleboro Center. She was reprimanded for missing too many services when "she only had to walk eight miles". After her military service in the American Revolution she was expelled from the congregation for wearing men's clothing. For this, the Church is remembered in Middleboro's history. It is generally forgotten that Rev. Hunt was a beloved pastor who was a strong influence in the growing community of South Middleboro.

Money was always a problem for ministers of the Separate Churches as compared to the Standing Churches that received support from the government. Rev. Hunt fell deeper and deeper into debt until he requested that his parishioners dismiss him in his disgrace. In 1789 they did. He moved to Pennsylvania and later died in Rhode Island, no doubt believing he had been a failure. On the contrary, for eighteen years he had been an influence for much good in South Middleboro and in the national campaign for religious freedom in the new nation of the U.S.A.

Five years later, Rev. Samuel Nelson became the Church's Pastor. He was a local person, grandson of the well-known Lakeville family. An increasing number of Church members were moving to Beaver Dam (The Rock), and so he held services in both communities. At Beaver Dam the meetings were held in private homes, often in the parsonage on the bend in the road of Miller Street. The Rock Baptists dreamed of having their own meetinghouse on the hilltop on Highland Street, and here they started their own cemetery in 1791 with the burial of Eunice Barrows, age 22. At last the Baptists dream came true (1795). The South Middleboro property was sold to the Methodists, and the new meetinghouse at Rock with its sixty-eight pews was small but adequate. Mr. Nelson continued to attract new members and stayed on as minister until his death at the age of 77. "Mr. Nelson's Church" was a village center serving all denominations. The churchyard cemetery with its old slate stones is still there.

After a half century of use, the Rock church was replaced with the beautiful New England meetinghouse pictured in *Weston's History,* p.478. Recently Hazel Rowley found the negative for this picture among her family treasures, and it will now be given to the Middleboro Historical Society along with this story of the Church's history. This was the Church in which my father, Ernest Thomas, and his brother Waldo grew up and for which my grandfather, Alfred Thomas, kept the papers in a candy box in his kitchen desk until in

his old age he sent them to the Baptist headquarters for safekeeping. The Church was the spiritual and social center of Rock Village for members and non-members alike.

Across the road, in the front row of Hope's Rest Cemetery, is the grave of George Eastman, Civil War veteran from Illinois and his wife Priscilla ("P.C.") Pratt from the Highlands of Rock.

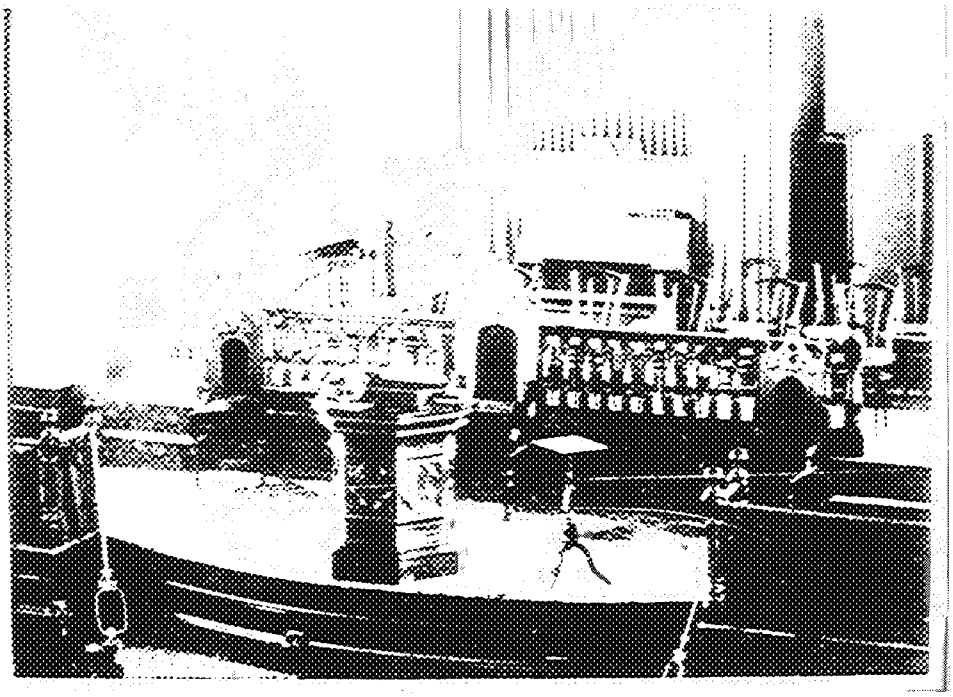
Disaster struck the church early in this century when the steeple was hit by lightning in a freak December storm in 1918, and the building burned to the ground. Only a few mementos were saved. Our family kept a picture on the living room wall and used a pew as a garden seat. The cellarhole is now covered by a Memorial Chapel that was erected by the Rock Cemetery association and is used occasionally for burial services.

After the fire, the members of the Rock Baptist Church were forced to accept the offer of the "Chapelites" of the Independent Congregational Church on Miller Street to merge their congregations under one pastor. Thus the religious schism in the village was healed and outwardly the union of the two congregations was a success, however each organization had its own officers and conducted its own business. New members could choose which denomination they were joining, or they could be neutral and join the Rock Village Church. The three annual meetings were held simultaneously and then the three groups joined together for supper. In the course of time, as the original members died, the union became complete, and although the Baptist origin has not been forgotten, the Church is now called the Evangelical Church. The building of the Third Calvinistic Baptist Church at Rock is just a memory, but its influence still lives in the "Chapel" on Miller Street.

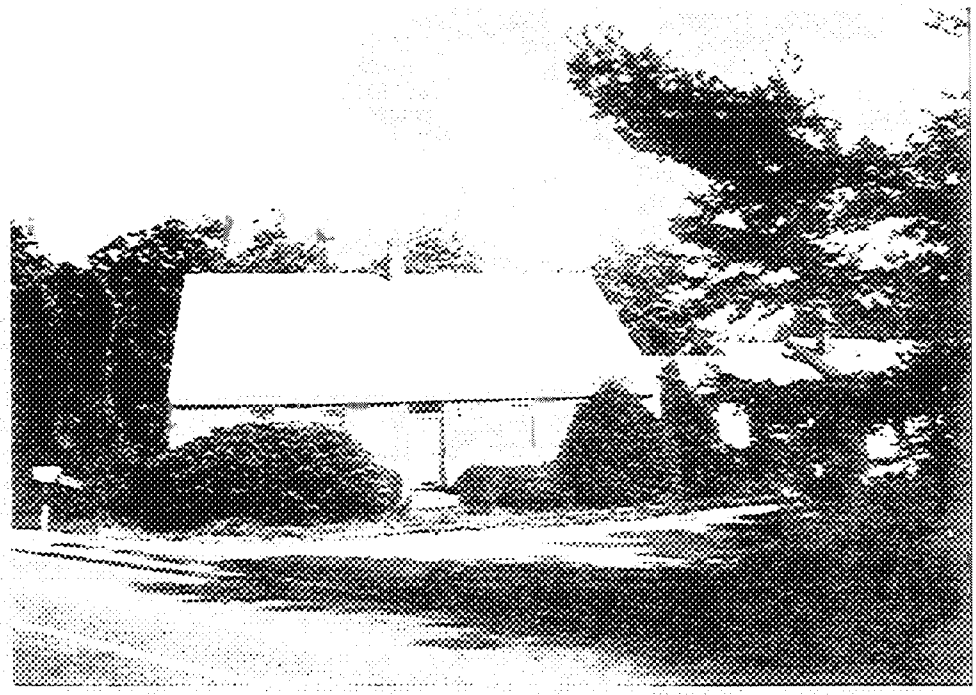
Many changes have taken place in Rock Village since the fire in 1918. The railroad was responsible for transforming the community into an active, prosperous neighborhood. The village center moved from the hilltop to the intersection of Miller and Smith Streets. Rock Pond was created. The Atwood Box Mill employed every man who wanted to work, and every family did a little farming on the side. The houses were kept in repair and neatly painted. It was an attractive village that had its own school, church, library, general store, post office, railroad depot, mill, doctor, and barber. The commuter trains ran express between Rock and Boston's South Station. Trolley cars ran through Middleboro to Onset. Rock was a self-sufficient community until the mill burned, the post office was closed, and trains and trolley cars were discontinued, all in the era of F.D.R.

Rock is now a bedroom community. Once again the houses are well-kept and the general appearance indicates prosperity, but there is no economic opportunity in the Rock. The people must commute elsewhere for jobs and services.

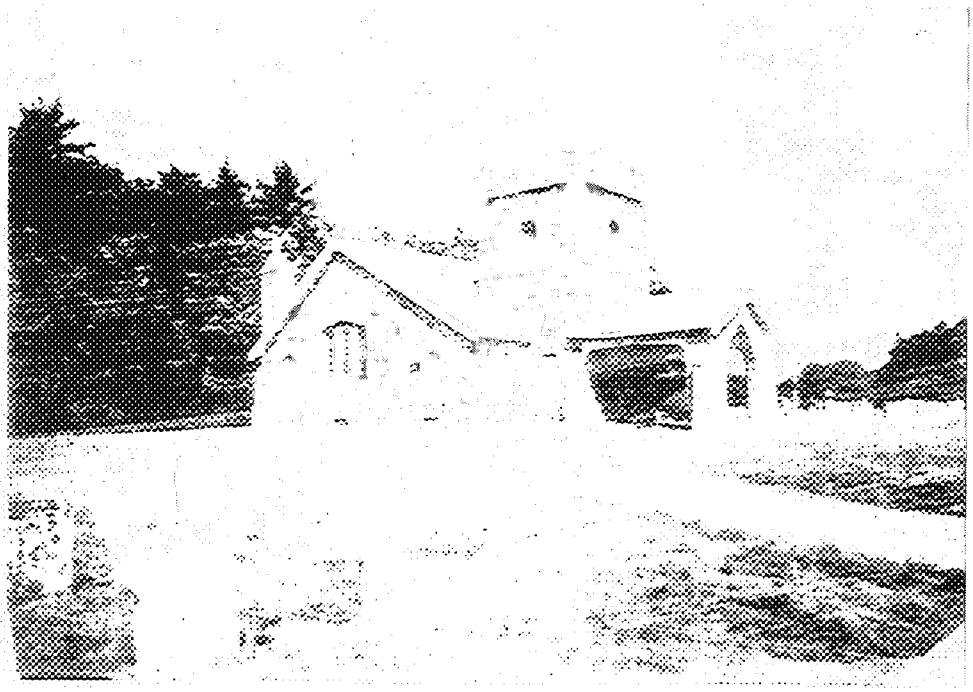
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH AT ROCK
1852-1918



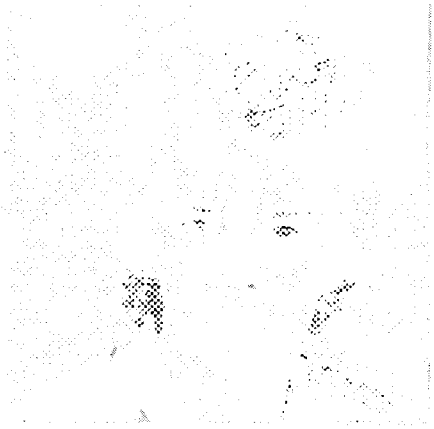
CHURCH'S INTERIOR VIEW



THE OLD PARSONAGE
Miller Street
c. 1795



MEMORIAL CHAPEL ON SITE OF BAPTIST CHURCH



Message From the President

Hello, let me introduce myself. My name is Dorothy F. Thayer. I have been a member of the Middleborough Historical Association, Inc. since 1985. I serve on the museum committee and have served on the nominating committee. I am a social studies teacher at Middleborough High School where one of the courses I teach is Middleborough Past & Present. My goals, as president of the association, are to get more members actively involved in the association and to create programs of interest for the schools and community. Neither of these goals can be accomplished without your help. I look forward to working with many of you in the months ahead.

Officers of the Association

President ..... Dorothy Thayer

Vice President ..... Thomas Weston

Secretary ..... Gladys M. Beals

Treasurer ..... Ann M. Ventura

Directors ..... Eileen L. Atkins
Thomas A. Maddigan
Cynthia B. McNair

Curator ..... Marsha Manchester

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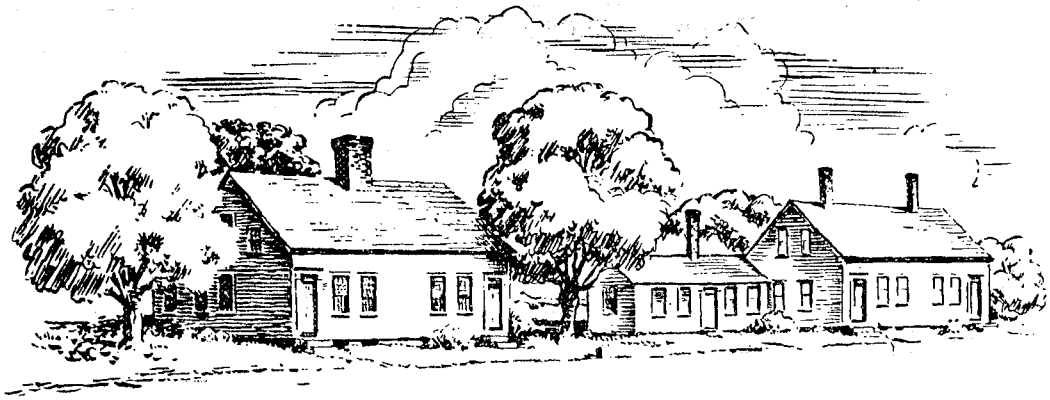

MIDDLEBOROUGH HISTORICAL MUSEUM
MIDDLEBORO, MASSACHUSETTS

Jackson Street, off Route 105 (behind the police station)

The museum complex includes seven buildings that contain many different collections. Featured is the Tom Thumb and his lady memorabilia and collection.

ADMISSION:

$2.00 for adults
$1.00 for students

Open seasonal or by appointment
Call Dorothy Thayer 947-2596

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