

William A. Wheeler's
Series
On His Town of Brunswick



Arranged and transcribed by
Richard F. Snow
May, 2008

Table of Contents

Brunswick Yesterdays A Boy's View of the old Town in the Early '80's, Chapter 1: Transportation in the '80s April 20, 1944	6
Brunswick Yesterdays A Boy's View of The Old Town in the Early '80s, Chapter 2: Churches and Schools April 27, 1944	11
Brunswick Yesterdays A Boy's View of The Old Town in the Early '80s, Chapter 3: A Boy's View of Brunswick May 18, 1944	16
Brunswick Yesterdays A Boy's View of The Old Town in the Early '80s, Chapter 4: Hotels, Beaches—And Other Things May 04, 1944	21
Brunswick Yesterdays A Boy's View of The Old Town in the Early '80s, Chapter 4 (continued): Hotel, Beaches—And Other Things May 11, 1944	24
Brunswick Yesterdays A Boy's View of The Old Town in the Early '80s, Chapter 5: A Boy's Life in Brunswick May 25, 1944	26
How Clothes Made the Man Back In The '80s October 26, 1944	31
How Grandpa "Went To Town" From Here A Century Ago January 4, 1945	35
When the Bicycle Was a "Craze" February 1, 1945	38
When Brunswick's "Depot" Was Used As a Public Hall May 10, 1945	45
Yes, We Had Fun in the '80s! February 8, 1945	41
When the Name "Despeaux" Meant Law and Order in Brunswick August 16, 1945	47
Wheeler Recalls Food Stores in Brunswick in the '80s September 21, 1944	50
Elders from Generation to Generation "View with Alarm" The Escapades of Youngsters September 28, 1944	52

Wheeler Recalls How Boys Here Spent Their Pennies in the 80s February 7, 1946	54
When a ‘Ghost’ Walked In Brunswick February 14, 1946	56
Brunswick High Baseball Team of 1894 Were State Champs February 21, 1946	57
Splashes, Hushers, Shams and Mottoes Were Musts in the ‘60s March 7, 1946	59
How Brunswick Helped To Make a President May 16, 1946	60
Wheeler Regrets Sacrifice of Historic Landmarks to Progress April 11, 1946	63
General Joshua Chamberlain Was Brunswick’s Outstanding Civil War Hero May 16, 1946	65
Brunswick Was Just a Hamlet a Century Ago Wheeler Translates For Record Readers Map of Town Made in 1846 May 30, 1946	68
Old Time Town Meetings Scenes of Hot Debate August 15, 1946	71
Brunswick’s Newspapers Symbols of Democracy For Over 100 Years Augusts 22, 1946	74
Brunswick Railroaders in the ‘80s October 17, 1946	86
When Brunswick had its “Little OPA” Back in 1777 October 26, 1946	91
Old Book Reminds Wheeler of Brunswick Businesses of 1892 November 28, 1946	92
Brunswick Boys IN 1891 Took Part in Bowdoin Scientific Expedition December 12, 1946.....	98
It Cost Pyam Prince 25 Cents to Mail A Letter 117 Years Ago March 27, 1947	101
Wheeler Writes of This and That and Other Things May 13, 1947	104
Keeping In Style Costly For 1747 Brunswick Woman October 16, 1947	107

Telephone Service Began In This Area 65 Years Ago November 13, 1947	108
Harpwell “Triangle” In 1840 Led To Murder of One Elisha Wilson November 18, 1947	113
Butter Sold For 12 Cents a Pound, Brunswick Beef 16, 100 Years Ago November 27, 1947	116
Dunlap Block, Housing Record Office Has Long and Honorable History December 11, 1947	121
Brunswick of 100 Years Ago Had Many of Today’s Problems February 12, 1948	125
Evening Amusement No Problem to Citizens of a Century Ago March 18, 1948	129
When “Old Boys” Get Together, the Talk Is Of Youthful Days April 15, 1948	132
Ingenuity Marked 1880 Era of Brunswick Principal “Pa” Fish July 1, 1948	135
History of Famous Brunswick Juvenile Band Vividly Recalled April 21, 1949	137
Problems of a Century Ago Brunswick Selectmen Had Less Trouble Then May 19, 1949	141
Forgotten Shaving Mug in Attic Revives Memories January 4, 1951	145
“The Good Old Days” Had Dollar Problems, Too July 12, 1951	147
Brunswick a Hot-Bed of Political Strife in 1880, Tom Reed Defied August 9, 1951	149

One of the most prolific story tellers of Brunswick history was William A. Wheeler. His 44-odd articles appeared in the Brunswick Record from 1944 to 1951. An obituary in the Brunswick Record in 1958 described this writer and “reporter” of Brunswick “lore”.

William Wheeler, 83, retired railroad official and author of books and newspaper features, died Sunday in Portland after a brief illness.

The author and publisher of two books, “Brunswick Yesterdays,” and “The Old Timer,” Mr. Wheeler also wrote numerous feature stories for the Brunswick Record and the Portland Sunday Telegram, as well as “A Brief History of the Maine Central Railroad.”

He was born in Brunswick Jan. 18, 1875, a son of Henry W. and Mary Adams Wheeler. After two years of high school, he became a telegraph operator at the Brunswick station of the Maine Central Railroad. He remained with that company as an employee and official until his retirement in 1945. He had been a railroad man for 55 years. He operated a printing business since his retirement.

Mr. Wheeler, who made his home in Gorham for many years, became a telegraph operator in the Portland general office of the railroad in 1896, train dispatcher in 1897, and chief train dispatcher in Bangor in 1908. He was made assistant superintendent of the Eastern Division in 1917 and in 1925 became superintendent of the Mountain Division, later becoming Assistant superintendent of the Portland Division.

In 1932 he became special representative, public relations, of both the Boston and Maine and Maine Central Railroads...¹

Below are the articles that Wheeler wrote for the Brunswick Record. Some pictures have been added by this author from a number of sources in order to add to Wheeler’s words. All of the articles have been transcribed by this author and can be found in that form at the Curtis Library in Brunswick, Maine.

The first series of six articles were submitted in 1944 and covered the period from April 20th to May 25th. In addition, there was an article separate from the series submitted on October 26th.

The “Brunswick Yesterdays” series were inevitably published, although few copies exist today (The Maine State Library has a copy). They were in five chapters entitled “A Boy’s View of the Old Town in the Early 80s.” These dealt with transportation, churches and schools, social activities, hotels, stores, restaurants and industries, etc.

¹ Brunswick Record, September 28, 1958, p. 1

In the article below Wheeler describes the railroad, the local “hack”, Topsham Fair, bicycles and trolleys, etc.

Brunswick Yesterdays
A Boy’s View of the old Town in the Early 80’s
Chapter 1: Transportation in the 80’s
April 20, 1944

A long time ago someone, I don’t remember who, wrote a little verse:

When time, which steals our years away,
 Shall take our pleasures too,
 The mem’ry of the pat will stay,
 And half our joys renew.

Time has stolen my years; and as I travel down the shady side of the hill, I indulge, more and more, in retrospective thoughts of the Brunswick I knew as a boy, back in the early ‘80’s.

Perhaps the Brunswick boys of today have just as much enjoyment of life as I did and my contemporaries; but it seem difficult to believe. Life was simple; we depended almost entirely upon our own devices for our amusement. Perhaps it wasn’t an unmitigated evil to learn to be self-reliant in our pleasures as well as in the sterner phases of life!

This isn’t to be a history nor a biography; neither will it follow a chronological sequence. I shall merely browse in a fertile field of memory, and choose the fodder which seems best. Pursuing this course, I may ramble far afield.

Whenever my thoughts turn to the Brunswick of 60 years ago, I think, almost invariably, of the old railroad station. We didn’t call it that, of course, it was the “deepo” with a long e; only the effected pronounced it “daypo.” The depot, then, was a huge barn; it seemed huge to us, anyway, with a train-shed covering the tracks. It was before my time, but when the depot was built, it even had “barndoors” which were closed at night; and as no trains ran after sunset, it didn’t interfere in any way with traffic.

There was a restaurant in the depot back in the ‘80s, and all the trains stopped 15 to 20 minutes for refreshments. My first recollection as to the proprietors of the “eating house” was “Bill” Field who later ran a cigar and confectionery on Main Street.

Right there, the temptation to digress for a moment is irresistible. It was “Main” street in those days—the “main” street of the town and nobody was ashamed to call it that. Today, for some reason I’ve never been able to ascertain, it’s “Maine” street. Possibly Brunswick has grown too sophisticated to have a Main street, but it’s a change I have always regretted.

That’s not the only instance of discarding a time-honored name in favor of one less appropriate. In my boyhood that beautiful promontory which juts out into the sea; four or five miles from Brunswick, was Mair Point. It was so named for old John Mair, one of the original settlers. When it became a flourishing summer colony, however, so plebian a name was considered unsuitable, and turning to the French language for inspiration, it became Mere Point. Maybe that’s a better name; but I still feel that the memory of John Mair should have been perpetuated.

Following Bill Field, the depot restaurant was run by George Woodbury, formerly a conductor on the old Knox and Lincoln Railroad between Bath and Rockland. Dapper, always immaculately dressed, Mr. Woodbury was a familiar sight to travelers as he presided behind the counter of his lunch room. Second only to his restaurant, perhaps not second even to that, was his famous stable of trotting horses; and his barn was as immaculate as his person.

Solon Cahill was the first station master I recall, although he had number of predecessors. He, too, was formerly a conductor. Henry Wheeler was ticket agent, Isaiah Elder freight agent, and James Dennett was baggage master. Dennett had two occupations: he was also a florist, and ran a greenhouse on Jordan Avenue.

The long stops of the through trains at Brunswick gave us boys an opportunity to do some merchandising. In season, we'd gather pond-lilies and sell them on the trains; we couldn't get enough to supply the demand. Mayflowers in the spring went like hot-cakes. We'd buy a dozen peaches or apples, and peddle them through the cars. If we made a profit of 10 cents, we were entirely satisfied. I wonder if the Brunswick boys of today earn their spending money in any such ways; and if they'd be content with such modest returns for their labor.

If we had any spending money at all, we had to earn it; and we worked pretty hard for very small remuneration. I recall that once I badly needed a dime for some now forgotten purpose. I put a barrel on my sled, went to a carpenter shop and filled the barrel with shavings, then peddled them all over town until I finally found a good-natured housewife who would give me ten cents for them. I probably worked five or six hours in bitter winter weather for that dime! Picking and peddling blueberries for five or ten cents a quart, running errands for which the pay was seldom more than a penny, turning the crank of Maynard's ice-cream freezer for hours for ten or fifteen cents; these were some of the ways in which we gained the wherewithal for our modest needs.

But to get back to transportation—for it isn't only the railroad I'm thinking about now, but transportation in general as Brunswick knew it in my boyhood.

Of course to go to another town, the railroad was the only means of travel but people didn't roam as they do now. A trip even to Portland or Lewiston was a real event, one planned and talked about far ahead. Once in a while one might go to Boston—and that was a red letter experience! There were excursions, though, which everyone patronized who could scrape up the dollar or so demanded for the fare. It might be an excursion to the State Prison at Thomaston. A special train was run; it seems to me now that these trains were a mile long; more or less, but they probably hauled 7 or 8 coaches—and they were packed to the doors. There was the ride to Thomaston, with the wonderful experience of crossing the Kennebec river on a boat while sitting in the cars; and then the trip to the Prison, with a guide taking the party through. We always carried a picnic lunch, eating it either on the train or at the "depot"; and in either case the odor of bananas and oranges were predominant. I can smell those lunches now!

Or perhaps it was an excursion to Lake Maranacook. Sometimes there were more passengers than one train could handle, and extra sections were run; but no matter how many cars there were, they were always jammed. There was the novelty of the train ride; a day at the Lake, with swimming, fishing and bowling; the inevitable picnic lunch—and then the long ride home, tired but happy. Do the boys of today get as much enjoyment, I wonder, from a swift dash somewhere or other in an automobile, a dinner in some roadside restaurant, and the return trip; all within a couple of hours?

Shipyards flourished in Bath in the '80s and launchings were frequent. The railroad ran special excursion trains. I think the fare from Brunswick was 25 cents for the round trip—and

every boy in town who could scrape up a quarter went to Bath on those great days. I recall very vividly one launching in particular; that of the “Star of the East,” a steamer for the then flourishing Kennebec River steamboat line to Boston. While the gangs were preparing for the launching, we boys swarmed all over the place, climbing the stairs to the deck of the big boat, and generally making nuisances of ourselves. We were running around the deck, getting in everybody’s way, when we suddenly realized that the boat was moving, and we with her! Out into the river we went—and it was long after the excursion train for Brunswick had left that we finally got back to shore. We walked back home—a nine-mile walk wasn’t as much of a hardship than as it would be today—but we didn’t get the train trip for which we had paid our good money.

I recall rather an unusual incident in connection with one launching. The excursion train was ready, with its full load of impatient passengers, when it was discovered that the conductor had not put in an appearance. An emergency call came from headquarters: “Find someone who will run that train to Bath and return. We’ll pay three dollars for the job.” About the only man in Brunswick who wasn’t already on the train as a paying passenger was “Ant” Hall, the hack-driver. So he was drafted, and ran the train—the first and only time in his life that he served as a railroad man.

In the days of my youth, Topsham Fair was one of the important events of the year, looked forward to for months; and everyone went at least one day. While there were several enterprising horse-owners who drove for hire between Brunswick and Topsham during the Fair; almost every one went by train. The railroad operated shuttle service with trains every half-hour or so, a locomotive at each end to avoid turning. The fare, as I recall, was 10 cents; and no tickets were sold, the conductors collecting dimes as they do today on trolley cars and buses.

Perhaps looking back through the year gives a faulty perspective, but it seems to me that Topsham Fair today isn’t what it used to be. It’s more sophisticated; less down to earth. The boys of my day found far more interest at the Fair, I believe, than do modern youths, accustomed to automobiles, the radio, movies and other attractions unknown in the ‘80’s.

Somehow or other, by hook or by crook, all of us boys managed to get to the Fair—all three days if we were lucky, one day anyway. Some of us gained admittance by getting a job passing handbills, or perhaps selling gum-drops for an enterprising Brunswick merchant.

I can still hear that spiel, “goody, goody gum drops, five a bag”—some saved their pennies for months and manfully paid their admission fee; some went on the “family tickets” purchased by the head of the family; and some, regrettably, sneaked in when the doorman wasn’t looking—the equivalent to crawling under the tent at a circus.

Once inside, we dutifully inspected the exhibits in Horticultural Hall; we wanted our money’s worth, even if we weren’t especially interested in the huge pumpkins and the polished apples displayed by proud farmers. Before we left the Hall, though, there was one thing we all did: we bought at least one slab of delicious taffy. First we watched the candy-maker throw a mass of the sticky stuff over a big iron hook, and pull it and work it by hand until it became hard. Then it was cut into pieces about four inches long and two wide—and we cheerfully laid down our cherished nickels for a hunk. I shudder, even now, to think of trying to bite off and chew a piece of that candy—it lasted almost all day if we were careful. I wonder it that stuff is still made and sold at Topsham Fair—and if the boys of today buy it as we did!

Through the Hall and up the hill to the grounds, our first course was direct to the “Midway” although that name didn’t then come into use. The “shows” were better then, it seems to me. Nowadays, one big company sends all the tent attractions around to different fairs; then

each was an independent enterprise, and there was strong competition. Few of us had any spare pennies to spend for such things, but once in a while we did go in to see the “genuine mermaid” made of paper-mache, or the “wild man of Borneo” who growled in a pit, surrounded by grisly bones. We waited sometimes until the attendant drove us out, hoping to see him gnaw one of those bones; but we never did.

Games of chance ran wide open. There was a “wheel of fortune” with a big arrow which, for a dime, could be given a twirl. Wherever it might stop, there was a “prize”; but somehow it never seemed to stop at any of the “big” prizes like watches, pocket-knives or bottles of perfume. The attendant saw to that!

Then of course, there was the “hit the nigger” concession, and every boy on the grounds spent much of his time watching the strong-armed pitchers throw baseballs at the head of the darky boy, sticking through a hole in a canvas curtain. Sometimes they scored a hit, although the victim’s practiced agility usually enabled him to avoid the ball; and when they did, a rank cigar was the reward. Yes sir, there was a lot of interest a small boy at Topsham Fair in those days.

Did I remark that I might ramble?

The automobile, of course, was undreamed of in my boyhood; but we had horses, and a ten-mile drive behind a good horse was something to talk about. Not many Brunswick people owned horses, as they own cars today; only the well-to-do could afford it. But horses could be hired; and the fact that there were several livery stables indicates that they were hired.

There was Henry Bowker’s stable at the top of Maine street, near Cleveland street; and Oren Hubbard’s stable on Maine street near School street. Where once was the scent of sweaty horses, there is not the reek of gasoline and oil; Hubbard’s old stable became a garage. Perhaps there were other livery stables; I recall only these two, and Richardson’s stable, near the old Dr. Lincoln home, which came later.

To us boys, it was an event when a horse—or glory of glories, a pair of horses—was hired for an all-day picnic at Orr’s Island or Harpswell. Today, we say, casually, “Let’s take a run down to Orr’s Island,” and the trip is made in an hour, including a short stop to gaze at the sea. Not so in my boyhood; such a trip was an event, planned far in advance, and anything less than a full day would have been out of the question.

Long before breakfast time, the mother was up and preparing the lunch—and it wasn’t peanut butter sandwiches and a piece of cake, either. We wanted something substantial after the long ride in a carryall, and we got it. Usually there was a cold roast, always there were raised rolls, buttered while hot from the oven; two or three pies; or perhaps “turnovers”; jelly tarts; oh, I don’t know what all. Anyway, there was plenty of it—and did it taste good!

Then to the livery stable for the “teams” and usually one or more of us boys went along, to get all the “buggy ridin” we could. Most of the livery horses—those we got anyway—were plodders which anyone could drive, and we boys usually were granted the privilege of holding the reins for a while; never, though, down the steep, curving hills on Great Island. Climbing the numerous hills, all but the driver usually got out and walked, to relieve the horses, and to stretch our cramped muscles.

Once in a while, nowadays, I go on a “picnic”; but it’s a poor parody of those boyhood adventures.

Of course there were no taxicabs in those days. Anthony Hall (everybody called him “Ant”) met all the trains with his “hack” and his son (was his name Charlie?) drove another. I think the fare was 25 cents a person, anywhere in town.

Topsham passengers, when they were any, were taken in a little one-horse cab owned by one Blondell. Business must have picked up though, because I remember that he appeared on the streets one day with what he called a “herdie.” It was a grand affair, with longitudinal seats, and drawn by a spanking pair. My great ambition was to ride in that magnificent equipage and I saved up my money until I had enough to pay for a trip to Topsham. I walked back—and that brings me to perhaps the most common means of transportation in Brunswick of my boyhood: “Shank’s mare.” We walked everywhere, and even in those days leg muscles were of some practical value.

Try as I may, I can’t recall who had the first bicycle in Brunswick; but I do know it was one of the “high wheel” affairs, with a solid rubber tire about as big as my little finger. “It’s curved backbone” led down to a tiny wheel at the rear, and the saddle was directly over the big wheel. The pedals were attached directly to the hub of the wheel without gears. There were only two or three such contraptions in town in my day. I remember Sam Forsaith owned one of them; built entirely of wood, with iron tires. “Headers” were of frequent occurrence; when the great wheel struck a small pebble, it acted as a trip and the rider just simply kept on going when his bicycle stopped. I know from experience.

A variation of the conventional pattern was the “Star” bicycle and, unless I am mistaken, Ben Furbish owned the only one in town. This had a small wheel in front, and was an effectual preservative of the “headers”.

When the so-called safety bicycle came on the market, we boys were contemptuous. Only fraidy-cats could prefer one of these contraptions to the man-sized big wheel. Then, when women commenced to ride them, our contempt was intensified—“Safeties” were fit only for the gentler sex. Our contempt was shared by the populace in general, but for another reason; the first woman to appear on Brunswick’s streets astride a bicycle was promptly declared to be a shameless hussy. One woman—yes, I remember her name, but we’ll leave it out—had the temerity to don bloomers for her cycling, and she was the talk of the town!

The hauling of heavy loads was, of course, all done by horses. The Cabot Mill, and the Bowdoin Paper Company owned a number of big drays, drawn by powerful horses and they traveled back and forth all day, between the mills and the freight station. Main street (yes it was Main street then) was, of course, unpaved; and the iron-tired wheels of the dray made great ruts in the street. In the spring, the loads necessarily were reduced because of the damp mud.

When trolley lines were first introduced we called them “electrics” then—the possibility of transporting the freight to and from the mills by this means gave impetus to the suggestion that Brunswick could support such a road; and there was much discussion as to the possible location of the track. Main street was, as Maine street is today, an unusually wide thoroughfare. A track in the middle of that wide street would be inconvenient; yet to have it on one side of the other would unduly favor the merchants on that side of the street. However, nothing came of it; and it was many years later that the short-lived Brunswick Railway came into being.

Chapter 2 dealt with Wheeler’s experience in church, school and the local library.

Brunswick Yesterdays

A Boy's View of The Old Town In the Early '80s
Chapter 2: Churches and Schools
April 27, 1944

To the boys of my generation, Sundays were, to say the least, days of restricted activity. In the more strait-laced families, any amusement on the Sabbath was sinful; an afternoon walk, usually to the cemetery, was the maximum in the way of secular occupation. Reading was usually permitted, but the choice of books was more limited than on a weekday.

Some families, like my own, were a bit liberal, and a reasonable amount of normal activity was allowed. In the summer, long Sunday afternoon walks, the whole family participating, were the rule. We'd go across the "Free Bridge," sometimes walking on the railroad ties, and through Sprague's Woods, then down the "fish-way," along through Topsham, past the Red Mill, down to the Fair Grounds and across the railroad bridge, then follow the track to Jordan Avenue and home. That would be a little jaunt of 5 or 6 miles—too much for the inexperienced muscles of modern youth.

In practically all families, strait-laced or liberal, however, there was one definite requirement; every junior member of the family except babes in arms must attend church and Sunday-school. We like Sunday school well enough—if that had been the only requirement—after listening to a long sermon, not a word of which had reached our immature comprehension, to remain another hour when one's whole being cried out for release was a little too much, and we tried all sorts of devices to avoid it.

In my own church one of the boys conceived an idea which was—at first—so successful that it spread like wildfire. Immediately after the morning service, he found it necessary to go to the toilet; and as there were no facilities on the premises he was permitted to go home. Probably the need was genuine in that first instance; but its success was so marked that every boy in the Sunday-school tried it out, until it reached a point when some teachers found themselves without classes. Then the men of the parish got together and built a "privy" back of the church—and our "racket" was ended.

My folks attended the Unitarian church on Federal Street—we called it "Back Street" then. I have a most lively recollection of our pastor—the only minister of the church whom I remember—The Reverend Edward C. Guild. He was a boy's man—on of those rare adults who understand the minds of boys and can talk their language. Indeed, it was said that he was called to our church by the youths of the parish. As a "candidate" he preached one Sunday, then talked to us at Sunday-school. Every last one of us went home and demanded that he be called as pastor. That remand was so insistent that it couldn't be disregarded; and the elders listened and heeded.

Our organist was Stephen J. Young, then treasurer of Bowdoin College, and formerly a professor. He was an outstanding musician; many people came to church because of his playing.

The organ, like all organs at that time, was "pumped" by hand. All of us boys, as we grew big enough, took our turn at the pump-handle. It wasn't especially difficult; except when some unusually "fortissimo" piece was played; then it was a task to keep the bellows full. Besides the pump-handle was an indicator, and it was a matter of pride with us never to let the indicator drop below the "full" mark. There are probably others of my generation, reading this, who will recall their own efforts in this direction; the boys of today know nothing about it because organs are pumped electrically today.

It's been a good many years since I was inside our church building, but I can picture every detail of it. I think I could go in there now—unless things have changed—and walk directly to our family pew. I sat there too many hours, my feet dangling, listening to unintelligible gibberish, every to forget it. Sometimes the droning voice of the minister, plus the intense boredom of nothing to do, caused my eyes to close and my head to nod—then an adult elbow on one side or the other roused me to wakefulness again. I think the wisdom of requiring church attendance by children too immature to understand what it's all about is at least debatable. In my own case, just as soon as I was old enough to determine for myself the question of church attendance, I decided in the negative; and it wasn't until some years later that I became active in religious observance.

In our church we had no Sunday evening services; but as I grew a little older I began to attend prayer meetings at one of the evangelical churches. In view of what I have just said as to my attitude toward church attendance, that sounds a little illogical, but it wasn't religion which attracted me to the evening services—it was girls! Strangely enough, those prayer meetings were attended by a good many youths of both sexes who would do almost anything to avoid going to morning service. We boys sat in the rear seats; and the moment the benediction was pronounced, we were out, lined up along the sidewalk, waiting for the girls to come out. As the right girl appeared, one of us would step out of line, take her by the arm, and “see her home”—the reward for sitting through the service.

One of the regular participants in the Sunday evening prayer meetings was a saintly-appearing white bearded elderly man, with a quavering voice, who invariably offered prayer. If ever there was a saint on earth, I thought it was this patriarch; and listening to him, I began to believe that perhaps there was something more to prayer meeting than a convenient meeting place with the opposite sex.

One day, walking through School Street, I saw an old horse, driverless and hauling a wagon trotting complacently toward home. I stopped him, and as I held his bridle, I saw my patriarchal friend running at a dog-trot along the sidewalk. When he reached me, he belabored me, verbally, for not driving the horse back to meet him; then he grabbed the whip, and with a flow of profanity and obscenity such as I had never before heard, he punished the aged horse for running away. My opinion of my “saint”—and my feeling toward religion—took a sudden and decided drop.

The Public Library was another favorite place for meeting girls—I wonder if it is today? To go to the library for the evening was considered praiseworthy rather than otherwise, and we never had any difficulty in obtaining parental permission. There was only one hitch; the library chimed promptly at 9 o'clock; if we weren't home within a few minutes thereafter, we had explaining to do—and it had to be a convincing explanation, too. Most of the girls realized this, and they were considerate enough to put up their books and magazines by quarter to nine or so, giving us time to “see them home” and still get under the wire for our own home-coming.

The library in those days was quartered in the Town Building, in a large room on the first floor, to the right of the municipal court room. Gentle, courtly Lyman E. Smith was librarian, a friend and counselor to all the boys who frequented the place. One end of the library was the reading room, with long tables on which were piled magazines and newspapers. We boys always made a bee-line for the latter on which were kept “Puck” and “Judge”, the humorous magazines of that day. Frederic Opper was then drawing for “Puck,” and while his political cartoons were somewhat beyond the comprehension of youthful readers, we apparently did understand and

appreciate his masterly touch, which in my opinion has never been approached by later cartoonists.

At the opposite end was the back-room with shelves of books reaching nearly to the ceiling. The librarian's desk was here too. This portion of the library was railed off; but the gate was always open, and we were permitted by the indulgent Mr. Smith to browse at will among the books. Here we found such reading matter as the Oliver Optic books, the entire fictional output of the prolific Elijah Kellogg—the Elm Island series, for instance—and the works of Frank Stockton. I doubt if the Brunswick boys of today have ever heard of any one of these authors; but they were our favorites back in the '80s.

I'm rambling again! Let's get back to the churches.

By a rather peculiar coincidence, at one time the pastor of "the church on the hill" was the Reverend Mr. Fisher; the Methodist minister was the Reverend Mr. Haddock; and the Baptist minister the Reverend Mr. Herring. That may sound like a "fishy" story, but it's true! Add to that the fact that the principal of the Brunswick High School was Charles Fish, and the story is better still!

It seems to me, looking back through the years, that there was much more social life in the churches than there is today. There were no movies; radio was yet unborn; "shows" came to our little town only at long intervals. What entertainment we had we made for ourselves. So when the Baptists put on a "Strawberry festival," everyone of whatever creed or faith patronized it, and paid a quarter for a heaping dish of native strawberries, with all the thick, heavy cream they wanted. Incidentally most of the strawberries came from Metcalf's big strawberry farm down on the bank of the river—and I never tasted more luscious berries. We boys used to pick for him in the season—a penny a box, as I remember it, it was our wage, plus the ride to and from the farm behind his old white horse.

Then, perhaps, there'd be a "sociable" in the parlor of our own church, and again everybody in town would attend. Sometimes there'd be a "sacred concert" or an "old folk concert" in one of the churches; and we'd all faithfully patronize it. Every church had its annual "fair" or course, as most of them do today; but it seems to me they were bigger and more successful affairs. At the end of the fair, there was frequently an auction of unsold goods; and strait-laced as most of us were, there were sometimes raffles, with numbered tickets sold on a patchwork quilt or some other donated article. At most of the fairs there was a supper—almost invariably it was a baked-bean supper—and a quarter bought as many servings as one desired. We boys got our money's worth, anyway!

Elijah Kellogg was preacher in the old church at Harpswell Center, and it was not uncommon for some of the Bowdoin students to go there, on a pleasant Sunday, to hear him. More than once, in company with other boys of my age, I walked the 11 miles, attended the service and then walked back home. When a minister of the gospel can so attract boys of 14 or 15 that they will walk 20 miles, more or less, to hear his sermon, he has something.

Some years later, after Kellogg had retired, I camped out for a few weeks, with several boys, on the farm of Bert Curtis at Harpswell, just a short distance below the Kellogg homestead. The weather was fair, but dead calm, and we waited for several days, more or less patiently, for sufficient breeze to go sailing. One day a heavy rain storm developed, and with came a high wind. We had our sailing breeze and then some, so we got the boat and struck out. A short distance up the bay we saw through the driving rain, another small boat, tacking about and sailing before the wind. When we got nearer, we saw it was Elijah Kellogg, then more than 80 years old, out in his

boat, along, for the sheer pleasure of sailing. He enjoyed life, every minute of it, up to his last breath.

So much for Sundays. Once in a while nowadays, I hear a young boy and girl declare a genuine liking for school. I don't believe I ever knew a boy in Brunswick of my day who would admit as much. We had to go, of course, but it was a necessary evil, to be tolerated but not enjoyed. Perhaps school life is different today.

There were no kindergarten in my youth, and at 5 years old children entered the "first class" in the primary school. I doubt if I'll ever forget my first day, in strange surroundings, under a teacher I didn't know, and in the company of more or less sophisticated pupils who had the advantage of experience which I lacked.

I recall all of my teachers, save one, with very real affection and respect. The exception—she shall be nameless here—I recall principally because of what I do not—to term her cruelty toward the children, hardly more than babies, entrusted to her care.

A teacher must have control of her pupils, of course, and the law recognizes this fact to the extent that it permits punishment for the infraction of rules. This is necessary and right; but it is to be expected that the punishment shall be reasonable and just.

Illustrative of the position of a teacher in this respect, let me jump ahead a number of years to tell this story. I was a member of the school board in a Maine city, and at one of our meetings we considered a complaint from an enraged parent, who stated that a teacher had taken a boy across her knee and spanked him in the portion of the anatomy generally employed for such punishment. The school superintendent was asked by a board member just what authority the teacher had to administer corporal punishment. "She is authorized," he replied, "to administer just punishment as a father or mother might under similar circumstances. The law puts her in loco-parentis."

"In this instance," remarked a member of the board, "it seems to have been 'in loco-panties'."

But not parent would have utilized the methods of my old Brunswick teachers in connecting his offspring. The methods were ingenious, I'll grant, but they were nevertheless cruel and unusual. A whisper, for instance, was given the treatment. A thin piece of wood, sharpened at both ends, was placed between the teeth of the offender, so tightly that the jaws were held open at their fullest extent, and for an hour, sometimes for an entire session, the poor victim was forced to set on the platform, with wide-open mouth. Think of, you parents! What would you say, today, if a teacher treated your six or seven year old bay?

I'm not going into detail as to the other corrective measures. They were all equally ingenious; and some of them would have pleased even a cold-blooded Gestapo officer.

From the primary, in those days, we passed to the so-called "intermediate," which was located on Center Street at the corner of Federal Street—I recall especially two of the teachers there, Miss Hattie Perry, and Miss Harriet Otis. Miss Otis was strict, but just and her pupils loved her.

Then came Grammar school, the "downstairs school" in the old High School building at the corner of Federal and Green Streets. It was town down when another school building was erected on the same lot, but facing Federal Street.

The principal of the Grammar school was Miss Annette Merriman; and that name will bring responsive memories to most Brunswick people. She taught long before I entered the Grammar school; she continued to teach for years after I left it. I recall one "graduation" day, hearing her ask Prof. Robinson, then chairman of the school committee, if she would be

reappointed. The idea of a Grammar school without Annette Merriman was so ridiculous that they both laughed. Many of her pupils grew up, married and sent their own sons and daughters to her school. It is possible that she may have taught the grandchildren of former pupils, although I don't know that that's true.

With her was Miss Octavia Merriman—and am I correct in saying they were not related? The third teacher, at the time I attended, was Miss Lydia Swett.

It was Miss Annette, who inaugurated the “Industrial exhibitions” for the school which for a few years were the features of the educational program. First, in the municipal courtroom, later in the Town Hall auditorium, the handicraft of all grades was exhibited—fine needle-work, cooked food, and the like, by the girls, carpentry, metal work and similar projects by the boys.

It was because of a ruling by Miss Annette that we nearly had today would be called a “strike.” During recess, one day, some boy threw a snow-ball which struck the principal, who was standing on the steps. She issued an ultimatum: there would be no recess thereafter for any boy until he came to see her and promised “not to throw snow-balls again.” But to make that promise was tantamount to an admission of guilt; we told her we were willing to promise not to throw snow-balls, but that we couldn't add the word “again.” She stuck to her guns, and for a week no boy left the room during recess. It got to the ears of some parents, however, and recess was restored, without the required promise.

Every boy entering Grammar school in my day went through a mild form of hazing. Upon his appearance in the school yard, he was grabbed by some of the older boys, and “bumped.” With two or three boys on each side, he was lifted up, his heels high in the air, and swung so that his posterior came into contact with the corner of the brick building. The severity of the treatment depended somewhat upon the standing of the victim; an unpopular boy was likely to need a cushion in his chair for some time. I wonder how many of my contemporaries reading this, recall that experience?

The “upstairs” portion of the building was the High School. There was be big main room, seating the entire student body; two small recitation rooms, and, on the third floor, the laboratory. Because of the limited space, classes had to recite in the main room, which to say the least, was not conducive to close attention on the part of those who were supposed to be studying.

Charles Fish, of beloved memory, was principal; and during my school days, at least, taught Greek, geometry, trigonometry, chemistry and physics. It was in the laboratory that his talents had greatest expression. There he threw off the mantle of authority and became one of us. There we learned to know him as a man as well as a teacher, and to love him. We know him as “Pa” Fish; and that was a term of affection.

It was while I was in High School that I entered upon my first journalistic endeavor. With two other boys, I edited and published *The High School Journal*. It has a short life—less than four months, as I recall it—but it was a pretty good paper, if I do say it. It was printed by Henry Upton; and to this day I recall with gratitude his helpful advice and assistance to the decidedly green publisher.

Chapter 3 dealt with Paradise Spring, the Town Hall, Fire engines and musters, entertainment, the first phonograph, dancing classes, early lighting and telegraphs.

Brunswick Yesterdays
A Boy's View of the old Town in the Early 80's
Chapter 3: A Boy's View of Brunswick
May 18, 1944

The boys of the '80's knew their Brunswick, every square foot of it, from Mair Brook to the Topsham Bridge; from Paradise Spring to Sandy Gully; and they knew it; not from the seat of a speeding automobile, but by walking it. There isn't a street in Brunswick through which I haven't walked; hardly a field or a piece of woods I haven't explored. Let me, then describe as best I can, the Brunswick of my childhood.

Paradise Springs still flows, I believe, but it has been commercialized. In my day it was a wild and unspoiled spot, with the clear, pure water gushing out from the bank. Someone, I don't know who, had nailed a board on which had artistically lettered the quotation from Tennyson's "The Brook":

"For men may come and men may go,
 But I go on forever."

The spring has been "going on" for uncounted years, while many men who have tasted its waters have long since departed for another Paradise.

There was no public water system in Brunswick in those days and everyone had well, and usually a rain-water cistern for other than drinking purposes. Sometimes wells ran dry, or became contaminated; then, with a wagon-load of jugs and bottles, we'd go to Paradise for a supply. Later, someone—was it Charles Gilman?—made a business of delivering Paradise water around town.

But to us boys, Paradise was a place for exploration, for outdoor activity, for picnics. There, on one occasion, we built a hut in the trees, stopping our labors occasionally to take a deep draught of Paradise water. No cups were needed; we'd bury our faces in the rushing stream and drink deeply. Even if the spring has dried up, it will still "go on forever" in my memory.

I don't remember Brunswick's "town hall" prior to the erection of the present Town Building, but I do clearly recall the completion of that edifice. We boys thought it was about the grandest and most imposing building in the world, with its lofty clock tower and its immense auditorium. Surely there could be nowhere else a tower as tall; our estimates of its height varied anywhere from a hundred to a thousand feet.

There was—and is—a bell in that tower; and I'm told that some people consider its ringing a nuisance. It was no nuisance to the boys of my day. It was rung then—perhaps still is—at 7 o'clock in the morning, at noon, and again at 9 in the evening. The janitor (wasn't it Bert Robertson?) had the responsibility of ringing the big bell, and whenever we could, we boys were on hand to see him do it. He'd ring it a few minutes, then pause, with the bell "set", or upside down—we could never quite comprehend how he held it there. I don't know whether or not the bell is still rung—but it isn't, how in the world do people know what time it is?

There was no fire alarm system in Brunswick then, and the town bell was rung for all fires, wherever located, the volunteer firemen would rush to their engine houses, then, ascertaining somehow where the fire was, off they'd go to do their best—or worst. Without a public water system, dependence was entirely on cisterns; and many times the water supply was inadequate for the job.

We had two fire engines in Brunswick, both hand pumpers. The “Kennebec” was housed behind the Town Building, and the “Niagara” on Mason street. Naturally there was considerable rivalry between the crews; and we boys were intense partisans. Some of us swore by Niagara, others by Kennebec; and there were many warm arguments as to the merits of the respective machines.

One of the big events of the year was the annual Fireman’s Muster. It seems as though some of the time it must have been held elsewhere, but looking back, I seem to recall the Muster as a yearly occurrence in Brunswick. Hand tubs from all parts of the State accompanied by red-shirted firemen, were shipped by rail, on flat cars; and the beginning of or big day was watching them unload. None of them, we boys felt sure, could possibly beat Kennebec—or perhaps Niagara—and if they did, we were sure there was “funny business” somewhere.

At the lower end of Main street about opposite Lincoln, the tubs took their places near a convenient cistern. Long rolls of paper, obtained from the Bowdoin Paper Company, were laid out on the surface of the roadway because in measuring the length of the throw, the last drop counted, and it would have been invisible in the dust of the street.

Then, one by one, the tubs were manned and pumped valiantly for the record. With two muscular firemen at the nozzle of the hose, and the Captain glorious in his red shirt exhorting his crew, a dozen firemen grasped the long handles of the pump and bent their backs in frenzied effort to outdo their competitors. With shouts of “Break ‘er down!” they pumped valiantly; and way down the street, the judges stood with their measuring tape to record the throw.

Not all of the firemen dealt with water along; some of them had, or managed to find, more ardent liquids, and fights were not uncommon. We boys were about as much interested in the fights as in the more legitimate contests of the day, and we had our favorites among the scrappers as well as the handpumps.

At noon, some of the church women served dinner. I was about to say “lunch” but that would be a misnomer for such substantial viands as were heaped on the plates of the customers. Muster day meant crowds, crowds meant business; and not only the good women of the churches, but the merchants as well reaped a harvest.

But let’s go back to Town Hall. When the new building was ready for occupancy, one of the first tenants was Uncle Sam, whose post office occupied the southeast corner. There it remained, too, for many years until the present post office was built. The tier of boxes was V-shaped pointing towards the door, and the stamp window was in the apex of the V. Later, to make more room, the boxes were placed crosswise of the office, but this was after my time.

There were no deliveries in those days and everyone went to the post office for his mail. It was my job to go get the mail every morning, and I still remember the number and location of our family lock-box.

Back of the post office, as I recall, was the office of the Selectmen; and behind that, the municipal court. Leonard Townsend was Judge at that time, I think. By some sort of grapevine, we boys always seemed to learn when there was to be a “trial,” and we were invariably there. Almost as invariably, our sympathies were with the poor victim who stood in the dock; it was a shame to lock a man up just because he broke up a religious meeting. “Tain’t fair! The man was drunk and didn’t know no better—he said so himself. The hadn’t orter lock him up for that!”

The store on the north side of the main entrance was occupied jointly, I think, by Ed Will’s Jewelry store, and Thomas Riley’s music store. I worked for Mr. Will one summer. Part of my job was to wind all the clocks everyday—it seemed to me there were hundreds of them.

On the second floor, over the post office, was the dental parlor of Dr. J.W. Curtis, and at the main entrance was a sign reading "J.W. Curtis, D.M.D." One day we discovered that a new sign had been placed below it. "A.W. Haskell, D.D.S." That was a puzzler. We knew that D.M.D. meant Doctor of Dental Medicine; but what was D.D.S? Finally solved the problem—to our own satisfaction, at least—D.D.S. meant "Dental Student".

The Town Hall, intended primarily, of course, for holding town meetings, was also used for the semi-occasional "shows" put on by traveling troupes, and for the even more interesting and profitable amateur theatricals produced from time to time by local talent. The auditorium was lighted by an immense gas-fixture, high in the center, with open flame jets. There was, it seems to me now, a pilot light which was always burning; and the chandelier was turned on and off by a valve near the door. The foot-lights too, were open-flame gas burners, shielded by tin reflectors; and these were controlled by a valve back-stage.

The use of Town Hall for theatrical and other purposes was in charge of Emery Crawford; and because one of the prerequisites of his office was a supply of complimentary tickets, we boys cultivated him assiduously just before some attraction was to visit town. We were very glad, at those times, to help him on his express wagon route, or to run errands for him. Our object couldn't have been unknown to him; but he was good-natured and usually "came across".

Most of the professional engagements were, of course, one night stands, but occasionally a stock company played a week's engagement; then we boys made it a point to get acquainted with some members of the company. We'd slip back stage after a matinee, and mingle with the actors. Sometimes it worked, too; and we'd be permitted to pass in without tickets, or, in a few instances, to have the super-privilege of watching a performance from behind the scenes.

There were a number of amateur theatrical organizations in town. I remember only one, because I was a member of it—the Brunswick Dramatic Association. Jim Crawford was our great luminary; he played Uncle Josh, Uncle Si, and other rural characters, and he did a good job, too. As I recall it, practically all of our productions were of the Uncle Josh type—probably to give Jim a chance to do characters he portrayed best. Inasmuch as we were all school boys and girls, our theatrical ventures must have been pretty crude, but they seemed to us then to be equal to the work of finished professionals. A boy of 16, dressed as a villainous French count, with the inevitable false moustache; a callow youth making ardent and passionate love to a maiden of equally tender age—all this must have been extremely funny to our adult audiences, but it was serious business to us.

The famous Brunswick Minstrels came at a later period and while the story of this aggregation is worth telling, it must be told by someone who knows it better than I.

Before the erection of the Town Building, such theatrical performances as there might be were held in Lamont Hall, now the quarters of the Knights of Pythias. It was there I saw my first "show." I couldn't have been more than five or six years old, but I recall the experience vividly. The production was called "The Jollities," and as I look back upon it now, it must have been pretty "corny." There was such "humor" as this: Two soldiers were being drilled by a burlesque sergeant. "Fall in!" he cried—and they did fall in, to an open trunk behind them. I thought it was screamingly funny.

It was in Lamont Hall that the first phonograph ever seen or heard in Brunswick was exhibited. It must have been very shortly after the invention of this device, because the record was made on tinfoil, as it was in Edison's first experiment. The machine itself was a wooden box, with a tin megaphone attached to the top, and a crank at one end. The exhibitor spoke a few

words into the horn while turning the crank; then reproduced the sound. Charles Fish, principal of the High School, was called to the platform to inspect the gadget, and to operate it. He said "Hello" into the horn, then turned the crank and we heard a reedy parody of his voice repeat "Hello!" The tin-foil was removed and passed around for inspection; later it was given to "Pa" Fish, who kept it in the laboratory of the school as a curio.

Some time later, after the phonograph had been more or less perfected, an electrically operated model was exhibited for a week in a vacant store next to the Tontine Hotel. This machine used the old-time wax cylinder records; similar to those physicians use on their stethoscopes, for patrons to listen to the selections at a nickel a throw. I did business too; there were very few citizens who did not, at one time or another, drop in to hear a band record or a humorous monologue. Each record started with an announcement of the subject followed by the name of the maker: "The Columbia Phonograph Company, of New York and London."

We boys had at that time an amateur orchestra—I'll tell you more about it later—and we made half a dozen musical records for the exhibitor. As Manager of the orchestra it was my proud prerogative to record the usual announcements. In return, any of us were privileged to listen in at any time, without charge, and we certainly availed ourselves of that opportunity.

I'm very sure that the first business use of the phonograph was by H.C. Baxter & Brother, who had two machines, with wax cylinders, for dictation purposes. This was long before dictation machines came into general use.

Lamont Hall was also the locale of dancing classes conducted by Prof. Gilbert of Portland. His piano was one Ryser, who mystified us all by his ability to read a novel from cover to cover while playing for our dances, stopping and starting at the professor's command, and not missing a note, nor a word of his novel. Almost every boy and girl in town whose parents could afford the modest fee attended the classes; and the culmination of the season was the Grand Ball which closed the course.

Jazz, rag-time, swing—a rose by any other name would smell as sweet, and that type of music by any other name would sound as bad—these were unknown then. We learned to waltz, to polka, to schottische; we were taught the Portland Fancy and the Lancers. Lessons in deportment went hand-in-hand with lessons in Terpsichore; we must bow from the waist in asking a young lady for the privilege of being her dance partner; or conversation while dancing must be in approved phraseology.

I recall one incident of the particular Grand Ball which closed my own course of education in dancing; a course which by the way, could have profited one little, as I haven't danced since. The young lady whom I had politely asked to dance a waltz with me, and who, in approved fashion, had graciously accepted, was wearing a silk waist, which apparently she feared my be spoiled by contact with my hand. We boys were dressed in our best jackets and knickers, but we hadn't quite acquired the refinement of wearing gloves. So, as we stepped out on the floor, my partner said, "Please use your handkerchief," I wasn't aware that my nose needed attention; but I took her request literally, pulled out my handkerchief and blew a resounding blast!

One girl was the undisputed belle of the class; and much sought after. I recall her very clearly; but even at this late day, there might be some jealousy should I mention her name! She was "keeping company" with one of the boys of our group, however, and none of the rest of us had a look-in. The day of the Grand Ball, I learned that her escort was ill in bed. I immediately went to see him; and after a more or less perfunctory expression of sympathy, I came to the real reason for my call: might I take his girl to the Ball? He consented, and in high spirits I went to

the girl's house to confirm the arrangement. But—another boy who had also learned of George's illness took a more direct if less proper course; he went straight to the girl herself and clinched the matter while I was visiting the sick!

Another popular girl lived in Topsham. On the night of the Ball her escort was a boy whose home was near the College. "After the Ball was over" he "saw her home," of course; then as she said good-night, he burst into tears. "Why, what in the world is the matter?" asked the puzzled damsel. "I'm afraid to go home alone," sobbed her gallant escort. So they turned about, she walked back with him, past Lamont Hall, now closed and dark, and left him at his home; then she retraced the mile and a half, alone; to her own residence. The story was too good to keep, of course, she told it to a few of her feminine cronies, under the sacred promise of secrecy, so naturally the boys got hold of it; too. Life wasn't worth living for the poor victim, for a while.

There may have been some excuse for him, though; Brunswick streets were pretty dark at night in those times. There were open flame gas-lights at infrequent intervals, but the provided feeble illumination. Every night, about dusk, the lamp-lighter made his rounds, carrying a short ladder to reach the burners, and a pocketful of matches. Then in the morning each burner had to be turned off. Some people—the more well-to-do—had gas-lights in their homes; most families depended on kerosene lamps. I wish I had an extra dollar in my pocket right now for every lamp I've trimmed and filled!

In many homes there were containers filled with "spills"—twisted paper lighters, used for lighting the kerosene lamps. Pieces of newspaper or other waste material were twisted into long rolls, about as large as a lead pencil; and one of our occupations, on rainy afternoons, was making up a supply of these spills. When it came to light the lamps, a spill was thrust into the open fire, or lighted from the cook-stove (it wasn't a "range" then), and several lamps were lighted from one spill. That saved matches, and we considered that a saving worth while.

The matches we had were the old style "Star" matches, which cam in "cards" about 3 inches wide. The matches were split only part ways down, and when one was used, it was broken from the card. That was another job we boys had to do—break up the cards of matches and fill numerous match-boxes.

When electric lights were first installed in Brunswick, the town made a contract for lighting the streets, which provided that the lights were to be turned off on moonlight nights. The question of what were moonlight nights was determined by the almanac; it might be raining pitchforks, or there might be a raging blizzard; but if the almanac said there was a moon, we had no street lights.

The first electric street lights were arc lamps, placed on extremely high poles, with a metal hood over them, which looked like a huge inverted bread pan. Apparently it was thought that the higher the source of light, the wider the expanse of illumination. Arc lamps required daily renewal of the carbon points; and every day a man climbed those tall poles, took out the exhausted carbons, and put in fresh ones.

Some stores, and a few residences, were wired for the new lighting system. In every case, the lamp was just a naked bulb, hanging from the ceiling by a cord. The loss of the street lighting contract, and the gradual displacement of gas-lighting in stores and homes, spelled the doom of the gas company, which eventually closed its doors.

I'm quite sure that the first telephone of any kind in Brunswick ran between the home of Henry Wheeler on Everett street and this office at the "depot." This was a drum-head phone, of his own construction, although I doubt if it was his invention. At each end of the line was a circular wooden frame, with a sheepskin tightly stretched within it. A fine copper wire was

strung between to two points, pulled tight, and attached to a wooden ball in the center of the sheepskin. The voice, vibrating the “drumhead” was carried over the taut wire and reproduced by the sheepskin on the opposite end. It was practical, for short distances at least.

The first Bell telephones in Brunswick were, of course, of the wall type, operated by a crank and a magneto. “Central” was in Al Townsend’s stationery store on lower Maine street; but the installations were so few that it gave him no trouble at all to handle the switchboard and still serve his store customers. If he was busy the telephone patron had to wait; but nobody protested. A few business houses had phones; but it was sometime before residence service was all that extensive.

In Al Townsend’s store, too, was the office of the Commercial Union Telegraph Company, later the Postal. He was a telegrapher, and served both as manager and operator. The Western Union office was in the railroad dept.

Herbert Nevens, son of the Maine Central roadmaster, and I learned to telegraph; and we constructed a telegraph line between our respective homes. Less than a mile long, and with only two offices, our “company” had the imposing name of “National Union Telegraph Company.” This was before telephone came into general use, and we had visions of extending our live to Topsham, opening an office there and doing a tremendous commercial business between the two towns. Like most boyish visions, however, it never went beyond the blue-print stage.

Chapter four came in two parts: the first dealt with circuses, play circuses, college boat races, tin shop visits and barber shops. The second dealt with the telegraph, stores, politics and restaurants.

Brunswick Yesterdays
A Boy’s View of the old Town in the Early 80’s
Chapter 4: Hotels, Beaches—and Other Things
May 04, 1944

Brunswick was too small a town to attract the big circuses, but almost every year some little one-ring show would perform there for an afternoon and evening. Generally the “lot” was a field on Jordan Avenue, although I recall on circus which showed on Pleasant Street about opposite River Road. Today a small show such as these would travel over the road, with motorized equipment, but in my day they necessarily moved by rail. Circus day was a full day for us youngsters. Invariably we would be on hand when the circus train pulled in to watch the fascinating process of unloading. Then to the “lot” where we’d hang around until time for the “grand parade” to start. During this interval, those of us who were lucky got a chance to water the elephants and the horses, with an admission ticket as our reward. Probably a few of us were taken to the show by our dads, who paid the required admission fee; but it seems to me that the majority either worked and worked hard to earn free tickets or else sneaked in by crawling under the canvas.

And the “side-shows”! Wild men of Borneo, snake charmers, tattooed women, fat women, living skeletons—the promises emblazoned on huge banners outside the tent were, to our minds, fully warranted by the attractions to be found inside.

The folding of the tents and the departure of the show did not however, end the matter. The following day, whenever half a dozen boys together, there was but one cry: "Let's have a circus!" In my own group, Fred Hubbard was the acknowledged leader in arranging for a circus. In the first place, he was somewhat renowned among the boys as a "tumbler" and an expert on the trapeze and horizontal bar; and in the second place, he was a born "manager". I recall one such circus, held in the yard of John and Le Grand Thompson, just beyond the Red Mill in Topsham. There isn't any Red Mill today, of course; and where our circus took place is now a filling station.

We had a "grand parade" through the principal streets of Brunswick. Dave Scribner had a Shetland pony, and Fred Hubbard, as "manager" rode in the pony cart at the head of the procession wearing a borrowed—or abstracted---tall beaver hat and a burnt cork mustache. I can't remember who our clown was; but his antics fascinated the small youths who followed our parade.

My part in the "show" was as a tight-rope walker. I had never attempted to walk a rope in my short life; but it looked easy, and I was sure I could do it. The rope was stretched from a corner of the house to a fence-post—perhaps 4 feet above the ground—and I secured a bean-pole from a nearby garden to use as a balancing pole. The boys thought I ought to rehearse; but I was so confident of my ability that I scorned the idea.

Of course I had to dress my part; so I went to the college gymnasium, and persuaded some trusting student to loan me his tights. They were long, black suits, not unlike a full-length union suit, and were worn with gaily spangled trunks about the midriff. As I was a callow, skinny youth of 14, weighing something less than a hundred pounds, and the owner of the tights was a grown man who would tip the scales at perhaps 150, the picture I made can better be imagined than described.

Let's draw a curtain over the rest of it. I got up on the tight-rope, yes—but I didn't' stay there; nor were repeated attempts any more successful. Right then and there I gave up my ambition to run away and join the circus!

Whether it was the influence of our "circus" I don't know, but about that time we organized the "Boys' Athletic Club." Dr. Whittier of Bowdoin College was much interested in our Club; he devoted considerable time to drilling and instructing us. We scraped up enough money to hire a room on the third floor of the Storer Bock for our "gymnasium", and for a time the Club flourished.

We made our first and only public appearance in connection with a fair held in the old theatre in Bath. With "tumbling" acts, wand, dumb-bell and club drills, horizontal bar stunts, and the like, we really put on a fairly creditable performance for boys of 15 or 16. And—as I well remember—we were paid the princely sum of four dollars for our services!

Like the occasional circus, the Firemen's Musters also inspired our imitation. Immediately following each Muster Day, all over town, home-made fire engines consisting of wooden boxes on a sort of wheels obtainable, participated in imaginary pumping contests. One boy, with considerable ingenuity, constructed a practical pumper. Dipping into his savings bank (probably unknown to his parents) he took enough pennies to pay for having a tin pipe made at Furbish's tin shop, with a hose coupling on each end. This, of course, was after town water had been piped, and at his home there was a sill-cock and a length or two of garden hose. With a piece of hose from the sill-cock to one end of the tin pipe running through his "engine", and another piece, with nozzle, attached to the other end, his crew could "pump" the engine and see an actual stream of water apparently forced through the pumps.

The college boat-race day was another inspiration to the boys of my time. This was a big event; the long, narrow sculls, with a coxswain in the stern to steer and to exhort his crew, and hardy oarsmen rowing in perfect time, made a picture never to be forgotten. The boat-house was at the Brunswick end of the railroad bridge, near the Landing; and the course was from that point around Cow Island and back, with the bridge as the finish line. Special trains were run for this event; and the river banks on both sides were lined with festive spectators. Following the main events, there were usually tub races and swimming matches—a full day's program.

So-immediately following Boat Race Day we boys must have our own contest. Oscar Ripley owned a row-boat—a good one, too—and he was good-natured enough to let us use it occasionally. Somewhere or other we obtained the use of other boats; and made up our “crews.” Starting from the Landing, we'd row like mad for a short distance, but our immature muscles were hardly equal to the pull down to Cow Island at any such furious speed; and anyway, one or more of the boats generally wound up hard and fast on a sand-bar, and we never did finish a race.

John Furbish ran a hardware store—the only one in town then, I think—in the same location it is today; and in the rear was a tin shop, where the pipe of our champion fire-engine was made. When a housewife needed a tin dipper or a wash-basin, she didn't buy it at the 5 and 10—there were no chain stores then—she went to Furbish's and had it made. We boys used to hang around the tin-shop; it was fascinating to see the evolution of a sheet of tin into a dipper or a bread-pan, in the hands of an expert.

The tin-shop had a competitor, however—the tin-peddler who made his rounds two of three times a year. Drawn by a single horse, his gaily-painted cart was hung with tin dippers, pans, basins, and pie-plates, which jingled merrily as the equipage bounced over the rutty streets. The house-wife could hear it coming a long way off; if she needed any of its wares, she was at the door when it approached. The transaction was seldom for cash; usually the tin-ware was traded for old rags, with, perhaps, part payment in money. It was usually a leisurely transaction, with considerable bargaining, and included a discussion of the latest news. The tin-peddler was a veritable mine of information and gossip picked up in his travels, and he imparted it as part of his trade.

The hardware store itself was fascinating, too. Bearded John Furbish never seemed to find us boys a nuisance; we would wander at will through the store, as long as we didn't disturb customers.

A bearded man was no novelty in those days—the novelty would have been a clean-shaven masculine face. There was Benjamin Greene, agent for the Cabot Mill; Weston Thompson, the lawyer; A.G. Tenney, editor of the Brunswick Telegraph; Alonzo Day, the shoe leader; George Nevin, roadmaster; Maynard, the ice cream and cigar dealer, they and countless others sported luxuriant beards. One man—a tailor, I think, although I cannot recall his name, had a beard which reached to his waist, and he kept it buttoned inside his coat most of the time. Even those who did not wear full beards and “sideburns” or perhaps a “goatee” had almost inevitably a “handle-bar” mustache. Even college students frequently wore beards—a youth of 20 who couldn't raise at least a moustache was something of a sissy.

Moustache cups were used by most males in those days—cup with a bar across to keep the hirsute adornment out of the morning coffee. Today these cups are museum pieces.

At the barber shops was another kind of cup—individual shaving mugs for regular customers, with the patrons name lettered on his cup in gold leaf. A popular barber shop had dozens of such cups, each with its cake of soap and private shaving brush.

Brunswick Yesterdays
A Boy's View of the old Town in the Early 80's
Chapter 4 (continued): Hotel, Beaches—and Other Things
May 11, 1944

A.G.Tenney was editor, publisher and the only reporter of the now long-defunct Brunswick Telegraph, which for years was issued from the second floor of the brick building on the corner of Main and Center Streets. It was, of course, long before the days of the linotype and monotype, and the entire 4-page sheet was set by hand. I think I am correct in saying that the news columns were set by a woman compositor; but the ads, and all the job-printing work, as well as the press-work, were done by the foreman. Was his name Stinchfield? It seems to me it was. I can see him now, operating the primitive Washington press, printing two pages of the Telegraph at a time.

The type was made up in cases on the flat bed of the press, inked by hand with a huge roller, then a sheet of paper was carefully laid on top and, by operation of a hand-crank, type and paper were rolled under the big lever-operated press. A strong pull on the level made the impression; then the type was rolled out, the printed sheet removed, the type re-inked and the process repeated. A Washington press is a museum curiosity today; but in the early '80s it provided us with our weekly newspaper.

At one time, the Telegraph had a competitor—the Brunswick Herald. This was published over a store near Everett Street, and the proprietor was editor, reporter, business manager and printer's devil, all rolled into one. He had somewhat better equipment than the Telegraph, though; his type was, for the most part, new; and he had what was then a modern press. It has an immense fly-wheel, with a big wooden crank-handle, and was operated by manpower. The Herald was a more up-to-date in another respect: it employed newsboys to sell the paper. I tried that job for a while, but Brunswick people were loyal to Tenney and his Telegraph, and competition was short-lived.

The Telegraph depended considerably on its job printing department, of course, and for some years it was the only printing establishment in town. Then Gilbert Wheeler opened an office in the Town Building, later selling to Henry Upton of Bath, and much of the Telegraph's printing patronage was diverted to the new establishment.

Some merchants did their advertising by means of "dodgers" or "hand-bills"; and several had their own small printing outfits for this purpose. Ed Will, in his jewelry store had such equipment; and Jackson's shoe store had a complete outfit, with a foot-powered press.

There was comparatively little advertising, though, by most merchants. Apparently they held the theory that everyone knew where they were and what they sold. Maynard's ice cream parlor was one of the places which needed no advertising. It was the only establishment in town where ice cream could be purchased, and everyone knew it. Maynard's store was under the old Universalist Church on the corner of Main and Mason Streets. There were three or four booths, with roller curtains which could be pulled down to the floor, providing complete privacy to the couples enjoying their serving of ice cream.

It was a rare thing for Maynard to serve more than two flavors—vanilla and chocolate. I recall once asking him what kind he had. "Vanilla and chocolate," he replied, "but the chocolate's gone." I took vanilla.

His product was home-made, of course; mass production of ice cream was unknown then. We boys used to pick up a nickel or two by turning the crank of his big freezer. I've never tasted anything better than Maynard's vanilla ice cream when, after turning the crank for hours, we were permitted to scrape off the dasher.

He sold cigars, too. I was too young to smoke, but I used to look over his cigar case, and I was much impressed by one box which bore the label "Maynard's Best." Maynard's Best sold for five cents, six for a quarter; and it seemed to me that he must do a whale of a cigar business to have a brand of his own.

Few people smoked cigarettes in those days; they were considered somewhat "sissy" and suitable only for boys learning to smoke. Pipes were generally used; although the more well-to-do men indulged in an occasional cigar. Pipe tobacco was almost invariably bought in plug form, whittled as needed, and rubbed in the palm of the hand before loading. The numerous "mixtures" of today were practically unknown then. "B.L." was a favorite brand. I recall that during the presidential campaign when Maine's James G. Blaine and General John A. Logan were candidates, some local wag remarked that "B.L. made a good tobacco, but a darned poor campaign team."

We boys were intense partisans politically, loyal to the party favored by our dads, of course having not the slightest comprehension of the principles involved. If the head of the family was a Republican—as he usually was in Brunswick—we had no use whatsoever for a Democrat; the sons of Democrats scorned a Republican.

Brunswick took its politics seriously. During a presidential campaign, there was always two immense flags hanging over Main Street, one bearing the names of the Democratic candidates, and the other the Republican aspirants. The "flag-raising" were impressive ceremonies; and we never missed witnessing one, even if it was for the despised opposite party.

Rolled tightly on its supporting rope, stretched across the street, the flag was released by the pull of a cord, and dropped gracefully to display the party designation. Sometimes an enterprising merchant printed some advertising handbills which were rolled up in the flag, and floated down on the throng of spectators as the flag was unfurled. Preceding the "raising," of course, were the inevitable campaign speeches; and oratory was the order of the day.

Torch-light parades were a part of every presidential campaign; and really, it was an imposing sight to see a hundred men or more, parading down Main Street, each with a smoking, smelly kerosene torch held high on a pole. Some of the marchers carried "transparencies"; boxes mounted on a pole, with sides of thin cloth on which were lettered campaign slogans lighted by a kerosene lamp or candles inside the box. We boys frequently marched in those parades. We could seldom obtain torches, but we made our own transparencies, and proudly displayed them at the tag end of the parade. On the night of a parade, it was easy to tell which homes sheltered Republicans and which were the homes of Democrats; the windows of the party being honored were ablaze with lighted candles; those of the opposition were dark.

The Brunswick hotels never advertised either; they were there if anyone wanted their services, they could find them. I know of only three hotels of my day, and those not all at the same time. The Tontine was the principal one. It stood at the corner of Main and School Streets occupying the entire area between School Street and Hubbard's stable.

We boys, none of whom have ever slept or eaten a meal in a hotel, thought the Tontine the acme of grandeur; but the seasoned traveler of today would turn up his nose at its glories. The rooms were heated by woodstoves, and lighted by open-flame gas jets. No fires were built in the stoves until the guest took possession, and in winter weather he was likely to go to bed

shivering. There were no bath-rooms, and toilet facilities, in each room, consisted of a “commode” with its wash-bowl and pitcher of cold water, and a utensil kept in the lower part of the commode for use when necessary.

I never ate a meal in the Tontine, but I do know that its dining room had a reputation among the “drummers” of that day for excellent and abundant food. It was expensive though—a full dinner cost a quarter of a dollar. Most of the traveling men who were unable to get home for the weekend planned their trips so they might spend Sunday in the Tontine where, throughout the long day, they foregathered around the huge stove in the “office” and swapped the yarns for which drummers were famous.

The Brunswick House, near the depot, was much smaller and catered to a different class of customers; while the Elm House was, as I recall it, more of a residential than a commercial house.

Few people ate in restaurants in those days, save the occasional visitor. Nobody ever thought of getting “lunch” downtown; they all went home to “dinner” at 12 o’clock sharp. Consequently, aside from the depot restaurant, which served principally the travelers by rail, I recall no public eating places in the Brunswick of my day. Certainly there were no “lunch-rooms,” cafeterias, or anything of that sort.

There were bake-shops, but few housewives patronized them except in emergency. Baker’s bread was seldom placed on the table in the average home; cakes, cookies and pies were all home-made rather than purchased from the bakery. But a great many women did have their Saturday night beans baked, in the great brick ovens—of the bakeries. They prepared them at home; according to their own recipe, then took them to the bakery for the long, slow baking possible only in the old-time brick oven. No baked beans taken from a can, and few beans baked in a modern electric or gas oven, can equal those of my boyhood—especially when eaten with the appetite engendered by a long Saturday out of doors.

Chapter 5 dealt with his observations about industries, shops, a railroad caper, concerts, girls and camping in his childhood of the 1880s.

Brunswick Yesterdays
A boy’s eye view of the old town in the early ‘80s
Chapter 5: A Boy’s Life in Brunswick
May 25, 1944

The largest industry in the Brunswick of my childhood was the Cabot Mill. Strangely enough, I have never set foot inside the doors of that great factory—I say strangely, because I don’t know of any other public or semi-public building in town which my cronies and I didn’t visit at some time or another. Naturally curious and of an investigating turn of mind, as are all boys, we poked our noses in wherever we were permitted. Possible, at some time in the dim past, some boy who attempted to explore the Cabot Mill was shoed out; and somehow we learned that it was traditionally forbidden territory—I don’t know.

The Bowdoin Paper Company’s mill, at the Topsham end of the bridge, however, was familiar ground to us. The employees there must have been forbearing, and with an understanding of boy nature, for they allowed us to wander the mill as we pleased. Sometimes one of the big rolls of newsprint coming from the machines went askew and the attendant tore off a yard or so; if we were standing near, the waste piece was offered to us. We always took it,

whether or not we had a use for it; and if at any time we wanted a supply of paper, it was ours for the asking. Watching the great mixing troughs; with the swirling mass of pulp; observing the wet, soggy substance going in at one end of a great machine and coming out the other end as virgin white paper—this was fascination, indeed.

We frequently visited the “box shop”, too. This was the plant of the Dennison Manufacturing Company, and if I am correctly informed, the beginning of the immense business now located in Framingham, Massachusetts. It was located upstairs in the building where the Brunswick Record is now housed; in fact, the Record’s quarters were in the main office of the Company. Once in a while we’d wander upstairs to the factory, and gather up from the floor the half-moon-shaped pieces of cardboard cut from the boxes to form finger grips. What did we do with them? Well, everything that comes into a boy’s hands can be made of some use; we stuck the little semi-circular disks under the thumb-nail of the left hand, and snapping them with the forefinger of the right, sent them sailing at a target. Some of us became quite expert at it, too.

Then was the Bryant’s soap factory, on the Bath Road not far from Cook’s Corner. Wandering aimlessly through the woods, we’d come out near enough to smell the place—and we didn’t have to be very near, at that—so we’d drop in to watch the process of making “Delight” soap.

The D. & C.E. Scribner grist mill was at the foot of Mill Hill, on the left going towards Topsham, and at the very end of the bridge. Possibly because Dave Scribner was one of our bunch, and his father ran the mill, we spent considerable time there, watching the grain pouring over revolving mill-stones and being ground into flour or corn-meal. Opposite Scribner’s was the pulp mill of the Androscoggin Pulp Company and beyond that on the bank of the river was a wood-working mill. Some how it seems to me men must have been more tolerant in those days than they are now, because we were allowed to watch machines at work, and pick up and carry off pieces of waste wood which took our fancy.

There were freshets in the river today, just as there were 60 odd years ago, but I wonder if people pay as much attention to them as they did in my day. Then, with the water above “freshet rock”, and a torrent pouring over the dams, the bridge would be lined with people from the Brunswick end to the Topsham shore, watching the spectacle. When the river was low, however, there were times when no water was passing over the dams; then we could, and did, walk dry shod to the little island between the dams.

Another favorite haunt of the boys of my time were the blacksmith shops. I recall particularly John Auben’s shop on Pleasant Street, although there were others—one on Main Street between Elm and Everett and one just beyond the Bowdoin Paper Mill in Topsham, for instance. There was a distinct fascination in watching the brawny smith shoe a heavy draft horse, or perhaps a trotter; still more interesting was it to see him shoe an ox. Sometimes the smith would allow one of us boys to pump the bellows; and as the fire grew hot, he’d place a horse-shoe in it with a pair of long-handled tongs, then take out the white-hot iron and hammer it into shape on the anvil. Frequently we’d pick up horse-shoe nails—from then we’d make finger-rings. A horse-shoe nail ring was reputed to be “lucky.”

The blacksmiths made iron tires for carriages and cart wheels, too. They had a round granite slab, a little larger than a wheel, usually set in the ground outside the smithy. On this they’d build a wood fire; and then lay the iron hoop on the fire. As the tire heated, of course the iron expanded, and it was then placed on the wheel. When it cooled, it contracted to a tight fit.

Through all of this, the boys of my day, unwittingly perhaps, acquired a somewhat liberal education outside of “book larnin’”. We know how paper was made—we could have described

the process intelligently, had we been asked. We know how lumber was sawed and planed; how corn was ground into meal; how fats and grease became the soap with which we washed our hands—when such wholly unnecessary cleanliness was enforced by our maternal parents. We know how paper boxes were made, although of course we couldn't have done it ourselves. From visits to the electric light station, we learned how the current which illuminated our streets was generated. We didn't know we were learning, of course; we were just "having fun", but the education was there, nevertheless. I wonder if the boys of today acquire practical knowledge in the same way—or are they debarred from the experience by more hard-boiled industrialists.

One of our exploratory expeditions had rather an unfortunate sequel—for us, at least. Maybe it has no logical place right here, but I intended to tell the story, anyway, and it may as well be here.

One Sunday afternoon, dressed as I had come from church, I went out for a walk; and I came upon Herb Nevins, also trying to kill a boresome afternoon by walking. We talked for a while, then he said, "My old man is taking a nap. Let's get his keys and go up to the shop." The "shop" was the Maine Central carpenter shop, in the angle between the "main line" and the Lewiston branch track, and it was completely enclosed by a high board fence.

Herb got the keys, while I waited outside; then we climbed the board fence, and unlocked the carpenter shop. Ranging around inside, we found, much to our delight, a three-wheeled "velocipede" car, apparently sent in for repairs. It was a heavy machine, with two steel wheels under the long seat, and a smaller wheel at the end of a detachable long wooden arm.

Tugging and lifting, we managed to get it out of the shop and up to the tall fence. Then by boosting and pulling, we hoisted it over the fence and lowered it down on the other side. But between the fence and the main line track were three side-tracks, filled with box cars. Under the cars and across the tracks we pulled and pushed the heavy, awkward load; and finally we reached the main line and the "open road" to adventure. There we put the parts together, set the car on the rails and got aboard for a trip. But—at that crucial moment, George Nevens stepped out from behind a box car and said, quietly, "Now boys, you can put it back again."

Crestfallen and abashed, we dismantled the car, and repeated our strenuous efforts under the watchful eye of Herb's dad; but this time it was merely hard work, without the incentive of adventure. We reached the fence; it seemed impossible that we had ever boosted that heavy load over so high a barrier, or that we could repeat the performance. But we did, and without help from the quiet man who stood calmly by and watched our struggles. Then Mr. Nevins held out his hand. "The keys," was all he said. There was no scolding or criticism offered; he knew that we had been adequately punished.

My Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes, my white shirt which I had so proudly donned that morning, and above all, my face and hands, were black with grease. I went home in fear and trembling; but when I told my story, I was merely sent upstairs to bathe and change my clothes. As I went slowly up the stairs, I heard a road of laughter behind me; my folks evidently thought it was funny. I didn't!

One of two of the boys in my group played musical instruments—indifferently. I know now, but nevertheless passably. With the usual passion for organization which boys seem to possess, it was decided to form a boy's orchestra. Jim Hubbard was an accomplished musician, and he consented to direct and instruct us, although he was just enough older to be somewhat patronizing about it. Jim, incidentally, joined a circus band, and traveled with the show for many years.

I had made more or less half-hearted attempts to learn to play the clarinet, under the tutelage of Sinclair Thompson, but I was impatient with the slow process of practicing scales and soon gave it up. So, as I was instrumental in organizing the musical aggregation—I was made manager. We gave just one concert, but that was in Town Hall, and we played to a capacity audience. As to what the audience got for their money, perhaps the less said the better; but they were patient and considerate.

There was plenty of music in Brunswick without our help, however. One of the memories which linger in my mind—probably in the minds of all Brunswick boys of that period—is the summer evening band concerts on the Mall. Everybody and his wife were there; some strolling up and down Main Street, some sitting on the park benches or on the grass beside the band-stand. Boys and girls raced madly along the park paths in the summer air. Sweethearts paraded the darker side of the streets. And over all, the “ompah” of the brass horn; the clear note of the clarinet; the strident blast of the cornet and the trombone; the boom of the big bass drum. We didn’t need radio or the movies; we needed no big name orchestras—we had our own beloved band and that was entertainment enough.

There were concerts indoors from time to time, of course, most of them in Town Hall. Some were amateur productions, with local talent, and I’m sure the Bowdoin students frequently put on a concert. I know they had a Glee Club then.

At many of the local productions, the star was little Willie R. Lincoln, whose performance on the cornet was, I believe, outstanding. There is no question he might have developed into a really great soloist; but except as a child artist, I think he never made any public appearances.

Another “star” in the firmament of local talent was Henry Allen, the druggist who possessed an excellent baritone voice. I recall especially one of his appearances, when, in black-face, he sang “Let My People Go.”

As we grew to an age approaching that of the college students, there was more or less feeling between the town-boys and the collegians. One Sunday evening, after prayer meeting, a student stepped out of the waiting “stag line” and captured one of the belles of our set, “cutting out” a town boy who had been paying her considerable attention. We boys got together and determined to “defend our honor.” The next Sunday night, instead of attending the prayer meeting, we waited outside. When our victim appeared, we mobbed him, escorted him, by force, back to the college, and warned him never again to interfere in our affairs with the Brunswick young ladies.

But the matter had repercussions we didn’t anticipate. The girls got together and declared a boycott against every boy who had participated in the affair. They issued an ultimatum: Not a girl was to dance with, or even speak to one of us until he had first apologized to the aggrieved student, and then to the girl he had escorted home. Well, we stuck it out for a while; but it was during the annual series of dancing assemblies, and without a single girl who would dance with us, we were losing out, so we capitulated. Our college boy was magnanimous, he declined to permit us to humble ourselves by apologizing—and he became one of our most valued friends.

I said in one of my opening paragraphs that there would be no chronological sequence to these reminiscences and so I’m going back to an earlier period for a moment, and tell you of my first camping experience.

Three other boys and I, all of us around 12 or 13 years old, gained parental consent to “camp out” for a week on the shores of the New Meadows River. Carl Day had a big wall tent, which he was good enough to let us take; and we got together enough equipment to have lasted a

month. It was our plan to catch fish for our food, and cook them over an outdoors fire—although none of us had ever cooked anything in our lives. Our mothers, however, had so little confidence in our ability that we were provided with huge boxes of cooked food—and perhaps that was the part of wisdom.

We pitched our tent early in the forenoon, took the boat we had hired, and rowed across the river to a farm-house where we bought eggs. We built a fire, and by common consent, decided that we wanted our eggs scrambled. Just as they were done to a turn, the boy who was holding the frying pan over the coals slapped at a mosquito—and the eggs went into the fire. We dined on cold corned beef from our supplies.

We really enjoyed ourselves, though—until sunset. Watching the sun sink below the horizon, and thinking of the hot supper then being placed on the family tables—well, homesickness is a real illness. But when it got really dark, terror was added to our longing for home. Trees which had just been trees in daylight took on horrible and menacing forms. Little sounds which passed unnoticed before dark became horrendous portents. The friendly river, flowing in front of our tent, looked ominous and dangerous. We decided that we must take turns keeping watch while the others slept; and we drew lots for the first turn. It fell to me.

I sat there, while my companions calmly slept, feeling secure because I was on watch, and I trembled at every sound. But nature was too strong for me, and I dropped off to sleep. The next thing I knew, I was being smothered by some horrible thing which was wrapped around my face; there was a tangle of legs and arms, and something hard hit me on the head. It was pitch dark, and we were all screaming, and striking out at some unseen and unknown enemy, although our blows reached only each other.

Then we found that a high wind had come up, breaking the ridgepole of our tent, and allowing it to collapse and encompass us in its folds. We huddled together and sat there until the first rays of the rising sun; then we left Carl Day's tent where it lay, with our provisions and our equipment under it, and started on foot for home. Thus ended our first camping experience.

It seems to me that nowadays we don't have such snowstorms as we did in my boyhood. The weather bureau doesn't agree with me, however; the records show that the amount of snowfall has been fairly constant over the years. But at any rate, winter meant something different to us than it does to the boys of today. The streets weren't plowed in my day; but immense rollers, drawn by several horses, packed the snow down, to make a suitable roadway for sleighs and sleds. Then Main Street, and to some extent other streets, became a raceway for fast trotters, drawing light sleighs, with the driver wearing a big fur coat, and snug under a bearskin robe. No automobile ride, winter or summer, can equal the thrill of driving a fast horse attached to a sleigh.

When we boys were old enough—perhaps 16 or 17—we hired rigs, especially on moonlight winter nights, and took “the” girl for a sleigh ride. I remember one such night when, after picking up the young lady, I drove up Pleasant Street, headed for River Road. The hill on upper Pleasant Street was alive with sliders—single sleds, bob-sleds, box-sleds—every kind of sliding equipment was there. My horse took fright—I didn't blame him—and turning sharply, overturned the sleigh, and “me and my girl” were pitched headlong into a snowdrift. The horse returned to the stable, unaccompanied; in deep humiliation, I escorted my disgruntled companion to her home, and the evening was ended.

The weather bureau to the contrary notwithstanding, it seems to me that the snow was deeper in those days. I recall once when the snow drifted level with the roof of the piazza around the Tontine Hotel, and we boys walked from the top of the porch out into the hard crust and

down to street level across the drift. I remember seeing drifts so high that the first floor windows of our house were covered; and certainly there have been no storms like that in recent years.

But perhaps it's all in the point of view. As I sit in my easy chair, dictating this story, though the smoke of my pipe, I visualize the days of my boyhood, and somehow it seems that those were better days. It may be that my views are more roseate because of the passage of years, but I liked my Brunswick of the '80s!

The last article he submitted in 1944 dealt with his recollections about how men and women dressed in his childhood.

How Clothes Made the Man Back In The '80s
William A. Wheeler Contributes Another Interesting Article
For Pleasure of Brunswick Record Readers
October 26, 1944

Back in the '90s, there were no magazine articles describing "What the Well Dressed Man should wear." Our own Brunswick Telegraph carried not articles of sartorial advice. Yet there were "styles" and we religiously followed them, insofar as we could. Do you remember, for instance, that summer when every man and boy wore a flat straw hat with a brim 6 or 8 inches wide? On a breezy day on Main Street (I still insist it was Main Street then!) about every third man could be seen trotting down the street chasing his hat, rolling along on the brim like a big cartwheel.

Another year although the straws were much smaller each one came with a stout black cord attached, and a loop to secure it to a coat button.

In winter, almost invariably men wore "derby" hats—soft hats were infrequently seen, if at all. There were still "beaver" hats worn by some of the older men—enough of them so that they did not seem at all strange or unusual.

And do you remember the "razor-toed" bright yellow shoes we all wore one or two seasons? During that fad we all suffered pinched toes as the penalty for being in "style". Practically all men wore ankle-high shoes; low shoes and "pumps" were worn sometimes in warm weather, but the general run was the high shoe. Usually they were laced; but many men wore button shoes. Some of the more conservative swore by the "Congress" shoe—an ankle-high shoe with inserts of elastic on each side, which could be pulled on over the foot and held without laces or buttons. As a boy, I was once the proud possessor of a pair of Congress shoes. They were "hand-me-downs" and the life of the elastic had vanished; they were too large for my feet, and flopped as I walked, but I considered them a badge of manhood and was correspondingly proud.

A good many men, in those days, had their shoes—or boots—made to order. Mr. Varney, the cobbler, whose shop was just north of Dunlap Street, had special lasts for his customers, and made their shoes by hand. Quite a number of men wore "cow-hide" boots, with long legs. These, of course, neither buttoned nor laced, but were pulled on over the feet—and it took the aid of a boot-jack to get them off.

Boys of that period wore "short pants"—and please don't confuse them with "knickers." They were merely a shortened replica of the trousers worn by adult men, knee length, and usually buttoned to the "shirt-waist". Suspenders—we called them "galluses"—came in with the

first pair of long pants. I think none of us would have worn a pair of “knickers”—they were “sissy.”

Almost without exception, boys’ clothes were home-made, and usually from the cast-off clothing of their paternal parents. Possibly the “best suit” might be purchased in a clothing store, but even this was unusual. In my own case, the first piece of outer apparel I ever purchased in store was my first pair of long pants—and was I a proud youth when I donned them! I recall, even after 60 odd years, that the clothier, instead of pressing the trousers, ironed out the creases, making them like bags. The idea was to avoid the appearance of having been taken from the pile!

It was during that period that the term “dude” was current, as adopted to a man who was meticulous about his dress. Outwardly, we boys held a dude in utter contempt, and we were outspoken in condemnation; secretly, however, we envied them, and longed to emulate them.

In families where there were two boys of age and size, it wasn’t unusual for them to share a single “best” suit. I recall hearing our minister relate with glee and incident which occurred in Sunday school. Little John appeared dressed in his best, and with the hair smoothly brushed and slicked down. “Where is Jimmy?” inquired the minister; “Why isn’t he here?” “He couldn’t come,” was the reply, “I’m wearing his pants!”

There were styles in neckties, too. Remember the huge ties which filled the entire opening of the vest? I believe the proper name is the “Ascot” tie; but we boys called them “dirty shirt neckties.” One could safely wear a dirty shirt under such a piece of neckwear, too, or even go shirtless—and many actually did.

“Made-up” ties could be—often were—purchased at the clothing stores. These were similar to the “four-in-hand” but pre-tied; and they fastened around the “standup” collar with an elastic band.

Practically all, if not all, shirts had a stiffly starched bosom; and they pulled over the head. In summer, man men wore “false bosoms”—the starched bosom of a shirt, with a strap to hold it in place.

I think I was pretty well grown up before I ever saw a shirt with attached collar and cuffs. The “boiled shirts” men wore in my boyhood had a neckband to which the collar, whether of linen or paper, was fastened by studs; and the separate cuffs were cylindrical in form, and attached to the sleeves with a button.

I never know a man or a boy, in the ‘80s, who wore pajamas as a sleeping garment. The old-fashioned night-shirt, was the only recognized night-wear. I do not know that any of us boys would have fought valiantly had our misguided parents attempted to send us to bed wearing anything else. Many older people, of both sexes, wore night-caps as an essential part of their sleeping wear. Bedrooms were cold, and night air was considered harmful, so protection for the head had to be provided.

Remember the paper collars which many men wore, back in those days? They were actually made of paper, cut in collar form, with holes for collar buttons, and were bought by the box. When one became soiled, it was discarded and a fresh one used. Isaac Plummer, in his clothing store, near O’Brien Street (Cumberland Street now) carried an immense stock of these collars, in all sizes and styles. It seems to me now they cost 10 cents a dozen. I think there were celluloid collars, too, although I cannot remember every wearing one.

It is with a great deal of trepidation that I approach a discussion of the female apparel of the ‘80s. Probably a “hang-over” of the extreme modesty of that day makes me hesitate to attempt to describe anything so intimate as a lady’s corset or underwear; yet that must be a part of the picture I am endeavoring to paint.

It goes without saying, perhaps, that women's dresses, in that day were of ground length as far as visible evidence was concerned, ladies had no ankles. Often the dresses were so long that they dragged in the dust of the street; and it was common practice for a woman, while walking, to hold up a bunch of skirts in her hand. Remember the old story of the woman who went to the store to shop, and tried to remember what she was carrying? She checked up—she had her hand-bag, her package of silk ribbon, her spool of thread, her parasol. What was missing? Then she remembered, grasped her skirts and went out.

Parasols! In summer every woman and girl carried one. Elderly women might have a tiny black silk one, with a long handle which was hinged in the middle so it could be folded. Younger women's parasols were lacy, frilly affairs and they served the double purpose of protecting the delicate skin of the face from the rays of the sun, and also provided flirtatious accessories for the enhancement of feminine charms. A tanned skin was unthinkable for a woman or girl of the '80s. At the same time little or not "make-up" was used. Rouge, lipstick, colored finger-nail enamel—these were taboo in my day, except for the "fallen" woman.

Hoop skirts were before my time, but the skirts worn by women were voluminous and to keep them properly spread out, numerous frilly petticoats were worn beneath. Sometimes, when a woman sat down, the lacy edge of one of these petticoats would show a trifle, but not if the wearer was aware of it! The petticoat served another purpose, too—they provided warmth. That was necessary, in winter, in the days when homes were inadequately heated. The kitchen was always warm, of course, with the wood-burning "cook stove" going full blast; there was usually a "gas burner" coal stove in the sitting room or parlor; and even so late as my day, many people placed some dependence upon the open fireplace for heat. Nevertheless, compared with modern homes, most rooms were far from comfortable. It was for this reason, probably, that women wore heavy woolen underwear, with legs reaching the ankle, and full length sleeves. For summer, the same sort of underwear was worn, but of course much lighter weight.

Few women owned silk stockings, and neither rayon nor nylon had been invented. Cotton stockings were worn generally, usually black, but sometimes white. It didn't make much difference though, because nobody, but the owner ever saw them. A lady would no more disclose to public view an inch of her stockinged lower limb than she would use the word "le" in describing it.

It was in my youth that the style called for the "hour-glass figure," although I believe it was even then on the wane. Physicians waged war upon the compression of vital organs by tight lacing so successfully that it was given up—or was it merely that the style changed? I remember one strikingly pretty girl perhaps 21 or 22, who boasted that she could make her hands meet around her waist—and although they were tiny hands, I believe she could. Her imitation of a wasp's figure was perfect.

And do you remember when the style rigidly demanded the wearing of bustles? Some of them were made of wire, and could be purchased in the shops; many were home-made, of paper and old rags; but whatever their construction, they were a "must" for every female above the early teen age.

Women today, when they need a new dress—or think they do—go to the store, look over the stock, and purchase what they like. In my youth all dresses and outer garments were made for the wearer, sometimes by the housewife herself but usually by a professional dressmaker. Dressmaking was one of the few occupations a self-respecting woman might engage in; that and school-teaching were practically all. Once a year possibly oftener, a women might purchase at the dry goods store the necessary material for the clothing she required; then the dressmaker

came to the house, usually for three or four days and everything else was subordinated to the fitting, cutting and sewing of dresses. During that period, the man of the house was lucky if he got a cold snack for dinner.

Hats and bonnets were seldom purchased ready-made; they were made to order by the local milliners. There are millinery shops today, of course, but I doubt if they build hats, from the wire frame up as they did in the old days.

Bonnets, as worn in the '80s, consisted of a flat plate of velvet or other material, elaborately trimmed with cloth flowers, which were worn on top of the head, with velvet strings tied under the wearer's chin. At about the same time, school girls were wearing "coal scuttle" hats, not unlike the old-fashioned sun bonnet, but rather more elaborate and pretentious.

Shoes, for both women and girls, were invariably high enough to reach well above the ankle and were almost as invariably buttoned. I'd say there must have been 15 or 20 buttons each.

Such things as slacks and shorts were unheard of then and any woman, or even any young girl, who had dared to appear in public so dressed would probably have been ostracized. As to the bathing suits of today—well my imagination isn't strong enough to picture what would have happened had such a costume been seen, even on the burlesque stage in the days of my youth. When women dressed for bathing, they wore a heavy skirt, reaching well below the knees, black stockings and a waist which buttoned around the neck and completely covered the arms. It's a fact that they could, and did, actually swim in such a rig.

It would have been incompatible with womanly modesty, anyway, for the arms of the neck to be exposed to view, except, possibly, when a formal evening costume was worn. If a dress was cut with a small V neck, the space was modestly filled with frilly lace. Sleeves were invariably full length, although the lower part might be of net or lace. Gloves, for street wear, were always required, although "mitts" were permissible. Mitts were lacy gloves, minus the fingers, but extending back well above the wrist.

It was a little later than the '80s maybe, but do you remember the tremendous "leg-o-mutton" sleeves women wore? It was most impossible to get those sleeves into a coat without assistance which gave a thrill in the young men who were called upon to help tuck them in. Then there was the "butterfly" sleeve—a modification of the leg-o-mutton with the puffed portion flattened out like the wings of a butterfly, and held in place by some glittering ornament.

It was later too, that the high boned collars were all the rage. Women certainly suffered torture for the sake of style during that period. Made of lace, and held upright by pieces of whalebone 4 or 5 inches high, the neck of the victim was tightly encased up to and behind the ears.

Remember the "peekaboo" waists? Made of some lacy material they covered the arms and neck; but through the openings disclosed the corset cover? Oldsters gave up the younger generation for lost—such depravity was appalling. Newspapers deplored the immodesty of modern youth, preachers inveighed against it, cartoonists ridiculed it. I wonder if there ever was a time, including the "present" when the younger generation wasn't considered beyond redemption?

I am by no means an expert in the matter of women's wearing apparel; possibly I would have been wise in consulting some feminine contemporary before daring to essay such a description. Looking back through the years, however, it seems to me that my recollection of the dress of both men and women is essentially correct. One thing is sure—today's method is far

more sensible and reasonable, even though we all, of either sex, are still slaves to fashion, however absurd, just as we were then.

In 1945 Wheeler submitted seven articles. They ranged from a description of transportation, bicycles, entertaining childhood activities, law enforcement, the Brunswick railroad depot, food stores and his views of the youth of the 80's compared to the youth of the mid-forties.

The first submitted in January described the transportation getting to Brunswick and to other destinations. He reviewed boat, stage and railroad transportation.

How Grandpa "Went To Town" From Here A Century Ago January 4, 1945

A little more than a hundred years ago, a Brunswick merchant found it necessary to make a business trip to Boston. Two methods of travel were available to him. He could take the stage, stopping overnight in Portland and continuing the journey the following day; or he could go to New Meadows, and from there take passage on the "fast and commodius" sloop "Hope" of which Captain Connelly was master.

There were several reasons why he elected to go overland. The stage operated every week-day; the "Hope" only once a week, even under favorable conditions. Then, too, the trip by stage could be made in about two days; adverse winds, or the lack of wind, might make the trip by water a matter of three or four days or more. With a definite appointment to meet, he hardly dared to risk the pleasanter, and more comfortable water journey.

So, after an early dinner, he betook himself to Stoddard's Inn on Maine Street and booked passage on the noon stage for Portland. Noon at Stoddard's Inn was a lively time. It was the hour when stages from all points, then four or even six horses on the gallop, met for the interchange of passengers. As he sat on the wide piazza of the Inn, Nahum Perkin's stage from Augusta drew up to a stop. The mail bags were thrown off, and the three or four passengers went inside the Inn for dinner. Then came the Turner stage; and in quick succession, the stages from Portland and from Bath.

The Stage to Portland

At exactly 12 o'clock, from the stables around the corner, came the stage for Portland, with Calvin Gossam on the box holding the reins over his prancing six-horse team. Gossam was one of the most outstanding stage-drivers of that day; with his beaver hat, his flowing whiskers, his gauntlet driving-gloves and his faultless apparel, he was locally famous.

Our Brunswick merchant, well acquainted with Gossam, climbed to a seat beside him. It was a raw, cold day, but he was dressed for cold weather; and on any sort of day at all a seat on the driver's box was to be coveted. The other passengers took seats inside the big Concord coach, and with a flourish of his whip, Gossam started his horses on the gallop. That was traditional; no matter how weary the horses and the driver might be, they always approached and left each stopping place at full speed. Elsewhere on the journey the horses might plod at a snail's pace; but the ceremonial flourish of speed at terminals was never omitted.

Over The Hills

All went well until the long hill just beyond Hillside was reached. There the mud was deep, and less than a quarter of the way to the summit, the coach slid into the ditch and was deeply mired. The straining horses labored in vain to move it; and finally Gossam called upon his passengers to get out. Into the foot deep mud they waded, and putting their shoulders to the wheels, managed to get the heavy vehicle started. Then the horses, slipping and straining, under the expert guidance of driver Gossam hauled the coach, empty except for a solitary woman passenger, to the top of the hill, the male contingent following on foot.

At the gully before reaching Freeport Village, the driver whipped up his horses, and with a tremendous speed they ran down the hill, getting enough momentum so that they were able to pull up the muddy opposite hill, even with a full load of passengers.

At 8 o'clock that night, the stage drew up with a flourish in front of Elm Tavern on Federal Street in Portland; and the tired passengers alighted for a late supper and a short night's rest in unheated bedrooms, lighted only by candle.

At 4 o'clock the following morning, a lusty knock on the bedroom doors aroused those who had booked passage to Boston. Breakfast was waiting; not coffee and toast, but beef-steak, ham, eggs, cereal, pancakes, smoked herring, hot raised rolls and even apple pie. Experienced travelers, knowing what was ahead of them, arose from the table well fortified.

The Coach to Boston

At 4:30 the Boston coach rolled up to the tavern door, and the passengers, warmly dressed for the long ride in the unheated vehicle, took their places. All day long, stopping only for frequent changes of horses, the "express" stage lumbered along over the ruddy, muddy roads; and at 9 o'clock that night our weary Brunswick merchant registered at his hotel in Boston. He had made a remarkable and unusually quick trip only 33 hours from Brunswick to Boston, and after a night's rest, he was ready for his business interview the following day. It was soon completed, and at noon he was ready to begin his homeward journey. For an hour's business transaction he was gone from home only a matter of a little more than four days!

Now—By Train

Yesterday, that man's grandson, also a Brunswick merchant, had a business appointment in Boston. After a leisurely breakfast he went to his office, opened and answered his mail, and cleared his desk. A little after 10 o'clock he took his brief case and walked to the railroad station. Boarding the Pine Tree Limited, he took a seat in the chair car and with a table secured from the porter, prepared the necessary papers for his upcoming interview. After leaving Portland, he had lunch in the dining car; and at 1:50 he was in a taxi bound for the office of his business friend. At 4:50, the transaction completed, he was again on the train for home, and at a little after 8, he was back in the bosom of his family. His one hour business interview took him away from home exactly 10 hours.

There, in a proverbial nutshell, is condensed the history of a century of Brunswick's transportation facilities.

It was just a hundred years ago next May that plans for building a railroad to Brunswick took definite form; and in August of the same year, 1845, a citizens' meeting was held in the old Baptist Church on Maine Street, now long demolished, to solicit funds, for that purpose.

First Train in 1849

In 1849, the "Kennebec," the first steam locomotive ever to enter the town limits, drew up to the "depot" near the location of the present station, with a great puffing of steam from the wood-fired boiler. The track had been completed between Yarmouth and Brunswick, and a gravel train was run back and forth between the two towns all day long, giving free rides to all citizens who desired them. That is, it was "free" as far as money cost was concerned but riding on a train of open dump cars, on a newly and scantily ballasted track of light iron involved at least a cost in discomfort. So much pleased were the citizens of the old town, however, that the demand for a regular passenger train was insistent, and it was acceded to by the director; even though the road was not completed.

So in that year of 1849, Brunswick became the terminal and the principal station practically the headquarters of the new railroad. At Yarmouth, connection was made with trains of the Atlantic and St. Lawrence (later the Grand Trunk) for Portland, a change of cars at that point being necessary.

First Depot Here

The first depot in Brunswick was a small, unfinished frame building which stood on the lot when it was purchased by the railroad. Hastily, to meet the need of the public, crude waiting rooms and a tiny ticket office was fitted up. John S. Cushing was station agent, and George French switchman; and they constituted the entire staff at what was then the actual headquarters of the company! Cushing was not only the agent; he served as superintendent, treasurer and traffic manager as well, fixing the rates and handling all the affairs of the company.

One Train a Day

For a number of years, but one passenger train a day in each direction was operated, and a freight train three times a week handled all business which was offered. Changing cars at Yarmouth and again at Portland, a passenger could make the trip to Boston in a little more than 6 hours, as contrasted with the two or three days necessary in stagecoach days and at a quarter of the cost.

The passenger cars used on the first railroad in the United States were actually stage coaches on hinged wheels; and a man rode the box seat of each coach, just as Gossam did when he held the reins over his six-horse team. By the time the railroad was built into Brunswick, however, the cars had assumed more of the appearance of today's equipment; although they were about half the length of the modern coach. They were painted a bright yellow, had open platforms with a wide gap between cars where the "link" and pin" couplers fastened them together and were heated by wood stoves, one in each end of the car. Kerosene lamps furnished light when trains were operated after dark. There were no airbrakes, and stopping the train required the services of strong-armed men at the handbrakes from which came the term "brakemen".

This isn't a history of the railroads, however, it is merely intended as a comparison of the transportation "enjoyed" by our forbears with that of today. Even with the advent of the motor vehicle, the railroad today means much to its people

In February he described the early bicycles and trips in those early days.

When the Bicycle Was a "Craze" **February 1, 1945**

My reference to the old high wheel bicycle in "Brunswick Yesterdays" has brought me several letters asking me to enlarge upon this phase of my story of boyhood days. As a matter of fact, however, the high wheel was on its way out in the '80s, and even the few which were owned by Brunswick people were soon supplanted by the "safety."

In the hey-day of the cumbersome, dangerous high wheeled bicycles there may have been half a dozen or so in Brunswick;--my recollection may be faulty, but I don't believe there were more than that number. Ben Furbish owned one, I think; Ernest Danforth certainly did, because I recall that he took a header on Narcissa's hill and was rather severely injured. Booker Dennett of Topsham was another high-wheel rider, and Maynard Tenney owned a "Star" bicycle with the little wheel in the front.

The First "Safety"

I'm not sure who owned the first "safety" bicycle in town. It seems to me it was Charles York, the barber. It is certain that he was among the first, and he was an ardent devotee of the sport. These first wheels of the safety type were heavy machines—they probably weighed twice as much as a modern bicycle—and the cost was \$135. That was a lot of money in those days but somehow a good many people acquired their wheels, and bicycles became a common sight on the unpaved streets of the town.

As the craze spread, it became the all-important subject of conversation among its adherents. Over the back fence, neighbor argued the respective merits of the "Columbia" and the "Rambler"; the believers in the excellence of the elliptical sprocket were scornful of those who preferred the round sprocket. It was a common sight, in the summer evenings, to see a group of men, one of whom was at the everlasting job of cleaning and oiling his mount, hotly discussing the proper way to lubricate and to avoid rust, the comparative advantage of cork hand-grips over rubber, and the several types of saddles.

For a few, the bicycle became merely a convenient means of transportation, as the automobile of today, but of course in much more limited scope. Men like Weston Thompson, the lawyer, used them to travel between their home and their offices or stores. For most owners, however, they were vehicles of pleasure rather than of utility.

So universal was the interest in bicycles that a national organization of riders was formed—the League of American Wheelmen. I don't think there was a Brunswick branch of this organization; but there was a large and successful one in Portland, with their own club-rooms and with group expeditionary trips. The ambition of all bicyclists of that day was to make a "century" run—a single trip of 100 miles. A hundred miles over the roads then existing, on a bicycle with solid rubber tires about as big as your finger, was a real undertaking.

There were no “coaster brake” then; the only brake was a spoon-like affair which was pressed against the front tire by the action of lever on the handlebar.

Favorite Rides

A favorite ride was to Mere Point, a distance of a little more than 7 miles. The road was sandy, of course, but as I recall it, there was a fairly hard path beside the road which made pedaling not too difficult. Frank Woodbury, called by the Brunswick Telegraph “one of the fastest riders in this town” made the run in 29 minutes, apparently a remarkable record. Charles York was the starter for this test run; and T.H. Riley, at Mere Point, timed the finish. The Telegraph also reported as an unusual event, that Miss Sue Winchell had made the entire trip, from Brunswick to Mere Point without once dismounting; something which male bicyclists of presumably greater strength and stamina had hither to failed to do.

Other than Mere Point, trips out of town were uncommon enough to warrant mention in the paper. The Telegraph tells, for instance, that six riders made a round trip to Lisbon Falls; and that E.S. Bodwell and E.H. Willis took a three-day “bicycle cruise” to Orr’s and Bailey Islands. Later, however, with the advent of pneumatic tires, a round trip to Harpswell or Orr’s Island in a day was not considered a matter of special importance. Even with the improved tires, however, pedaling a bicycle through the deep sand of the plains, and over the unsurfaced roads of that day, took strong muscles and good wind.

The Tandem

A development of the standard bicycle was the “tandem” built for two riders. Remember that popular song of the gay nineties which ran

“You’d look sweet, upon the seat
Of a bicycle built for two

Usually a tandem was designed with a “drop frame” in front, providing a suitable seat for the feminine partner in the team. A man took the rear saddle, and did the steering. It took a little practice to harmonize the operation and keep proper balance; but experienced riders soon learned to work together. The two pairs of pedals were connected with the rear wheel, and both riders, of course, did their share in providing the motive power. I haven’t seen a tandem for many years, I doubt if there are any in existence today.

There were also bicycles built for four or even six riders; but for the most part these were intended exclusively for professional racing.

Cycling Clothes

A few men—those who took their wheeling seriously—wore clothes designed for the purpose, consisting of a Norfolk jacket and knickers. The majority, however, merely snapped a spring clip around their ankles to keep the bottom of the trouser legs out of the chain and the sprocket, and wore their ordinary business suits. Some women wore skirts a little shorter than the ground-length walking skirts; and a few hardy, daring feminine souls actually appeared in bloomers. For the most part, however, women riders wore their usual clothing, the “drop frame” of the women’s wheels being designed to permit this.

Racing

Bicycle racing, although non-professional, was somewhat in evidence. Fast riders were known as “scorchers.” They usually had the handle-bars of their machines placed low—so low that the torso of the rider was almost horizontal as he “scorched” down the street.

Just as today we build garages for our cars, so many of the bicycle enthusiasts of that early day built more or less elaborate houses for the protection of their “wheels”. The Telegraph reports one on Federal Street, built for two bicycles, “the latest thing in town.”

Rentals

I was a grown man before I owned my first bicycle; but from time to time I hired one from Thomas H. Riley, who maintained a “stable” of for-rent wheels at his store in the Town Building. It seems to me now that his charge was 15 cents an hour, with lower rates by the day or week. He had a half dozen or so of the machines placed in a rack in front of the store, and the renter had his choice as to make. If he preferred the Columbia, or the Rambler, or the Iver Johnson, he could take whichever he liked.

Off To Portland

I shall never forget one trip I made on one of Mr. Riley’s bikes. “Cub” Nevens owned a wheel, and persuaded me to accompany him on a trip to Portland and return. My courage was better than my judgment; to take a trip like that required muscles hardened to the job, and what riding I had done was to infrequent and too limited to give me the necessary endurance.

However, on a Saturday morning we started off bravely enough, our lunch-boxes swinging from the handle-bars, with assurance to our folks that we’d be back by supertime. To those who know the Portland road only as it is today, the difficulty of pedaling a bicycle over cannot be conceived. There was sand; there was mud; there were deep ruts; there were stones. Long before we reached Freeport I was tired; by the time we dropped down hill into Yarmouth village the muscles of my legs turned into knots. Riding a few minutes at a time, then resting and rubbing the tortured muscles while “Cub” patiently waited for me, I managed at long last, to get to Portland. Then came the final difficulty—the round cobble-stones with which Portland’s Congress Street was paved, and which bounced us around so that it was difficult to steer.

I didn’t make the return trip; I couldn’t have done it had my life depended on it. I made my way to the railroad station, and loaded the bike in the baggage car. I parked my weary frame on a cushioned seat and traveled home in comfort.

It was the advent of the motor vehicle, of course, which spelled, for a while, the doom of the bicycle. It came back, after a number of years, but never became again the craze that it was in my boyhood.

First Motor Vehicle

I had left Brunswick when the first motor vehicle came to town and I don’t know who was its owner, I think E.S. Bodwell was among the first, if not the first, to buy one of the new contraptions. I do recall very distinctly, however, that it was in Brunswick that I had my first ride in a “horseless carriage”.

I was spending a week-end there; and on Sunday morning I accepted, with some trepidation, an invitation to “take a little ride”. The owner had had the car only a few days, and he knew almost as little about it as I did—which was exactly nothing at all. “Car” isn’t exactly the right word to apply to that vehicle, though—it was more like a buggy without the thrills and, of course, minus the horse. It had a single seat, a dash-board not unlike that of a carriage, no windshield, and of course no top. It was steered by a tiller instead of a wheel, and its one-cylinder engine was under the seat. The crank was permanently affixed on the end of the seat, so that the driver had merely to reach down as he sat at the controls, and crank his engine.

The top speed of the machine, even under favorable conditions, wasn’t over 15 miles an hour—and that speed was made only to the accompaniment of tremendous vibrations and noise.

We started out toward Gurnet but before we reached Little Village the engine stopped. The driver concluded that perhaps the radiator needed water, and stopped at a house to get a pail full. After repeated winding of the crank, the engine finally caught again, it had had sufficient rest—and all went well until we reached a hill near the New Meadows meeting house. There the engine stopped dead and no amount of coaxing by the inexperienced chauffeur could start it. There was but one thing to do—he walked back to the nearest house to call for a mechanic, while I sat in the car. A drizzling rain which had started a short time before had then become a downpour; and I sat there in that open buggy, with my straw hat and my summer suit, wholly unprotected.

The church bell was ringing; and the good farmers of the vicinity were driving placidly through the rain to go to meetin’. Along came a carryall.

“Whoa! Anything the matter?”

“No, just sitting here.”

“Git wet, won’t ye? Giddap!”

A buggy with a gray-bearded farmer and his wife.

“Whoa! In trouble?”

“Oh, no, just sitting here.”

“y’ enjoy it. Giddap!”

By this time, thoroughly wet and disgusted, I reached down and gave the crank an experimental turn. Instantly the engine sprang to life and I was scared stiff. The whole car shook until I thought it would fall apart; and I never saw a more welcome sight than that of the owner plodding back through the downpour. The car behaved beautifully after that; and we sped home at a good 10 miles an hour, without further mishap.

His next submission dealt with all the “fun” he had as a young man in Brunswick and the activities that young men found exciting and enjoyable.

Yes, We Had Fun in the ‘80s! February 8, 1945

One of my Brunswick contemporaries relates with considerable glee a conversation which he had with a young friend of high school age. The youth had questioned the older man as to his activities in boyhood—but his reaction was tersely expressed:

“You couldn’t have had much fun—no movies, no radio, no automobiles, or airplanes—it must have been pretty slow!”

Well he was partly right—we had none of those things which seemed to him so essential—but slow? Not a bit of it! Every minute of a boy's day, back in the '80's was a busy minute. Some of the time he worked, of course—boys had to earn their own spending money then—but mostly he has having fun, and real fun.

Good Ball Players

Of course, we played ball, just as boys of today do; but perhaps less expensively. I think the high school team managed to raise money for uniforms and equipment, but most of us were content with a ten-cent ball and a cheap bat. Masks, gloves, chest protectors—we might yearn to own them, but we never did. Yet our “sand lot” scrub teams turned out some pretty good players. At least two of them—Hal Bryant and Walter Williams—graduated into professional baseball.

We played football, too. Unless I am greatly mistaken, it was during my boyhood that the present game of football had its beginning in this country. We called it “rugby” then.

Yes we did a good many things that are no different from the activities of the present generation; but we also had a lot of fun in ways which are unknown to the boys of today.

Punging

How many boys today have ever had the experience of “hooking on” or “punging”—or even know what those words mean? Matter of fact, indulgence in this sport would be impossible today, because an essential is the horse-drawn sleigh or pung; which went out with the horse ‘n’ buggy.

But in our day that was the only method of winter transportation, and Brunswick's streets were alive with them. Then we boys would watch our chance, “hook on” our sleds behind a fast moving pung, and drop “belly-bumps” onto the sled. The sled rope was passed around the runner support of the sleigh, and we'd hold the free end. If we fell off, if the speed became too fast, or if we just got tired of the sport, all we had to do was let go the rope.

Most drivers were good sports; some of them would slow up a bit to give us a chance to hook on. Some, who may have been mighty good fellows; but whom we boys called “curmudgeons” deliberately whipped up their horses just as we were about to drop onto our sleds.

How would some of you boys, who think we didn't have any fun, like to try that sport?

Snow Forts

Do the boys of today make snow-forts? I haven't seen one for so long I doubt it; anyway, I'll bet they weren't like ours! We'd work all day like beavers, building a fort perhaps 10 or 12 feet square with walls three or four feet thick and about breast high. Then, at dusk, we'd lug bucket after bucket of water and pour over the snow, so that by morning there would be a thick armor of ice cementing it together. On the inside of the walls we'd scoop out ammunition vaults and fill them with hard-packed snow-balls. Sometimes we'd wet the stock of snowballs and let them freeze overnight—wickedly dangerous missiles they were, too.

There was never a problem finding an opposing army—boys from some other part of town would soon find out about our fort and appear in force, armed with an ample supply of

snowballs. Then there'd ensue a battle royal, the enemy trying to storm the fort and we to defend it. Do you boys do that today—and do you doubt that we had “fun”?

Sleighbing Parties

Did you ever go on a sleighbing party? No? You don't what fun is! We'd hire a big two-horse sled, with several seats each holding four or five boys and girls—oh we didn't forget the girls!—and go for a trip to “Jakes” or to some other place for dinner, with the ride home by moonlight after an evening of games and perhaps a dance. Cold? Yes, of course it was; but we didn't mind that. No ride in a heated automobile at 40 or 50 miles an hour can possibly equal that jog-trot pace of the sturdy horse, their hooves clumping in the hard-packed snow, the squeal of the runners on the frosty road, and a happy group of boys and girls singing the popular tunes of the day.

Willow Whistles

So much for winter. Spring, summer and autumn all brought their joys and pleasures. Did you ever make a willow whistle? We used to go in the spring down near the river and cut small branches from the willows which grew profusely there. At the time when the sap was running, the bark could be twisted off the twigs intact; then, by a little expert use of the Jackknife, the wood could be formed into a whistle and the bark replaced. Get some old-timers to show you next spring!

Punch and Judy

A canopied “stage” with the “platform” about as high as a tall man's head was set up in the street, usually at the curb just in front of Town Hall. Back of the curtained lower portions of the cabinet were the operators, who manipulated the puppets and gave the “dialogue” in voices artificially “squeaked” through a peculiar device carried in the mouth. It was the sale of these whistles or whatever they might be called which gave the proprietors their profit; as I remember it there was no charge to see the show, but the “whistles” were sold for a dime each. They were simple affairs—two small pieces of tin, bent apart in the middle, with a piece of thin cloth stretched tightly between them. Placed in the roof of the mouth and held in place with the tongue, weird tones could be emitted—by an expert, that is, we boys tried in vain to get similar results.

Few of us had dimes to buy the gadgets, but they were very simple and we soon found we could make our own. With a couple of scraps of tin from Furbish's Tin Shop and a bit of cloth we could easily fabricate whistles as good as the professionally-made ones.

Class Meetings

Did you ever go to a “class meeting,” you young men and women of school age today? We did. Every class through grammar school and into high school had its class organization, with its president, two or three vice presidents, its secretary and its treasurer. Half a dozen times during the school year we'd have “class meetings” in the homes of some of the members of the class. There'd be a brief business meeting—and incidentally we learned something of

parliamentary procedure—and then the rest of the evening would be devoted to games. They were simple, unsophisticated games, to be sure—“going to Jerusalem,” “blind man’s bluff,” “spin the cover,” and the like—but we had fun. Do you do that?

Boat Races

You boys of today, of course, never had the thrill of watching a college boat-race. Well, that was one of the highlights in our day. Long before the races we’d gather at the boat-house on the river bank, just below the railroad bridge and congregate around the float where the fragile “shells” were placed in the water. If the students were gracious to us—and they usually were—we’d go into the boat-house and inspect the equipment at close range.

Then—the thrill of the start; the coxswain in the stern, handling the tiller ropes, and with a megaphone strapped to his mouth, exhorting and directing his crew of hardy oarsmen; watching the swiftly moving boats as they neared Cow Island; waiting for their reappearance on the return trip—then the shouts and wild applause as the winner shot past the finish line. If it was a Bowdoin crew that won, we were jubilant—we withheld our applause when the opposing crew won. You boys missed that; you should have been here in the ‘80’s!

Firemen’s Muster

You never saw a fireman’s muster, either. You never watched a crew pumping water from a fire cistern with a gloriously decorated hand engine—the Kennebec, the Niagara or the Androscoggin—with the foreman, gaily bedecked in red shirt and leather helmet, a silver trumpet at his lips, urging his men at the pumps to “break her down.” You never experienced the glow of pride we had when one of our beloved engines won first prize.

Going Barefoot

There’s another thing you probably never did, and that’s to go barefoot all summer. Maybe you wouldn’t want to—and with the concrete pavements and brick sidewalks of today, I don’t blame you. But you’ll never know the unadulterated joy of feeling, the warm dust of the street between your toes; of walking barefoot through the woods, the pine needles making a soft carpet as your feet shuffled through them; scuffling the fallen leaves of autumn—no that’s something we had that you don’t have today.

Tree Huts

Did you ever build a hut in the trees? Possibly, that seems to be one of the perennial pursuits of an adolescent boy. Anyway, we used to do that; and some of our “huts” would have done credit to much older workmen. We’d lug old boards for miles to the selected wide-branching tree and patiently, painstakingly build our house. Usually we fabricated a rope ladder by which we climbed into it; but sometimes we even built stairs. Almost always the completion of a hut meant the formation of a “secret society” with grips, passwords ‘n’ everything. No matter how intimately we knew each other, none of us could get through the required ritual. You ever do that?

Yes sir, we had fun in the '80's. Somehow or other we got along without movies, automobiles and radio. Maybe when you boys grow up, your sons or your grandsons will say to you "gee, it must have been awful slow back there in 1945!"

In May Wheeler recites a colorful story about the old Brunswick Railroad Depot and a humorous instance in Town Meeting experiences!



When Brunswick's "Depot" Was Used As a Public Hall May 10, 1945

In the days when Brunswick was but a tiny hamlet—days long before the advent of radio, motion pictures and night clubs; days when the theatre and all that pertained to the theatre was considered by the simple townfolk to be sinful—the need for entertainment seems to have been met by lectures, usually on serious subjects, and by “lyceums” or debating societies.

As far back as 1825 there are records of such public gatherings and Wheeler's History of Brunswick tells of a lecture in 1832 by a professor in the medical school on the advantages of a strictly vegetarian diet. The meat dealers of the little town were profoundly disturbed by the preaching of such heresy, their sales dropped off to an alarming extent.

For such public meetings, of course, there had to be a suitable hall or large room, capable of accommodating a hundred or two of the worthy villagers. There were churches, but it can hardly be imagined that in those straight-laced days the house of God would be used for any secular purposes whatever.

Stoddard's Hall

The first public hall of which there is record, there may have been one earlier, was Stoddard's Hall, located in the inn of the same name, which stood at the corner of Maine and School Streets, where the famous Tontine Hotel was later built.

Stoddard's Inn was the center of the little town's activities and a logical place for public gatherings. Here the stage coaches stopped for “refreshments” and to pick up passengers; watching for the Boston coach with its four prancing horses of the day. On the broad porch of the Inn, the staid town elders congregated to discuss the affairs of the times and the shortcomings of their fellow citizens.

This was in 1817, and the hall was used for lectures and other public entertainments. It was said to be “large and comfortable,” although by modern standards it was probably neither spacious nor conducive to comfort. It was heated by wood stoves, probably lighted by whale-oil lamps or candles, and with benches for those who attended the meetings. The hotel and its hall burned to the ground in 1827; and the following year the “new” Tontine was built.

The Tontine

The Tontine, too, had a public hall, which, according to a newspaper of the day, was declared to be “unsurpassed in the State for elegance and spaciousness.” This hall became a popular gathering place and was used for all sorts of public meetings, balls and parties.

Other Meeting Places

The Alfred Merryman mansion, on the corner of Maine and Pleasant Streets, was built in 1807. Around 1823 it was opened as an inn, and in the ell of the building was a public hall known as Hodgkins’ Hall. In 1863 the property was purchased by Capt. Alfred Merryman as a residence.

Masonic Hall on Mason Street, later the home of the famous hand fire-engine Niagara, was built in 1817. Primarily intended for the use of the Masonic Lodge, of course, it was occasionally used for public lectures and other gatherings.

In 1851, McLellan’s Hall was built at the corner of Maine and Pleasant Streets opposite the Merryman home, and was almost exclusively used until it was torn down, in 1870, to make way for the newer and more modern Lemont Hall, now the quarters of the Knights of Pythias.

Lemont Hall was large—it could accommodate nearly 800 people—and had a small stage, with scenery, for the use of traveling theatrical companies and local talent. Here it was that Prof. Gilbert of Portland carried on his famous dancing school when I was a boy. Here it was that the first phonograph ever seen in Brunswick was exhibited at 10 cents a head. Here it was, too, that every large public gathering was held until the building of the present town hall.

The Railroad Depot

With all these “spacious and elegant” meeting places available to the people of the little town, it seems hardly believable that on one occasion, at least, the old railroad depot was used for some sort of town meeting. There is no record as to the purpose of the meeting, but as it took place during the Civil War, it seems probably that it was of a patriotic nature.

While many Brunswick people remember the old “depot”, with its barn-like train shed, probably no one alive today recalls the time when the train-shed was closed at night by great “barn doors.” After the passage of the last train for the day, at about 7 p.m.—the Portland to Augusta train—the night watchman lowered the great doors with a creaking windlass, and they remained down until morning, when they were hoisted for the day. Two tracks ran through the shed and the big doors rested on the rails, leaving enclosed what might be likened to a huge hall, but with steel rails, cedar ties and wooden platforms instead of a floor.

Frantic With Fear

In this structure, on the occasion of the meeting referred to, after the departure of the last train, wooden benches, settees and chairs were placed on the tracks and on the platform between the tracks, and pretty nearly every adult Brunswicker might have been found occupying one of those seats. But—someone had miscalculated; history doesn't say who, or how. During the meeting the long drawn whistle of a locomotive was heard; a special train which had taken a party from Harding's Station, on the Bath Road, to Lewiston, was returning to Brunswick to put up for the night.

As the sound of the approaching train grew louder and nearer, panic seized the throng in the shed. Suppose that mighty engine should dash through those flimsy doors—it would be nothing short of massacre. Yet escape was almost impossible; the entire throng must pass through the waiting rooms and out through the small doors on "Depot Street." To raise the big barn doors to permit egress along the tracks would take too long, and the milling, shrieking throng inside the closed structure was frantic with fear.

But the engineman of that train had no intention of crashing the doors which, of course, he knew were always closed at night. The train stopped some distance away; the crew put away their coaches and ran the little locomotive into the roundhouse for the night, and then went home wholly unaware of the fright they had caused.

Whether or not the meeting continued, history doesn't disclose, but that was the first, last and only time the old Brunswick depot was used as a public hall. If it was ever proposed again those who were in attendance on that unforgettable night turned thumbs down on the suggestion and sought other quarters!

Wheeler next described the police and law enforcement of early Brunswick centering on a Policeman named Despeaux.

When the Name "Despeaux" Meant Law and Order in Brunswick August 16, 1945

The first record of a protective organization in Brunswick was the formation, in 1826, of the "Brunswick Watch Association." Primarily to guard against fire, it seems evident that the "Watch" also assumed more or less police power, and probably constituted the little town's first organized force of law and order.

With 113 members, all volunteers, four men were detailed each night to patrol the town, on regularly assigned beats. Five rounds of the village were made—at 10 o'clock, 11:30, 1:00 a.m. and 4 o'clock. There was a central office—or, as the records put it, a "rendezvous"—with two men on duty to receive reports during the hours of patrol.

At the start, the Watch was supported by voluntary subscriptions; but later an assessment was made on property-owning citizens, in proportion to the value of their holdings. Any member who was unable or unwilling to serve when called upon, was required either to provide a substitute or to pay a fine of one dollar.

In case of fire, all the members of the organization were expected to respond to the call. There was a fire engine, but it was not provided with a suction pipe, and its tank was filled by buckets from wells or any available source of water. To keep it supplied must have taxed the energies of the 113 "Watchmen."

On his rounds of the village, each man was required by the rules to carry a lantern and a “watch-pole.” The latter was a stick about three feet long, with an iron hook at one end. It was useful as a cane; but doubly useful as a method of catching a fleeing culprit by hooking the stick into his clothing!

At midnight each night the entire force on duty gathered at the “rendezvous” for hot coffee and lunch, prepared by the “office force.”

Unfortunately there is little record of the activities of the first police force of Brunswick. The History of Brunswick, Topsham and Harpswell quotes briefly, however, from some of the reports made by members of the Watch, as, for instance, that of the patrolman who found a lamp burning on a chair beside the bed of a sleeping resident. What he did about it is not recorded!

One officer reported “a fine lady sitting in the lap of a fine gentleman” but was gentleman enough himself to omit the name! “Much courting going on” also appears on the record book.

On the fifth watch—that is, the round starting at 4:00 a.m.—a patrolman met a young man returning to his home. What he was doing out at that hour does not appear, but the officer reported that he “detained and questioned him,” found that he had a legitimate reasons for being on the street before dawn, and then “let him go by paying one bottle of wine.” The watchman could hardly have been accused of taking a bribe, as he wrote a faithful account of the incident in the watch book; but one wonders, even at this late date, why the victim should have been “fined” after satisfying the officer of his innocence!

The first record of an official police force appears in 1852, when a night watch consisting of six citizens, appointed daily by the “Justice of the Peace and the Selectmen,” began its duties. From that date to the present, it would appear that there has been some form of regular police protection at public expense.

Coming down to later years, the records show that in 1880, the town voted to “continue” the nightwatch, and appropriated \$800 for this purpose. A decade later, the appropriation was \$1400. Police officers were apparently elected at town meeting each year; and in the record of the meeting in 1880 shows 35 citizens on the police force. Among them were Henry Bowker and Levi Toothaker, both livery stable owners—possibly because of their ability to provide fast horses in case of necessity!

In 1890, the town voted to police Main Street (please note the records spell it that way—not Maine!) and, other sections between one and nine p.m. daily at a cost of \$200 per year—apparently the first daytime police service on a regular basis. The vote also provided that the officer must wear a uniform, paid for by himself. Apparently, therefore, the officer was paid around 55 cents a day, out of which he had to purchase a uniform!

The first uniformed police officer I can recall was Louis Norman (or Normand—the records spell it both ways). I think he was first appointed to the force in 1876, and the last record I can find of him was 1887. For a dozen years, more or less, he was a familiar sight in Brunswick’s streets. He was proud of his uniform, which he always kept in immaculate condition, and, I believe, proud of the distinction of being a member of Brunswick’s “finest.”

Oren T. Despeaux was appointed to the force in 1883—and that name will touch a responsive chord in the memory of all my contemporaries. To us “Despeaux” wasn’t the name of a man; it was a synonym for the Law. “Despeaux’ll get ye” didn’t mean that the man Despeaux was on the hunt for small boys; it meant that what was contemplated was contrary to that fearful and incomprehensible thing, the law.

The very fact that we always referred to him as “Despeaux” without the title of Mister is evidence the name of an embodiment of law and order. Boys of my generation were brought up

to be respectful to their elders—even the most easy-going of parents would have punished a lack of proper deference toward adults. We wouldn't dream of referring to the bearded Town Clerk or the hardware merchant by their last names alone; we would speak of them, as we would speak to them, as Mr. Riley or Mr. Furbish. Yet in our reference to the representative of the law, it was invariably "Despeaux". That meant no lack of respect—far from it—it meant merely that we were referring not to the man but what he stood for.

Oren Despeaux was more than a policeman—he was also a constable, a deputy sheriff and the town truant officer. Is it any wonder that we regarded him with some awe—and perhaps a little fear? He was the Law itself! I don't doubt that the boys of a later generation had the same feeling towards "Big Bill" Edwards; and perhaps the boys of today toward Warren Purington.

Between Despeaux and the college students there was a continued and unrelenting warfare. I have seen him, alone and unaided, attempt to control the exuberance of some 50 or more students returning from a celebration in Portland. His courage was better than his judgment in such cases; the sheer force of numbers defeated him. While he was attempting to arrest one man, a dozen more would be manhandling him—and while interference with an officer was a serious matter, he could do nothing about it because of inability to identify the guilty individuals. He couldn't arrest the whole gang single-handed; so almost invariably he had to beat a retreat.

We boys, standing on the sidelines, were all for Despeaux. He represented our beloved Brunswick and its laws; the students were outlanders who were violating its laws. Maybe we didn't put into definite words, but that was our feeling. Yet when a man was actually arrested—we called it "took up"—our sympathies were all with the poor victim of the law; whatever his offense; and we gathered around the lock-up hotly arguing the injustice of confining a man for so trivial a fault as intoxication and fighting.

The foot was on the other foot, too, when it was town boys who were involved. Then it was a contest between our own crowd and the Law, as personified by Despeaux, and we small fry cheered, even if silently, for the gang. At times it became a game to endeavor to outwit the officer; as for instance, on the Fourth of July. The ringing of church bells at midnight to usher in the Glorious Fourth was forbidden, and it was Despeaux's endeavor to prevent any violations. So some of the youths of the town would lead him on a wild-goose chase, while others of the gang got into a church in some other part of town and rang the bell. Sometimes they succeeded; as often he was able to outwit them; but both sides took it as a game.

Arrests were not easily made in those days as they are now. As far as I know, Brunswick never had a patrol wagon—certainly not in my day—and there was no such thing as an automobile. An officer making an arrest usually had to conduct his victim on foot to the lock-up, sometimes a long distance, perhaps struggling with him most of the way. If the offender was so intoxicated that he couldn't walk, the officer might commandeer a grocery wagon or a passing dump-cart to convey him to the hoosegow. Arrests were far less frequent, then they are now—possibly that was one of the reasons!

Before the building of the present Town Hall, the lock-up was in a small wooden building near Stone's livery stable. The "liquor agency" was, I think, either in the same building or an adjoining one. Yes, liquor was sold—legally—in the Brunswick of my boyhood; but that's a story in itself.

Police officers in the 80's did not have to contend with motor vehicle violations, but they did have certain laws concerning highway travel to enforce. For instance, in 1879 the town passed a law to the effect that "no horse shall be driven immoderately without necessity for amusement only, after being forbidden to do so by the selectmen." It isn't clear just who the

selectmen were supposed to forbid—the driver or the horse—but it would seem that before making an arrest for “speeding” the officer first had to ascertain whether or not such a warning had been given!

Food stores and how food was handled in retail shops, as well as delivery of foodstuffs, was the topic of his next article.

Wheeler Recalls Food Stores in Brunswick in the 80's September 21, 1944

The modern market, with its gleaming tile, glistening showcases, its orderly shelves filled with packaged goods, attractively displayed in a far cry from the old-time grocery store we know in Brunswick in the '80s.

There were a number of such establishments, all cut from the same patterns and run in the same manner. There was Charles Townsend's store, for instance, on the corner of Maine and Cleveland streets, opposite the Congregational Church. Townsend was one of Brunswick's prominent citizens; he was “chief engineer” of the fire department, postmaster, town agent, president of the Board of Trade, the president of Sagadahoc Agricultural and Horticultural Society. In addition to his grocery store, he had a carriage depository at the rear of the town hall.

John Peterson, and later his son, Will Peterson had a store just south of the railroad tracks where there is now a feed and grain store. There was G.B. Tenney's store in Lamont Block; Fred Stanwood's in Odd Fellow's Block; F.C. Webb's factory store, near the Cabot Mill; Barron's on Mason street; A.G. Poland's on the corner of Center street, under the offices of the Brunswick Telegraph; Larkin Snow's on the opposite corner; Barton Jordan's just south of Center street; Sam Knight's near Dunlap street, and many others.

Cracker Barrels

When a housewife bought five pounds of sugar, it didn't reach her neatly packed in a sanitary paper carton—it was scooped out of an open barrel into a paper bag. Crackers, too, were kept in an open barrel—there was a real reason for the term “cracker-barrel orators” as applied to the customary loafers who sat close to the huge stove in the center of the store and helped themselves to crackers while they discussed the political questions of the day. Molasses was drawn from a hogshead, kerosene from a drum—and the spout of the kerosene can was generally stoppered with a raw potatoe.

Prunes, dates, figs—these were kept in open boxes on the counter, exposed to the dust of the street and the attention of the swarms of flies which infested the stores—but nobody minded that. No packaged coffee was sold; the housewife ordered Java, or Mocha, or Rio, or some combination of the three, and it was scooped out of a bin, ground, and delivered in a paper sack. Occasionally, perhaps, a small sack of flour was sold, but for the most part, it was delivered a barrel at a time. Nearly every housewife made her own bread and cakes, and the barrel of flour was an essential part of her stock. I doubt if any grocery store in Brunswick, in my boyhood, ever sold a loaf of bread. If, in an emergency, it was necessary to buy one, the housewife went to the nearest bake-shop.

The stock of the old-time grocery was confined almost entirely to staples—such things as fancy biscuits, doughnuts, cakes, brand-name cereals, and other packaged goods were unknown.

Deliveries

Today the housewife, in the morning, jots down her needs for the day, lifts her telephone, and gives the grocer her order. An hour later, a smart motorized delivery van leaves her supplies at the door. There were few telephones in the '80's. It is possible that some enterprising grocer may have had an instrument installed, but it would have served little purpose, because few, if any, of his customers were "on the telephone". Consequently the regular routine was to make the rounds of regular customers early in the morning to take orders, then return to the store, put them up, and make another trip to deliver them.

I worked for Fred Stanwood one summer, and that was the main part of my job—other than to sweep out the store, unpack goods arriving from the freight house, run errands, help put up orders, and make myself generally useful. At 7 o'clock each morning I'd start out on my rounds; and as our customers were pretty well scattered all over town, it would be 10 o'clock or so before I'd get back with the orders. Then we'd put them up, and out I'd go again to deliver.

The Horse Knew

The first morning on the job, I was considerably troubled by doubts as to my ability to remember who the customers were, and the proper route to take in calling on them. "Just forget that," said Stanwood, "the horse knows!" He was right; the horse knew. He took me directly to the first of our patrons, and stopped at the door. Without being hitched, he stood placidly until I came out again, then ambled along to the next customer.

For charge customers—and practically all of them were such—we had a little account book, in which the order was written down. As the goods were put up, the prices were jotted down in the book, which was returned to the customer with her groceries. When the bill was paid, it was merely cancelled on her book.

There was a definite and unmistakably characteristic odor to the old-time grocery store which is wholly lacking now. Perhaps that's a good thing, but I miss it. It can't be described—it was a combination of coffee, spices, molasses, kerosene, apples, and almost everything else that was kept in open bins.

No Competition

There was then, of course, no "chain stores"; each was an independent enterprise; yet there was little competition. Each grocer had his coterie of loyal customers—he was satisfied, and made little or no attempt to encroach on the field of his competitors. Some of the stores—by no means all—advertised in the Telegraph occasionally; but their ads were hardly more than business cards. There were no "special"; no "sales"; no "bargains". As far as stock went, one grocery store was as good as another, and there was little point in advertising.

How Meats Were Sold

I don't think meats were sold by the grocers, with possibly one or two exceptions. Frank Webb, in the factory store, carried meats—and also dry goods, boots and shoes—but for the most part meats were sold only in the meat markets. I may be wrong, but it seems to me, looking back

through the years, that most of these markets were located in basements. If that is so, it may have been because refrigeration was a greater problem then, than it is now, and the underground quarters were cooler.

There were, too, meat carts which made regular rounds on specific days, calling on customers and selling direct from the wagon. A housewife would step out to the street, inspect the meats, exposed on the floor of the cart, and have a roast, or a steak cut as she might direct. Neither in these carts, nor in the markets, was there, as a rule, any protection against flies and dirt.

Much of the meat sold was of local production. Refrigerated railroad cars were not available, and long distance shipment of meat was impossible. There was at least one abattoir in Brunswick—possibly others—and cattle, sheep, and hogs were brought in by farmers, butchered and dressed, and sold to local markets.

Bottled milk was unknown then. The milkman, on his rounds, carried his product in huge cans, from which he poured the desired quantity into pint or quart cans, thence into the housewife's waiting pitcher. If, between his visits, extra milk was needed, there was generally a cow-owner near enough so it could be obtained.

Little Sanitation

There was little thought given to sanitation in those days. Not only did flies hold high carnival in the stores and meat markets, but even in homes, few of which were equipped with window screens. Food was sometimes protected though, by covers made of wire screening, which were placed over the dishes on the table; but in general, the menace of the common fly was little understood or guarded against. Flies were a nuisance, of course, but not a serious one.

Hotels, and similar places, provided a "roller towel" for the use by guests. Theoretically, after one had wiped his hands, he pulled the towel down so that a clean, fresh surface was ready for the next user; actually, the towel might remain unchanged for a week or more. The common drinking cup was rather the rule rather than the exception; I recall that at the "depot" there was a water tank—with river ice placed directly in the water—and a tin dipper hanging beside it on a chain. I never knew the dipper to be washed!

Somehow or other, though, we seemed to survive and thrive!

In September Wheeler wrote an article that stressed his confidence in young people by comparing his youth to theirs.

Wheeler Has Confidence In Brunswick Youth of Today Elders From Generation To Generation "View with Alarm" The Escapades of Youngsters September 28, 1944

"The younger generation is going to the dogs!" That statement isn't original with me. When I was a small boy, my elders were dismayed by the evidence of degeneration of the youths of that day and they didn't hesitate to say so. As I grew to manhood, I and my contemporaries had dire forebodings concerning the future of the rising generation. Today I hear gloomy predictions and evil prophecies about modern youth.

And yet my generation grew up to be, for the most part, rather respectable and useful members of the community. Some of them built up reputations not confined to Brunswick alone; a few if any of them brought disgrace upon the old town. Our children, in turn, became today's solid citizens; they are our doctors, our lawyers, our business men and women, our teachers—few of them indeed became our criminals. Tomorrow the backbone of our communities will be those boys and girls whom we now regard with such dismal forebodings.

Perhaps 'twas ever thus. How far back into antiquity the elders “viewed with alarm” the tendency of the younger generation to stray from the straight and narrow path nobody knows. Possibly the Pilgrim Fathers had grave fears as to the future of the colony they were founding in view of the waywardness of their progeny. It is a matter of record, however, long before the time of anyone now living; when Brunswick was an insignificant hamlet, the sins of the youth of that day was a matter of serious concern to the stiff-backed straight-laced town fathers.

Can you see them now—gray-bearded, stern-faced old martinets—gloomingly discussing the peccadilloes of the younger generation and the hopelessness of their future? “Going to the dogs” may not have been a current expression then, but there was certainly some equivalent which was employed.

We know that in 1829 such a discussion took place. Very likely it was in the old Baptist meeting house on School Street, where at that time, the town meetings were held, although the records do not show. Wherever it was, it was apparently a serious meeting. The youth of that day were running wild—something must be done to curb them—and it was the duty of the bearded, pious town fathers to find a remedy.

What were the misdemeanors with which they were charged? Well, for one thing, they were “annoying the public” by flying kites in the public streets. That they should have preferred such frivolity to sitting quietly at home reading “Pilgrim's Progress” or other worthwhile books probably seemed incomprehensible to the dignified staid old gentlemen sitting in judgment. That wasn't all, through it appeared that they were addicted to throwing snowballs; to sliding “on sleds or boards” on the town streets; and perhaps worst of all, to “obtaining rides by taking hold or getting on vehicles without the consent of the owners.” Well, they could fix all that—and they did. At the next town meeting they got a law passed providing a fine of 25 cents for each and every such offense. Probably the morals of the Brunswick youth of that day took a sudden and decisive upward turn.

Perhaps the most serious charge brought against the youth of that early day in Brunswick was that they were wont to visit “mills and other places near the water on the Sabbath” for the purposes of gambling, accompanied, apparently, by older men. So grave was this situation that it was voted to employ a suitable man on Sunday “to see that the law be not violated.” There is no record that any action was to be taken against the grown men who, it would seem, had led the boys astray—it was the youth offenders who were the target.

Playing ball was another “crime” charged to irresponsible youth. It must have been that a ball, perhaps carelessly thrown, broke a window in the home of one of the elder brethren, because the dignified lawmakers made it an offense, punishable by a 25 cent fine to throw a ball within 10 rods of a dwelling house.” Topsham people were a bit more lenient in this respect; the prohibited area for ball-throwing was “within three-quarters of a mile of the toll bridge.” Perhaps town fathers lived within that area!

There is nothing inherently wrong with our young people—unless being young is in itself a crime. I only wish I could be here to see the better world they will build—and they will probably worry about the future of that world in the hands of their own offspring.

In 1946 Edward Wheeler submitted 14 articles, the most numerous of all the years of his Brunswick Record contributions. The dealt with Bowdoin history and President Franklin Pierce, Brunswick High School Baseball champions, old customs in sleeping arrangements, how young men of his time spent their money, how he hated to see the old houses make room for new building, a monograph about General Joshua Chamberlain, a story about a haunted church and a descriptive narrative about early Brunswick geography and people. In addition, he covered Brunswick newspaper history, old railroad men, prices controls, early Brunswick businesses, and a Bowdoin College expedition.

Starting in February of 1946 Wheeler reminisced about candy stores, ice cream shops and other fascinating places that he would spend his "pennies."

Wheeler Recalls How Boys Here Spent Their Pennies In the '80s February 7, 1946

In the Brunswick of my youth the average boy's mouth was equipped with a "sweet tooth," just as today; but we had far less opportunity to satisfy its demands, and few indeed were the pennies we could spend on sweets. It was a fortunate boy who got hold of a copper cent which he was free to spend for his own purposes; and a nickel would have been a small fortune. A cent was considered good pay for running an errand or similar service—to be given a copper two-cent piece, now obsolete, was fortune—indeed. Most boys today would turn up their noses at a penny—a dime, or at least a nickel, would be their minimum requirement.

As I recall, the only establishment dealing exclusively with candy in those days was in a little building just south of the blacksmith shop on Maine Street, between Everett and Elm, with the name "G.M. Keyes" over the door. The word "establishment" is much more pretentious than the little one-and-a-half-story shop it describes. This was the favorite resort of the school boy fortunate enough to have acquired in some way a penny for which he need not make accounting; and, because a penny was so hard to come by, the spending of it was a matter requiring considerable thought and frequent changes of mind.

Keyes was a tall, thin, silent old gentleman with a white beard such as most elderly men of his day wore, and, as I recall, he always wore a somewhat shabby and faded frock coat. We called it "Prince Albert." I don't believe I ever saw him without the coat; he must of worn it many years, judging from its condition.

In the little shop was a counter with a showcase on one end in which were exhibited the higher priced confections—goodies which, in view of our limited resources, we did not waste time inspecting, knowing they were beyond our reach. There were in this showcase chocolates of various forms and types including the then popular "brandy drops," and the fortunate possessor of sufficient wealth could buy a pound for 40 or 50 cents. They were not boxed in assortments as chocolates are today; but the customer made his selections from the various trays and the old man took out the items wanted and sold them either in a paper bag or in a plain folding box.

It was the other end of the counter which attracted his juvenile customers. Here were displayed in trays, flat on the counter, the penny candies. In summer, they were protected by cloth mosquito netting which was spread over a series of trays. Incidentally, that was somewhat unusual because few people then realized the menace of the common fly, and foodstuffs

generally were not protected as they are today. It may be that the proximity of the candy store to the busy blacksmith shop resulted in an excess of flies which led the old man to provide some measure of protection.

Old Mr. Keyes had his house-keeping rooms in the rear of the little building, and as a customer entered the store a tinkling bell called the proprietor from his domestic quarters into the shop. Sometimes we got a glimpse through the open door, of a comfortable, if homely, living room; and it is probable that with his limited patronage Mr. Keyes spent most of his time sitting at his ease in that room.

With his cherished penny pinched tightly in a small moist fist a juvenile customer would give a long and painstaking inspection of the good things displayed on the counter before finally arriving at a decision and parting with his wealth and ordinarily Mr. Keyes would stand patiently and without speaking while the youth made up his mind. Once in a while, however, perhaps when something was cooking on the stove which needed his attention, or his dinner was cooling on the table, he became impatient and endeavored to hasten the decision of his customer. That was always confusing. We hated to rouse the old gentleman's ire—he could be bitingly sarcastic at times—yet we wanted to be sure that we had chosen the very best value for our money. As a rule, however, the candy man was taciturn and silent, making no comment and waiting patiently for the acquisition of his customer's lone cent.

There was a wide choice of good things for a penny. I remember particularly the long, limp sticks of black licorice, perhaps the utmost in quantity for the money which was obtainable, even though the quality might be debatable. There was also a stick called "Crow's Foot," and six inches long, corrugated lengthwise and with a peculiar flavor unlike any other candy. I can almost taste it now, in imagination.

Then there were, the all-day suckers. Of course this was the greatest value of all because, with care, one of them could be made to last for many hours. There were the "Boston Baked Beans," peanuts in a sugar coating, sold a tiny bean-potful for a cent; there were chocolate covered goodies, and all in all a bewildering display from which it was difficult for the youthful mind to make a final choice.

Bill Fields, whose store was at the corner of Maine and Depot Streets, also sold candy and this was a more or less popular place, although confectionery was merely a sideline to his cigar and tobacco business. He did not have as great a variety as Keyes, nor was his candy counter as popular with the youthful customers.

Most of the grocery stores also had a small assortment of candy. Some of them carried penny candies as well as those sold in bulk. Frequently when I had a penny to spend I went to G.B. Tenney's grocery store in the Brackett block and bought my favorite confection—what we know now as a Needham. This was about an inch and a half square and a quarter of an inch thick, the inside a rich coconut paste covered with a heavy chocolate covering. It was a quickly disappearing cent's worth, but a luscious one, and he sold a great many of them. Also at Tenney's I used to buy for a cent what was known as an "ice cream drop," a cone about three inches high and an inch and a half in diameter at the base, chocolate covered, the flavor and consistency of the filling really having some resemblance to ice cream.

I worked one summer at Stanwood's grocery store, where he had a small showcase filled with chocolates and a few other candies. The first day I went to work Mr. Stanwood told me I could have all the candy I wanted and I took advantage of his gracious permission. The first day I stuffed myself; thereafter, I never went near the candy case. He was wise enough to know that the temptation would be removed after the first orgy.

The drug store, too, carried candy, but for the most part it was the higher priced chocolate creams. In the grocery stores one could buy a pound of chocolates for twenty cents, and they weren't half bad, either; but the drug store chocolates were of higher grade, selling for forty or fifty cents a pound. Harry Allen had perhaps the best display of chocolates, and it was there that most youthful swains purchased a package to take to their lady loves.

I can recall only one place we went for ice cream. That was Maynard's located under the old Universalist Church on the corner of Maine and Mason Streets, tucked between Day's shoe store and Howard Eaton's harness shop. At Maynard's the ice cream was invariably served in booths with roller curtains which could be pulled to the floor, insuring complete privacy for the patrons. The ice cream there was homemade—there was no commercially made ice cream—and looking back through the years it seems to me that I have never since tasted anything as good.

There were some soda fountains but they were very unlike the pretentious refreshment bars of today. Most of them were small but ornate affairs of marble or a reasonable facsimile, with nickel-plated spouts and gadgets on the front, and they were exactly what the name implied, dispensers of soda water. We did not have such things as sundaes, ice cream sodas, banana splits and things of—that sort. We would order a raspberry soda, or vanilla, or chocolate. A little syrup of the desired flavor was placed in the bottom of the glass, then the fizzing soda, mixed with it, and that was the extent of soda fountain service. There were a few bottled drinks such as cream soda and ginger ale, but for the most part, if we were thirsty we had our drink concocted at the fountain.

Anything like ice cream or a glass of soda, however, was a special treat, because it was seldom that we had a nickel or a dime which we could spend on such luxuries. With our limited resources most of our patronage for sweet things of life went for the penny candies which represented the greatest possible value for our money. Perhaps the very rarity of such indulgence made it all the sweeter.

Wheeler was fascinated with his memory of the old Baptist/Catholic church on the corner of Federal and Franklin streets. His story of ghosts was apparently one that stayed with him for many years.

When a 'Ghost' Walked In Brunswick February 14, 1946

"We've never heard of a haunted house in Brunswick," writes the "Rambling" columnist of the Record of February.

Neither have I—but I can recall very vividly when, around 1890, we boys in the Grammar School would have been willing to swear on a stack of Bibles that we had located—not a house, but a church—that was definitely the residence of a "ghost."

On the corner of Federal and Franklin Streets there stood at that time a long, low white wooden building, the abandoned church of St. John's Catholic parish. Built originally as a Baptist "meeting house" in 1829, the building was purchased in 1866 and used by them until around 1890, when their new edifice on Pleasant Street was ready for occupancy.

It had hardly been vacated when some boy—I don't remember who—discovered that it was "ha'nted". Passing the Franklin Street side of the building on his way to school, he happened to tap against the clapboarded wall. Instantly, and distinctly, there came an answering rap from

the inside! He tried again; and again there came the ghostly response. Then he went away from there, and fast.

At recess that forenoon he told of his experience, only to be met with hoots of derision. "All right," he said, "If you don't believe me I'll prove it to you."

I was one of the bunch of skeptical youths who followed the psychic experimenter to the old church. There he tapped the wall—and the "ghost" obliged with a responsive knock. One and all—we tried it—two taps brought an answering two; drumming rapidly on the wall brought forth a veritable tattoo. We were sure there could be no explanation other than a supernatural one. Had it not been for the bright sunlight and the support of numbers, I wouldn't have stayed there a minute.

The next day the school yard was almost totally deserted at recess—we were all communicating with the "ghost." Somehow or other, as teachers have a way of doing, Miss Annette learned about our excursion into the esoteric, and forbade our leaving the yard, "even" she said, "If the ghost comes out and sits on the steps".

That ended our mass experimentation, and as no boys cared to carry it on alone, the "ha'nt" was permitted to rest in peace. It was a long time, however, before we were willing to walk on that side of the street when passing the building, especially at night.

If it were rats which haunted the old church—and there may have been rats there—they were mighty intelligent rodents. Anyway, we never did find out the answer.

As a lover of Brunswick sports Wheeler was proud of the 1894 State baseball champs. He reveled in the makeup and activities of that team, many his childhood friends.

Brunswick High Baseball Team of 1894 Were State Champs
William Wheeler Recalls Enviably Record Set Up by
That Outfit Which Has Stood For 52 Years
February 21, 1946

Brunswick High School has always held an enviable position in all fields of interscholastic sports, and I doubt if ever before or since has the record of the school baseball team in 1894 been equaled. For 52 years it has stood as the school's outstanding athletic accomplishment.

In that year, under the inspirational leadership of "Bob" Toothaker, there was gathered a team of exceptionally brilliant school players. Toothaker, who later became a salesman for Twitchel, Champlin Co., of Portland, was captain and pitcher—without doubt the best high school pitcher in the State. Edward W. Wheeler, the Vice President of the Maine Central Railroad and General Counsel of the Boston and Maine Railroad was manager and catcher.

Playing first base was Burton Brown, only son of Stanley Brown, who ran the old saw mill in the cove, back of the Androscoggin Pulp Company's mill at the Brunswick end of the bridge, opposite the Scribner grist mill.

At second base was Elbridge Perkins, who has for some years conducted a business in Amherst, Mass. Samuel Forsaith, now President of the First National Bank, played shortstop.

In left field was Fred Hubbard, son of "Ote" Hubbard who ran a livery stable next to the old Tontine Hotel. Fred, now retired, lives in South Freeport.

Harold Bryant—who took up professional baseball—played center. He was for many years employed by the Pike Manufacturing Company, maker of abrasives, and is now retired, living in Bristol, Vt.

Harry Varney and Frank Edwards, now both deceased, alternated at right field. Varney for many years ran a jewelry store in Brunswick, Edwards was a printer, employed by “Gilly” Wheeler and Henry Upton.

The official scorer was George Coombs, now a prominent and high successful physician in Augusta.

This, then was the team which wrote upon the sports record of Brunswick High School the story of an achievement which was outstanding—the interscholastic baseball championship of Maine.

It was in 1894 that orange and black were chosen as the Brunswick High School colors—and they were carried onto the ball fields of the State by what was probably the best aggregation of players that ever represented the school.

An energetic committee of pupils solicited the merchants and professional men of the town—many of them graduates of Brunswick High—for funds with which to purchase equipment; and additional money was raised by the presentation of the High School Minstrels. If advance preparation could help give them a championship team, the pupils of the old school were determined to leave no stone unturned to accomplish that end!

Thus financially supported, the team became the best equipped school nine in Maine. They had impressive and complete uniforms, even to specially made sweaters with alternate bands of orange and black. They bought the finest quality shoes; the best bats obtainable, with a bag to hold them; mitts, gloves, chest protectors, masks—whatever a professional team could boast of, they duplicated. It is probably that the morale of the team—and of their rooting supporters—was immensely boosted by the knowledge that they owned the best equipment money could buy; and that this confidence, plus the high efficiency of the players themselves, won for Brunswick High the 1894 school pennant.

One by one, the best school teams of Maine bit the dust before the superior playing of the Brunswick boys—Portland High School with its much greater field of talent from which to draw, was quickly defeated; in quick succession, Brunswick won over Lewiston, Cony High of Augusta, Edward Little of Auburn, Bath High, Gardiner and others—all of them larger schools. Managed and handled like a big league club, the team of '94 brought home the bacon—and the pennant of the High School Championship of Maine.

Flushed with their victories, and seeking new worlds to conquer, the champions turned their eyes toward Massachusetts and still larger schools. A schedule of games was arranged with high schools in various cities in the Boston area, and the team prepared for another triumphant tour. What the result would have been we shall never know; the school authorities, perhaps fearing that the high standing of the team might not be maintained, refused permission, and the plan was abandoned.

Those members of the team of '94 who are still living are staid somewhat dignified gentlemen today; but they look back with immense satisfaction to the days when they won for their school the enviable title of State Champion.

Wheeler was delighted to talk to “old timers” about the days even before his youth. One of the topics he wrote about was the customs and furniture one might encounter in a “sleep over.”

**Splashes, Hushers, Shams and Mottoes Were
Musts in the '60's
March 7, 1946**

I was spending a week end in the home of the Old Timer. All the afternoon and well into the night we had chatted about our boyhood days in Brunswick; one “do you remember” always led to another.

Finally my host looked at his watch. “Good land,” he said, “do you know what time it is? It’s half-past one. Let’s go to bed.”

“It’s been almost 60 years since I spent a night with you,” I said as I knocked out my pipe and rose from my comfortable chair. “Ouch! I didn’t have rheumatism then, though! Remember how we used to beg our mother’s permission to sleep together?”

“Sure do. We didn’t often get it, either. It was an event when we did. Say, do you remember my bedroom as it looked the last time you slept there? I can picture every inch of it, of course, but I’ll bet you can’t.”

“Let’s see,” I replied as we climbed the stairs to the comfortable guest room, “It was a small room under the eaves, as I remember it. Right?”

“That’s right. Go ahead.”

“There was a sloping roof and just one small window. You had a spool-leg bed—and say! I certainly do remember that enormous feather bed that was on it!”

The Old Timer chuckled. “Remember we used to take turns getting in first? With one of us lying close to the edge, the other side ballooned up and made the mattress twice as thick—then the other fellow would dive into it head first.”

“I remember. And how warm and comfortable that feather-bed was on cold nights! Seems to me you did have a little heat in the room, though, but I can’t remember a stove there.”

“No, there wasn’t a stove; but the sheet iron pipe from the ‘sitting room’ stove came up through the floor and entered the chimney in my room. That did take the edge off the cold, but that’s about all. Many a time I’ve had to break the ice in the pitcher on the commode before I could wash in the morning.”

“The commode! Now you’re talking about the most essential piece off furniture in the room, except for the bed. Remember the ‘splashes’ that always hung from a rod behind the bowl and pitcher to protect the wallpaper?”

“Yes—they were usually fancy embroidered affairs, especially in what we called the ‘spare room.’ I had a really special one over my commode—it had the motto ‘Clean Hands and a Pure Heart’ embroidered on it.”

“I suppose you’ve kept your hands clean ever since,” I laughed, “but I don’t know about the pure heart. Speaking of ‘splashes’, do you remember what we called ‘hushers’?”

“Hushers? Oh yes.” replied the Old Timer, “Those were knitted coverings for the lid of the very necessary utensil which was always kept in the bottom compartment of the commode. Lord, I haven’t seen or even thought of a ‘husher’ for years.”

“There’s something else no particular housewife would have omitted in her spare bedroom. Know what that was?”

“I’ll bet you mean the ‘pillow shams’,” said the Old Timer.

“That’s just what I mean. Some of ‘em were elaborate lace affairs, but usually, as I remember, they were embroidered linen squares, stiffly starched, one to cover each pillow.”

“Yes, and do you remember that in many cases they were fastened to a wire or wooden frame, hinged to the head of the bed so the whole thing could be turned up and out of the way without mussing the shams when we went to bed?”

“So they were: I’d forgotten that,” I said. “By the way, do you remember the framed ‘mottos’ that hung on the walls of the bedrooms in all well-regulated homes?”

“I sure do—‘God Bless Our Home’, and ‘What Is Home Without a Mother’,” I interrupted.

“Yes and ‘Home Sweet Home’—most of ‘em seemed to be about home didn’t they? They were worked with worsted on perforated cardboard; some of them pretty elaborate, too.”

“I know—I used to work them. Of course that was girl’s work mostly; but one time when I was recovering from typhoid fever I made several of them. Used to buy the stamped cardboard and colored worsted at Dennison’s—remember his store?—and then they were framed when finished.”

“Well,” said the Old Timer, “you won’t find any mottoes in this room—nor a commode or pillow shams. Your bathroom’s right in there—you won’t need a ‘husher’. There’s no feather-bed either; but I hope you’ll sleep as well as you did in those good old days. Good night.”

With the help of the Bowdoin College Library and librarian Wheeler put together an article about life at Bowdoin and how Franklin Pierce, among others, got an “education” there.

How Brunswick Helped To Make a President May 16, 1946

(Author’s note: I am indebted to the Librarian of Bowdoin College for invaluable assistance in obtaining material for this story, much of which is gathered from “Personal Recollections of Franklin Pierce” by Bridges; “Franklin Pierce” by Nichols; Nathaniel Hawthorne at Bowdoin, by Manning Hawthorne in The New England Quarterly; and Wheeler’s History of Brunswick)

The newly-born State of Maine was not yet out of its swaddling clothes as an independent commonwealth and Bowdoin College was but 18 years old, on an October day in 1820, the stagecoach from Portland drew up with a flourish at Stoddard’s Inn in Brunswick, and there alighted, for matriculation at Bowdoin, a future President of the United States—young Franklin Pierce of New Hampshire.

Bowdoin Men Like Town

Many men who have burned the midnight oil in Bowdoin’s hallowed precincts have reached high places in the business and professional world, or in the field of letters, some have won imperishable fame. Because the College and the town are so closely linked, Brunswick vicariously claims these famous sons of Bowdoin as its own; and in turn, old Bowdoin men,

fondly recalling their undergraduate days, hold both the College and the town of its location in equally affectionate regard.

Brunswick, then, as well as the college, played a part in fitting for his future high office this son of a neighboring state—how much of a part that was, is the subject of this story.

Pierce was not the only passenger on the swaying stage when, with horse at full gallop, it drew up at the old Inn. At least one other youth had also taken the tedious six-hour ride from Portland to begin his college life; and he and young Pierce, meeting on that day as strangers, commenced then a friendship which was to last throughout their lives.

Hawthorne, Too

The second youth was a slender boy of 16, with dark, expressive eyes, heavy eyebrows and a profusion of dark hair, whose name was Hathorne, and who had traveled from his home in Old Salem. It was not until years later that he added a “w” to his name, and became world-famous as Nathaniel Hawthorne, whose writings are classics of American literature.

100 Houses Here

Neither Brunswick nor its college, on that day a century and a quarter ago, bore much resemblance to the town and college we know. There were, in the little village, perhaps a hundred houses; most of them small, a few rough and unpainted. There were a dozen stores, five churches, and eight or ten taverns. The taverns were not so much hotels as groceries—dispensing liquor was their principal business.

3 College Buildings

Bowdoin College then was housed in three buildings—Massachusetts Hall, Maine hall and a crude, unpainted wooden chapel. The campus was merely a cleared spot in the pine forest which encircled the town. Near the campus were the President’s home and the First Parish Church, which all students were expected to attend regardless of religious affiliations; and squarely on the campus itself was a tavern, which advertised “a good cellar and never-failing well.”

Fines Were Many

The Puritanical President and the faculty of the young college decreed certain laws and regulations for the government of its students, most of which seem today not only unnecessarily harsh, but actually silly. The students were forbidden, for example, to smoke a “seegar” on the streets, under penalty of a 50-cent fine. No mention was made of cigarettes; nobody had ever heard of one. There were also fines for “sitting in improper posture in chapel,” for owning a gun or pistol, or going shooting or fishing. “Loude and disordered singing” was prohibited. Cards, billiards and other games for money or things of value were forbidden; any place out of town, except Topsham, was “out of bounds.” The students were not permitted to attend a theatrical entertainment or “other idle show,” and eating and drinking in a tavern was taboo.

On Saturday and Sunday evenings, the boys were required to stay in their rooms, without receiving or paying visits. No Sunday “blue laws” could have been more strict than the college

rules, which prohibited all diversions whatever on the Sabbath, even an innocent walk among the great pines surrounding the campus.

It must be remembered, however, that these students were, many of them, mere boys. Many became freshmen at the tender age of 14 or 15—There is a record of one man, later, a Brunswick preacher, who matriculated at 12 and graduated at 16. Then, too, many came from farms or tiny hamlets, and, for the first time, were faced with the temptations of the world, freed from maternal apron strings. Perhaps, after all, those martinets were wise!

Strict as the rules were, their enforcement seems to have been somewhat erratic and spasmodic. Both Pierce and Hawthorne were fined many times during their course; yet apparently they as often escaped punishment. They did carry a gun; they did shoot pigeons and squirrels; they did go fishing; They did play cards for money or its equivalent, a 50 cent jug of wine, all of which activities were strictly forbidden. The fact that the students congregated at the Tavern, there to eat, drink and play cards, could not have been unknown to the faculty; yet apparently only occasionally was an example made of the offenders.

Lived In Town

With only Maine Hall and Massachusetts Hall available for students' quarters, many of the boys, including Hawthorne and Pierce, had rooms with private families in town; which, incidentally, must have played a part in cementing the bonds between the town and the college. The rooms were bare and cheerless with uncarpeted floors, heated only by open fireplaces, for which the occupants had to find fuel or freeze. However, as wood at that time could be purchased for a dollar a cord, most of the boys were able to keep a supply on hand. These rooms, with three meals a day thrown in, cost the princely sum of two dollars a week!

What light they had for studying came from oil lamps, supplied, fueled and cared for by the boys themselves. When the oil can needed replenishing, it was carried to the nearest grocery and refilled. However, the fact that a student was carrying an oil can didn't necessarily mean that his lamp was low. A new oil can made a convenient and innocent-appearing receptacle for a supply of ardent spirits, which every grocer carried along with his molasses and flour; and it was less likely to arouse the suspicion of an observant faculty member than would have been a more conventional container.

Chapel services were held morning and evening—and woe betide the laggard student who came in late; or worse still, “cut” a chapel session. Perhaps more fines were assessed for this delinquency than any other. And yet a youngster could hardly be blamed for an occasional lapse—the chapel was without heat of any kind, and to set for an hour or more with the thermometer outside registering zero, while listening to the exhortations of President Allen, was an ordeal which might well excuse dereliction.

That the rules and regulations were frequently disregarded is a matter of record, and it is in part because they were so violated that Brunswick as well as the college, left a lasting impression on our future President and our embryo novelist. They were not allowed to fish—but they did. They caught salmon and bass in the Androscoggin; they caught trout in a brook, which Hawthorne, in the dedication of his “The Snow Image,” called “that shadowy little stream.” This brook had its source somewhere in the plains east of the campus, swung around the highland back of Professor Cleaveland's mansion, then meandered through the shady pine forest to the river about a mile below where now the railroad bridge crosses. The boys knew and loved this brook; they knew where the best trout-holes were, where mayflowers grew in greatest abundance

near its banks; where were the rocky sluices through which the stream rippled musically on its way to the Androscoggin.

Paradise Spring

They know too, and equally loved, the little ravine where Paradise Spring gushed forth its cold pure stream of sparkling water, the overflow running down to join the large brook. On the bank beside the spring was their favorite place for reading and study. Here it was that they frequently had long serious talks; here they discussed their plans, their hopes, their aspirations. Perhaps that which made one of them a statesman and the other a beloved writer was gained, not along from books, but in some measure from their communion with Nature as they lay on the soft pine-needle carpet beside gushing Paradise Spring.

Of course Pierce and Hawthorne had no monopoly on this spot; Paradise Spring was a favorite resort of all the students. It was not unusual, on warm spring days, for a group of boys to gather in this natural amphitheatre to discuss the problems of the day. The term “bull session” hadn’t been invented, but bull sessions they were.

Walks through the pine woods, picking blueberries on the plain, as generations of boys have done since; fishing the brook or river; tramping the sandy road to Maquoit Bay (they called it “Maquate” just as we do today), for a swim to watch the little schooners being loaded with lumber for Portland; dropping in at a tavern for a glass of wine—Pierce and Hawthorne spent almost as much time off campus as one; and they knew their Brunswick as well as they did their College.

Loved the Village

Standing on the bridge during the freshet season, they were thrilled by the mighty force of the torrent pouring over the falls. The river fascinated them; frequently they took long walks along its banks, or sat down on a sandy spit to watch the swift current as it tossed and churned through the “rips.” Sometimes they took their textbooks with them on these expeditions; more often, perhaps, they studied only the lessons which Nature alone can teach. That they loved the little village, nestled between the river and the sea, loved the great pine forest which surrounded it, its brook and springs, its birds and its flowers, cannot be doubted. It is probably that all this made an impression on their youthful minds which had a definite influence on their future.

It may truthfully be said, then, that Brunswick helped to make a President of the United States!

Wheeler was sorry to see many of the old structures in Brunswick torn down to make way for more modern needs.

Wheeler Regrets Sacrifice Of Historic Landmarks to Progress April 11, 1946

I have never been a voter in Brunswick—I left the old town before my 21st birthday. Perhaps, therefore, it is presumptuous of me to express my feelings, however deep, on matters,

which after all, are only the business of those who now live in Brunswick. I can only excuse it on the grounds that Brunswick is, and always been “home”— and I live again the days of my boyhood there, and to me the tearing down of historic landmarks borders on iconoclasm. It was a sense of real grief that I read, in the Record, that the old Merryman mansion on the corner of Maine and Pleasant Streets is to be torn down to make room for that utilitarian but unhandsome modern institution, a filling station.

For nearly a century and a half, that sturdily constructed building has been a landmark on the corner of Brunswick’s Maine Street and the principal avenue into the town from the west. It is dignified and imposing in appearance; an asset to any town which values the heritage of olden days.

It was built by the Honorable Jacob Abbott, in a day when carpenters were not mere wielders of “saw and hammer,” but were craftsmen who pride in a good job well done—who built homes rather than houses. Lumber such as that went into that old mansion is unobtainable today; it was fitted and put together with meticulous care and expert workmanship.

Jacob Abbott was a prominent and influential citizen of Brunswick in the early days of the last century. He was, according to the History of Brunswick, “a useful member” of the Board of Overseers of Bowdoin College and a State Senator.

In 1823, the house was sold to William Hodgkins, by whom it was operated as a tavern for several years. In the ell that extended back on Pleasant Street, the new owner opened a public hall known as Hodgkins’ Hall. This was one of the favorite gathering places for Brunswick people of that day; here were held public meetings, lectures and social events. It may truly be said, I think, not only is the building itself historic, but perhaps history itself was made in that old hall.

With a succession of owners, and under such names as Maine Hotel, Pejepscoot House, American House and Brunswick House, the building continued to serve the public until 1863 when it was purchased by Captain Alfred Merryman and converted into a private residence.

Captain Merryman was retired mariner who took an active and influential part in the affairs of the town. Says the History of Brunswick, “The houses and grounds were greatly improved and are now an ornament to the village.” They still are!

Dr. Gilbert Elliott, who married Captain Merryman’s daughter, occupied the home during his many years as a prominent and well-loved Brunswick physician.

But now, instead of a stately home where hospitality reigned, instead of a tavern serving the needs of the weary stagecoach traveler, instead of a hall where the people of the town met to discuss the problems of the day, the site is to contain a filling station. Where once trod the daintily slippered feet of Brunswick belles of a day long ago, reeking automobiles will stop for a fleeting instance for fuel before continuing a mad dash about the country. Where now is the scent of garden flowers, there will only be the reek of gasoline and oil.

Perhaps when the wrecker’s axe renders asunder the massive timbers which, for so many years, have staunchly stood as a monument to the craftsmen whose living hands fashioned the mansion, there will be groans from the inanimate wood. That may be the voice of protest from long-dead Abbotts, Hodgkins, Rogers, Seaveys, Skolfields, Mustards, Niles, Sargents, Marstons, Libbys and Merrymans, whose home it had been, deploring the desecration of a Brunswick landmark.

Perhaps, in the quiet of the night, some filling station attendant may feel the presence of one of those who had lived and loved the old mansion, destroyed by modern “progress.”

And now—the old Town Hall!

Claiming no such antiquity as the Merryman home, and with no aura of venerable history, the Town of Building has stood for only 62 years. Perhaps it is outmoded; perhaps the needs of the town and its people are for something modern and more efficient. There may be sufficient reasons for its abandonment.

And yet—to my generation, that massive pile was one of the seven wonders of the world. As boys we watched every step of its construction; we were proud of its stately beauty. Its lofty tower, with the bell that rang with scheduled regularity thrice daily; its library, presided over by Lyman Smith and his gracious lady; its courtroom where were held the infrequent sessions of municipal court, and where too, we learned something of the art of Terpsicore under Professor Gilbert of Portland; and most of all, its huge and impressive auditorium—are these to remain only in memory?

For 62 years the annual Town meetings have been held in that auditorium—we did not call it that, of course, it's always been "Town Hall." In those years, many matters of supreme importance to the citizens of the old town have been thrashed out, sometimes vigorously. There was, for instance, whether Brunswick should accept a city charter, or remain what it then was, the largest town in the State. There was the question of installing a sewer system, bitterly fought. There was a matter of water supply—a story in itself. Perhaps the walls of that hall will no longer resound to the oratory of Brunswick citizens, earnestly advocating policies in which they are interested, or as earnestly opposing those which they think undesirable, but something will be lost if and when this comes to pass.

Brunswick men and women of three generations, as would-be Thespians, have trod the boards of the Town Hall stage. Many graduating classes of Brunswick High School have sat upon that platform while their salutatorians and valedictorians have uttered words of juvenile wisdom. Some of us spend many in the Hall at Emory Crawford's rolling skating carnivals. On the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the Town's incorporation, the banquet which was served there was one of the most outstanding features of the celebration, with a long list of distinguished speakers.

Perhaps Town Halls get old and worn out, just as people do; and perhaps we should not mourn their passing. Time is relentless, progress must be served. Just the same, if the old town building is relegated to the scrap heap, I and I believe most of my contemporaries, will not be ashamed to shed a silent tear.

Sic Gloria Mundi!

General Joshua Chamberlain was a famous Brunswick citizen. Held as the "hero" of Gettysburg, Wheeler helped to continue that perception by his article on the unique individual.

**General Joshua Chamberlain Was
Brunswick's Outstanding Civil War Hero
May 16, 1946**

Perhaps few Brunswick people today remember one of the town's outstanding Civil War heroes—very unlikely the youngest generation have never even heard his name. Yet he not only occupied a prominent place in the Nation's military history, but he served for four years as Governor of Maine, and for some dozen years as President of Bowdoin College.

Joshua L. Chamberlain was not a native of Brunswick—he was born in Brewer in 1828—but from 1855 until his death in 1914 he was a resident of his adopted town, and one of its most

influential citizens. He traced his descent from one William Chamberlain, who emigrated from England to Woburn, Massachusetts in 1648. His great grand-father served in the Colonial and Revolutionary Wars; his grandfather was an officer in the War of 1812, and his father was second in command during the so-called Aroostook War of 1839.

Young Joshua received his preliminary education in a military academy which then flourished in Ellsworth, and later matriculated at Bowdoin College, graduating in 1852. After two years at Bangor Theological Seminary, he was called to Bowdoin as instructor in natural and revealed religion. Between that time and the outbreak of the Civil War, he served as professor of rhetoric, instructor and later professor of modern languages, and was in considerable demand as a lecturer.

With his military training, and especially with the family tradition of military service, it is not surprising that the outbreak of war found him eager to take up arms. He was proud of his forbears and their achievements; he could not see himself calmly and comfortably continuing the schooling of youth, while there existed an opportunity to emulate his soldier ancestors.

The college faculty strove mightily to dissuade him; he was needed at Bowdoin. They even dangled before an offer of two years leave for study abroad; but in spite of their vigorous protests, he sought and obtained a commission as Lieutenant Colonel in the 20th Maine Infantry. A year later he was made a Colonel, and with this rank engaged in some 24 major battles, including Antietam, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, Spotsylvania, Cold Harbor and the Forks. Nor did he come through them unscathed, he was wounded six times.

Probably his greatest military achievement was in the defense of Little Round Top in the Battle of Gettysburg. Some of my contemporaries will recall the "cyclorama" of this great battle, which was shown in Boston. I'd say around the latter '80s. This was a painting, in heroic size, hung around the wall of a circular building especially constructed to display it. In the center was a raised platform on which spectators stood while a glib lecturer described the different portions of the picture. It was much like standing on a hill and looking off into the distance on all sides. I can recall now the tremendous thrill I received when the lecturer, in describing the battle, spoke of "the hero of Little Round Top, General Joshua L. Chamberlain." That he was a hero is beyond question; the history of the famous battle effectually confirms it; and the records show that for "daring heroism and great tenacity" in this engagement, he was given the Congressional Medal of Honor.

In 1864, on the field of Petersburg, where he was severely wounded, he was made a Brigadier General by no less a person than Ulysses S. Grant. A year later, in an assault on Lee's right he won and achieved the brevet rank of Major General. At the time of Lee's surrender, Chamberlain was in command of two brigades of the First Division, 5th Army Corps, and was designated to receive the surrender of the Confederate Army.

Am I not justified in calling Joshua L. Chamberlain one of Brunswick's most distinguished sons?

He was mustered out in 1866, having declined the offer of a Colonelcy in the Regular Army and a command on the Rio Grande. Instead, he returned to his beloved Brunswick and his chair at Bowdoin, although he was not to be permitted to occupy it long. In the same year a grateful people elected him Governor of Maine; and to this office he was re-elected three consecutive times.

In 1871 he was elected President of Bowdoin College, an office which he retained until 1883 at the same time occupying the chair of Mental and Moral Philosophy and lecturing on political science and public law.

He was sent to Paris as the American Commissioner to the Paris Exposition in 1878; then for a few years, he was engaged in industrial pursuits in Florida. In 1900 he was appointed Surveyor of the Port of Portland, a position which he held until his death in 1914.

He was a writer of no mean ability and some of his books were important contributions to literature. Among them were “Maine: Her Place In History”; “The Passage of Armies” and “Reminiscences of The Civil War.”

Yes, it may fairly be said that Brunswick has reason to be proud of the memory of Joshua L. Chamberlain; and that brings me to the real reason for the writing of this article. Because interesting though his story may be, in preparing this sketchy outline I have an ulterior motive.

In all Brunswick there is, as far as I am aware, no memorial to this man whom Congress honored for “daring heroism”; the man who for four terms was Governor of Maine; the man who graduated from Bowdoin College and returned to become an instructor, then a professor, and finally President of that honored institution. If there isn’t such a memorial—why isn’t there?

Brunswick, like almost every city, town and hamlet in the United States, has a Pleasant street; but Brunswick’s Pleasant street happens to be the main artery into town from the west. It is an undistinguished name; it has little of no meaning. Many streets are more “pleasant” than this; and even if they were not so, there is nothing original or distinctive about the name.

Why not, then, honor Brunswick’s famous citizen by renaming this “open door” to the town’s hospitality “Chamberlain Avenue”—or “Chamberlain Boulevard”—or, if it isn’t too much of a mouthful, “The Joshua L. Chamberlain Boulevard”. Two things would be accomplished: a suitable and fitting monument to a man who was as much a part of Brunswick as the street itself, without the expense of anything more than a few street signs; and the adoption of a distinctive and distinguished name for the thoroughfare over which pass thousands of tourists every summer.

The memory of General Chamberlain should be perpetuated. No finer memorial, and no more appropriate one, could be devised than to give his name to one of the most important streets in the Brunswick he loved.

Another article in 1946 was one that described early Brunswick and its streets, mills, and activities. A proposed canal was described as well as schools, hotels, and doctors, etc.



Brunswick Was Just a Hamlet a Century Ago
William Wheeler Translates For Record
Readers Map of Town Made in 1846
May 30, 1946

Have you ever wondered what the old home town looked like a hundred years ago?

I have many times; I have tried to picture it, a little hamlet clustering, for the most part, along its famous Twelve Rod Road. Most of its population of more than 5,000 people lived outside the village proper; and while there are no census figures available for the village along earlier than 1870, even then less than half of the population were villagers.

Now through the courtesy of a Brunswick boy of my own generation, I am able to visualize quite definitely the Brunswick of a century ago. Willis R. Tenney, of Queens Village, N.Y., has sent me a detailed map of the village, made in September, 1846—within a few months of an even 100 years ago. It was drawn by C.J. Noyes from a survey made by him in that year, and shows every residence, business location, church, school, hotel and public building in the town, with the name of the occupant or owner.

A few years ago, Mr. Tenney, an engineer by profession, made copies of the map, exactly duplicating the original drawing.

Bowdoin College

Bowdoin College, in 1846 barely out of swaddling clothes, consisted of but half a dozen buildings, largely surrounded by forest. King's Chapel had been built and was then, as today, perhaps the most pretentious structure on the campus. Standing in a straight line with the chapel was North College, Maine Hall, and South College, with Massachusetts Hall, the oldest building

and a little to the west. A new dormitory had been commenced but not completed. And that was Bowdoin College a century ago.

Steamboat Wharf?

Main street (I'm talking from the map now, and "Main" street it was, according to the document) was much as it is today, as far as its lines are concerned. The Mall is shown bisecting the wide thoroughfare, with Park Row on the easterly side. But south of the Congregational Church, Main street ceased to exist; it was Maquoit street from that point on. Interestingly, too, the map bears a legend on Maquoit street, "Steamboat Wharf 3 mi."

I'm wondering, though, about the "steamboat" business. The History of Brunswick, Topsham and Harpswell stated definitely that "no steamboat was ever know to run regularly from Maquoit." That history was published in 1878, some 30 years after Noye's map was drawn, so that it seems unlikely that there was ever any regular steamboat service form the wharf which was "3 mi." from the College.

And by the way—do Brunswick people today call it "Maquayte" as we did when I was a boy, and as they probably did when Noyes carefully lettered the name of the street on his map?

Five Churches

There were five churches in Brunswick back in 1846. The Congregational church and Episcopal church stood where they do now. The Baptist church was on "Main" street, just north of Lincoln street, and the Methodist church stood at the corner of Federal and Franklin streets. The Universalist church was at the corner of Main and Mason streets. In addition, the Congregationalists had a parish house on School street, the present home of the Pejepscot Historical Society.

The Congregational church, of course, was—and is—the oldest. The building shown on the 1846 map was then new; in fact, it was dedicated in that very year. The Baptist church on Main street was built in 1840, the Episcopal church on Pleasant street in 1845. The home of the Methodists on Federal street was originally the Baptist meeting house. Later it was purchased by the Catholic church, and used by them until their own church was built on Pleasant street.

Four Schools

The map shows four schools—if there were more I an unable to locate them—"District No. 1" school was located on Mason street, opposite the northernly end of Federal street. A school designated as "1st Dist. 2" was on School street, next west of the present Historical Society building. It was from that fact that the street was so named. The second District No. 2 school was on Union street near Elm, and the third on Bath street opposite the Delta. Apparently District 2 produced many more children; I am unable to find but the one building for District 1.

An interesting feature of the map is a line marked "proposed railroad." This shows the present location of the Maine Central track, but running to Bath only—the line to Augusta was then apparently not even 'proposed.'

Fine Old Homes

Main street, it would seem, was largely a residential street in 1846. There were few business establishments, but for the most part it was a street of rather pretentious homes. Many are of the good old Brunswick names which appear opposite their pictured domiciles—Dennison, Upham, McLellan, Jackson, Palmer, Elliott, Furbish, Snow, Toothaker, Dunning, Jordan, Stanwood, Merryman, McKeen, Melcher, Varney, Everett, Griffin, Forsaith—these and many others names which are and always have been, a definite part of Brunswick.

Mills

Apparently the only industry operating in 1846, which is still in existence, was the cotton mill, although a century ago it was but a midget compared with the great Verney mill of today; and it passed through the hands of many owners before it reached its present importance. The small mill shown on the Noyes map was, in 1846, operated by Kimball and Coburn. It was built in 1836, and after a period of vicissitudes, passed into out-of-town hands, with Kimball and Coburn as managers, in 1840.

There was a woolen mill owned by Whitten and Meder, located on Mill street near Union, an iron foundry where later Scribner's grist mill was built, and a warp yarn mill near the foot of Mill Hill.

Proposed Canal

I was much surprised to see, on the map, the line of a proposed canal, labeled "for the mills", running from the river west of Cushing street, making a wide circle around the village through the present location of the railroad freight station, thence through the south end of the Mall and to the river again below where the railroad bridge is now. I never heard of such a canal "proposed" or actually constructed. Even now I am at a loss to explain the fact that it is shown on the old map. I am unable to find any record of such a canal.

The History of Brunswick, Topsham and Harpswell related that in 1807 a canal was proposed to Maquoit, but that it was never built. There is no reference to any canal such as Noyes shows on his map. It may have been discussed in a visionary way, when he was making his survey, but apparently it was not taken seriously enough to warrant a record. Such a canal, if it had been built, would evidently have been for the purpose of by-passing the falls and permitting navigation around them.

The "Town House" of that period, built in 1836 was located on Maquoit street, near the College. It was 60 feet long and 42 feet wide, with four pillars flanking the front door. It was burned in 1857, and thereafter the town was without a "town house" until the erection of the present building.

Four Physicians

Four physicians were available to the Brunswickers of 1846. Dr. Isaac Lincoln lived in the large mansion then located on the corner of Main and Lincoln streets, and his office was in a small building set well back in the spacious grounds. Dr. Nathaniel T. Palmer's residence was on Main street, near Center, and he also had a separate small office building. Dr. Ellis, in 1846, had his home and office on School near Main; later he moved to the corner of Main and Noble streets. Dr. Haley was on Main street north of Pleasant.

Two Hotels

There were two hotels, the Tontine, located on the corner of School and Main streets, and the Pejepscot Hotel, almost directly opposite. The latter was later purchased by Capt. Alfred Merryman as a residence and is to be demolished soon to make room for a filling station.

The Masonic building was on Mason street, later to become the home of the fire engine Niagara. The Odd Fellows had rooms over the store on the corner of Main and Pleasant streets. This was then known as “Cushing’s Corner”, and a tailor by the name of Cushing occupied the lower part of the building.

Seminaries

In addition to the public schools, there were two “seminaries” evidently operated as a business venture. One known as the Brunswick Seminary was on the corner of Main and School streets, opposite the Tontine, in what was later one of the Scholfield mansions. Both males and females were accommodated here, it being specified in the prospectus that they occupied separate rooms, but came together for classes. The Pleasant Street Seminary, shown on the map as run by J. Mustard, was in the rear of the Pejepscot Hotel or Merryman house. It was a two-story building, erected in 1842, and the first Episcopal services in Brunswick were held in rooms on the second floor.

Buildings and Streets

Two banks are shown on the map, neither of them, I think now in existence. The Union Bank was on the corner of Main and Bank streets, The Brunswick Bank on Main street near Mill street.

Shad Island is shown as rather closely populated, having a number of buildings which, however, are unidentified. A street, known as Island street, ran from Bow street across to the island.

What was then known as O’Brien street, now a part of Cumberland street, ended at Union, and the territory west of Union street was largely one of forest growth. Cleveland street, in 1846, was known as Cross street; there was a Maple street where now stands the passenger station of the Maine Central Railroad, Cove street ran from Maine, about opposite Mill street, to the river, Jordan avenue was then called Pearl street.

On Pleasant street, from Main to Stanwood, there are shown a total of 30 buildings. One of these, however, gave the name of the hill on which it stood—the old powder house. It was built in 1816 at a cost of \$150, and was used for the storage of ammunition for the town’s “melitia”.

I have touched only a few of the highlights of this fascinating record of a century ago; as a matter of fact, I have only commenced to study it. There are stories galore drawn on this old map—perhaps some day I may be able to dig some of them out for Brunswick Record readers.

Wheeler wrote about the issues that swirled around the old Town Meetings.

Old Time Town Meetings Scenes of Hot Debate

August 15, 1946

Perhaps town meetings in Brunswick today are invariably harmonious and devoid of dispute and disagreement—I haven't attended one for years and I wouldn't know about that. Looking back to my boyhood, however, and remembering some of the annual gatherings in the old Town Hall which I attended only because I was able to sneak in, with other kids of my age, unnoticed by the officers at the doors, it seem to me that most of them were marked by rather acrimonious debate.

Many Issues

There was for instance, the question whether Brunswick should become a city, or remain what it was then, the largest town in the State. There was the question of water supply, bitterly argued—that is a story in itself. There was the question of supplanting the street gas-lights with the new-fangled electric arc lights, placed on tall poles with “dish-pan” reflections; there was the proposal to spend tax-payers money to build road rollers to pack down the snow on “Main” street, strongly opposed by voters from outside the village limits. There was the question whether Brunswick should have a “liquor agency” in accordance with State law. And—perhaps outstanding in my memory of the town meetings of my youthful days—there was the question of constructing a sewer system in Brunswick.

Brunswick a City?

The first agitation for raising Brunswick to the dignity of city status began as long ago as 1857—and the subject has cropped up at numerous times since then. In that year, a mass meeting was held in McLellan's Hall to consider the matter of application for a city charter, and apparently the citizens present were rather enthusiastically in favor of such action. A committee consisting of Daniel Elliott, merchant, A.G.Tenney, editor of the BRUNSWICK TELEGRAPH, and A. C. Robbins was appointed to conduct necessary correspondence. To draft the proposed charter, the meeting appointed lawyer Ebenezer Everett, Joseph McKeen, cashier of the Union Bank, Richard Greenleaf, Charles J. Noyes, civil engineer, and Benjamin Furbish, the tinsmith and hardware merchant. In preparing the petition, it was carefully drawn so that, in the event a charter was refused by the town as a whole, it could be accented to apply only to Brunswick Village.

“East Is East...”

In those days—in fact almost from the incorporation of the town—there was divided sentiment between sections of the town. “East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet” seems to have been the motto: the east side, the west side, and the village proper were frequently at odds. So strong did this feeling grow that from time to time the suggestion was made to divide into two townships, and incorporate two towns instead of one. The situation actually reached the stage of an article in the warrant for the annual town meeting in 1886, when it was proposed to petition the State Legislature to “set off and incorporate that part of town east of the 12-rod road from Mere Brook northeasterly to the Androscoggin River at, or near the Narrows.” The motion was voted down, however, and the secession of the east side was averted.

It was because of the divided sentiment that the committee drafting a proposed city charter included a provision that the village alone might be made a city, if the charter should be rejected by the entire town. Just what would have become of the outlying districts had this plan been carried out is not clear. Brunswick village would have become the “City of Brunswick,” with its mayor, its board of aldermen, and its council. What then would have been the status of the “east side” and the “west side,” separated by the newly made city? There could hardly have been both a City of Brunswick and a Town of Brunswick within the same corporate limits.

Speculation on this point is fruitless, however, because as a matter of fact, the proposal was voted down. At the town meeting in 1858, a committee consisting of three residents of the village with three citizens from the east side and three from the west side was appointed to investigate the feasibility of application for a city charter, and to report at a special town meeting one week later. Their report, duly made, indicated that while residents of the village generally approved, both the east side and the west side, were uncompromisingly opposed. Put to vote the motion to apply for a charter was overwhelmingly defeated.

The proponents of the plan, however, then fired the second barrel of their gun. The plan called for an alternative of a city charter for the village alone; and by vote of the town, the “village school district” was given leave “to petition the Legislature for a charter for said district under the name of the City of Brunswick.”

Accordingly, a bill was passed by the Legislature, and signed by the Governor, which, however, would be null and void unless accepted by the Town within 30 days. A special town meeting was called, and in spite of the fact that the village alone was affected by the bill the charter was rejected by a majority of 101 votes.

Whether of not further attempts to obtain a city charter were made in the interim I do not know, nor can I find any record of such action; but I do know that in 1892 an article was inserted in the Warrant for the annual town meeting “to see if the town will vote to apply to the Legislature for a city charter agreeably to petition of George I. Thompson and others.” The record bears only the laconic notation by Town Clerk Thomas H. Riley “article dismissed”—but that doesn’t tell the whole story. It is my recollection that the pros and cons of the proposal were hotly and vigorously debated and that feeling in the town ran high.

Largest Town in State

In 1892 Brunswick was the largest town in the State, with approximately five-sevenths of its population residing within the limits of the village. A great deal of opposition to the acceptance of a city charter was based on that fact—it was considered better to remain the largest town rather than become one of the State’s smallest cities.

I don’t know the situation back in 1858, but when the proposition was brought up in 1892, I remember that there was one prominent citizen, who, it was said, had his eye on the mayoralty chair, and who fought hard for the charter in order that he might run for election. It may well be that similar aspirants since that time have advocated application for a city charter, but as far as I know it has never again reached the stage of a definite proposal at a town meeting.

Sewer Oratory

It was in 1892 that the town was first given opportunity to vote upon the installation of a sewer system and again the record merely shows “article dismissed.” Again, however, that brief

and business-like entry fails to tell the whole story. The walls of Town Hall resounded with oratory, for and against the proposition; it was defeated because of the opposition of the voters outside the village limits. Once more the “east side” and the “west side” combined to defeat the villagers.

Village Corporation

In 1893, the Brunswick Village Corporation was organized, and incorporated by the Legislature. Whether or not the installation of a sewer system was the prime reason for the formation of the Corporation doesn't appear; but the fact remains that one of its first official acts was to pass a vote to construct a sewer within the corporate limits, at a cost of \$50,000. It wasn't accomplished as soon as that statement indicates, however. Meeting after meeting was called, and the subject was hotly debated—so hotly that on one occasion which I clearly recall, two very prominent citizens, on opposite sides of the fence, engage in vigorous physical battle during a meeting and had to be separated to avoid bloodshed.

We had orators in Brunswick in those days—perhaps that is true today, I wouldn't know. We boys, perched upon the window sills of the auditorium, listed with bated breath to the polysyllabled phrases rolling out the mouths of the verbal gladiators. Argument and invective, logical, reasoning and mere name-calling, made up the scenario of the real drama, with the gavel of the moderator ceaselessly pounding in an effort to preserve reasonable order.

But in the end, the motion was passed, and Brunswick got its sewer system. In 1894, a vote was passed giving the contractor a license to excavate the streets and the work began.

Maybe today East and West have met; perhaps town meetings in Brunswick are tame, peaceful and harmonious affairs. If that is so, something which we used to have has been lost!

The history of Brunswick newspapers was a fascinating topic for Wheeler and his readers. He traced them from early to his present time emphasizing their importance to the community.

Brunswick's Newspapers Symbols of Democracy for Over 100 Years **William Wheeler Prepares a Noteworthy** **History of Journalism in the Town Since 1820** **Augusts 22, 1946**

“The country weekly newspaper,” editorially remarks the Saturday Evening Post, “is about the best symbol of democracy that we have... In printing its own kind of news the country newspaper becomes one of the most faithful mirrors of American life.”

“It's own kind of news,” is, of course, the little, homely items about you and me—about the folks we meet everyday. We read the big city papers to get the world coverage of news—but to learn that our friend John Smith made a trip to Boston last week we must turn to our own local weekly.

We read with more or less interest that one Peter Stebbins of Saskatchewan lost life in an explosion, and we cluck sympathetically, but Saskatchewan is a long way off, and we never before heard of Peter, so his tragic end is quickly forgotten. But when we read in our home-town paper, whom we know well, accidentally cut off his big toe while chopping wood, it is a tragedy which comes home to all of us.

News of Ordinary People

For it is in only the home-town weekly that “ordinary” people and their ordinary, day-by-day are recorded. Almost everybody in the community, at some time or other, sees his name in print in his own paper. It is these “ordinary” people who make up the great bulk of our population; and the record of their daily activities is, literally, a mirrored reflection of the American way of life.

Paper Here Since 1820

For more than a century and a quarter, Brunswick has had such a “symbol of democracy.” Only in recent years to be sure, has been, in the old home town, a newspaper which could truly be called “modern”; but except for brief lapses, there has been some kind of periodical published in Brunswick since 1820.

Griffin’s First Press

The first printing press in town was set up by John Griffin in 1819. President Appelton of Bowdoin College felt there should be a local printer available for the issuance of the college publications, and prevailed upon Griffin to come to Brunswick to establish a printing plant. His press, known as a Ramage, was the best equipment available at that time; although today it would be a museum piece. The early printing presses were adaptations of the familiar wine-press or cheese-press—the paper was pressed down upon the type by means of a screw. In 1818, one Adam Ramage of Philadelphia designed a press on the same general principle, but with a toggle-point instead of a screw for applying pressure. Griffin’s Ramage was a small affair, built of wood and iron, and was intended for commercial work rather than newspaper publishing.



Ramage Press

With his press Griffin purchased a supply of new type at the Boston foundry; and the whole equipment was shipped by sailing vessel to Bath, thence carried to Brunswick, where it was installed in a small building on the east side of Maine Street, facing Pleasant Street, about where, later, the Tontine Hotel stood. Shortly thereafter, Griffin moved his shop to the little frame building still standing on the north corner of Everett Street; where he remained until his death in 1875.

His first job was for Bowdoin College—and it is said that he was never paid for doing it! He published the baccalaureate address of President Appelton in 1819, but no funds were available to pay for the job, and Griffin was in debt for \$500 which it cost. It took him 10 years to recover from the financial embarrassment of this experience.

First Periodical

In 1820 Griffin published the first periodical ever printed in Brunswick—the forerunner of the long line of progressively improving newspapers which culminated in the modern and enterprising Brunswick Record. This first paper was called “The Management of the Tongue and Moral Observer,” and the mouth-filling title pretty well indicated the type of its contents. Certainly we today would hardly call it a “mirror of democracy,” although very likely it reflected the way of life of that day.

It was a monthly pamphlet, the subscription price being \$1.50 a year. Typical of its reading matter were such titles as these: “The Boaster: Two Maxims and Reflections,” “Observations Upon The Passions” (addressed to women); and “The Ill Tongue, Three Maxims and Reflections.”

Griffin, a practical printer who had learned his trade as an apprentice in Boston, performed most of the work of his shop; but he employed several female apprentices, who were required to learn all the features of the printing business, even to operate the cumbersome press.

The “Intelligencer”

The first real newspaper in Brunswick was called “The Maine Intelligencer.” This was established by Griffin in 1820, following the untimely demise of the “Tongue,” was published as a weekly under the editorship of John O’Brien, a Brunswick lawyer. It was not self-supporting, however, and lasted only six months. O’Brien also edited another Griffin publication, “The Maine Town Officer,” but little is known of this sheet.

“The Herald”

In 1824, Benjamin Titcomb, Jr., son of the first printer in Maine, began publication of a weekly religious paper, The Maine Baptist Herald. This was the most successful of all the early endeavors in the newspaper field in Brunswick. The paper existed from more than six years, and had, at one time, as many as 1,100 paying subscribers. In the last two years of its journalistic life, the title was changed to “The Eastern Galaxy and Herald,” and it dropped its exclusively religious mantle and treated of secular matters as well. Miss Narcissa Stone, whose mansion still stands on Water Street was a regular contributor to its page.

“The Free Press”

In 1827 Griffin began publication of the Androscoggin Free Press, for Moore and Wells. Unfortunately, however, he had not yet shaken off the burden of debt incurred by his publishing venture, and the ink on the first issue was scarcely dry when all of his equipment was seized by his creditors and sold at auction. Without equipment, and still owing more than he could pay, Griffin’s situation was serious; but friends came to his aid, and provided funds for the purchase of a new type and a “modern” level press. While the record does not indicate, this was probably one of the early “Washington” presses, a distinct improvement on the Ramage press. On the Washington press, the type, placed



on the bed of the press, could be rolled out of inking with a hand roller; then after the paper had been laid carefully in place, it was rolled back under the lever-operated plates for printing. Just such a press as this provided Brunswick people, much later, with their weekly Brunswick Telegraph.

The “Journal”

In 1830, William Noyes commenced publication of the Brunswick Journal, which was edited by Charles Packard, a lawyer. Incidentally, it seems to have been men learned in the law who were almost invariably selected as newspaper editors in those days: was it because they were better educated than the average citizen? This paper published for the express purpose of furthering the cause of Whig candidate for Governor of Maine and President of the United States, ceased to exist after the elections were over.

The “Juvenile Key”

Meanwhile, following their father’s footsteps, two children of Joseph Griffin had commenced the publication of a weekly paper called The Juvenile Key. These youngsters, seven and nine years old respectively, printed the sheet in the Griffin shop, and their names appeared on the masthead as editors. After the suspension of the Brunswick Journal, the youthful publishers dressed up their brain-child in long trousers and rechristened it The Family Pioneer and Juvenile Key.

The Pioneer could hardly have been called a purveyor of news in the same sense that we refer to a newspaper today. Its pages were devoted principally to “causes”, temperance, the abolition of slavery and of the death penalty for crimes, and a campaign against immorality.

In 1838 a somewhat similar paper, published by adults and called The Advocate of Freedom, was rabidly anti-slavery, and its pages contained nothing on other subjects.

The “Regulator”

Theodore McLellan, then about 25 years old, published “The Regulator” in 1836, his name appearing as editorial manager. William Tenney, of Glens Falls, NY, a nephew of McLellan, has as one of his choice possessions today, a copy of that short lived publication.

The “Brunswicker”

A few years later, McLellan published and John Dunlap edited a paper called The Brunswicker. It was issued weekly for almost a year, then followed its predecessors into oblivion. Other publications, about this time were the Forester and the Pejepscot Journal, concerning which little is known today.

The “Telegraph” Is Born

It was in 1853 that the first really successful Brunswick newspaper enterprise was born—The Brunswick Telegraph. It was published by Waldron and Moore and edited by William G. Barrows, another lawyer. A few years later, Howard Owens joined the staff and conducted an agricultural department for the Telegraph—perhaps Brunswick’s first “columnist.” Owen remained but a short time, however, and left to edit the Kennebec Journal. During his term with the Telegraph he published, independently, The Juvenile Watchman. This was printed in the Telegraph’s office and was devoted to the causes of temperance. Its life, like that of so many larger publications, was extremely short—it almost “died a-bornin.”

Albert G. Tenney

In 1857 a young man named Albert G. Tenney bought the Telegraph; and for the balance of his life—some 37 years—Tenney and the Brunswick Telegraph were synonymous terms. The Telegraph was Tenney—Tenney was the Telegraph.

I am not sure that a complete file of this paper is in existence anywhere. The Bowdoin College Library has at least a considerable number of volumes. A few years ago, because of deterioration and the possibility of complete loss, the entire file was copied in microfilm for permanent preservation. Surprisingly I am told that no copies of the Telegraph are filed in the Curtis Memorial Library. In as much as the weekly issues of this paper constituted a veritable history of the town and its people from 1858 until the demise of the Telegraph in 1904, it seems a pity that it has not been preserved in archives in the Town’s library.

Albert Tenney was a graduate of Bowdoin College, in the class of 1835. That, of course, was a long before my time, as was his purchase of the Telegraph; but I recall him very distinctly in his later years as a somewhat dignified, quiet and courtly gentleman, wearing a long beard, as was the custom of the men of that period. Almost every word which appeared in the Telegraph emanated from his pen—written, of course, in long-hand and it may be, in the earlier days, with a quill pen.

I well recall, too, his little editorial sanctum at the head of the stairs in the building at the corner of Maine and Center streets. Hardly large enough for his desk and chair, it was littered with papers and books in a hodgepodge through which only he could find his way. Here he wrote his editorials; here he compiled the news of his town and its people; here he received the cash or produce paid by his faithful readers for their subscriptions. Those were somewhat easy-going days.

Often subscriptions ran on for years with nothing paid on account—then the delinquent would appear one day, and balance his account, with cash or perhaps a load of firewood. Over the street door was a sign reading “Brunswick Telegraph.” It was not infrequently that a stranger

in town, wishing to send a telegram, climbed the stairs only to find himself in a newspaper office instead of a telegraph office.

Out in the printing office, one Stinchfield was monarch of all he surveyed. He had several women compositors who set by hand, of course—the linotype hadn't even been conceived—the columns of news and editorials. Stinchfield set all the advertisements and all the commercial work, and in addition, operated the archaic Washington press. The type, in my day, at least, was well worn and, even then, old-fashioned. The combination of old type and crude presswork resulted in a decidedly blurry and inky sheet; but it was avidly read, and we asked for nothing better.

Mr. Tenney's editorials were, as I now recall them, somewhat ponderous. He invariably used the editorial "we" sometimes in a way so inappropriate as to be rather ludicrous. His personal and news items were chatty in style—the present generation can gather an idea of that style from the "Fifty Years Ago" column in the Record.

From time to time, some citizens would "write a letter to the paper" on some topic of public or personal interest. Almost invariably Mr. Tenney would print it; and almost as invariably he would append some comment of his own—always referred to himself as "we."

Shortly before Tenney's death in 1894, the Telegraph ceased publication. This cessation was temporary, however, the paper was purchased soon thereafter by Albert C. Shorey, and edited by him until its absorption by the Brunswick Record in 1904.

Albert C. Shorey

Albert Shorey graduated from Bowdoin College in 1888, and immediately took a position on the Bath Times, then owned by his father, Major H.A. Shorey, and his uncle, Scott Shorey. The Shoreys were, and have been for many years, a newspaper family. The Major founded the Bridgton News in 1870, and this paper has been published, without a break, by one or another member of the family, ever since that time.

Taking over the Telegraph, Albert Shorey purchase a cylinder press for printing the paper, and a new job press, discarding the old Washington press except for proof work. He gave the old paper an entire new dress of type, and a new policy—under Tenney, the Telegraph was Democratic tone; Shorey made it a Republican paper.

Throughout its entire existence, the Telegraph depended as do most small papers, upon its commercial printing business for much of its support. Up to the time this paper was founded in 1853 Griffin had exclusive patronage as the town's only printer, but the Telegraph soon took over a considerable part of his business. Gradually, Griffin built up a trade as a purveyor of books and stationery, and his printing business became a sideline. His book was the forerunner of the Curtis shop, later Byron Stevens, in the same location, and now carried on by Algernon Chandler.

Wheeler and Upton

For many years, the Telegraph did practically all the printing for the town, until, in my own time, Gilbert Wheeler opened a printing office, in the Town Building. He and his successor, Henry Upton, were far better equipped to do high-class work than was the Telegraph, with its out-moded type and machinery and the weekly lost part of its printing business.

The Telegraph, too, ran into competition in the news field. It was around 1888, I would say, that the Brunswick Herald was established; and for a short time sought to enter the lists against the Telegraph. This sheet was published on the second floor of a store building on Maine Street, just north of what is now the Maine Hotel.

The Herald's owner was publisher, editor, reporter, compositor, pressman, and printer's devil, all rolled into one. He did have fairly new type, I believe, and a press which for its day was considered the acme of efficiency for a small newspaper. It was a "one man-power" affair—the power furnished by the strong arms and back of George Cripps, who turned the big fly-wheel by a crank while the editor fed the press. This was not only much faster than the work of the Telegraph's ancient Washington, but turned out a much better job.

The Herald was up-to-date in another respect; it employed newsboys to sell the paper on the streets—something which the Telegraph never attempted.

I have been unable to obtain the slightest information concerning the Herald from any source other than my own memory. There are apparently no copies of the paper now extant; and I cannot ascertain the date of its founding, its length of life, or the name of its proprietor. I am sure, however, that it lasted only a short time; the people of Brunswick were loyal to Albert Tenney and his Telegraph.

The Green "Independent"

The Herald, however, was not the Telegraph's only competitor. In the late '80s or early '90s, the American Sentinel, a weekly published in Bath, merged with the Bath Independent; and around 1892 the latter paper established a Brunswick page, prepared and edited by John H. Dunning as Brunswick representative. Dunning was a printer, formerly employed by the Telegraph in its commercial department; he never was a real newspaper man and his effort to compete with the Telegraph for subscribers was not markedly successful. As I recall, after the lapse of more than half a century, the Independent was printed on colored paper—green. I think, although it may have been pink—and this departure from the conventional did not appeal to the staid conservative Brunswick citizens.

None of this competition, however, drove the old Telegraph, to the wall; and it was not until the Brunswick Record was established in 1902 that the death-knell of the older paper was sounded. In 1904, the Telegraph was purchased by the owners of the Record, and indeed its 51-year record of almost uninterrupted publication.

The "Record"

It was in Thanksgiving week, 1902, that the Brunswick Record commenced its enviable and honorable career as a modern, progressive and efficiently managed weekly newspaper—a career which has continued for 44 years and which will doubtless exceed the 51-year record of its predecessor.

Frank B. Nichols, publisher of the Bath Daily Times, had been running in his paper a few columns of Brunswick news; but he felt that a town of such size and importance should have a live up-to-date newspaper of its own. Accordingly, he founded the Brunswick Record, with James A. Cook as the first of eight men who were to take their turn in the editorial chair. Backed by the newspaper experience of the founder, and with the efficient management of Mr. Cook, the Record was an immediate success with each successive edition adding to its laurels.

James Cook

James Cook, whose death occurred this year, was a native of Ellsworth, where he was born in 1870. After attendance at Dartmouth College, he entered newspaper work with the Bangor Daily News and later with the Lewiston Sun. It was while he was connected with the latter paper that he undertook preparation of programs for Merrymeeting Park, an amusement resort which will be fondly recalled by Brunswick old-timers. His work in this connection brought him to the attention of publisher Nichols, who engaged him as editor when the Record was established. He resigned in 1915 to go to Spain, later engaging in newspaper work in Washington and Boston.

Other Editors

His successor, Robinson C. Tobey, remained at the Record's helm for five years, and again, in 1925 took over the editorship for a further period of three years. Tobey came to the Record from the staff of the Piscataquis Observer at Dover-Foxcroft. After leaving the Record, he became Assistant Secretary of State, and was later made Secretary of State. His daughter married William Ridley of Brunswick, now head of the Warren Steam Pump Co. of Warren, Mass.

In the interim following Tobey's resignation from the Record post in 1920, E.A. Merriman edited a single issue; then Harry W. Sanders took over the editorship. He came to the Record from a newspaper in Barre, Mass.; and now is deceased.

In 1924, Emerson Hunt was appointed editor. He was a graduate of Bowdoin College in the class of 1924, and it was his first employment in the newspaper business. He remained only a short time, and later became editor of Telephone Topics, one of the most outstanding house organs of the country, established by the New England Telephone & Telegraph Company. Hunt served as a naval officer in World War II.

Following a "a return engagement" of Robinson Tobey as editor from 1925 to 1928, William L. Robbins served in that capacity for four years. Robbins later became editor of a small country weekly in a Maine coast town, in the comfort of which he became famous for his homely, humorous derisiveness of the people and section he served. His department "From My Window" has been carried and quoted in big city dailies all over the country. His death occurred this year.

It was in 1932 that Paul K. Niven became editor of the Record and now I am faced with a dilemma. There are many things I would like to say, but unfortunately, Mr. Niven has the duty of editing this story of mine, and to snare his blushes. I must modify what otherwise I might have written (Gil Wheeler would certainly blush, too, were I to state publicly my own appreciation of him and the high regard in which he is held by a host of his friends. P.K.N). With the hope that modesty will not impel him to wield his blue pencil to delete this statement, I will, at least, express my great admiration for him as an editor, as a highly-regarded and public spirited citizen of Brunswick, and as my very good friend. He has now published the Brunswick Record for 14 years—may he continue, for many years, to edit what I consider the finest example of a weekly newspaper in New England!

I wish I had the ability to draw for you two pictures, to be studied side by side. One would portray the office of the old-time Telegraph, as I recall it, with side-whiskered Mr. Stinchfield presiding at the clumsy Washington press, rolling out the two page form of type, inking it with a huge hand roller from a marble slab at his side, rolling it back with a sheet of dampened paper laid on the type, pulling strongly at the lever to make an impression, then removing the printed sheet and repeating the process, until the entire week's issue had been printed. At the type-cases by the Maine Street windows, I would show you the women compositors, excellently setting by hand the news items and the editorials for the following week's paper, or meticulously redistributing the type from the previous number. I would picture Mr. Tenney, in his cubby-hole sanctum, painstakingly writing by hand the news he gathered, or perhaps dickering with a potential subscriber, or a customer for the commercial printing department.

The New

The other picture would be that of the modern, efficient plant of the Brunswick Record, with its marvelous linotype machines, operated by experts, setting type in perfection of composition unknown in the old days; its case after case of modern type faces; its big power-driven presses, turning out an entire issue of the paper in a few short hours; its business office, with the latest time-saving equipment; its news-gatherers; its expert printers—and its enterprising editor.

I can't draw these pictures; and my word painting is woefully inadequate. If, however, it could be done, there would be in two such pictures, an epitome of the entire history of newspaper publication in Brunswick.

It is a far cry from John Griffin's "Moral Observer" printed on his crude Ramage press, and the ably-managed well designed and efficiently printed Brunswick Record. Yet each, for its day and time, may well be demonstrated as a "symbol of democracy."

*Note: It might be interesting to read the account of newspapers that *The History of Brunswick, Topsham and Harpswell* by Wheeler and Wheeler (1878) contains:*

NEWSPAPERS, ETC.

The following account of the newspapers and press in Brunswick, Topsham, and Harpswell is mainly derived from a recent work by the late Joseph Griffin, entitled "The Press of Maine," with a few additions, which the character of his work led him to omit.

The first press in Brunswick was set up early in December, 1819, by Joseph Griffin, who graduated at the printing-office of Messrs. Flagg & Gould, in Andover, Massachusetts. His office was, at first, on the east side of Maine Street, facing Pleasant Street. In 1821 he removed to the building opposite the north end of the mall, and which he occupied until his death, in 1875.

For twenty-nine years Mr. Griffin printed, annually, one edition of the

Catalogue of Bowdoin College, and for twenty years he printed two editions each year. He also printed sixteen editions (1,600 copies each) of the College Triennial Catalogue.

The first work approximating to a newspaper, or rather to a periodical, which emanated from his press, was in pamphlet form. It was issued in June, 1820. The third number had the following title-page:- "The Management of the Tongue and Moral Observer. No. III. Price per annum, \$1.50. Published & Printed by Joseph Griffin. Issued on the second Tuesday of each Month.

"CONTENTS. - Part 1. The Boaster, consisting of Two Maxims and Reflections. Part 2. The Ill Tongue, consisting of Three Maxims and Reflections. Part 3. Moral Observer, No. III. Melissa; a tale. Observation upon the Passions, addressed to the ladies. Poetry: Mathon's Return. The Season. Communication, suggesting a Legal Act in favor of 'Sitters' or Loafers. An Anecdote." On the last page was an advertisement of Griffin & Hazelton's bookstore. Only three numbers were printed.

It was followed by the first newspaper that was printed in Brunswick. This was the *Maine Intelligencer*, a demiquarto of eight pages, published by Joseph Griffin, and edited by John M. O'Brien, Esquire, who graduated at Bowdoin College in the class of 1806.

The publication of this paper was commenced in September, 1820, and was given up at the end of six months, not proving remunerative to the publisher.

The Maine Baptist Herald.-The first number of this paper was printed by Mr. Griffin, July 17, 1824. It was a demifolio. It was edited for about six months by Benjamin Titcomb, Jr., a graduate of Bowdoin College, 1806, and son of the first printer in Maine. After the time named the *Herald* was under the sole management of the publisher. At the commencement of the second volume it was enlarged to a royal folio size, and continued weekly for six years. During the last two years of its existence it was called the *Eastern Galaxy and Herald*, the name having been changed in consequence of a larger part of its columns being subsequently devoted to secular interests. In the latter years of this publication the subscribers numbered over eleven hundred, - a larger circulation than can be claimed for any other of the many papers subsequently commenced in Brunswick.

The *Herald* was the first paper coinciding fully with the faith and practices of the primitive Baptists ever published in the United States. It was also one of the earliest papers in New England to take a stand against the inroads of intemperance, by exposing the causes leading thereto. In 1826 appears in the *Herald* the first complaint and argument against indiscriminate licenses for the sale of alcoholic liquors.

Androscoggin Free Press.-This paper was a royal folio, twenty-six by twenty. It was edited and published by Moore & Wells, assisted by Charles Packard, Esquire. It was commenced in 1827 and continued about two years. In politics it was the exponent of the principles of the Whig party.

The Escritoir was a semi-monthly magazine of thirty-two pages, octavo, published in 1826-27 by a club of students, of which John Hodgdon was chairman. It was printed by Joseph Griffin.

The Northern Iris, a monthly of thirty-two pages, went forth from the Bowdoin press for six months, in 1829. The editor and publisher was Sumner Lincoln Fairfield,

a gentleman from the South. It was edited with ability, but depending on unsolicited patronage it was not remunerative. Mr. Fairfield had considerable reputation as a poet. He died while young.

In 1830 the *Brunswick Journal* made its appearance. It was a royal folio sheet, published by William Noyes, now one of the editors and publishers of the *Saco Independent*. Associated with him a part of the time was Henry W. Fairfield, now the printer of the *New England Farmer*, Boston. The *Journal* was a Whig paper, supporting J. G. Hunton for governor of Maine, and Henry Clay for President of the United States. Charles Packard, Esquire, then attorney at law, edited it for a short time, after which Francis D. and John S. Cushing were the principal writers. It was a well-conducted paper, but it was published for only a year and three months.

The *Juvenile Key*, commenced in 1831, was a children's paper, nine by seven, in neatly printed newspaper form, published weekly for two years. A considerable portion of the type-work of this paper was done by two children of Joseph Griffin who, at the commencement, were only nine and seven years of age, respectively. Their names appeared as publishers. The first, a daughter, is now the wife of a clergyman in New Hampshire; the second, a son, Joseph Warren Griffin, was lost at sea in February, 1849, on his passage to California.

After the suspension of the *Brunswick Journal*, the *Key* was enlarged to a twelve by nine size, four pages, to make it more completely a family paper and give room for advertising. From this time it was called the *Family Pioneer and Juvenile Key*, and was published with good success for four years. It was the endeavor of the editor of the *Family Pioneer and Juvenile Key* to operate upon the public mind, especially that of the young, by the publication of interesting narratives, setting forth in a clear light, not only the evils of an intemperate use of intoxicating drinks, but the dangers of temperate drinking. The abolition of negro slavery, and of the death penalty for crime, were strongly advocated in the columns of the *Pioneer and Key*.

The *Eastern Baptist* was commenced in November, 1837, by Thomas W. Newman, and was continued about a year and a half, when it was discontinued, and the list of subscribers transferred to the *Zion's Advocate*, in Portland. The paper was started and edited by an association of Baptist ministers. These were, in 1838, David Nutter, Edwin R. Warren, A. J. W. Stevens, and Luther C. Stevens.¹

Mr. Newman also published at this time, at No. 2 Forsaith's Block, the *Advocate of Freedom*. This was a semi-monthly sheet, published under the direction of the Executive Committee of the Maine Anti-slavery Society, and issued at fifty cents per annum. The prospectus stated, "It will explain and defend the principles held by the society and the measures approved by it. It will be a vehicle of the anti-slavery intelligence of the day, and a repository of facts and arguments on the subject of slavery and the measures for its speedy and peaceful removal." The editorial work was done principally by Professor William Smyth. The paper was devoted exclusively to the antislavery cause. There were no local items or advertisements in it. Number 1, Volume I, was printed March 8, 1838. Number 25, the last printed here, was printed February 21, 1839. The size of the paper was twenty by twenty-five. The publication of this paper was continued at Augusta as a weekly paper.

The *Regulator*, a royal folio, Democratic paper, was published for two years, 1837 and 1838, by Theodore S. McLellan. I. A. Beard was the editor.

The Brunswicker, a neutral paper, was printed and published for one year, 1842, by T. S. McLellan. John Dunlap, B. A., was the editor. It was succeeded by a paper called *The Yagerhamer*, of which, however, but two or three numbers were issued.

The Forester was printed in 1845 by Noyes & Stanwood. Its editor was H. A. Stanwood. Only one volume of this paper was published.

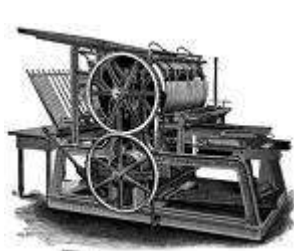
The *Pejepscot Journal*, a weekly sheet, was published at Brunswick in 1846, one year; edited by G. C. Swallow, now Professor of Geology and Agriculture in Missouri.

The *Juvenile Watchman* was edited and published in 1854 by Howard Owen, who is now one of the enterprising publishers of the *Kennebec Journal*. It was a small sheet, eleven by sixteen. It was issued on the first and third Monday of each month at the office of the *Brunswick Telegraph*. It was devoted principally to the cause of temperance, especially among the young. It was discontinued at the expiration of six months.

The Musical Journal was published monthly in 1855 by George W. Chase, editor and proprietor. It had but a short existence.

The *Brunswick Telegraph* was commenced in 1853 by Waldron & Moore, as publishers, and Wm. G. Barrows, Esquire, as editor. It was afterwards issued by Waldron & Fowler, then by Fowler & Chase. The publishers in 1856 transferred their interest to Geo. W. Chase, who published it as editor and proprietor about one year, when Howard Owen, now of the *Kennebec Journal*, was admitted as a partner, and took charge of the agricultural department. After being connected with the establishment about five months, Mr. Owen became dissatisfied with his unremunerated labors and sold his interest to Mr. Chase. Early in 1857 Mr. Chase abandoned the *Telegraph* and went to Bath, where he published the *Masonic Journal* and taught music.

Mr. A. G. Tenney, a graduate of Bowdoin College, class of 1835, purchased the *Telegraph* establishment in 1857, reissued the paper, and has since continued to edit and publish it weekly. Of Mr. Tenney's fitness for the position of editor, the Press of Maine well says, "To a liberal education and a mind capable of close reasoning and of arriving at logical conclusions, he adds unwearied industry and constant application." Under Mr. Tenney's management, the paper has been particularly valuable for the energy and fidelity which the editor has displayed in his efforts to make it a good local paper, and in this respect it has no superior in the State.



As a railroader for many years Wheeler must have enjoyed sharing with his readers some of his own early railroad experiences and the men he had contact with that contributed to the age of railroads in Brunswick.

Wheeler Describes Brunswick Railroaders in the '80s October 17, 1946

Because so many of my boyhood recollections center around the old “depot” and the railroad men, it may be that I attach undue importance to this phase of the Brunswick of the ‘80s; but I believe that many of my contemporaries have equally fond memories of the only form of transportation then available to us. Certainly I was not the only onewho made a regular habit of going to the “depot” to watch the trains come in!

The Old “Depot”

Old timers will recall the archaic structure which served for a railroad station in those days; and I have already described in previous articles in the Record—its big, barn-like train shed, its restaurant and its separate waiting rooms for men and women; its toilet for men was down the platform under the water tank, the sign on the door reading “Men’s Walk.” I never did understand why the work “walk” was appropriate for such a place!

Envied the Engineer

There were a good many Brunswick men who worked for the railroad in those days—they considered it more of a profession than that of a job. A passenger conductor, in his blue uniform with gold buttons, was looked upon with considerable awe, and the engineer! Well, we would have given the world with a fence around it for the proud privilege of setting at the throttle of one of the mighty power plants controlled by the grimy hand of the engineer. That is, we thought, the locomotive was “mighty”—it might look rather insignificant beside a modern steamer of Diesel engine.

Ask almost any boy, in my day, what he wanted to be when he grew up, and seven out of 10 boys would say “an engineer.” Probably two of the others would want to be a conductor. Even the fireman was important—part of his duty was the fascinating job of ringing the big brass bell—but none of us planned on becoming a fireman; we would skip that stage of railroading and step directly to the engineer’s seat.

I recall specifically two Brunswick men who were enginemen, “Wood” Haskell and Charles Evans. One of Haskell’s sons later followed in his footsteps and became an engineman.

There was no yard switch-engine in Brunswick in those days. When the local freight from Portland to Bath, No. 27, arrived at Brunswick with Charles Evans on the engine and Charles Berry of Portland as conductor, they did what local switching was required. Because our fathers were railroad men, Herb Nevens and I often had the rare privilege of riding the engine during the switching operations and we were the envy of less favored boys. Once—and it stands out in my mind even after some 60 years—Evans invited me to ride with him to Bath and back; and the good natured fireman let me do the bell ringing all the way. That was a real adventure!

Old Trainmen

Side-whiskered Harding Dunlap was conductor of the freight which ran between Brunswick and Lewiston. He lived, I think, on Dunlap street—it may have been Bank street. With him was a brakeman named Blaise Gamache, although on the payroll his name appeared as Gamish—who later became conductor on the engine run.

John Daugherty and Ted Dolan were conductors on the two “work trains” which operated out of Brunswick. Dolan later became street commissioner in Brunswick. Jim Merrill, as I recall, was brakeman with one of them and later became a passenger conductor.

Dolan’s Story

A story used to be told of Dolan—I can’t vouch for its truth; in fact, I believe it to be fiction, but good fiction, nevertheless. In the old days, red flags on the front of the engine indicated that an extra train was following, but with no rights over the other trains. In the late ‘90s, the Maine Central adopted the standard code of rules, in which green flags, not red, displayed on an engine indicated a following section, with the same rights as the train carrying the signals.

It happened that the first time that the signals were used was on St. Patrick’s Day, when the train dispatches ordered green displayed on what is not the Kennebec Limited. Dolan, with his work train, was on the siding at Hillside ready to go to Brunswick as soon as this train passed. When the engine appeared with its two green flags fluttering in the breeze, Dolan, recognizing the engineer as a brother Hibernian, forgot all about the new rule and assumed the flags were in honor of the day. With a cheery wave of his hand as a salute to the flags, he opened the switch and struck off for Brunswick. He made it and got into the clear before the arrival of the second section and the incident was ended. Anyway, true or not, that’s the story which went the length of the line.

Today, the affairs of the railroad in Brunswick are in the hands of a single, general agent, who has jurisdiction over station house and freight house. In those days a station agent, a ticket agent and a train agent, were each charged with responsibility for his own field of activity. The earliest freight agent I can recall was Leonard Townsend, who later became judge of the municipal court in Brunswick. Oscar Abbott was the first station agent within my recollection and my father Henry W. Wheeler was ticket agent.

Henry W. Wheeler

The latter began his railroad career in 1858 as telegraph operator; then went to Boston as a telegrapher for Western Union. In 1870 he returned to Brunswick to take the position of ticket

agent, which he held until shortly before his death in 1894. The earliest of his assistants whom I can recall was George H. Coombs, a Brunswick boy, who later became a physician of state-wide reputation and who still practices his profession in Waldoboro. Even to this day, Dr. Coombs tells me, he can read the Morse Code as it flows from the chattering sounder.

Another assistant in the ticket office was Holmes D. Waldron who later became general passenger agent for the railroad. Waldron was a somewhat gifted writer of fiction, and was a regular contributor to such publications as *The Youth's Companion*. Many of his stories had a railroad flavor and the scene of at least two of them which I remember were laid in Brunswick.

Waldron's Yarns

In those days, with the light power available, a long passenger train was forced to crawl at a snail's pace up the stiff grade from Brunswick to Deep Cut, sometimes a second engine was necessary to assist it. Waldron wrote of a young mother who went to the depot restaurant for a cup of coffee, leaving her baby in a seat of the coach. When she came out, the rear of the train was just passing. An engine was standing coupled to the Lewiston train on the spur track west of the station. Taking the frantic mother on the "cow catcher" of the engine, the crew raced up the hill behind the moving train; and just at the top of the hill passed her over to a waiting brakeman on the rear platform. That doesn't sound like much of a story as I condense it here, but really, as Waldron wrote it, he made quite a tale out of it.

Another of his yarns had to do with the ticket office in the old station. Maybe old-timers will recall that there were three ticket windows—one for each waiting room and one opening onto the platform. Directly overhead there was a trap door opening into a small tower, into which were led the telegraph wires and the electric light wires serving the station.

Waldron concocted a story of an insane man, who had escaped from the custody of a keeper transporting him by train to Augusts. Late at night, the young telegrapher was startled out of semi-drowsiness by the shattering of a window at the rear of the office and was horrified to see climbing in a wild-eyed, tangled-haired man with a big knife in his hand.

There ensued a mad race around the office, then the young operator, seizing an opportunity, jumped up on the shelf of the ticket window and climbed up into the tower through the open trap door. The madman attempted to follow him. The operator seized a hatchet lying conveniently at hand, cut the electric wires, and as the hands of his pursuer grasped the edge of the opening, he touched a live wire to each hand. That ended the madman—and the story. Pure fiction, yes; but Waldron made it sound very real and very plausible.

Other Old Timers

"Nat" Brown was a later assistant and ticket seller, coming to Brunswick from the little station at Harward's Crossing. He afterward resigned to become affiliated with the Holy Ghost and Us sect in Durham.

In the freight office, Watson B. Drew was in charge for some years, following Leonard Townsend, I think. Drew later became car accountant at the general offices of the railroad in Portland. Then, for a considerable number of years, Isaiah Elder served as freight agent.

The station agent whom I recall best was Solon Cahill. He had been a popular passenger conductor for many years before his appointment to the position of station agent. In those days when almost every man wore a beard of some sort, Solon Cahill contented himself with a

moustache! It was of the “handle-bar” variety, luxurious and carefully tended. He was meticulous in dress and made an imposing appearance in his uniform as he paraded the depot platform at train time.

Sometime in the early '80s he ran for the State Legislature and was elected. As soon as the result was known, he announced a “party” at his home, with free ice-cream for all-comers. Nearly every man in town—all the Democrats anyway—accepted the invitation. Chinese lanterns decorated the lawn and a gala evening followed. I was, at that time, night operator at the station, and while I hated to see a Democrat elected to office, I felt that I ought to be attending with my friends; anyway I could use some of that ice cream. So, as things were quiet, I thought it would be all right if I left my key and ran up over the hill just long enough to see what flavors were available.

While I was gone, however, an extra freight train pulled in from Bath, with orders only as far as Brunswick. With no operator on duty, it was unable to get its orders for the run to Portland, so the crew started out to look for me. After I got back and took the orders from the furious train dispatcher the train still was stranded—the entire crew had ceased search for me and were eating Cahill’s ice cream!

Charles Annable was yardmaster. At the farm home in South Freeport of Harry Rodick, retired engineman, he has a lantern the globe of which is engraved with Annable’s name and a date in the late '60s. There was a pride in owning a good lantern in those days and most conductors had their name etched on the glass, usually in ornate Old English letters.

The depot baggage room was presided over by James Dennett, whose assistant was Charles Murray, with Willis Watts as nightman, Dennett “doubled in brass”—he was not only a railroad man but a florist, and had a greenhouse at his home on Jordan Avenue. In those days the handling of mountains of baggage was not easy task. Practically all “drummers”—we didn’t call them traveling men then—carried immense sample trunks, too big and heavy for any one to handle, and they arrived and left by almost every train. Just about train time, Emery Crawford’s express wagon was backed up to the rear door of the baggage room, and it was seldom that he left without a full load.

D.A. Booker was bridge engineer, having charge of all the bridges on the system. There was a carpenter shop at Brunswick under his jurisdiction, presided over by Tom Melcher, who was one of a long line of distinguished Brunswick builders. Working with him was one Woodside—I can’t now recall his first name. This shop, and one for the track department, were located in the angle between the Lewiston track and the main line, and were surrounded by a high board fence. There was a blacksmith shop, too; and although I spent many hours watching the brawny smith at his work there, I do not remember his name.

George Nevens

Bearded George Nevens was roadmaster, having charge of track for his district. Although he had an office between the main line and the freight house tracks facing Union street, he was seldom found occupying his chair; he was typically an outside man and spent practically all his time riding his territory or visiting his section crews. The office work was cared for by Rufus Webb, who lived on Maine Street south of the college.

George Nevens began his railroad career, as a laborer on the track; he was not technically educated, but he knew track from practical experience—his education was gained in the school of hard knocks, and there were few indeed whose knowledge of track maintenance was greater

than his. To a degree, his family followed him into railroad work—his son Herbert, my chum “Cub”, studies telegraphy and worked for some time as operator at Bath, later becoming a train dispatcher. After some years he left railroading for a business career, and the last years of his life were spent as a watchmaker at Boothbay Harbor. Another Nevens boy, William, became an engineman and at one time was superintendent of the Seabasticook & Moosehead. One of the Nevens girls married Al White, a train dispatcher; another married a Brunswick physician, Dr. Lancaster.

Model Railroad

Cub Nevens and I had pretty much the run of the carpenter shops and the blacksmith shop, and we made use of our opportunities. We actually built and operated a railroad of our own! From a junk pile at the blacksmith shop we borrowed—anyway, we took—four flanged wheels which had been used on a “push-car”. In the carpenter shop we gathered up some pieces of joist which we felt sure were of no use to anyone—we didn’t bother to inquire—and built the framework to which we attached some iron rods for axles and our four wheels. On this framework we mounted a barrel for a boiler, surmounted by a piece of stove-pipe for a smokestack, and gathered enough boards to build a cab—and we had a small but practical and life-like locomotive.

Then we found a lot of fence rails which served excellently as a substitute for steel rails, and we laid our tracks in the back yard of the Nevens home on Cedar Street. It was indeed a practical miniature railroad, with switches, sidings and such crude signals as were in use in those days—a ball signal and a semaphore. One end of the track was built up a grade for providing motive power to our engine. In the stack we hung an old kerosene torch which, with the wick pulled out sufficiently, emitted a dense cloud of black smoke; there, with one of us riding the cab as engineer and the other acting as switchman, down the grade came our engine. The momentum carrying it to the extreme opposite end of the track. That was fun; pushing the heavy contraption back up the grade was less interesting, but a necessary chore.

George Woodbury, formerly a passenger conductor on the Knox and Lincoln, bought the depot restaurant from Bill Fields when the latter opened a store on the corner of Maine and Depot streets. Dapper, always immaculate, he was a familiar figure on the streets as well as in this restaurant. At his Cedar Street home he kept a stable of fast horses, and that stable was as neat as any room in his house. The floor was varnished and always kept clean; one of the stableman’s duties was to wash it every day. The stalls were of hard wood with hand-carved posts; the horses themselves were kept curried and shining. I am not disclosing any secret when I say that it would have been well if his restaurant had been as immaculate as his stables.

There were, of course, other Brunswick men—many of them—who worked for the railroad during the period of my youth. I have touched upon only a few of them—those who are most outstanding in my memory.

Living in the post WWII price controls, Wheeler wanted to share that Brunswick has such economic activities in its early history.

When Brunswick Had It's "Little OPA" Back in 1777

October 26, 1946

Whether or not we like it, we are "regulated" today in much of our way of life. Perhaps we believe that price control, OPA, and other governmental agencies are "something new under the sun"; but as far back as the eighteenth century Brunswick people were told, by a government body, just how much they could pay for wages and what they could charge for the goods which they offered for sale. Veritably history repeats itself.

Born of war, like the OPA, it was during the Revolution that "ceilings" were placed on numerous products—although there is no record that they were called that. Unlike OPA, however, the regulation was local rather than national.

Prices Fixed in 1777

In 1777, the General Court of Massachusetts enacted a law called "An Act to Prevent Monopoly and Oppression." It provided that each town and city within the Commonwealth should choose a committee to fix prices for labor and for the necessities of life. Brunswick being then in the jurisdiction of Massachusetts, accordingly appointed its "little OPA"; and there is at least a partial record of their price-fixing. The list is given in pounds, shillings and pence. But for the purposes of comparison, I have translated it into dollars and cents. I do not know, of course, that rate of exchange at that time—if indeed there was any such rate—but based on today's values, the figures are at least approximately correct.

Labor 75 Cents A Day

Common "labour" (in the British spelling) was to be paid 75 cents a day and "found" from "ye first of April to ye last of November," and at other seasons of the year "in proportion". Whether winter wages were to be more or less does not appear. The word "found" apparently meant that in addition to wages, the workman was to be housed and fed.

Mowing and reaping was evidently not considered "common labour," as the ceiling wage provided was approximately 90 cents per day—with the usual "found" provision.

The highest wages recorded were for "carpenters and joyners;" who were paid \$1.00 per day "and found as usual." Men "tayles" were to receive 75 cents per day.

Meat Was "High" Then

Whether or not the placing of "ceilings" on meat meant empty markets in that day 170 years ago does not appear, but there was very likely considerable dissatisfaction at having to pay 8 cents a pound for "good mutton, lamb and veal", and 7 cents a pound for "good salt beef." Fresh beef, if good, was to sell for 6 cents a pound—if of "inferior kind" the price was to be in proportion. Fresh pork, "well-fatted" was 12 cents a pound. Salt pork was a little higher—about 14 cents.

While shoes and clothing were not rationed, there was a ceiling price fixed at which they might be sold. Men's shoes of "good neat leather" were about \$2.00 a pair, with others in proportion "according to their size and quality." Evidently a big-footed man was personalized!

Cheese, if “manufactured in this state”, sold for 12 cents per pound. Molasses was priced at \$1.00 per gallon. Beans were \$1.50 per barrel.

Liquor Plentiful

Prominent in the list of commodities for which definite ceilings were fixed were the liquors which were a very essential part of community well-being in those days. Every grocery store carried its stock of rum; in most of them, a bottle and a glass stood at all times on the head of a barrel in the middle of the store so that customers, women as well as men, might refresh themselves while shopping. There were several taverns in Brunswick, but the entertainment of travelers was secondary to the sale of liquor. Every tavern had its tap-room, with a large open fireplace to provide warmth outside, and plenty of grog to warm the inner man. The tap-rooms were the gathering places for the men of the little village, as well as for the transient guests, and while it was forbidden by the college laws, many students spent their evenings there.

So considering liquor as one of the necessities of life, the Brunswick authorities on price control fixed the permitted charge for a drink, for a gallon, or for a hogshead.

A West Indian toddy could be bought for about 25 cents; one of New England variety cost only 18 cents. “Good” West Indian rum sold for about \$1.85 for a single gallon, or for the moderate drinker, a quart could be bought for 50 cents. New England rum was cheaper; a gallon cost only \$1.10. No mention is made of whiskey, gin, wine or other potables; rum was evidently the stand-by of Brunswick folk of that day. Tobacco wasn’t on the list, either; but records of prices at a little later date show this commodity at 25 cents per pound. It wasn’t the sort of tobacco we know today, however—there were not blends, no fancy containers—and no growing radio commercials! Most of the tobacco sold was in “twists” or “pigtails”; and was cut by the yard!

They Also Grumbled

It may be that the people of that distant day grumbled—as we do today—about shortages, about high prices, and about the arbitrary action of those I authority in limiting prices!

Discovering an old book Wheeler wrote an article about the early businesses of Brunswick and their contributions to the economic vitality of Brunswick.

Old Book Reminds Wheeler of Brunswick Businesses of 1892

November 28, 1946

I have been perusing a copy of the Bowdoin Bugle published in 1892. Aside from the typography, which is radically different from the printing of today, what most impresses me is the page after page of advertising:--apparently space was sold to help defray the cost of publication of the book.

With the sole exception, as far as I am aware, there is not a single one of the advertisers of 44 years ago who is in business today; and probably few of them still living. Their names, however, will still strike a responsive chord in the memories of Brunswick people of that day.

John Furbish

John Furbish, for example, advertises “lamps, chimney shades and wicks.” That was before the days of the electric lights; and college students, to whom of course, the message was directed, depended, like everyone else, upon oil lamps for illumination.

The Furbish store had a long and honorable history. The business was founded in 1835 by Benjamin Furbish and was, continued by his John from 1886 until in turn it was taken over by the second Benjamin, who retired a few years ago. For more than a century, therefore, the three generations of Fubishes, carried on the merchandising of hardware and allied products—perhaps a record for the town.

The original Benjamin was a tinsmith, and at the start, he confined his business to the manufacture of tin-ware, later adding a stock of hardware and farm implements. His shop was located approximately where the Furbish store had stood for so many years, although at that time Gilman Avenue had not been laid out as a thoroughfare. He invented and manufactured one of the first “cook-stoves” in the country and his was the first hardware store in Brunswick.

A. O. Reed

Then there was A.O. Reed, the photographer, whose studio was in the O’Brien block, upstairs, at the corner of Maine and O’Brien Streets; now Cumberland Street. He advertised himself in the Bugle as “The” photographer; and indeed, for many years, he was the only one in town. I wonder how many graduating classes in Brunswick High School has their class pictures made by Reed—how many brides, how many infant prodigies, how many politicians and plain businessmen were photographed by him!

I still have a picture which he made of me when I was about five years old. His studio then was over the A.T. Campbell grocery store on the corner of Lincoln Street. Then, and for many years thereafter, he used the old-time “wet plate” process; and I remember he allowed us to go with him to the dark room while he developed a negative. The exposures were long, and to insure the subject keeping absolutely motionless he had a clamp which was applied to the back of the victim’s head to hold it rigidly while the photographer removed the cap from the camera lens, held it in his hand counting the seconds, and then replaced it.

Bert Webber also advertised his studio in the Bugle. It must have been in the very early days of his Brunswick business, and his location was given as in the “Snow and Rines Block.”

Thomas M. Riley

Thomas M. Riley advertised his business of musical instruments—pianos, organs, banjos, guitars, violins—and offered them for rent as well as for sale. His store was in the Town building, where he was also in the insurance business, now carried on by his son in the same location. Perhaps it was later that he acquired a “stable” of bicycles to rent—they are not mentioned in his ad. Another insurance man whose card appeared in the Bugle was William M.

Pennell, who later became sheriff of Cumberland County and it today active in the real estate business in Portland. His Brunswick office was over Towne Pharmacy, now Merserve's.

Two Dentists

Two dentists purchased space to carry their cards—Dr. A. W. Haskell, whose office was in the Town Building with Dr. J.W. Curtis, and Dr. J.H. Lombard, then located in the offices over Boardman's dry goods store, now Senter's. Dr. Lombard had in his waiting room a huge glass case in which stuffed birds were posed to show the story of "Who Killed Cock Robin?" It was a fascinating object to us youngsters, and the good natured doctor let us look at it as long and as often as we wished.

Several Grocers

Several grocers were among the advertisers—M.C. Orr "on the hill"; Nason Bros., at Maine and Cleveland ; A.I. Snow, also at Maine and Cleveland; F.G. Webb at the factory store at the top of Mill Hill; L.D. Snow, whose store was at the corner of Maine and Center Streets. There was also Alexander's Meat Market in the basement of the Snow block.

Charles Pollard, whose shop was near the Town Building, advertised his "hair dressing parlors" and George O. Hubbard called his place in Lamont Block as a "tonsorial parlor". A rose by any other name would smell as sweet—both of them, of course were just barber shops, and neither bore any resemblance to a parlor. George Hubbard, whose father "ran" the livery stable near the Tontine, later entered the Army, and retired with the rank of Colonel.

Livery Stables

A line of businesses long since defunct in Brunswick or elsewhere, but active and prosperous in the '90's was the livery stable. Alexander and Hubbard advertised in the Bugle as did Henry M. Bowker. The former was, I think, the oldest concern of the kind in town. Its stable was located just south of the Tontine Hotel, in the rear of the Alexander residence which stood where the Field block now is. "Ote" Hubbard succeeded Alexander and ran the stable for many years. As Fred Hubbard was a chum of mine, I spent many hours around the place, even though a livery stable wasn't considered a suitable resort for youths—and with good reason.

Henry Bowker's stable was on the hill, set back from Maine Street near Cleveland. This was an advantageous location, as it was near enough to the "depot" to serve train arrivals; and in such close proximity to the college that it was patronized by the faculty members and such of the students as had the inclination—and the funds—to take some damsel "buggy riding". The stable also served "drummers"—we didn't call them traveling men then—who came to Brunswick by train and hired horses and buggies to make their calls in the outlying districts not reached by any public conveyance. Often the rig was hired for the entire week, a special rate being made for such service.

Toothaker and Dunning also advertised their livery in the Bugle. Their stable was located on Maine Street, opposite the Town Building, the entrance passing the store of Barton Jordan. Later Toothaker withdrew the business and it was taken over by the Dunning brothers, Alfred and Henry. The latter was a member of the famous "Ananias Club" which met in Jordan's store, and which is a story in itself. I hope to tell it some day.

Closely allied to the livery business is another trade long since gone with the horse 'n' buggy—the making of harnesses. John D. Neagle—whose shop will be remembered by many old-timers—made by hand, the harnesses for most of Brunswick horse-owners; and he also sold trunks and bags and other leather goods. We went to him when we wanted a strap for our skates, or when we needed a scrap of leather for some purposes. To advertise harnesses in a book reaching college students might seem illogical; but in those days quite a number of the more well-to-do undergraduates owned horses, just as today some of them have their own automobiles.

Clothing Stores

Two clothing stores were represented in the advertising pages of the Bugle—J.W. and O.R. Pennell and E.S. Bodwell. Both concerns have had long and honorable histories in Brunswick merchandising—Pennell's ads deal with collars and cuffs—commodities which are seldom offered for sale today.

Boardman's dry goods store—the forerunner of what is now Senter's, and in the same location—advertised gent's underwear as the part of their business especially appealing to a college student. The history of the Boardman establishment is interesting. It was founded in 1825 by Mrs. H.A. Boardman and Dolly Giddings in a house on Park Row as a millinery shop. The business was later moved to a small store, near Lincoln Street, and in 1834 to the corner of Maine and Mason Streets. In the latter year, the Boardman interest was drawn and moved—to a store in the Dunlap Block where a stock of dry goods and carpeting was added.

In 1862 Boardman's was moved to the present Senter's location, and a cloak department was added. In the later years of its existence, it was managed by Col. George L. Thompson, who was at one time Brunswick's postmaster.

Another long-established dry goods store advertised in the Bugle's pages was that of J.R. Will & Co., who at the time occupied two stores in the Odd Fellows Block, where Tondreau Bros. now are. The business was established in 1876. The Will Store and the Boardman establishment, I believe, were the oldest dry goods stores in town. There was another advertised in the Bugle—the store of Oliver T. Newcomb—but this was a new and rather short-lived venture. Newcomb was a traveling salesman for Hovey & Co. of Boston for many years before opening his retail store in Brunswick. After selling out—I think to Cahill—he moved to Portland where he was a junior partner in the firm of Turner and Newcomb.

Book Store

The only book-store represented in the advertising pages was that of Fred R. Shaw, "The Brunswick Book Store," located near the Town Building. Shaw later moved to Bath, where he is still in business.

Congress Shoes

Adams and Phenix, whose store was in the Odd Fellows Block on Maine Street, advertised patent leather "Congress shoes" with "kangaroo or cloth tops." I haven't seen a pair of Congress shoes for many years; and I doubt if those of the younger generation even know what they were. Low shoes were seldom worn in those days; most shoes were laced, with hooks

instead of holes to receive the strings; although many men wore buttoned shoes—but all of them were ankle high. The Congress show had elastic webbing on both sides, which permitted drawing the shoe on over the foot, and then held it tightly in place without the use of laces or buttons. While it hardly seems a legitimate part of the shoe business, Adams and Phenix also advertised bicycles to let.

Howard Stackpole, a popular shoeman whose store was near the Adams & Phonex establishment was also an advertiser in the 1892 Bugle.

Bill Field

“Bill” Field advertised confectionery, fancy groceries, canes and smoking material at his store on the corner of Maine and Depot Street, near Morton’s. Field opened the restaurant in the “depot” in 1865, and ran it until 1881, when he sold out to George Woodbury and opened his own store on Maine Street. While I spent many a penny there for sweets, I remember it especially as a place where I bought my first real smoke—a pack of Caporal cigarettes. Remember “Sweet Caps”?

F. E. Hall

Another store of the same kind was that of F.E. Hall, on Maine Street near Center. Hall advertised ice cream, fruits, confectionary and cigars and, incidentally, “to five pleasure boats on the river, for rent.” In 1984 he sold the business to “Ned” Willis who conducted it for many years.

Wilson’s Drug Store

The Wilson drug store, founded by Dr. F. H. Wilson and now conducted by his son James, had a card in the Bugle as did the pharmacy of John S. Towne near the Town Building, now Merserve’s. Towne first established his business in the old Dr. Ellis store on the hill, moving to the current Merserve location in 1984. In addition to drugs and medicines he advertised a full line of fishing tackle.

Henry Upton

Henry Upton, whose office was in the Town Building, was the only printer advertising in the Bugle. It was in his plant, and under his tutelage, that I acquired what little knowledge I have of the art of printing. Later after selling the business, Upton became a compositor in the office of the Brunswick Record.

Patent Medicines

Prior to the turn of the century, there were no restrictions on medical advertising, and many were the extravagant claims made for patent medicines. In the Bugle appears an ad of a certain “acid phosphate” which, it was claimed, was a brain food, and designed especially for

“lecturers, teachers, students, clergymen, lawyers, and brain-workers, generally.” “It is,” says the glowing advertisement, “a Brain Food that increases the capacity for mental labor.”

Another ad extols the merits of a facial preparation which, it declares, will cure, as listed, 21 different ailments of the skin!

Dancing Academy

The advertisement of Gilbert’s Dancing Academy in Portland brings back many fond memories. It was Professor Gilbert, and his expert pianist, Ryser, who conducted the dancing classes in Brunswick during my youth. First, I think, in Lamont Hall, later in a large room in the Odd Fellows Block, and finally in the municipal court room, year after year. He taught the waltz, the polka, the schottische, the Portland Fancy, the minuet and the Lancers to the young people of Brunswick. “Deportment” as well as dancing was a part of his course; we learned to bow from the waists in making the request “May I have the pleasure of this dance?” And we were taught the etiquette of the ballroom as practiced today.

Steamboats

Memories of olden days, too, which will appear to many Brunswick old-timers, are stirred by the advertisement of the Portland Steam Packet Company. This line of steamboats operated between Portland and Boston, a boat leaving each port daily at 7 p.m. Many Brunswick people traveled to Boston that way—taking the “Yankee” or “Jewett’s train” to Portland, eating supper in the restaurant on the wharf and then spending a comfortable night at sea. The fare, as I recall it, was only a dollar, which included a free berth in the cabin. A private stateroom could be had for another dollar or so. The “new and palatial” steamers Tremont and Portland are pictured in the ad, the latter the boat which was lost, with all on board, on that terrible Thanksgiving Day in 1898. The story has been told many times; it is not necessary to repeat it here.

Medical School

A long lost Brunswick activity is brought to mind by an announcement of the Medical School of Maine, signed by Dr. Alfred Mitchell as secretary, and outlining a 20-week course of medical instruction. Many a “medic” who graduated from that school became an outstanding physician, with a reputation not confined to Maine alone. Dr. Mitchell, by the way, studied medicine under the tutelage of Dr. John Lincoln in his little office at Maine and Lincoln Streets. His son, the late Alfred Mitchell, Jr. followed in his footsteps and became a prominent physician in Portland.

To many Brunswick people those advertisements of more than half a century ago will mean little or nothing, to those of my generation they will bring back memories of days that are gone, and of prominent citizens of that time.

An expedition that Bowdoin College students made to Labrador in 1891 included some Brunswick young men. Wheeler want to share their experience with his readers.

Brunswick Boys In 1891 Took Part In Bowdoin Scientific Expedition December 12, 1946

The whole world knows about Peary's discovery of the North Pole and the polar expeditions of Byrd, Amundsen and others, including the notorious Dr. Cook, but it is less well-known that some 55 years ago, an exploratory expedition to Labrador was made under the sponsorship of Bowdoin College alumni, and headed by a prominent member of the college faculty.

It was in 1891 that the party of students and alumni under the leadership of Professor Leslie Alexander Lee, manned the little sailing vessel Julia A. Decker and set forth from Rockland to explore the then almost-unknown territory of Labrador.

Professor Lee

Professor Lee was born in Vermont in 1852, and after obtaining the degrees of A.B., A.M., and Ph.D. at St. Lawrence, he took a post-graduate course in science at Harvard. In 1876 he came to Brunswick as instructor in natural history, and in 1881 was made professor of geology and biology.

For more than 30 years he was one of Brunswick's outstanding citizens. Genial, polished and of an exceptionally friendly nature, he was popular with faculty, student body and townspeople alike. He took an active part in town affairs and his somewhat portly figure was a familiar sight on Brunswick streets. His home was on Bath street, nearly opposite Adams Hall.

For some reason which I cannot now recall—nor can I ascertain—Professor Lee was familiarly—and affectionately—known to the student body as “Pinky.” I doubt if the nickname was ever used to his face;—his dignity would not have permitted it.

Two Brunswick Boys

Included in the aggregation of hardy explorers who sailed from Rockland on the balmy day in June, 1891, were two Brunswick boys,—Charles S. F. Lincoln and Ernest B. Young,—and another young man who later made Brunswick his home, Rupert H. Baxter.

Charles Lincoln

“Charlie” Lincoln was the youngest of the three children of the beloved Dr. John D. Lincoln, whose home was on the corner of Maine and Lincoln streets, with his tiny office building on the Lincoln street side of the grounds. Like his father and his grandfather, most of his active life in his profession being spent in China. He is now retired, making his home in Brunswick during the summers and spending his winters in Florida, where he is an active member of one of the famous old-timers softball teams.

I remember him very well as a boy, although I haven't seen him for many years. As a small lad, I lived on Lincoln street, and I looked up to Charlie Lincoln as one of the “big” boys. Even to this day, I recall one occasion when he, prematurely with other boys of his age, gave a “circus” in the spacious yard of the Lincoln mansion. The crowning “act” of the show was when he somehow managed to climb to the roof of the big house, and gave a “tight-rope” exhibition by walking the length of the ridge-pole, while we small boys gazed in awe from the sidewalk. When

it came to descending the perilous slope of the roof, however, the acrobat's courage deserted him and, as I recall it, the services of a man with a long ladder became necessary to rescue him.

Ernest Young

Ernest Young was a son of Professor Stephen J. Young, at that time Treasurer of Bowdoin College. Like Charles Lincoln, Ernest became a physician of considerable repute, practicing in Boston.

Bowdoin Students

Among others in the expeditionary force was Austin Carey, who graduated in 1887 and became an expert in forestry; Fred J. Simonton, then a senior, who, after graduation engaged in the dry goods business with his brother in Rockland; Parker C. Newbegin, also a senior, who for many years thereafter was chief engineer of the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad; Myron A. Rice, '89, and J.P. Cilley, Jr. '91, both lawyers.

Although many expeditions had been made to Labrador, little was known about its natural resources and when, in that day 55 years ago, Professor Lee proposed to the college and its alumni that they sponsor an exploratory voyage, it was almost virgin ground for study. The necessary funds were provided by the alumni, Professor Lee and the undergraduate members of the party were given leave of absence, and the little vessel which was to be their home for four months was chartered.

At Labrador

It was July 11, after having passed through one bad storm and day after day of heavy, dense fog, that the party first sighted the rocky shores of Labrador. They had made several stops, one at Halifax, and a two-day stay at Port Hawkesbury on Cape Breton where they took physical measurements of the Mic-Mac Indians.

The members of the party were greatly intrigued by the icebergs which were numerous in that vicinity. Rupert Baxter relates that at Henley's Harbor, Labrador, they climbed to the top of a high basaltic cliff, from the summit of which they counted 82 icebergs, "many of them," he says, "looking like small mountains."

Eskimos and Indians

The purposes of the expedition were two-fold: scientific research and exploration. As the party came in contact with Eskimo groups or with Indians, ethnological measurements were made for future study. In some instances, the natives were able to converse easily in English; occasionally an interpreter was necessary.

The Great Falls

With the little vessel, safely anchored in Rigolette Bay, the party divided and a group of four, including Ernest Young, undertook the exploration of Grand River. In this river, several hundred miles from the mouth, tradition had it that there was a magnificent waterfall, said to

exceed Niagara in grandeur and height. According to tradition, too, only Indians had every seen the falls and lived; for a white man to gaze upon them meant death. It was on July 26 that the four hardy explorers left the schooner at the mouth of the river and proceeded in two small boats on their perilous journey. It was September 1 when they rejoined the main party, and in the meantime they had passed through a succession of hardships.

Because of scarcity of provisions, two members of the group had turned back when within an estimated 50 miles of the falls, leaving the other two to push on toward their objective.

When within about 40 miles of the falls, the courageous pair found their way blocked by precipitous cliffs and rapid water which was not safely navigable. They therefore abandoned their small boats and proceeded on foot through the wilderness. After many days of travel, they again turned towards the river and followed its course for about 20 miles until they came to a mountain. Climbing to the summit, they heard the roar of a mighty cataract, and with this sound as a guide they pushed on until they reached the Grand Falls. After taking measurements and photographs, and having named the mountain from which they had first heard the sound of the falls, Mt. Hyde, in honor of Bowdoin's president, they started their hazardous return journey, still on foot.

The falls they found were 300 feet high and about 200 feet wide. The great canyon which extended for 25 miles below the falls they named for their Alma Mater, Bowdoin.

When they arrived at the point where their boat had been abandoned, after days of heart-breaking travel through the wilderness, they found to their dismay that a campfire which they had built, and which they supposed had been thoroughly extinguished, had burned into the mossy ground and smoldered until it reached the boat, which, together with their small stock of provisions for the return trip, had been totally consumed. They were then some 200 miles from the nearest abode of human beings, without provisions, and with only a small revolver, and a limited supply of ammunition with which to secure food.

With undiminished courage, they built a crude raft of logs, bound together with saplings, and with much difficulty and after a narrow escape from disaster they were able to float down the river some 80 miles. From this point they were obliged to continue their weary journey on foot to the mouth of the river, where a native family ministered to their needs until they were picked up by the Julia A. Decker. These two intrepid explorers whose hardships and vicissitudes were forgotten in the pride of achievement were Austin Carey and D.M. Cole, both Bowdoin Alumni.

The party once more united, the little vessel was turned toward home, and after passing through dense fog and encountering fierce gales, finally dropped anchor in Rockland harbor on the afternoon of September 24.

Important Results

The expedition was over; but its results have been distinct asset to the world, as well as to the college which sponsored it. The party brought back, for preservation at the college, an important collection of natural history and archeological specimens. Among these were bone carvings and other strange relics found at the site of an old, abandoned Eskimo village.

Following the return of the explorers, Professor Lee wrote and published four articles on the scientific results of the expedition, and for some years thereafter he gave lectures on the subject, not only to scientists but to gatherings of laymen.

Brunswick has always had a vicarious claim to the achievements of the old college which is so vital a part of the town; but in this instance, two of Brunswick's own sons helped to make history.

Seven articles were submitted and printed in 1947. They were varied, dealing with early postal rates, women's styles in 1747, telephone service, a Harpswell murder mystery, prices in early Brunswick history, the Dunlap Block and a potpourri of recollections.

In March 1947 Wheeler narrated a story about the process of mailing a letter in 1830.

It Cost Pyam Prince 25 Cents To Mail A Letter 117 Years Ago March 27, 1947

I have just had the privilege of reading, in the original handwriting, a letter indited 177 years ago. The paper was handmade, with the genuine deckle-edge resulting from that method of manufacture. It is today somewhat yellowed by age, and the ink has faded, but the entire letter is clearly legible.

No envelopes were employed for letters in that day, but the sheet was folded, fastened with sealing wax, and addressed on the outside. Neither were postage stamps used—possibly they had not then been conceived—and the cost of postage was written in ink in the location where today we place our stamp. Generally letters were sent “collect” and unless the fee was paid, the postmaster refused delivery.

Postage rates varied according to distance. A letter from Brunswick to Boston cost 12 ½ cents; to New York 17 ¾ cents, and for a distance of more than 500 miles, the fee was 25 cents. The latter was the charge paid by the recipient of the missive about which I am writing.

Mailed From Washington

It was dated Wilmington, N.C. January 7, 1830, and was written by Pyam—yes, that's right, Pyam Prince—to his wife in Brunswick. Pyam Prince was a seafaring man, at that time on the brig Maine, under Captain Eaton. I am unable to locate the name of a Captain Eaton in any list of Brunswick master mariners and from the fact that Prince speaks of him as a “stranger”, it would appear that his home was elsewhere, possibly in Bath.

Records show a brig named Maine, Captain Sylvester, as operating regularly between Brunswick and Boston in 1820; and it seems probable that this was the same vessel which, at the time the letter was written, was in the West Indies trade. It seems strange to us today to read of cargo vessels docking at Brunswick; but it is a well substantiated fact that in the early 1800's fairly large craft could navigate the river as far as the Brunswick falls.

Pyam's Letter

Pyam Prince's letter carries the salutation: “Dearly beloved and ever respectful wife” and is signed “I remain as I hope I always shall your Affectionate and loving Husband, Pyam Prince.” The handwriting is in the olden style, and in all probability was done with a quill pen.

Much of the contents is of an intimately personal nature and may not be quoted here, but certain passages are of general interest.

Urging his wife to write, Prince says: "We are loaded and shall go down river tomorrow, but if your letter arrives in the course of a few days it will be taken our and carried to the West Indies where I hope to receive it. We are bound for Martinico, and from there we expect to return to this place and take freight for New York or Boston and then to Bath where I expect to arrive about the 20th of April if I should live and nothing in Providence prevents."

Hoped To Return

Whether or not this proved to be his last voyage does not appear, but it is evident that he so desired. "I should like," he writes, "to return and find you alive and well to remain at home with you, for the more I go to sea the less I like it, not because I am not used as well with strangers as with acquaintances and better but because I think if we was so minded we might live together in peace and not be continually haunted with that anxiety which we feel for each other while I am away."

Prince's stay in Wilmington could not have been especially entertaining for he writes: "I have spent the nights alone since I have been here for Capt. Eaton has not spent one on board." This would appear to indicate that Prince was first mate of the brig, and in charge during the master's absence.

Now, just how did that letter reach Brunswick? It was long before the advent of railroads, of course, and it is probably that it traveled the entire distance from Wilmington to Brunswick by stage coach. How long it took, and when it arrived at its destination, we can't tell; but we do know that on its arrival in Brunswick it was handled by Postmaster Joseph McLellan, whose office was on Maine Street near the foot of the Mall.

First Mail Route

The first mail route from Boston to Brunswick was established shortly after the Revolutionary War. From Portland to Brunswick and Bath, the mail was transported by Richard Kimball, on foot, and its volume was so small that he had no difficulty in carrying all the mail for the two towns in his coat pockets! This service was rendered once a fortnight, it was not until about 1800 that a weekly mail was dispatched. By 1803 there were three mails a week, each requiring three days time to be transported from Boston to Brunswick. According to the Farmers' Almanac for 1810, it was in that year that the first daily mail was established.

Brunswick's first post office was authorized in 1793, with Deacon Andrew Dunning as postmaster. The office was in the good Deacon's home of Maine Street, near Nobel Street; and mail was kept in a desk in a corner of a room, where citizens could look it over at their leisure and take whatever was intended for them. It is possible that a sort of unofficial delivery service was in effect; if a man found a letter for his neighbor he probably took it along with his own and delivered it.

Post Office Moves

Following the death of Deacon Dunning, his son, Robert, was made postmaster, and moved the office to the corner of Maine and Dunlap Streets. In 1824, under Joseph McKeen, the

office was on Mill Street, then moved to the corner of Maine and Mason Streets, and in 1827 was located on Maine Street opposite the Mall, where Pyam Prince's letter was delivered upon the payment of 25 cents. There were several other removals until 1871 when the office was established about where the Town Building is now.

One of the early postmasters was Theodore S. McLellan, one of Brunswick's prominent and highly respected citizens. He served two terms: 1840 to 1842 and 1843 to 1849. Another prominent Brunswick man to serve in this capacity was Albert G. Tenney, editor of the Brunswick Telegraph, who was postmaster for only 8 months in 1866-7. Benjamin Dennison, of the Box-shop Dennisons, served from 1861 to 1866.

James W. Crawford

The first postmaster of whom I have personal recollection was James W. Crawford, who was appointed in 1880 and held the office for four years. He was a tall man, wearing a full beard, as was the custom of the time; he lived, on Spring Street. James Crawford was a man of many attainments; he was an artist of considerable ability, a surveyor, and a draftsman. Unless I am mistaken, his wife was a sister of John Winchell. His son, also James, was one of my particular crowd, and a prominent member of the old Brunswick Dramatic Association. I shall never forget his impersonation of rural characters. We thought him equal if not superior to Denman Thompson.

Following Crawford was Charles E. Townsend, who served to separate terms, from 1884 to 1887 and from 1891 to 1896. Townsend was one of Brunswick's political leaders, an ardent Republican and a strong party worker. He, too, was a man of many activities. He ran a grocery store on the hill, near Cleaveland Street; he had a carriage depository back of the present location of the Town building; was at one time engaged in the lumber business and held, at various periods, the office of Town Agent, Chief of the Fire Department, President of the Sagadahoc Agricultural and Horticultural Society, President of the Board of Trade, Chairman of the Board of Selectmen, Chairman of the Republican Town Committee. At the time when an attempt was made to obtain a city charter for Brunswick, he was considered a candidate for the first Mayor.

Between the two terms of Townsend, William B. Woodward was postmaster. He was a railroad man, employed by Maine Central in the baggage room of the Brunswick station. It is my recollection that he returned to his former occupation after his term in the post office and remained there until succeeded by the late Joseph Dolan.

William M. Pennell

Following Townsend's second term, William M. Pennell became postmaster in 1896. Pennell was as strong a Democrat as Townsend was Republican, and he was the spark-plug of the organization in Brunswick. He conducted a real estate and insurance business, organizing the Brunswick Loan and Building Association of which he was Secretary, and was interested in several business ventures. He was later elected Sheriff of Cumberland County and moved to Portland where he still resides and is active in business at the age of 90.

The Republicans won again in 1900 and once more Charles Townsend took over the postmastership. He was followed in 1904 by Co. George L. Thompson, owner of Boardman Dry Goods Store, which was located where Senter's is now. Thompson held the office for a longer period than any of his predecessors—a 12 year incumbent from 1904 to 1916.

Isaiah G. Elder

Another railroad man, Isaiah G. Elder, was appointed in 1916 and held office until 1924. Elder was for many years the Maine Central's freight agent at Brunswick in which capacity he followed Watson B. Drew, later car accountant for the railroad, and Leonard Townsend, who afterward became Judge of the Municipal Court.

Lawrence A. Brown took office in 1924, continuing until 1933. He is now Treasurer of the Brunswick Savings Institution and has served as chairman of the Board of Selectmen.

George W. Leonard was appointed postmaster in 1933. He was a "career man" in the Post Office Department, having been a clerk in the local office prior to his appointment. His father was an employee of the Maine Central Railroad. Laval R. Lebel, the present incumbent, took office at the expiration of Leonard's term in 1942. He has served as Brunswick's Representative to the Maine Legislature, and prior to his appointment was connected with the United States Internal Revenue Office in Bath.

A Few Changes

There have been a few changes since Pyam Prince wrote his "ever respected wife" back in 1830. The letter for which she paid 25 cents would travel today for three and that's something more than a difference of 25 cents. A quarter of a dollar was real money in that day; it was one fourth of an average day's wage. Being carried by horse-drawn stages, the letter was doubtless weeks on its journey. Today a letter mailed in Boston in the morning may be delivered by a uniformed carrier to the Brunswick addressee in the afternoon. Instead of a desk in a corner of a room in a dwelling house, Brunswick has today a handsome post office edifice of which the town may well be proud.

Let us hope that mariner Pyam Prince got his wish that the brig Maine landed him safely in Bath; that he found his wife "alive and well"; and that they lived together in peace in their Brunswick home.

Wheeler then submitted a series of recollections, sometimes "wandering" from one thing to another.

Wheeler Writes of This and That and Other Things

May 13, 1947

This is going to be an erratic, rambling sort of piece. It will touch on several wholly unrelated subjects, without even the semblance of a thread to tie them together. Something like the boarding house hash—a little of everything that's left over.

Willis R. Tenney

The recent story about old-time Brunswick merchants and professional men brought me a long letter from Willis R. Tenney, a former Brunswick boy, whose love for the old town has endured through all the years of his absence. In his home town of Glenn's Falls, NY he eagerly

awaits the coming of the Brunswick Record each week, always finding in it something which takes him back to the days of his boyhood.

So as he read of the men who advertised in the Bowdoin Bugle some 45 years ago, he “took his pen in hand” and reminisced about those good old days.

Dr. Lombard

He recalls Dr. Lombard, the dentist, as located in an office on the corner of Maine and Mason Streets rather than over Boardman’s where I placed him. We are both correct, however; Lombard moved from the Mason Street location sometime around 1888. Tenney doesn’t remember the cage of stuffed birds, which is so vivid in my memory, but he does remember that one the wall of the Lombard waiting room there hung a large framed picture of the Confederate war-vessel “Alabama”. A plaque on the frame bore an inscription which so intrigued the youthful Tenney that he copied it and preserved it:

“The Alabama”
 Built in a British Shipyard
 By British Workmen
 Of British Oak
 Armed With British Guns
 Manned By British Sailors
 Trained in the British Navy
 And
 Sunk in the British Channel
 In 80 Minutes
 By the
 “Yankee Sloop of War
 Kearsage”
 Captain John R. Winslow
 June 16, 1864

I probably saw that picture many times. I don’t remember it at all. However, recalling Dr. Lombard’s consideration for the boys of the town, I am sure that many of us, who wanted to drop in, to look at it, were welcome.

Stuffed Birds

The mention of stuffed birds brought to Tenney’s mind another part of Maine Street in that period. Gardner Cram kept a jewelry store on the corner of Maine and O’Brien Street, now Cumberland Street, and one window was full of stuffed birds, principally game birds. Most of these were stuffed by a young Bowdoin student, an amateur taxidermist, who then lived with his mother on Center Street. His name was Peary—and he later became famous as an explorer and discoverer of the North Pole.

Willis Tenney and his brother Maynard once shot a sparrow with a “bow-gun”—that’s what we called them then, or perhaps cross-bow is the correct title. Anyway, they took it to Peary to have it stuffed; but he asked the price of 50 cents, which was exactly 50 cents more than the young hunters possessed, so they were never able to say, in later life, that they owned a bird

stuffed by the conqueror of the North Pole. Another Tenney got his name in the paper because he had the wisdom to buy insurance.

Just why this should have been considered newsworthy is not clear at this time. It couldn't have been unusual, even then, to purchase protective insurance. There were several insurance agencies in town; they must have sold policies or they wouldn't have continued in business. There was Thomas Riley in the Town Building, whose son still carries on the agency; William M. Pennell, whose office was over Meserve's Drug Store, Harry F. Thompson, and others. If it was so unusual to sell a policy that it made news, it leads one to wonder how insurance men made a living.

Winter Weather

In that December 50 years ago, according to the Telegraph, "there was good skating on the small ponds." But—the paper also states that "Hal Bryant enjoyed a ducking at Walker Pond the first of the week." I'd like to know the story of that! Maybe even if the skating was "good;" the ice was too thin for safety. Right along with that item, Editor Tenney declares that the bicycling was good on the streets about town. It must have been that there was little of no snow; we did not bicycle in the winter as the boys do now. The streets weren't plowed, and even the huge snow roller couldn't leave a surface suitable for wheels. There may have been a little riding on the sidewalks, although I think this was forbidden by town ordinance. So, I think we may safely assume that in December a half century ago the weather was cold, but there was no snow.

"Only a little over eleven dollars," says the Telegraph, "was taken at the door at the Julia Ward Howe lecture." This is surprising. Brunswick people have always patronized worthwhile events—in may day at least—and one wonders why so eminent a speaker as Julia Ward Howe attracted such a small audience. Entertainments were few and far between in Brunswick in the '90s and usually even a mediocre performance was well patronized.

Parcels and Mail

"Mr. Crawford's parcel delivery team was on hand Monday morning," says Mr. Tenney, "and did quite a business." Remember Emery Crawford and his "parcel delivery team?" I can see him now—tall, slight of build—driving his wagon with the "drummer's" trunks and sample cases, or guiding a two-horse team with a "jigger" for heavy loads. He did most of the hauling for hire in town. The date seems to indicate that the "quite" a business was due to the Christmas season.

"The mail carrier"—note the implication that there was but one—"averages 60 to 80 pieces of mail a trip on his 15 mile "route". I had left Brunswick when the carrier system was first made effective, but it seems to me if, on a 15 mile route, he carried only 60 to 80 pieces, many people must have retained their post office boxes. I wouldn't be at all surprised if that was so, anyway; Brunswick people were inclined to be conservative—what they always had done they would always continue to do. I know at least one citizen who has never yet given up his box—I think he has the same number he had when the old post office was in the Town Building.

There was something lost, anyway, when Uncle Sam started to deliver mail to the homes. There was something friendly and social about going to the post office for the mail—meeting friends, chatting of politics or the latest local news, even gossiping. That's gone now.

And who was the first carrier that had 80 pieces of mail a day on his 15 mile route? Was it one of the Gahan boys?

Electric Lights

“Electric lights,” says the Telegraph, “have been put in the vestry of the Free Baptist Church which make it more comfortable for the large congregations that gather there every Sunday evening”. The Free Baptist Church was on O’Brien Street (now Cumberland) just a short distance in from Maine and about opposite the Captain William Otis residence. It may well be that this was the first church to be lighted by the newfangled electric lamps, hanging naked from the ceiling by a cord.

L.P. Huntoon was reported as having visited Lewiston during the week. He was mine host at the Tontine Hotel—a genial and well-liked boniface. Unless he went for some special purpose, which in itself is news, it might appear that his travels hardly warranted the space; but it must be remembered that any journey—even one to Lewiston—was much more of an event in those days.

The Town Bell

Speaking of Huntoon reminds me of his effort, at one of the Town meetings, to have the ringing of the town bell at 7 o’clock in the morning discontinued. It annoyed the guests at the hotel, some of whom wanted to sleep later than that hour. But there again the conservatism of the Brunswick people of that day was evidenced—they turned down his petition. The bell had rung at 7 o’clock ever since it was installed; they weren’t going to drop what had become a tradition just because some “outsiders” wanted forty winks more.

Well I’ve rambled; I told you I would!

Although having described women’s styles in an earlier article, Wheeler returns to the topic of style in the mid 1700s to emphasize how women’s attire had changed.

Keeping In Style Costly For 1747 Brunswick Woman October 16, 1947

It’s a momentous problem which faces womankind today. Even with the world trembling on the brink of another war; even with inflation reducing the value of a dollar almost to the vanishing point, this question must be settled.

Will the female of the species yield to the dictates of fashion and conceal an inch or two more of her anatomy with longer skirts?

The answer, of course, is a foregone conclusion: She will, as she always has. Fashion is a relentless master.

Just how far back into antiquity women have been governed by the decrees of “style” is a moot question. It may well be that the cave-woman, hiding behind a rock in pretended evasion of the pursuit of a club bearing potential husband felt secure in the knowledge that her bear-skin sarong was draped exactly in accordance with the prevailing mode, and that the shin-bone in her hair was placed just right to be most attractive. Of this we have no record, of course; but we do

have a record of the unfortunate attempt of a Brunswick woman to follow style, some 200 years ago.

Young Patricia Wallace had been invited to a dance, and for weeks before the great event, she was busily engaged in preparation. A new gown for the occasion was a “must”—a dressmaker was called in, and cutting, fitting and sewing made up the order of the day. For ordinary wear, at that time, dresses were “short,” that is, they were within an inch or two off the ground—but for a party dress, a train was essential. Miss Wallace’s new gown was made with but two breadths, one in front and one behind, with a small gore on the sides. The waist was very short and full, with short sleeves, and as bare arms were unthinkable, long mitts were worn to cover them. Around the neck was worn a white muslin neckerchief, fitted to the neck and shoulders, and tucked in under the band of the skirt. So far, Patience was fully equipped to become the belle of the ball.

Fashion required, however, that the hair, piled high on the head and secured with a huge comb must be powdered. The gown might be in correct style, the cotton stockings and dancing pumps exactly right—although that didn’t matter much, as no one but the owner ever saw them—but to appear at a public function without powder on the hair would have been as fatal a breach of good grooming as to fail to wear petticoats, or to permit her ankles to be shown.

On the great night, Patty donned her new gown, and was gratified by the reflection of her beauty in the wavy little mirror which hung on the wall of her bedroom. She carefully dressed her hair, and then prepared for the crowning touch, its powdering. But she had no powder! Here was catastrophe.

A hasty visit to the kitchen for flour was unavailing—the barrel was empty, and all she could find was corn-meal, clearly no substitute for powder. What to do? She certainly couldn’t go to the ball with her hair its natural color.

Then came inspiration. She recalled that out in the barn there was a barrel of unslacked lime—that would do the trick. So gathering up her skirts, she ran out through the dusk to the stable, scooped up a handful of the white powder, and by the time her escort called for her, her hair was beautifully powdered in conformity with the fashion.

She was a popular girl, and her dance card was full. But the hall was warm and close, and as she danced, perspiration got in its deadly work on the lime. Moisture slacked it; and every follicle of hair was destroyed. Here pate became as smooth and denuded of hair as a billiard ball; and thereafter day and night, she wore a man’s cap to cover her naked scalp.

Thus did Patience Wallace of Brunswick pay the penalty for a slavish devotion to fashion, two centuries ago.

The moral? There isn’t any; it would do not good!

As an early user of telephone and telegraph Wheeler wanted to emphasize his personal knowledge about the history of that communication in Brunswick.

Telephone Service Began In This Area 65 Years Ago **November 13, 1947**

The telephone is today so much a part of every day life, it is so essential to the efficient conduct of business, that it seems hard to believe that in Brunswick, only some 65 years ago, there wasn’t a single telephone in existence.

I believe that my father built and installed the first telephone line in town utilizing a rather crude but effective “drum-head” device between his home on Everett Street and his office at the “depot.” It wasn’t, of course, his invention, the principle had been known for a long time but he was the first, I feel sure, to put it to practical use, at least in Brunswick.

The equipment consisted of two circular wooden frames, with which he had turned from walnut at Colby’s Mill, with sheepskin tightly stretched within them. With one of these contraptions at each end of the line, and a fine copper wire, tightly drawn, attached to a wooden ball in the center of the sheepskin, it was possible to converse satisfactorily for short distances. The vibrations of the sheepskin, carried over the taught wire, were reproduced on the opposite end with sufficient volume to be heard some distance from the receiver.

Editor Tenney, in the Brunswick Telegraph of February 11, 1881, tells the story that one day, while my father was changing the location of one of his drum-heads, he heard a voice coming over the disconnected wire. “Taking the wire in his teeth,” says Tenney, “he received the message with remarkable clarity.” The telephone, the editor further commented, might well become a most convenient instrument—a prophecy which has certainly been fulfilled.

First Public Phone

It was the same year 1881 that the first public telephone was installed in Brunswick. Strangely enough, I cannot find, in the file of the Telegraph for that year, any reference whatever to this important event. It would seem that such an innovation would have merited front page display but apparently it was accepted as a matter of course, not even worth reporting!

There appears to be no record of the exact date that “Central” was first opened in Brunswick, but, it was sometime in the early part of 1881. The records show that at that time there was a total of eight subscribers which couldn’t have kept the lone operator unduly busy. The names of those pioneer subscribers, however, cannot now be ascertained.

First Central Office

The first central office was in the coal office of Elbridge Simpson, over the old post office, which stood where the Town Building is now; and Simpson’s daughter, Ida, was Brunswick’s first “hello girl.” This small building, which had housed the post office for many years, was moved to Elm Street when construction of the municipal building was commenced. Its second story had been used for various purposes, and an advertisement in a newspaper of 1843 shows it then for rent by the postmaster.

Ida Simpson

Ida Simpson, with a tiny switchboard in the corner of her father’s office, manipulated the crude battery-powered equipment, with its crank for operating the hand generator. She found the ringing somewhat of an effort and rather ingeniously hooked up the wheel of a sewing machine to the apparatus so that she could turn the generator by foot-power instead of by hand. It is doubtful if her “invention” was ever adopted for general use, but she used it throughout her term of service as operator.

Will Lincoln

It is recalled that Will Lincoln sometimes handled the switchboard while the office was in its original location, but it does not appear he was regularly employed by the Telephone Company. The office was closed at night and all day Sunday, but in case of emergency Lincoln could always be persuaded to go to the office to handle a long distance call.

Office Moved

According to the records of the telephone company, the office was moved to the store of A.W. Townsend in the Arcade Block in June, 1881, but there is a discrepancy here. Al Townsend began business in Brunswick, in 1881, it is true, but in that year his store was located under the old Universalist Church on the corner of Maine and Mason Streets. In 1883 he moved to the newly erected Odd Fellows Block, and it was not until 1888 that he located in Arcade Block, where the telephone central was installed. It seems probable, therefore, that it was in 1888 rather than 1881 that the office was moved from its original location; and that matches up with my own recollections, as well as that of some of my correspondents.

Early Subscribers

The records show that at this time there were 37 subscribers, but again there is no list in existence. I am quite sure that there were then few if any resident phones—the Bowdoin Paper Co. , The Cabot Mill, Bowdoin College, the railroad station, the Androscoggin Pulp Mill, and perhaps a few of the more enterprising merchants were the early subscribers.

One of these early subscribers—possibly among the original eight—was “Ote” Hubbard, whose livery stable was just north of the Tontine Hotel, where now is a garage. Fred Hubbard distinctively recalls an incident of those early days. His father, and his brothers, Jim and George, were musicians; and when playing their instruments in the stable office one day, a phone call came in from Dunning’s stable in Bath. After a brief conversation, the trio played a selection for the edification of their Bath friends; the marvel that people in Bath could hear music played in Brunswick, nine miles away, was the talk of the town for days, and was given mention by Editor Tenney in the Telegraph!

Townsend’s Store

Townsend’s store was, theoretically at least, a book-store; but he sold not only books and stationery but a considerable line of fancy goods, toys, crockery, lamps and novelties. The telephone switchboard was on the south side of the store, about half-way down; and right alongside were the telegraph instruments of the Commercial Union Telegraph Company, later the Postal, of which Townsend was the local manager. He was also the Brunswick agent for Porter’s Express, a small concern handling shipments between Brunswick and Portland. Each morning Porter himself would take the early train to Portland, checking in the baggage car a huge “drummer’s” trunk. In Portland he’d do the errands for his customers, packing his parcels in his trunk and traveling with it back to Brunswick on the afternoon train.

In spite of the various activities of his business, Townsend found plenty of time to handle the telephone switchboard. If he happened to be busy with a customer, the “drops” in the

switchboard might go unnoticed for some time, but patrons were patient, and there was no complaint.

Charles Barron of Topsham was at one time a clerk in the Townsend store, and part of his duties was to handle the telephone calls. While I was never employed there, I used to spend a great deal of time in the store, and often sat at the switchboard to respond to the infrequent calls.

Around 1895, Irma Goodwin, now Mrs. George Bean Sr., was employed by Mr. Townsend, principally as telephone operator, and it would seem that the telephone business had then increased sufficiently to demand more attention.

I'm not sure of the date, but I believe it was somewhere around 1896 that Townsend sold his business to J.E. Davis, a traveling salesman whose home was in Freeport. The telephone business remained in the Arcade Block, with Miss Goodwin still presiding, until 1905, when, because of the increased demand for telephone service, the Company leased a portion of the old Public Library room in the Town building. There were more than 100 subscribers and larger quarters for the central office were badly needed.

Office Moved Again

For many years, the Brunswick Public Library had occupied a large room on the first floor of the municipal building, under the management of Lyman P. Smith and his estimable wife. When the telephone company took over the vacant space, a partition was built dividing the room, and the west end was converted into a central office, under a five-year lease, dated January 1, 1905.

Service Extended

According to the Brunswick Record, the removal gave impetus to a substantial increase in the number of subscribers. Sixty to 75 new installations were made shortly after the change, and, still according to the Record, "There is a larger number of rural subscribers than in any other town or city in Maine." New rural lines were then being constructed to Freeport, Cooks Corner, Gatchell's Mills and the River Road, in addition to the existing lines to Pennellville, Mere Point, South Brunswick and North Harpswell. Editorially, the Record commented that the telephone was "soon to become one of the common conveniences of modern civilization."

The extension of telephone service to the rural area brought into existence a rather unique organization. For some time past, a group of farmers and their wives in the New Meadows district had met from time to time, for informal social gatherings. Most of them became telephone subscribers, on party lines, and social calls by phone became a general custom. So great a contribution to the comfort and happiness of rural families did the telephone make, that they formed an organization known as the Telephone Club. No list of members is available today, and I am unable to ascertain the name of those who were affiliated. The Brunswick Record, however, faithfully reported the meetings of the Club.

It was about the time of the removal of the office to new quarters that, the following item appeared in the Record:

"Persons who use telephones for the purpose of vexing others are criminals under the law and may be punished."

Evidently the use of the "common convenience" was not limited to business and social calls in that day!

Within a few months after the new office was opened the number of subscribers had increased to nearly 300, and a force of seven operators was required to handle the calls. In an effort to still further increase business, with 500 subscribers as the goal, the company offered service for 15 months for the price of 12, or a trial of two months without charge. Calls to Bath were free, as an added inducement.

Staff Members

The staff at this time consisted of operators Mary Wade, Grace Gilbert, Mary Durgin, Mildred Barnes, Theresa McKinley and Harried Johnson. The office was then on a continuous basis, and as women were not employed for night service, the night operator was John Stetson. E.R. Spear was manager of both the Brunswick and the Bath offices, and Roscoe L. Douglas was located at Brunswick as inspector and lineman.

The telephone instruments in use were, for the most part, of the wall type, mounted on a board about two feet long, with a box at the bottom for the individual battery which supplied the power for ringing. On the side of the instrument was a small crank, and to call "central" the subscriber twirled this crank—and waited for a response. There was no bell in the central office, but on the switchboard a "drop" —a little plate about an inch square—was released, indicating to the operator on what line the call was made.

Numbers indicated the ring for each station. For example, "12" meant one long and two short rings; "22" two long and two short. However, in the early days few subscribers bothered with numbers. The operators knew them by heart, and it was only necessary to say "Give me Harvey Given's store" and the connection was quickly made. Those were simple days. I recall once when the exchange was in Townsend's store. I put in a call for Alonzo Day, whose shoe store was directly across the street from Townsend's. "He isn't there," replied Miss Goodwin. "I just saw him going upstreet!" Imagine getting such a response from an operator today!

Power Switchboard

In 1912, the telephone company expended nearly \$30,000 in Brunswick to change the system from the old style battery-generated instrument to a switchboard using power from a plant in the central office—a switchboard which, said the company's announcement, "is exactly like those used in the largest cities." This change involved practically complete reconstruction of all lines in the town, a job which required the full time of eight men for a year. Under the new system, which became effective on a Saturday night when few calls were made, the operator was signaled by merely removing the receiver from the hook, the system which is in use today. Along with these changes, 30 public pay stations were installed in town.

The Set-Up Today

At this time, too, the quarters of the telephone company in Town Building were enlarged, and a rest room for the operators was provided.

Today there are in Brunswick 550 rural subscribers alone—50 more than the hoped-for aggregate of 500 in 1905. With a total of 2800 subscribers, a force of 30 operators is required, with two full-time plant department employees to care for "trouble-shooting." Margaret Cripps with a service record of 32 years is chief operator; and seven of the operators have been with the

company for 10 years or more. The Brunswick office is managed jointly with the Bath office by George Otis, Jr. recently appointed to replace R.E. Bradbury who has been transferred to Vermont.

It is a far cry from the little sewing-machine-operated switchboard which served the eleven subscribers in 1881 to today's modern equipment and round-the-clock service and it all has developed in the comparative short period of 65 years!

As a rather departure from his other historical articles Wheeler wrote about a murder mystery that occurred in Harpswell that must have delighted the crime voyeur as well as those who found such mysteries fascinating.

Harpswell "Triangle" In 1840 Led To Murder of One Elisha Wilson November 18, 1947

The "eternal triangle", illicit romance, and the "erasure" of an unwanted spouse to clear the way for its continuance—happenings like this are now new, even though the radio's "whodunits" make them seem like commonplace events of today. Just such an affair took place in Harpswell more than a century ago, including the murder of a gentle and unoffending citizen—and, incidentally, brought out a Harpswell farmer's hitherto unsuspected talents as an amateur detective.

In 1840, one Thomas Thorn, said to have been a shiftless, illiterate ne'er-do-well, but of pleasing personality, came to Harpswell from New York to visit his sister, the Widow Dyer, who lived on Great Island.

On a neighboring farm lived Louise (or Lois—both names appear in the record) Alexander, a buxom young woman to whom Thorn paid constant court, and to whom, apparently, he proposed marriage. Whether or not she accepted is the question—his later assertion that they were engaged was denied by the lady.

Wanderlust Returns

Shortly thereafter, the wanderlust seems to have impelled Thorn to seek other fields, and he disappeared from Harpswell. For some time no word was heard from him, but late in the fall of 1842 he again paid an unannounced visit to Great Island, only to find that his widowed sister, Mrs. Dyer, had married one Benjamin Wilson, and erstwhile sweetheart Louise was wedded to Benjamin's brother Elisha. The Wilson brothers and their wives occupied a double house, their respective living quarters separated only by a narrow entry.

Thomas Thorn, penniless, and apparently having a natural aversion to labor, made himself comfortable in the home of his sister, and prepared to settle down to make the most of a good thing. Whether it was Benjamin or his wife who finally insisted upon being rid of the incubus does not appear in the records, but it seems certain that Thorn was given an ultimatum—go to work or get out. Work was too unpleasant an alternative, and he prepared to take up once more the wanderings of a nomad, when his former sweetheart, Louise Wilson, invited him to make his home on Elisha's side of the house. He therefore gathered up his trivial belongings and moved across the entry to the sparsely furnished attic chamber on the other side, and settled down to the customary life of ease.

The nearest neighbor to the Wilson home was one Samuel Toothaker—and he with the two Wilson families and the villain of the piece, made up the cast of characters in the sordid drama.

At about three o'clock on the cold, stormy Sunday morning of February 5, 1843, Toothaker was awakened by a resounding knock on his door. Sticking his head out of his chamber window, he demanded to know what was wanted.

"It's Tom Thorn," was the reply. "Come over quick's you can; Elisha is dead."

"What happened to him?"

Had Fit, Thorn Claimed

"He had a fit," Thorn replied, "it was all I could do to hold him; and in thrasin' around he hit his head agin the bed and cut it bad. They's a big hole in the back of his head, an' it's bleeding bad."

Dressing quickly, Toothaker waded through the snow to the Wilson home. In the first-floor bedroom where Elisha and Louise slept, he found the body of the dead man lying on the bed, close to one side, with a gaping wound on the back of his head, into which a wad of cotton had clumsily been stuffed. He turned to Louise. "What happened?" he asked.

Dry-eyed, and with no evidence of grief or emotion, Louise told her story:

"We had been asleep for some time," she said, "when I heard a groan from Elisha. I asked him if he was sick, and he said he felt awful. He was trying to get up, so I got up and lit a candle, and while my back was turned I heard a thump. I looked 'round and Elisha had fallen out of bed, hitting the back of his head on the chair. I called Tom, and we got him back into bed, then I sent Tom to call you,"

Toothaker examined the spotless white pine floor—there was no evidence of blood to be seen. The chair beside the bed, a low wicker-seated affair, was equally unstained. Turning his attention he found no stains on the headboard and noticed too, that there was no evidence that more than one person had occupied the bed—the opposite side was smooth and undisturbed. In a tub of water on the floor, he found a bloodstained sheet but the quilt from the bed was missing.

Finds Missing Quilt

The amateur sleuth climbed the stairs to Thorn's attic chamber. As he passed through the entry separating the two parts of the house, he saw a heavy axe, the head of which, however, was bright and stainless. In Thorn's room he found the missing quilt, stained with unmistakable signs of blood which might well have come from the axe-head.

Questioning both Thorn and Louise, found that the outer door had been locked all night and he could find no indication of forcible entry. This apparently ruled out any intruder, and made it evident that the murder—if murder it was—had been committed by someone in the household.

Toothaker's investigation tended to disprove Thorn's story of a fit and of striking the head of the bed, and Mrs. Wilson's conflicting story of a fall from the bed and a fatal wound in the back of the head from striking a chair.

On the strength of Toothaker's testimony at the coroner's inquest both Thorn and Louise were arrested and charged with murder.

At the trial of Thorn, which was held in Portland in May, 1843, Dr. James McKeen of Topsham and Dr. Isaac Lincoln of Brunswick testified that in their opinion the wound on the victim's head was caused by a vigorous blow, perhaps from a heavy pair of tongs, resulting in his death. Samuel Toothaker gave his testimony in great detail, bringing out the disparity in the statements of Thorn and Mrs. Wilson and his observations as to the condition of the bedroom when he arrived.

Thorn Found Guilty

Thorn was found guilty, and in a scathing denunciation, Chief Justice Whitman sentenced him to be hanged. The sentence was later commuted to life imprisonment, and after serving 30 years at Thomaston, he was pardoned.

Mrs. Wilson was tried separately. In her case, the court found the evidence insufficient, and would have permitted a no pros, but the attorney for the defendant insisted upon a jury verdict. She was found to be not guilty; and, according to a contemporary newspaper account of the trial, she "laughed heartily" when the verdict was announced. "Did she laugh," queries the newspaper, "because she was acquitted, or at the novel procedure of the court and jury?"

Just what actually happened on that February morning will probably never definitely be known. After her acquittal, Louise Wilson, knowing that she could not again be placed in jeopardy and tried on the same count, made a confession.

She was asleep beside her husband, she declared, when she was awakened by the sound of a blow—the blow, she thought, which killed her husband, and which she was sure was made with an axe. She ran to call her brother-in-law Benjamin, and as she reached the entry, she saw Thorn standing on the stairs. She accused him of having killed Elisha; and he became ugly, threatening her life if she ever told anyone. He then told her what story she was to tell when questioned—the story she later gave Toothaker—and returned to the bedroom with her to remove the bloody bedding and cover up evidence of the crime. Having completed this, Thorn went to call Toothaker, while Louise called Benjamin Wilson. She claimed to have had no prior knowledge of Thorn's intentions to dispose of Elisha; and that her only part in the affair was to aid Thorn in concealing evidence and in telling a false story, due to her fear of the murderer.

Statement Published

Her statement, published in the newspapers of the day, stirred Thorn to retaliation, and from his prison cell he, too, made a "confession". Louise, he said was constantly complaining to him about Elisha—that he treated her badly, and compelled her to do heavy farm work when she was ill. She often said, he declared, that she wished her husband was dead—that some would kill him. It finally reached the point where she first hinted, then directly demanded that Thorn undertake the errand of ridding her of her husband. "She kept at me," he said, "and would not let me rest until I had consented to it." He asserted that she promised to marry him, and to provide for him financially. "I did not consent to do it," he continued, "until the night of the murder. I was then so confused and deranged I did not know what I did."

On the evening before the murder, he claimed, he and Louise made their definite plans. She was to wait until Elisha was soundly asleep, then knock on the ceiling as a signal to Thorn. When that signal came, he went downstairs, picked up the axe, which always stood in the corner

of the entry, crept into the bedroom and struck the sleeping Wilson on the head. Then Louise arose, lighted a candle, and he declares, “laughed about it.”

He then assisted her in taking care of the bloody bedding, and arranging the room, after which she told him her prepared story of the “accident” as it was later given to Toothaker.

Letter From Cell

Which “confession” was true? That probably never will be determined. But a comment in a contemporary newspaper is enlightening:

“We are of the opinion that neither of them are true, but that they are foolish fabrications for effect only. There is not a shadow of a doubt but that Mrs. Wilson is equally culpable with Thorn, and had she worn breeches instead of long clothing would undoubtedly have share the same fate. Petticoats and a pretty face are good evidence in court, though perhaps her ignorance and inexperience should be taken into account. We are led to believe that her story is made of whole cloth, and that it needed patching before it was used. It is certain that one of them has told a falsehood, and we leave the public to judge which is the most reasonable.”

A letter from Thorn, written in his cell just before his trial, is also rather illuminating. It read verbatim: “poor Louisa i pity you and my hart akes for you and you must mind when you Come to Cort and Clear me and you must mind how you talk. I will wright to you once in for days I whant to see you onCe more and then if you don’t Clear me I shall be willing to dy for you.”

The story told by Louise, that her husband was taken ill and fell from bed, was of course admittedly untrue. So was Thorn’s first version of the “accident’ But even in her confession Louise claimed that she was sleeping by Elisha’s side—and Samuel Toothaker, the amateur Hawthshaw insisted that there was no evidence that she had occupied the bed at all.

Perhaps even yet, the entire story has not bee told!

As many people in the late 40s were complaining about rising prices Wheeler recounted prices of goods in Brunswick in its early days.

Butter Sold For 12 Cents A Pound, Brunswick Beef 16, 100 Years Ago November 27, 1947

Best country butter, 12 cents a pound. How would that sound if your grocer said it today? And how would you like to buy a good roast for 16 cents a pound? Well those were current prices in Brunswick a century ago!

Of course, in those days, the man who earned \$10 a week was wealthy; 75 cents to a dollar a day was considered a good wage—and a “day” meant from sunrise to sunset. Maybe we aren’t so badly off, after all!

Advts. In “The Brunswicker”

I’ve been looking over the advertisement in the “Brunswicker”—a newspaper published back in 1843 and 1844—and while, for the most part, unlike modern ads, they do not quote prices, occasionally they give insight into the cost of living in that far-off time.

Practically all of the advertisements were single column and not more than inch and two in length, set in small type. Once in a while—perhaps two or three times a year, a double column ad would be printed, with display type, but this was the exception rather than the rule. Medical ads, too, while still confined to a single column, were sometimes eight or ten inches long. The general run, however, was a four or five-line ad, usually carried without change for weeks at a time.

The Furbishes

In July, 1843, Benjamin Furbish advertised the opening of his “new store, a few rods south of the Brunswick Bank.” It was here, at the corner of Gilman Avenue, that for many years thereafter the Furbish hardware store was located. The founder of the business was a tinsmith, who in 1835 opened a shop near the top of Mill Hill. Gradually increasing the scope of his business in the new store he carried a stock of hardware and allied commodities, fairly complete for the times and the limited requirements of the people of the little village. Benjamin Furbish was succeeded by his son John, and the latter in turn by the second Benjamin who retired a few years ago completing a full century of uninterrupted business activity in a single line by members of one family.

The Brunswick Bank referred to was in the building which later housed the Pejepscot Bank, now, I believe occupied by a clothing concern.

Typical of the early Furbish advertising was the following:

“Just received and FOR SALE a large lot of Britannia Tea and Coffee Pots, Castors, Mexican Stove Polish, Flat Irons, Jappanned Lamps, Candlesticks, etc. The above articles will be sold at a less profit than any other place. Surely not a high-pressure sales talk!

Furbish didn't have a monopoly in this line though, Daniel Elliot, ostensibly a dry goods merchant, advertised in the same issue. “Rich China Tea Sets, Casters, Vases, etc.”, which he declared would be sold ‘cheap—very cheap—for cash’”.

Varied Lines

As a matter of fact, almost every merchant in Brunswick in those days carried a varied line of goods, not entirely consistent with the general nature of the business. The name of Daniel Elliot, for instance, in his advertisement, of “coats, vests and pants,” also offered 150 pounds of good butter. Theodore McLellan, who ran a bookstore, advertised, along with his books, writing paper and pencils, a stock of garden seeds and household paints; George Earle in his dry goods store carried lime, corn, flour, shoes and groceries; A.F. Boardman's millinery store also sold carpets, parasols, sun shades and shawls. John S. Cushing, the tailor, whose establishment was at “Cushing's Corner,” Maine and Pleasant Streets, not only advertised custom-made clothes, but flower pots and stoneware.

Some Specialists

Some of the merchants, however, did confine themselves to a single line of goods. Among these was Lorenzo Day, the cobbler, who dealt exclusively in boots and shoes. A cobbler, in those days, was something more than a mender of shoes—his principal business was the manufacture of footwear from the soles up, to the order of the customer. Compared with the

prices of ready-made shoes today, Lorenzo's charges for custom-made shoes seem almost inconceivable—he advertised to make women's shoes, to order, for 27 cents a pair! And comparing the ankle-covering, high button shoes women wore then with the wisps of leather that now adorn their feet makes the difference in cost all the more startling.

Women could dress at much less cost in those days anyway. Elliot advertised stockings for 10 cents a pair and gloves for seven cents a pair. True, both the stockings and the gloves were cotton, but try to get them at that price today.

Lorenzo Day

The shoe business, inaugurated by Lorenzo Day, was another of Brunswick's merchandizing establishments which had a long and honorable existence, second only, perhaps to the Furbish record. It was about 1842 that Day commenced making shoes in Brunswick. Later the business, by that time devoted to the sales rather than the manufacture of footwear and taken over by his nephew Alonzo and in turn by the latter's son, Ellery, if I am not mistaken; it is still carried on in the Day name, although not by a member of the family.

The Brunswicker in July, 1843, reported that the Lorenzo Day plant, in a single day of 14 hours, cut out and "tied up" totaling 410 pairs of ladies kid slippers and that they were for sale at 20 cents a pair! That was, indeed, mass production for those days of hand work.

Day also advertised custom-made "thick boots for men" at \$1.33 per pair; shoes 60 cents. Children's pegged shoes were 17 cents.

Depending on water transportation for the receipt of goods, which was more or less uncertain, Brunswick merchants were not always sure what they could have to offer. Boardman, for instance, advertised on June 20: "The subscriber will receive on Saturday July 1 a fresh assortment of ladies' DRY GOODS weather permitting." From time to time storekeepers advertised that they "expected by Str. "J.W. Richmond" or by the schooner "Maine" a hogshead of molasses or shipment of lime.

Competition with Bath

Brunswick's location worked somewhat to the disadvantage of the merchants, too. Freight coming to Bath had to be transported by horsedrawn wagons to Brunswick, making added cost; while Bath dealers had only the steamboat freight to pay. For this reason, there was considerable competition between the two towns. Elliot and Drew, who dealt principally in furniture, advertised to sell "chairs, mirrors, etc.," for a price "cheaper than anyone in this vicinity—Bath not excepted."

Eben Swett, the butcher, offered 45 cents each for wool pelts; and advertised to cut and deliver in any part of the village or town and ran a slaughter-house to which farmers brought their cattle, swine and sheep. Little of now western beef was obtainable; all meats were locally raised and slaughtered.

John Crowley

Old timers will recall, too, another butcher—the venerable John Crowley. Located first in Topsham, he later had a market on Maine Street just north of Center, and while I must have been a pretty small boy then, I can still remember him. He was a somewhat profane gentleman, even

when ladies were present and any inquiry as to the quality of his meats invariably brought the response “best beef in the world, by G--.” That became a by-word in Brunswick whenever anyone wanted to extol the superior quality of something or other.

The First Dennison

Another advertiser in the Brunswicker was Andrew Dennison, the cobbler, who was also the town’s sealer of weights and measures and surveyor of lumber and bark. Andrew Dennison, with his simple cobbler’s tools made the first paper boxes upon which the great business of the Dennison Manufacturing Company was founded. That, however, is a story in itself which I hope someday will appear in the Brunswick Record. Dennison’s cobbler shop was located on Maine Street near Lincoln and his home was on Everett Street.

One J. Lufkin operated a “hat factory” on Maine Street just north of Center and advertised “the latest fashion in moleskin, silk, brush, napt, leghorn and palm leaf hats” made to order.

Patent Medicines

As far as may be judged from the Brunswicker’s advertising contents, there was no regular drug store in town; but many merchants offered medicines of all sorts—indeed medical advertising seems to have predominated in many issues of the paper. Theodore McLellan in his bookstore carried a considerable line of patent medicines, grocery stores and even dry goods stores got their share of the trade. This, that and the other “sarsaparilla” or “tomato bitters,” salves ointments, cough remedies, lotions and what not—all claiming to make positive “cure” were sold and advertised by many Brunswick merchants.

First Drug Store

Dr. Asher Ellis did later open a drug store, probably the first in town. Until then I doubt if there was a single person, in Brunswick, other than doctors, qualified to pen up a prescription. Physicians usually compounded their own, and furnished the required drugs to their patients.

Doctors and Lawyers

Incidentally, there seems to have been, in 1843, no ethical bar to professional advertising. Dr. Ellis advertised regularly “tendering his professional services to the citizens of Brunswick and Topsham, residence in School Street opposite the Red School House.” So, too, did one Dr. Norton, “Botanic or Indian Doctor,” who claimed to be able to cure any diseases whatsoever. Dr. Isaac Lincoln, probably the town’s foremost physician did not advertise except for an annual card requesting the payment of bills due him. John W. Davis, a Topsham lawyer, regularly advertised his card carrying a foot-note: “J.W.D. will give personal attention to Collection in Lincoln, Cumberland and Kennebec Counties.”

D. F. Stocking, who boasted the title of M.D., advertised that he would be in Brunswick for a short time and was prepared to do dental work” in a judicious and scientific” manner at his room at the Tontine Hotel. Another dentist, also with M.D. tied to his name, was D.S. Grandin, who had “rooms at Mrs. Stanwood’s” and who offered, for a limited time, to perform a

“cure for aching teeth without extraction.” As far as I can learn, there were no dentists in Brunswick. Whatever emergency work was necessary was performed by the regular physicians, usually by yanking out the offending tooth.

William Baker, whose store was about where Wilson’s drug store now is, perhaps carried the largest stock of medicines, although this was only art of his business. In one advertisement, he offers “Spanish leeches, for sale or to let.” Bleeding was then the accepted treatment for almost any physical disorder, and leeches were largely used for this purpose.

General Store

Webb and Hall, whose emporium was located on the corner of Maine and Mill Streets, advertised carpeting, paint and oil, glass, nails, potash, carriage varnish, broadcloth, cassimeres, “satinnettes,” vestings, and “summer stuffs,” gloves and hosiery. Possibly they also carried groceries, hardware and sticking plaster—it wouldn’t be surprising.

W. Harmon, on the corner of Dunlap Street opposite the present office of the Brunswick Record, advertised, one week, 1,000 bbls. of old New York cheese. This rather astounding offer, however, was corrected in the next issue—it was 1,000 pounds, not barrels. Even a half a ton seems to have been a large quantity of cheese to be sold in the little village. His price was 6 cents a pound, which probably netted him a good profit. Eggs were 10 cents a dozen, coffee 11 to 13 cents, depending on quality.

Although there were a number of sawmills in Brunswick at that time, and lumber must have been plentiful, there was no advertising of this commodity—perhaps it wasn’t necessary. Good clear lumber was then selling for \$22 a thousand; hemlock planks, \$5 a thousand. “Larths” were listed at \$1.00. But if, even at those prices, a citizen couldn’t afford to build a home, he could rent one—an advertisement offers a “tenement for a small family” for \$30—not a month, but a year!

No Sports News

The advertisements—and the news columns—of the Brunswicker give us an idea to, of the recreational pursuits of the residents of the town of that day. Even in the College news, there wasn’t a single word about sports. Probably no one then living knew the meaning of the word golf; there was no organized baseball, or football. No; for recreation our forbears went to lectures! Anyway, that’s the impression one would get from a period of the columns of the little newspaper. But that’s another story!

The Dunlap Block was a key economic location in Brunswick and contained important employment for many of its citizens. Wheeler described some of its history.



**Dunlap Block, Housing Record Office
Has Long And Honorable History
December 11, 1947**

The enlarged modern quarters of the Brunswick Record are located in a building which has long played an important part in Brunswick's commercial history; a building which dates back some 66 years, and which was the cradle of an infant industry now grown to important stature.

In its exterior appearance, except for the striking changes made by the Record's expansion, the building is much the same as it was in my boyhood; but there was then, to reach the upper floors, an outside, covered stairway on the south side, next to the bank. The building was known to us simply as "the box shop" and as the box shop it is, perhaps, best remembered even now by old-time Brunswick people.

Originally, the Gilmans

In 1870, according to the records in the Cumberland County Registry of Deeds, the land and buildings thereon were purchased by Eliphalet W. Dennison of Boston from the wife of the Honorable Charles J. Gilman. That was before my time, and I do not remember the building then existing; but as nearly as I can ascertain, it was a two-story block, the front part of brick and the rear of wood, with two stories, the entrances covered by a wooden awning extending the width of the sidewalk. I believe that in one of these stores a Mrs. Boardman conducted a millinery shop at that time.

Next, the Dennisons

In 1880 the present brick building was erected apparently by Eliphalet Dennison, and in 1881 he sold it with the land, to the Dennison Manufacturing Company.

The story of the Dennison family and their achievements began more than a century ago. Aaron Dennison, a watch-maker and jeweler in Boston, was the first in American to devise machinery for the mass-production of watches, hitherto made entirely by hand—the beginning of the great Waltham Watch Company. In his jewelry store, he used paper boxes which were

imported from abroad. They were of inferior quality, and often were received in badly damaged and soiled condition. He was not satisfied to sell to his customers jewelry encased in such mediocre containers, and sought a way to improve the situation. Nowhere in America were paper boxes made, it was virgin ground for an inventive Yankee mind.

Jewelry Boxes

Aaron Dennison obtained a small supply of Bristol boards, paste, and created paper of various hues from David Felt of New York, the only manufacturer of such commodities in this country. With his package of potential box-material under his arm, he journeyed to Brunswick by stagecoach, steam packet, and finally, on foot, to present to this father, Col. Andrew Dennison, a plan for making jewelry boxes for his use.

Col. Dennison was a cobbler, and turning to the tools with which he was most familiar, he used a shoe-knife and a straight edge to cut the Bristol board into box-forms, which were then folded in prescribed lines by his daughters, Julia and Matilda, and covered with the fancy papers brought with such care from New York.

These boxes were so far superior to the imported variety that when Aaron took samples back to Boston and showed them to fellow jewelers there, orders began to flow in. Within a year the Dennisons, in their little cottage on Everett Street, were employing 10 helpers to carry on the work. Matilda and Julia Dennison, the first paper box makers in the United States, became expert not only in fabricating the boxes and teaching the art to others, but in management of the business as well.

But cutting, scribing and folding the boxes by hand was a slow, laborious process. With the same genius which evolved the machinery for making watches, Aaron Dennison invented a machine for cutting the stock for boxes, and another to scribe the lines for hand folding. Later he produced a machine which performed the entire job at one operation; and, in principle, this is the machine used throughout the country today for the manufacture of paper boxes.

This, then, was the birth of the Dennison Manufacturing Company which today, in its immense factories in Framingham, Mass., makes not only paper boxes but a multitude of allied products. That beginning of a great industry was, of course, long before my time; but the Dennison factory on the upper floors of the Dunlap Block was familiar to me in my youth.

First Floor Stores

The first floor front was arranged as stores. In the space on the northwest corner, where for many years the Brunswick Record had its office, B.G. Dennison, brother of Aaron and Eliphalet, had what might be called a "variety" store. My recollection is somewhat hazy, but I think that he carried not only stationery and allied commodities, but tin-ware, small household goods, crockery and "notions." In a way it was the forerunner of today's "Five and Ten." Later the business was taken over by Lithgow Dennison and moved to a store in the O'Brien Block, just north of what is now Senter's at that time as Boardman's.

There, however, were many mercantile establishments, and of little interest to the youth of the day. It was upstairs, in the busy box shop, that we found fascinating adventure. I think men must have been more forbearing, and with a better understanding of boy nature, in those days, anyway, we were permitted the run of the place as we pleased.

The Box Shop

The box shop office, as I remember it in those early days, was located on the north side, about in the middle of the second floor. Here Frank W. Chandler, the local head of the company, managed its affairs; and here, when we boys wanted a little paste or some piece of fancy paper, we called on Mr. Chandler and always got what we asked for, with a pleasant smile thrown in.

The Chandlers

Mr. Chandler acquired his managerial position logically; his wife was Ann Julia Hinkson, only daughter of Julia Dennison Hinkson, one of the two pioneer box-makers of America.

Two Hall brothers I think their names were Charles and Frank—were employed in the factory; and later, at Framingham, Charles became an official of the company. They were sons of “Ant” Hall, for many years Brunswick’s only hack driver. Perhaps by coincidence, possibly by intent they chose as a location for their new homes the street where the Dennison industry was born.

Four other Chandlers besides Frank were connected with the Dennison Manufacturing Company—Fred, Edward, Harry and George. In 1944, Edward and Harry, the only surviving members of the group were honored by the company at a banquet.

About 1893 the Dennison Company moved its factory to Roxbury, and later Framingham. The Chandler families and the Hall families together with some of the employees, followed the industry to its new locations, and some of their descendants are still connected with the company.

Several years before the removal of the Dennison Company to Massachusetts the officers of the concern were moved downstairs to the vacant store later occupied by the Record as its business office. With that change was also, as I recall, a change of policy—No admittance signs were displayed on the entrance to the factory floors, and all callers were required to state their business at the office on the street floor. That put an end to our wanderings through the busy factory, picking up waste material and generally making nuisances of ourselves. However, it didn’t put an end to Mr. Chandler’s kindness—if we really needed a dab of paste or a sheet of red and gold paper—or thought we did—he found a way to get it for us. Sometimes, perhaps to save our self-respect, he let us pay a cherished penny for it; more often it was given to us freely. Boys don’t forget things like that; my memory of Frank Chandler is a warm one.

I won’t vouch for the truth of this story, although it had wide circulation. After the sewer system had been installed in Brunswick, the Dennisons put in flush toilets for their employees—something brand new for a Brunswick industrial plant. There was great glee, on the first day the toilets were put into operation, when a certain man was found “washing up” in one of the bowls after his day’s work, and swearing mightily because it had been placed so low that he had to get on his knees to wash his hands.

Dr. Wilson’s Ventures

I am quite sure that after the departure of the Dennisons, the upper floors of the building remained vacant for some time. In 1896 the property was purchased by Dr. Frederick H. Wilson, the druggist, for the Pine Spring Bottling Company, of which he was the head. The bottling concern, however, utilized only the rear position of the first floor for its plant, and the upper

floors were unoccupied until around the turn of the century, when they were leased to the Brunswick Paper Box Company—and one more Brunswick had a box shop.

The Pine Spring Bottling Company was not the only business venture of Dr. Wilson. He had several other interests, chief of which was the drugstore now owned by his son Jesse. This store first opened in 1820 by Dr. Charles Baker, was acquired in 1875 by Dr. Wilson, who had worked there as a clerk. It has, therefore, been in the Wilson family for more than 71 years—perhaps a record for Brunswick business concerns.

It is interesting to note, too that the proprietors of two other pharmacies learned their profession in the Wilson Drug Store—George Drapeau, whose business is now run by his son, and P.J. Meserve, who still operates his store near Town Hall.

The Pine Spring Bottling Company was founded by Dr. Wilson in 1896 when he acquired possession of a spring of clear, sparkling water on Topsham Foreside, almost opposite Brunswick's famous Paradise Spring. The company was operated by Dr. Wilson until his death in 1915, when it was taken over by his son Jesse. In 1920, it was sold to Samuel S. Holbrook, whose father Sumner Holbrook, will be recalled by old time residents as a frequent contributor to the page of the old Brunswick Telegraph. The company is still in existence, and a going concern.

The Baxters Come Along

The Brunswick Box Company was founded by the late Stephen C. Whitmore about 1900, and was operated by him and his associates in the former quarters of the Dennison Company until 1904, when the business was taken over by the Baxter Paper Box Company. This concern manufactured not only jewelry boxes, similar to the product of the Dennison Company, but cigarette boxes as well.

In 1901, three years before the Baxters purchased the box business, the canning firm of H.C. Baxter & Bros. took over the second floor front of the Dunlap Block for its offices, moving there from the Lincoln Building. Harley C. Baxter, who founded the company, originally had his office in his residence on Cumberland Street, now the Brunswick Hospital. Later, when his brother James Phinney Baxter, Jr. became associated with him, the office was located on the second floor of the building now occupied by Meserve's drug store; and from 1892 until about 1900, the office was in the Town Building. In 1918, the firm moved to offices in the new building of the First National Bank.

In 1926, the building was sold by Jesse Wilson to the Brunswick Development Company, an aggregation of Brunswick businessmen, headed, I think, by the late Wilbur F. Senter. Since that time, the factory floors have been vacant, and the hum of busy machines silenced, until, in the Spring of this year, they were taken over by Textron, Inc., for the manufacture of women's wear. In the interim, however, the space was used, for a time, by the Pejepscot Paper Company, as a storage warehouse.

It was in 1902 that the newly established Brunswick Record took over much of the street floor, with the exception of the store on the south side and a small space at the extreme rear. The quarters became inadequate for the fast growing newspaper and printing plant, and expansion was imperative. Today the Brunswick Record occupies the entire first floor front for its modernized business and editorial offices, with its efficient printing plant in the rear.

The old Dunlap Block has had its face lifted—it is a credit Brunswick's principal thoroughfare, and to Brunswick's modern newspaper. Nevertheless, to me, as I believe to many of my contemporaries, it always fondly will be remembered as "the box shop"!

In 1948 there were four Wheeler articles in the Record. They dealt with early Brunswick problems, amusements, recollections by older citizens, and an educational institution—"Pa" Fish, the principal of the first high school. The first article Wheeler had read over some copies of the "Brunswicker", an early Brunswick paper, and reported about businesses and articles that he found there.

Brunswick of 100 Years Ago Had Many Of Today's Problems February 12, 1948

I have just made a mental journey back through the years to the Brunswick of a century ago; and the vehicle which I traveled is one of the most valued books in my possession. It is a bound volume containing the complete file of a little weekly newspaper published in Brunswick in 1843 and 1844 the "Brunswicker."

Between the covers of that book may be found a glimpse of the way of life of our forbears—a graphic picture of the village, and its people, their problems and pleasures. Every country newspaper reflects the lives of the people it serves. It is, veritably a condensed history of its time. Just so does the short-lived "Brunswicker" hold for us, today a mirror in which we may see reflected the little town of Brunswick as it was a century ago.

Set By Hand

Set by hand, in old fashioned type, the little four-page sheet was printed on paper of excellent quality, in various hues. For two or three weeks, it would appear on the conventional white; then would come in an issue or two on green, or red, or pink, or yellow, or blue—whatever the printer had in stock. The typography was, for the most part, unusually good for those rather crude days; occasionally an italic capital would be used out of place, or the word misspelled, but taken as a whole, it was a creditable example of the printer's art of that day.

According to its masthead, the Brunswicker was "A Weekly Journal Devoted to Literature, Agriculture, News, Etc.," and the importance of its contents was apparently in that order. A preponderance of its space was given to "literature"; there was a smattering of agricultural information, and "news, etc." took what little space was left.

Invariably the front page was devoted to fiction—always of a highly moral tone—usually original, although without a by line, but occasionally clipped from some other journal. The titles clearly indicate the nature of the stories: "The Seducer; or the Wine Drinking Physician", "The Cousin's Protogee; of A Tale of Real Life"; "Covetousness Its Own Punishment"; "How to Be A Gentleman"; "Love To Be A Gentleman"; "Love In A Stage Coach, or A Mistaken Acquaintance".

The Brunswicker was founded by Theodore S. McLellan in 1842, and the first volume was published by him with John Dunlap as editor. McLellan was, of course, an aged man in my time, but as a boy I recall him somewhat vaguely. His home was on Park Row, the house which, unless I am mistaken, was more recently the property of the late Isaiah Morrill.

McLellan's first venture in the publishing business was in 1836, when, at the age of 21, he produced a little sheet called "The Regulator". Its existence was brief, but the experience gained in its short life evidently inspired its publisher to try his hand again, and the Brunswicker was the result.

Variety of Activities

Theodore McLellan seems to have been a man of many varied activities. He owned and operated a brick-yard—I believe his house was built of bricks he manufactured himself—with his kiln on Harpswell Street, about half a mile below the College. At the same time he conducted a bookstore. That is, it was ostensibly a book-store, but according to his advertisements in the Brunswicker, the line he carried was not wholly related to such a business. Garden seed and greenhouse plants, worm lozenges, complexion lotion, sarsaparilla, anodyne plasters, sheet music, wallpapers, "Blood Root Pills", a cure for drowsiness, salve for pimples—these were some of the commodities publicized in his ads.

In September, 1843, he was appointed postmaster, replacing Elijah Pike, who according to the Brunswicker, was "removed". At this time he sold his merchandising business to J. Badger, but it appears that he continued to operate his brickyard, which, about 1870, was moved from Harpswell Street to "Back" or Federal Street, about where, later, Professor Moody had a home.

The old gentleman was, in his later years, an amateur weather sharp, of considerable ability. He maintained for many years a detailed record of the weather; and even in my day, Editor Tenney of the Telegraph depended on him for information as to the hottest and the coldest days and other weather data.

Following the last issue of Volume I, McLellan sold the Brunswicker to T.E. Noyes, who continued it for two years more. The office was "on Main Street near Center", possibly in the same quarters which later were occupied by the Brunswick Telegraph. In September of 1843—the same month and year McLellan was made postmaster, Noyes moved his newspaper office to rooms over the Post Office, which was then located in a small building where the Town Hall now stands. It was in this same little office that many years later Brunswick's first telephone switchboard was installed.

Run On Shoe-String

In the first issue under Noye's direction, it was announced that Editor Dunlap was no longer connected with the paper. The new proprietor candidly admitted that he could not hope to equal the former editor's ability, but said frankly that he could not afford to pay him. All through the two years' file which I have, runs a constant thread of evidence that the little paper was being run on a shoe-string, and that it was difficult to make collections, not only for subscriptions and advertising, but for job printing which the office turned out. From May to July, 1843, the publisher reported, he took in only \$10 in cash.

Long and impassioned editorials appeared frequently, urging patrons to pay their bill. It seems to have been the custom, in the Brunswick of that day, to let the bills run for a year, January 1 being the accepted settlement day. Along in January of each year appeared advertisements of local merchants, reminding their customers that the year's bills were due. One such card, requesting prompt payment, was signed by Dr. Isaac Lincoln, the town's most

prominent physician. Daniel Elliott, the dry goods merchant advertised to do a strictly cash business, but added that he would extend credit to all persons who would agree to pay in full on January 1 of each year.

Proprietor Noyes seems to have had considerable difficulty in making his collections. The price of the paper was not excessive—on dollar a year, with “25 cents added for each three months the bill is unpaid.” Advertising rates were \$1.00 per “square” for three insertions, of five lines for 25 cents. Even those low rates were not always paid in money—county produce was often accepted in lieu of cash.

In an effort to special collection, Noyes began listing in each issue the payments made during the week, in each issue the payments made during the week, identifying subscribers by initials—which in that day when every resident of the little town know all of his fellow citizens intimately, could not have afforded much concealment. The payments as listed varied from 12 cents on account to a new, fully paid, three-year subscription—probably from one of the town’s more well-to-do citizen. One week the editor jubilantly announced that “our Rocky Hill friends” had come across handsomely—to the tune of total payments of some \$12—and because of this windfall he promised that if money continued to flow in, he would enlarge the paper. He never did, from which it may be inferred that his subscribers continued to be dilatory.

Writes of Dream

In a rather fanciful editorial Noyes wrote of a dream he had. He was watching a comet, he said, when suddenly its tail twisted and squirmed to form the word “PAY”. Astounded, he dropped his eyes, and when he looked again, the tail had outlined the word “THE”. Then, as he watched, the heavenly body spelled out “PRINTER”, and disappeared—and Noyes woke up. With this as a basis, he wrote a touching plea for his debtors to come across. And it was nearly a century from the time this fantastic editorial was written before sky-writing became a reality!

Most of the editorials were moralizations. While the Brunswick of that day was far from being “dry”, there was still a strong advocacy for temperance. Editor Noyes seems to have taken a vigorous stand under the banner. He wrote frequently on the evils of strong drink, and the advantages of total abstinence. A temperance society of young men—The Washingtonians—were active, and the Brunswicker gave unqualified approval to their work.

One editorial scathingly denounced the unprincipled women who appeared on the street wearing white shoes! “When we see a lady with large understanding promenading the dirty streets with a pair of these despicable “splatterdashes”, wrote Noyes, “we are stongly reminded of a whitewashed mud-skow pushing its way through a bog with only here and there a glimpse of the white-wash remaining.”

Tobacco Denounced

Tobacco, too, frequently came in for denunciation. Referring to it as “the vile weed”, the editor declared that it was not only useless, but was in bad taste, expensive, injurious to health and dangerous to the public. Telling the story of a man who stopped his subscription to the newspaper on the grounds that he could not afford the expense, the editor comments: “That man chews up 14 dollars and 15 cents worth of tobacco every year! What a monster!”

We are inclined to think, perhaps, that the practice of smoking by women is something of more or less recent origin; but the Brunswicker in 1843 inveighed against the “disgusting habit”

of smoking indulged by “those who would like to be called ladies”. It wasn’t cigarettes these abandoned females smoked, however—cigarettes hadn’t been invented—it was clay pipes!

“There is nothing under the sun.” Back in 1843 there was not such thing as a labor union, yet the Brunswicker tells of a successful strike. “Where woman leads,” says an editorial, “man always follows, from the days of Eden until now. The factory girls in Pittsburg had a turn-out a few weeks ago to compel their employers to pay their wages in cash instead of orders at the stores. The various classes of mechanics and men engaged in manufacture have followed suit, with entire success.” And we thought strikes were an invention of our own day!

And this item has a familiar ring, especially right not. “We learn that a fire which was set in the word in the eastern part of Topsham last week is doing some damage. This fire is probably the cause of the smoky state of the atmosphere.”

Paid Town Postage

Postage on newspapers, in that day, was paid by the recipient, so that Brunswick people who subscribed to Portland or Boston papers had an extra 52 cents a year added to their subscription price. This fact was played up by publisher Noyes as an argument for the support of the local sheet; and in an editorial on the subject, he incidentally started a feud with the postmaster, Col. Pike. “The subscriber to an out of town paper,” he wrote, “has the trouble of calling at the Post Office three or four times to get it, the postmaster being out more than half the time at such hours as laborers find it convenient to call, and then if you don’t have the change to pay up the postage you can’t have your paper.”

Pike wrote a scathing reply to this, and peremptorily canceled his subscription. To justify his complaint, Noyes wrote: “A laborer must go to work at sunrise. Can he get his mail then? No! He has half an hour for dinner. He gets through work at 7:30 and then has a half an hour for supper. The Post Office closes at 8, too early for him to get his mail.” Right there is an interesting glimpse of life in Brunswick a century ago—a work day stretching from sunrise to sunset!

As to the inability of a patron to get his paper unless he “has the change to pay the postage,” however, it would seem that this was a matter in which the postmaster might exercise his judgment. It is certain that he did carry charge accounts and from time to time he published a notice requesting patrons to pay their bills “by the first of January next.”

Railroad Projected

The railroad had not been built at that time although it was projected and had the hearty support of the Brunswicker. A stage-coach line operating tri-weekly between Brunswick, Bath, and Portland was advertised in the paper. Leaving Portland at 8 a.m. on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, it was due to arrive in Brunswick at “12 meridian” and leave for Bath at 1 o’clock. On the alternate days, the coach left Bath at the early hour of 5 a.m. and Brunswick at 6 a.m. for Portland.

Practically all the freight for Brunswick traveled by boat; some in sailing vessels direct to New Meadows or direct to Brunswick, but mostly by the “superior and fast sailing steamer J.W. Richmond, Nathl. Kimball, Master” which operated between Boston and Hallowell. Brunswick freight was unloaded at Bath and hauled by horse-drawn carts from that point. Many Brunswick people, too, traveled to and from Boston by this line. The fare, in the early part of 1843, was

\$2.50, with meals extra; but apparently competition came into the picture, and the fare was reduced to one dollar, then to 25 cents and finally, for a very brief period, “free gratis for nothing”!

“Letters to the Editor” were frequently published, although in no instance was the name of the writer given. One irate citizen whose sleep had apparently been disturbed on the night before the Fourth of July wrote caustically:

“Why was not that youngster spanked and sent to bed instead of being suffered to disturb the whole neighborhood with his tin whistle on the night of the 3rd?”

Traffic Problems

Another correspondent evidently had difficulty in maintaining a garden at his home. “I wish to inform those hens who are in the habit of working in their neighbors’ gardens without contract,” he wrote, “that they will be paid off in shot, and if their friends have not use for the articles they had better keep them home.”

There seems to have been traffic problems in those days, too. An unidentified citizen wrote “passengers in the streets, on Sundays especially, are seriously incommoded by the habits of those who ride in sleighs, so as to take up both sides of the traveled path. If the latter could be for the future keep on side of the track and leave the other for those who walk, the public convenience would be greatly promoted, and accidents prevented. A word to the wise is sufficient.”

Perhaps it is in its advertising columns that the Brunswicker gives the most interesting pictures of the times—but that’s a story in itself, which I am reserving for a future article.

Wheeler recounted the lectures, concerts and debates that filled the evenings for Brunswick citizens.

Evening Amusement No Problem To Citizens of a Century Ago March 18, 1948

“What shall we do this evening? Want to go to the movies? Would our rather stay at home and listen to the radio? Or shall we take the car and run into Portland and see a show?”

Those questions never bothered our forefathers, the Brunswick citizens of a century ago. There were not such things as motion pictures; the radio was yet unborn. Transportation was limited to the horse-drawn vehicle and the ox-cart. “Running into Portland” meant half a day’s journey over sandy, rutted roads.

Anyway, those solid (and perhaps stolid) citizens were never at a loss to know what to do in the evening. Usually, after supper, they went to bed! The work-day was long; a newspaper of the period tells of one Joseph Coombs who cut 13 pairs of shoes in 16 hours, which the paper said was “a good day’s work.” After working, probably, from sunrise until seven or eight in the evening, Joseph doubtless sought nothing else than his downy couch as soon as he had eating his evening meal.

“Moral” Entertainments

Once in a while, though, the good people of the town attended an evening entertainment. It had to be a “moral” performance; anything like our modern movies would have been condemned as the work of Satan. For the most part, Brunswick folk of a century ago found their relaxation from the cares and tribulations of a workaday world in attending lectures!

Even these, however, had to be on topics which conformed to the street, and somewhat intolerant, tenets of the pious people. In 1843, for example, “a Mr. Starkweather”, says a contemporary newspaper, “lectured on the Second Advent in the grove on the hill, and he was able to obtain permission to use any hall or house in Brunswick or Topsham.” How much of an audience he attracted does not appear.

Lectures

“Mr. M. Hall,” according to a rather florid advertisement, offered a course of lectures in the “Baptist Meeting House” on Maine Street. (Incidentally, Brunswick’s principal thoroughfare is invariably referred to as “Main” street in documents of that period.) The lectures, on the subject “Astronomy and Natural History”, were to be illustrated by “transparent diagrams”—probably slides of old time “magic lantern”, with a whale oil lamp to provide illumination.

The Baptist church, which stood on Maine Street, seems to have been a favorite auditorium for approved lectures, although occasionally one was given in the Tontine Hall.

In April, 1844, Col. T.L. McKenney delivered two lectures on successive evenings, on the announced subject: “Origin, History, Character of Wrongs and Rights of the Indians—their present relations to us and ours to them—a plan for their preservation and elevation in the scale of their being—the terrible consequences to both them and us if their concentrated enmity is not speedily neutralized, and Justice and Mercy are much longer withheld from this Noble but downtrodden race.” No wonder it took two nights to get all that off his chest! Incidentally, this voice from the past gives us an insight into one of the problems of our forbears—the “concentrated enmity” of the Indians, who, even as late as 1844, were thorns in the flesh of the white settler.

Lecture lovers must have had a surfeit that week. On the evening following the good Colonel’s dissertation on the Indians, the Reverend Mr. Hayes lectured under the auspices of the Washingtonian Society. His subject was not recorded, but as the society’s aim was the furtherance of temperance, the nature of his discourse is not difficult to imagine.

Many, perhaps most, of the lectures were under the auspices of the Brunswick and Topsham Lyceum. This organization was formed in the fall of 1843, in response to a letter to the editor of the “Brunswick” urging the crying need of such a group. Like most of the communications which appeared in the papers of that day, it was signed by a nom-de-plum; but I have an idea it was from the pen of the beloved Dr. John D. Lincoln. Anyway, he was one of the prime movers in the organization; and was its first secretary. The first meeting of the newly-fledged Lyceum was held in the Pleasant Street Seminary, and at that time arrangements were made for a series of lectures throughout the winter.

Naturally enough, Bowdoin College was a fertile field from which to draw speakers. President Woods, Professors Sweetser and Peaslee of the Medical School, Professor Smythe, who spoke on “Explosions of Steam Boilers,” Professor Goodwin, whose topic was “The Times, Character and Political System of Machiavelli”, and Professor Packard who lectured on

“Nationality” were among those who addressed the Lyceum. Ministers seem to come next. The Reverend George A. Adams, the Reverend Asahel Moore, the Reverend Mr. Bailey, the Reverend Mr. Haynes and others. John W. Davis, Topsham lawyer, and the Honorable William G. Barrows represented the legal fraternity.

Debates

Occasionally, instead of a lecture, the Lyceum staged a debate between members. Such subjects were discussed as “Ought Texas to be Admitted to the Union?”, “Has Our Country More Grounds for Hope Than Fears?”, “Which is Best Calculated to Produce Eloquence, the Pulpit or the Bar?” That last debate must have been interesting, with two ministers arguing for the pulpit and two lawyers for the bar!

That these debates were of interest to the public is attested by a letter to the editor of the “Brunswicker”—anonymous, like all such communications of that day. “The large audience,” he wrote “listened with rapt attention for upward of two hours. It is a pleasant as well as an instructive manner of passing leisure evenings.”

For a time, all the Lyceum meetings were open to the public without charge. Apparently, however, the attendance increased to a point where it became unwieldy, and a notice signed by the secretary announced that all those who could not show membership cards were to be charged 12 ½ cents per lecture. No doubt the attendance dropped materially.

Concerts

Once in a while—perhaps two or three times a year—Brunswick people had an opportunity to attend a concert. In January, 1844 “The Twin Sisters Misses Macomber” advertised an entertainment of this kind in Tontine Hall. One of the ladies played the violin; the other the cello; and both were vocalists. The program consisted of seven songs, three “duets” and what was termed a “comic”. Apparently there was a good attendance, for the twins gave a second concert the following March.

On March 1, 1844, the Brunswick Brass Band gave a concert in the Maine Street Baptist church. Prior to that date, there were frequent references in the press to the activities of the Band, but it would seem that they had not hitherto made a public appearance.

Magicians

In September of that year, the good people of Brunswick were treated to an unusual form of entertainment for those days. They were visited by no less a personage than Miss Mary Darling; “celebrated English enchantress, pupil of Herr DeFrong the great magician, known all over Europe and receiving the rapturous applause of the elite.” The “enchantress” opened the program with a “grand necromantic scene”, which included “miraculous changes, transformations, productions and disappearances.” For the second part, Signor Vivalda exhibited his “marvelous marionettes”. Lest the people should fear the show to be the work of Satan, the advertising assured them that “persons of strictest religious principles need feel no repugnance in witnessing this exhibition.”

Whether or not the show was well attended and the “enchantress” a capable magician, we shall never know. The editor of the only Brunswick paper published at the time dismissed the

matter in a few words. “We did not attend,” he wrote, “as we were not favored with a complimentary ticket!”

Exhibitions

In that September so long ago, there was also an “Unparalleled Zoological Exhibition,” which exhibited in a “pavilion” said to accommodate 10,000 people near the foot of Federal Street. According to the advance billing the menagerie contained “the male and female—of every living animal”. Included was the “horned horse” supposed to be the fabulous “Unicorn”. I wonder if the good people of Brunswick were naïve enough to swallow that!

Showing in Bowdoinham the previous day, the caravan arrived over the highway, and paraded up Maine Street to the “Congregational Meeting House”, down Federal Street to the pavilion. Included in the procession was a “band of music” drawn by four huge elephants. The admission of this show was expensive—a shilling instead of the usual sixpence.

The editor of the Brunswicker reported that it was “said to be a splendid affair, but as we did not attend we cannot give a description.” Perhaps the proprietors of this show, too, were niggardly in the distribution of free tickets!

Local Talent

As far as I can ascertain, the concert by the Brunswick Band was the only entertainment provided by local talent during the period of which I am writing. There was, however, a series of what were called “singing meetings”, which appear to have been merely gatherings of citizens for the enjoyment of community music. The call for the organization of this group was published in March, 1944, and the first meeting was held in the Pleasant Street Seminary. The avowed purpose was “to revive the Musical spirit and Taste in this place”. The call was signed by Andrew Dennison, the cobbler; Elijah Pike, postmaster; A. B. Thompson; Benjamin Furbish, the tinsmith, John S. Cushing, tailor; B.G.Dennison, the book-binder and W. R. Field, who later ran the “Depot” restaurant.

No, the people of that bygone day didn’t have movies, or radio, or automobiles. They would probably have declared them sinful anyway—but it would seem that they managed pretty well, after all, in finding entertainment for their leisure hours.

Recounting topics of old gentlemen getting together, Wheeler covers topics such as stoves, cold weather, communications, horses, etc.

When “Old Boys” Get Together, The Talk Is Of Youthful Days April 15, 1948

Whenever a group of gray-haired “old boys” get together, the conversation is sure to turn to the days of youth, and somewhere in the discussion, inevitably, the remark will be made, “them was the good old days.”

But really now, were they?

Looking back through the years, kindly time casts a roseate hue on the memories of boyhood days—and indeed we did enjoy life, as do boys in any age. But there were certainly hardships in those days which have disappeared with the march of time, and which are unknown today.

My present home is heated throughout by steam, and from fall to spring I don't even have to think about it. My oil tank is filled regularly without attention from me; a thermostat regulates the heat, reducing it at night and automatically raising the temperature before the family arises in the morning. In my boyhood, the only heat was from a "cookstove" in the kitchen and the huge "gas burner" coal stove in the "sitting room." One of my jobs was to keep these various coal eaters supplied with fuel. The coal bin was in the shed, where it was so cold in winter that outdoor clothing must be worn; so when the "gas burner" needed to be fed, I had to bundle up, put on my mittens, and bring in a hodful after hodful in order that we might keep reasonably warm—"Reasonably" is good word in that connection too; it was uncomfortably hot alongside the huge stove, but in other parts of the room it might be—and often was—decidedly chilly.

Icy Bedrooms

The bedrooms were icy, except that in one there was a register which permitted a modicum of heat to rise from the stove below. The "parlor" was never used in winter—it couldn't be, as there was no way of heating it.

We went shivering to bed, and it was heavenly to crawl under the "comforters" on the thick feather-bed. We were extremely reluctant, however, to leave it in the morning to dress in the frigid atmosphere of the unheated room.

In every bedroom, back in the "good old days," there was a "commode" with its wash bowl and a big pitcher filled with cold water—or, in winter, solid ice. We could wash there, but usually we performed our morning absolutions downstairs at the kitchen sink. Today, modern bathroom, heated and comfortable, and with its hot and cold water quickly available, is just a step from the bedroom.

A real bathroom was practically unknown 60 years ago in Brunswick. There was no running water, no sewer, and the few tubs which were obtained were too costly for most folks. The regular Saturday night bath was, as a rule, taken in a washtub in the warm kitchen. Water was heated in a boiler on the cookstove and dipped out into the tub. With four or five members of the family taking turns, the entire evening was devoted to bathing, we never planned anything else for Saturday nights!

Tin Bathtubs

I recall when a real bathtub was installed in my home, back somewhere around 1885. It was made of tin; and unless I am greatly mistaken, it was built to order at Furbish's tin-shop. It was placed at the end of the kitchen sink, enclosed in a wooden casing, and with a hinged lid which was kept closed when the tub was not in use. Hot water was obtained, as before, from the huge boiler on the kitchen stove; but for cold water, we had a tin spout which could be attached to the kitchen pump, so that cistern water could be pumped into the tub.

Without a water system, everyone depended on the big cistern in the cellar for water for domestic purposes. Drinking water came from a well in the yard. A sewer system was

undreamed of; waste from the kitchen sink—and the bathtub—was drained into a V-shaped trough of boards and conveyed to the surface of the ground back of the house.

Communication

The telephone was in its infancy in my boyhood. Somehow we got along without what today has become essential; and if we needed to communicate with anyone in town, we went to see him—on foot. The housewife didn't telephone her morning order to the grocer—she dispatched whichever youngster was handiest to get her a pound of coffee or a yeast cake. We boys would have appreciated the telephone then!

Telegrams were delivered by messenger on foot—one of my first jobs was in that capacity, at the marvelous salary of three dollars a week. And really that wasn't bad pay; many grown men earned only twice as much, and for a 12-hour day. Somehow they supported families on that wage.

We had to walk, most of us, anyway. There were no automobiles, of course, and only the well-to-do-owned horses. "If the man of the house found himself out of cigars or chewing tobacco, he didn't get out the car to run over to Maine Street for a supply—he walked, or more likely, sent, one of the boys.

Old Dobbin

Riding behind a horse, in summer at least, was a real pleasure; and I think that in spite of the convenience of the automobile, something was lost when old Dobbin passed out of the picture. Travel was leisurely, to be sure, but that very fact made it enjoyable. In winter, however, it was something else again. One day a few months ago I took a long drive in my car, when the thermometer was well below zero. I drove without gloves, and with my overcoat unbuttoned—it was as warm and comfortable as a steam-heated living room. In contrast, I recall vividly a ride I took in an open sleigh, when I was about 10 years old, from Brunswick to Bowdoinham. I was warmly dressed; my head and ears were swathed in a heavy muffler; my legs were protected by a "buffalo robe", but I don't believe I ever suffered more in my life. Was "them the good old days?"

Gas Lights

Even the poorest home today has electric lights. In my boyhood we had kerosene lamps—a long shelf lined with them, cleaned and filled and ready to use. Over the dining table what I thought was the most beautiful thing in the world—a gorgeous "argand burner" lamp; its inverted bowl shade ringed about by glistening prisms of glass. Hanging by chains, this ingenious invention could be raised or lowered as occasion might require. A few—very few—Brunswick homes were lighted by gas. The burners were of the open flame type, turned off by a cock in the wall fixture and lighted by a match.

Most homes today have hardwood floors, with rugs as coverings which are given a daily cleaning with an electric vacuum sweeper. In the 80s, the floors were completely covered by carpets, tacked down; and one of the annual chores in which every boy had to participate was taking up the carpets, hanging them on a clothesline, beating out the dust, then re-laying them and tacking them down for another year.

Movie Gadgets

The nearest approach we had to movies was the old-time “magic lantern”. Remember those gadgets, with the kerosene lamps for illumination, and the crudely colored “slides” which they threw, in blurred and distorted form, on a sheet hung for a screen? We had no radio, of course; and the phonography was in its infancy when I was a boy. I’ve told the story before—how the first phonograph, with its tinfoil “record” was exhibited in Lamont Hall, when Charles Fish and Dr. Alfred Mitchell spoke half a dozen words into the tinhorn and a turn of the crank gave out a tinny reproduction of their voices.

Probably an age means good times for a boy. We managed to enjoy life, even without today’s opportunities, and to us oldsters looking back the days of our youth seem, indeed, “good old times”. But—I wouldn’t want to go back!

Wheeler gave his readers a fascinating view of the old high school and it’s principal. One got a very good picture of what education was like in his youthful days.



Ingenuity Marked 1880 Era of Brunswick Principal “Pa” Fish July 1, 1948

Some time ago, with the valued assistance of Leon P. Spinney, Brunswick’s superintendent of schools, I wrote for the record a brief outline of the history of the high school. This brought me several letters from contemporaries who recalled incidents of which I wrote, and one especially, from the late Willis Tenney, in which he went even farther back into ancient history than my own memory reaches.

Class of 1882

Tenney graduated in 1884, in a class of 12 girls and two boys. That was about the usual proportion in those days; for some reasons more girls than boys finished the course, and many of the latter were regular wage-earners by the time their class received diplomas. One class,

however, was outstanding in this respect—there was an equal number of each sex, and that number was one! It was the class of 1882, and the two pupils who received their diplomas on that historic occasion were Maynard Tenney and Abbie French. That class had just 100 fewer members than the glass graduated this year of 1948.

Old Building

Writing of the old building which stood at the corner of “Back” and Green Streets, on the lot purchased from Narcissa Stone, Tenney said that the third floor, which I knew only as the attic, once housed the intermediate school. I questioned this, it seemed to me unlikely that the small children attending the intermediate would be placed on the third floor of such a building. Tenney’s recollection proved to be correct, however, and was later confirmed by Miss Caroline Potter, one of the early teachers in the old high school.

When the “new” intermediate school was built on Center Street on the site now occupied by the Brunswick Community Center, the old attic of the high school was converted into a gymnasium—although even that is beyond my recollection. My own “intermediate” schooling was in the Center Street building, where Miss Harriet Otis and Miss Hattie Perry were then the teachers.

The Faculty

Willis Tenney’s first year in high school in 1880 was under principal George C. Purington, with Elizabeth McKeen and Nellie Bunker as teachers. In 1881 all three were replaced, Charles Fish becoming principal, and Mary Sanford and Carrie Potter assisting. These three were the faculty in my own school days. The grammar school, in the same building, in 1881, had W. H. Annette Merryman and Laura Hatch as teachers. Miss Merryman later became principal and served for many years in this capacity.

The small chemistry and physics laboratory on the third floor of the old High School, concerning which I wrote, was first used by the class of 1884. It would appear that this was an innovation brought about by the new principal, Charles Fish, who was happiest when teaching those subjects.

“Pa” Fish

“Pa” Fish was a man of considerable ingenuity. In his home on High Street he had a well-equipped machine shop—well equipped, that is, for those days before electric motors were available. His lathe and his drill press were operated by foot-power; but he did excellent work, even under those conditions.

There was little or no money available for “frills” in the school budget; whenever he wanted anything in the way of “gadgets” he had to make it himself. He wanted, for instance, an electric bell system in the two classrooms, so he could press a button at his desk and call classes out—but the school board had no funds for such luxuries as this. Mr. Fish then proceeded to manufacture for himself the equipment the town wouldn’t buy him. He turned out in his lathe a wooden push-button, wound magnet for the bells, fabricated then and installed them—and we had a modern call-bell system.

Hand-made Innovation

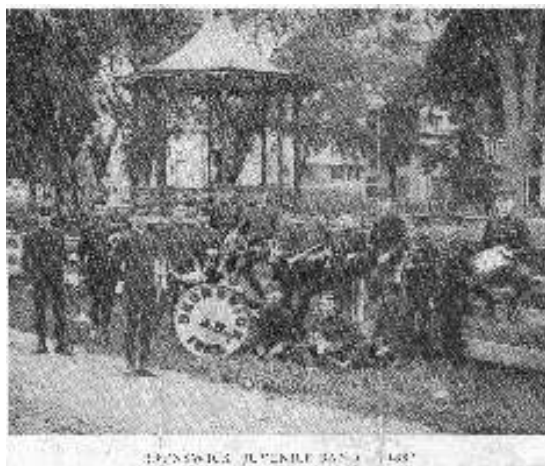
In his physics laboratory he needed models of telegraph instruments in order to demonstrate their use in his class; so he made them! He manufactured a practical, if crude, telegraph key out of wood, and with home-made magnets, constructed a sounder which actually worked. I recall that after I commenced work as a railroad telegrapher, I purchased and gave him a commercially-made combination key and sounder which he used thereafter in instructing his classes. I wonder where that instrument is now!

To operate his bells and his telegraph line, he had to have a battery, of course. There were not “dry cell” batteries in those days—so he built a wet bichromate of potassium battery in a series of jelly tumblers. For the carbon element, he gathered a handful of the partly consumed carbon tips discarded from the “arc” street lights of the day. Needing “binding posts” for connecting the wires, he turned them out of brass, with copper pennies for the knurled thumb-screw heads.

If he needed an extra shelf in the laboratory, he built it himself, making the brackets out of scrap iron. If he required extra jars for his chemistry work, he’d cut the tops of bottles to make them. A small machine which he used to demonstrate static electricity was manufactured entirely by him, as was the tiny electric motor which, as he once told the class, was “about one flea-power.”

Charles Fish has gone, as has the old building in which he taught, but both of them live in the memories of old-time Brunswick folk!

Only two articles appeared in 1949. One dealt with the Brunswick Juvenile Band, the other with problems that had faced Brunswick leaders in the late 1840s.



Frank Freeman, George Hubbard, James Hubbard, J. Frank Jacques, William White, James M. Curtis, Charles Ridley, Ernest Crawford, W. Doughty, George Toothaker, Ernest Merryman, Carl Hessel, Robert Thompson, Robert Eaton, Charles Burnham, Fred Nash, Fred Fish

History of Famous Brunswick Juvenile Band Vividly Recalled April 21,1949

A little more than a century ago, the first instrumental musical organization of which there is record in Brunswick came into existence—the Brunswick Brass Band, organized in 1844. Its leader, for its short life of only five or six years, was William R. Field, who ran the “depot” restaurant, and later, after selling out to George Woodbury, opened a cigar and confectionery store at the corner of Maine and Depot Streets. Little is known of this band and there is no record of its members.

It was about 1875 that Fred Given, a carpenter who lived on Mason Street, gathered a group of local musicians and formed Given’s Band—perhaps the best and most talented band in Brunswick’s musical history. Fred Given, with his new E-Flat coronet, was the leader, and Howard Eaton was instructor. Harvey Given beat the big brass drum, “Ole” Hubbard played the tenor drum. The coronetists, in addition to Given and Eaton, were “Pel” Storer and Stanley Brown. “Billy” Campbell played the first slide trombone ever seen in Brunswick; the key trombone was played by Paul Randall. Charlie Mountfort and one Thompson played clarinets; Nate Given, Ed Hunter and Charles Stoddard provided the bass. Ed Lancy, who worked in the “box shop”, played the alto horn, and Edwin Graves, the harness maker, baritone.

Music A Family Affair

Music, in the Brunswick of that day, seems to have been somewhat of a family affair. “Ole” Hubbard’s three sons, Jim, George and Fred, were all musicians. The Thompson family, too, all had music in its blood. Sinclair, who later opened a school of music in Portland, was an expert banjoist; John, and I think Bob, played the clarinet. The Givens—Fred, Harvey and Nate—were all members of the band.

It was Given’s band which provided the summer concerts on the Mall in my boyhood—in fact, it was to make these concerts possible that the bandstand, still a feature in the Mall but in a different location, was erected. In the Brunswick of that day a band concert was a real event. There were not automobiles in which to take an evening drive; no movies to attend; no radio to provide music and entertainment in the home. So, when Given’s band marched from headquarters to the Mall, and ensconced in the bandstand, the leader gave the first tentative toot on his coronet, pretty much every able-bodied resident of Brunswick from five to 75 years old, was out ready to listen and applaud.

Some strolled up and down the Maine Street sidewalks, young couples sought the darker side streets or sat on the park’s greensward; dads and mothers, when the could, found seats on the hard benches—planks covered with zinc to discourage whittlers. And everywhere there were boys—racing madly through the pathways, climbing the sides of the bandstand to get as close as possible to lucky Harvey Given, whose inestimable privilege it was to beat the huge brass drum and generally getting in everyone’s way. And, in the soft summer air, there was a strident blast of the coronet, the clear note of the clarinet, the deeper tones of the trombone and baritone and over all, the “oompah” of the big brass horn. We didn’t need radio or the movies; we had our own beloved band!

The French Band

The French Band—that’s what we called it, although I believe the correct name was St. Jean Baptiste Band—was organized by a group of French Canadian citizens, I’d say sometime in the ‘80s although I may be mistaken in the date. John Mutty was the leader and played the bass

horn; “Gene” Small, the Topsham carriage painter, was employed by the band as instructor. Whether or not this aggregation had musical ability, it is certain that they made an imposing picture as they marched up Maine Street. Their first uniforms were fire engine red, liberally adorned with massive gold braid. It is my recollection that “loud” as were their uniforms, their playing was louder still—in those first years of the band’s existence its repertoire consisted of two tunes: “Marching Through Georgia” and “Her Bright Smiles Haunts Me Still.” They played these over and over, making up for the lack of variety by plenty of volume.

I have been unable to obtain a list of members of this band. I believe, though, that from time to time, others than regular members occasionally played with the band—the late Prof. Hutchins, who was a master of the clarinet, Jim Hubbard, coronetist, and perhaps others.

Juvenile Band

I’ve been quite a while leading up to it, but this story is really intended to be about the famous Brunswick Juvenile Band of the 1880s—an organization which, because some of its members were around my own age, seemed to me to be the finest musical aggregation in existence.

I don’t know who started it—very likely it was Jim Hubbard, who certainly was one of its brightest lights. Jim made music his career; for many years he played in the band of Scribner and Smith’s Circus, traveling all over the United States and even in South America. Eventually he became treasurer of the show.

Incidentally, he was not the only Brunswick boy to follow the circus. At one time, some 10 or a dozen youths who could play some musical instrument joined up with a “canal show”—a sort of show-boat enterprise following the numerous canals of the period. Most of them remained only a short time. George Hubbard, Jim’s brother, quickly got fed up—watching his chance as the boat moved slowly along a canal one night, he threw his big brass horn up onto an overhead bridge and scrambled after it and somehow or other made his way home.

Trombonist was Frank Freeman, whose home was on Federal Street. He was, at one time, I believe, in the candy business in Brunswick, later he became an engineer for the New York Central Railroad. George Hubbard was a barber in Brunswick, then joined the Army and retired with the rank of colonel.

George was a special favorite of Miss Annette Merriman, principal of the grammar school. It has nothing to do with the band, but I can’t refrain from telling this story. We were to have some sort of a “business meeting” of the “Boys Orchestra” of which I was manager; and there was an afternoon session of grammar school. I couldn’t be at the meeting unless I got excused from school. My folks refused to write me an excuse for such a trivial purpose, so I sadly told George I couldn’t make it. “I’ll fix that,” said George. He got a piece of paper and wrote:

“Miss Merriman,
Please excuse Willie at 2 o’clock and oblige
George Hubbard”

I took it and in fear and trembling presented it to Miss Annette, never dreaming it would result in anything but censure and perhaps punishment for me. But, with a smile, and without asking why I wanted to go, she consented. The fact that George has asked was enough! I doubt if anyone else in Brunswick could have put that across.

Jim Hubbard was the band leader. Music, I believe, was the one real interest in Jim Hubbard's life. He took part in most of the concerts and other musical affairs in the Brunswick of his day; he was always ready, at a moment's notice, to join any musical aggregation. I recall that when (somewhat later than the time of the boys' band) we organized the Brunswick Juvenile Orchestra. Jim gave us a great deal of his time and attention, even playing with our group when we gave a public concert. It was a little beneath his dignity, perhaps, to associate with us younger boys—a few years make a great difference at that age—but it was a chance for him to play his beloved coronet, and that was enough.

Outstanding Achievement

That orchestra, by the way, had an outstanding achievement. It was short-lived and never a very accomplished musical aggregation, but it had the distinction of being the first—perhaps the only—Brunswick group to make a recording. It was shortly after Edison had invented the phonograph that an itinerant exhibitor leased a small store in the Tontine Block and played wax cylindrical records at a nickel a selection. Talking with him one day, I suggested that our orchestra might play for him. He accepted the suggestion, and we gathered in the small room and made a number of records—or entire repertoire, in fact. For the rest of his stay in Brunswick members of the orchestra were on the free list and could listen to records as long as they liked. Strangely it was our own recordings that we asked for most often!

But I'm getting away from the band.

Frank Jacques was the bass drummer. I wonder if Brunswick boys today have the same burning envy that we youngsters had, watching the drummer wield his big stick with one hand while clapping the cymbals with the other! If we ever lived long enough, we were determined that some day we'd play the bass drum!

Usually holding the trombone was "Billy" White, who lived on Gilman Avenue.

James R. Curtis, whose mother had a bookstore on the corner of Maine and Everett Streets, in the same building where John Griffin had the first print shop in Brunswick was also a band member. The Curtis Store was later purchased by Byron Stevens, who operated it in the same location until he moved to the corner of Maine and Pleasant, now Chandler's College Bookstore.

"Pooduck" Ridley

Charlie Ridley, perhaps better known as "Pooduck", also participated. If I recall correctly, Ridley later had a grocery store on Maine Street near Everett.

Ernest Crawford, coronet player, was the son of Emery Crawford, who for years operated a trucking business in Brunswick. "Trucking" then, of course, meant with flesh-and-blood horsepower rather than mechanical. Ernest was employed in the office of the old Bowdoin Paper Company at the Topsham end of the bridge.

The drummer was Charlie Burnham. You don't remember him? You will if I call him "Woggle"! He lived in the house just north of the little Curtis Bookstore; and later, I believe, moved to Portland.

And then there was William Doughty, who at one time had a barber shop in Brunswick, but afterwards studied medicine and became the head surgeon in a California hospital.

Next to him comes red-headed George Toothaker—and again, a nickname is perhaps necessary for identification. We all knew him as “Picker”. He was a printer and at one time was employed by Henry Upton in his Town Building office. Later he went to Augusta as a compositor on the Kennebec Journal and then migrated to Massachusetts.

Fred Nash

Another band member was Fred Nash, son of Charles H. Nash, who was a tinsmith in the Furbish Store. Also in the group was Fred Fish, the son of the beloved principal of the high school, Charles Fish. Fish studied law and became a prominent patent attorney in Boston. He died not long ago.

Ernest Merryman, who now lives at Hillside, was also one the boys, as was Carl Hessel, who made music a career. He trouped with a minstrel show, later with an Uncle Tom’s Cabin outfit, and afterward became bandmaster for a circus.

And don’t forget “Bob” Thompson, of the musical Thompson family. He clerked for a time in the grocery store of G.B. Tenney, near the Town Building. Bob was an accomplished musician, playing almost any instrument he could get his hands on. The only musical instruction I ever got was from him; when I attempted—unsuccessfully to learn to play clarinet under his tutelage.

Last of all is Robert Eaton, who lived on Page Street. I believe his father established the insurance business in the Town Building which was the predecessor of the long existent Riley Agency.

This then, was the aggregation of youthful musicians who made up one of Brunswick’s colorful organizations. Sixty-five years is a long time and memory is not always reliable; I may have erred in some of my recollections, but these thumb-nail biographies of the boys who made up the Brunswick Juvenile Band remember them.

Problems of a Century Ago Brunswick Selectmen Had Less Trouble Then May 19,1949

Now that Brunswick is entering upon a new era of Town management, it may be of interest to look back through the years for a glimpse of the activities of the Selectmen of a century ago.

I recently came into possession of a heterogeneous collection of papers which once rested in the Town's archives. Of little or no value in themselves, they reveal something of the duties and labors of the Town fathers of that bygone day. There's a small package bearing the dates 1812 to 1814; another covers a portion of 1832, and there are a scattering of mementos of the years between.

The selectmen of a Town, acting as assessors, have as a part of their duty the job of placing a valuation on taxable property. Any taxpayer may, of course, appear before the assessors and take oath to the value of his holdings; but nowadays this would be a rather novel experience for the selectmen of any town. Back in 1832, however, it would seem that either a

sworn evaluation was required, or the taxpayers of old Brunswick had little trust in the judgment of their elected assessors—anyway, it appears that it was the custom for property owners to appear, annually, and present a written list of their holdings to which they took oath.

Human Nature Unchanged

Human nature was the same a century ago as it is today; and most citizens, while honestly listing their property, endeavored to keep the valuation as low as possible. One Snow, for example, swore to the following: "75 acres, 15 of which I consider of little value; 1 house and barn much out of repair. This is all I posses and this I do Protest."

There's a salty tang to the sea on some of these property lists. Many of the solid citizens of Brunswick hi those days were sea captains, either active or retired, and their money was largely invested in shipping. Shares in Brig Hazard or the Folly Privilege were reported, with their value per ton. Even those who never followed the sea owned shares of vessels—Dr. Isaac Lincoln, for instance, reported half ownership in the schooner Maine and one-eighth of the Folly Privilege.

Dr. Lincoln's holdings for the year 1832 were listed as follows: "1 house, 1 shop, 1 chaise, 1 gig, 2 sleys, 1 horse, 1 cow, 1 acre improved land, 3 unimproved, 5 shares of Androscoggin Bridge," This represented wealth for those days.

Gen. A.B. Thompson, one of Brunswick's famous military men, reported no real estate, but declared 13 shares of bank stock, 1 cow, and 111 tons of shipping. He, too, owned a small share in the Folly Privilege, which seems to have been a Brunswick vessel.

Caleb Gushing, who was a tailor and one of Brunswick's prosperous merchants, wrote: "the following Property is to be Taxed to the present subscriber, viz., 1 Pole" (probably meaning his poll tax) "1 cow and 1 dwelling house that I now live in. The store and lot occupied by C. Gushing & Co. and stock in trade \$800." The Gushing store was located where the Lament Block now stands; and the corner of Maine and Pleasant streets was for years known as "Gushing's Corner."

No Income Tax

Probably there wasn't, in those days, an income tax such as we know today; but many—not all—of the taxpayers included in their declaration the amount of "money on hand" and the amount out at interest. Perhaps the others had none! One taxpayer who reported that he had in hand the sum of \$4 added the comment, "more than any honest man ought to have." Did his conscience trouble him, perhaps, concerning some Yankee horse trade in which he bested his opponent?

Prof. Thomas U. Upham, a preacher who turned professor and in 1824 came to Bowdoin College to take the chair of Moral Philosophy and Metaphysics, must have had some independent means, other than his salary from the College. His 1832 declaration shows a house and barn valued at \$2,000, 2 acres of land, \$5,500 in bank stock, and "total income \$ 1,000."

Josiah Melcher reported his possession as "135 acres lume land, 15 acres plains land, 1 house, 2 Barnes, such as they bee, 1 yoak Oxen, 1 yoak steers, 6 cows such ast they bee, 2 calves, 1 Coult, 1 hoge, \$100 money at interest."

Turning back to the war year of 1812, we find the Brunswick Selectmen engaged in finding means to support the "Melitia", a part of the armed forces of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Documents demanding of the town fathers that they furnish rations are signed by the company officers and approved by the regimental colonels. Richard Dunlap of Brunswick, captain of a company of infantry from that town, rendered a bill for "80 rations at 20 cents", the quartermaster of

a Bath Company requisitioned from Brunswick "2 Kegs contg. 572 cartridges of Powder and Ball for use of said Town of Bath."

Lookout at Mere Point

An interesting, if unexplained document is a regimental order commanding the Selectmen to "furnish rations and camp equipage and ammunition "for a corporal Mae Point as a lookout guard." The "guard" was maintained for a little more than three weeks, when it was withdrawn.

Capt. Jonathan Blondel of Brunswick rendered a bill "to Bath with House and Waggon" from Sept. 10 to Sept. 29, "which makes twenty days." His charge was 50 cents a day for the horse, another 50 cents a day for the horse's keep, and 33 cents a day for rental of the waggon." The bill was paid by the Selectmen; but there is no explanation as to the reason for it. Did the good Captain "commute" to and from his military duties in Bath, and let the Town pay for his travel expenses?

There were, apparently, paupers in those early days, and the selectmen then, as now, acted also as overseers of the poor. Diligent and vigilant they were determined to pay for the support only of those who had a legal claim on the town; persons whose legal residence was elsewhere became the subject of correspondence with other towns, sometimes long-drawn out. I have a bundle of such letters, written, or course, in long hand—there were no typewriters then—and with a quill pen. The paper was hand-made, with the deckle edge which was common then. These letters are all addressed to the Brunswick Officials; apparently no copies of outgoing letters were kept.

Addressing the town fathers as "Gentlemen Selectmen of the Town of Brunswick," the writers observed all the amenities then demanded in correspondence,

even though they might be acrimonious in their language. Invariably, the letters were signed "We are, Gentlemen, You Most Obedient & Humble Servants."

Letters in those days were not enclosed in envelopes, but were folded, sealed with wax, and addressed on the reverse side. The amount of postage paid was written by the postmaster in the upper right hand corner.

Problems of Paupers

A letter written by the Selectmen of Topsham in 1813 concerns Brunswick's claim that a certain pauper was an inhabitant of Topsham, and that the latter Town should either remove him or provide for his support. Let's call the gentleman John Smith, which isn't the name in the letter. "We have examined into this subject," says the writer, in flowing script, "and cannot find that any person by that name is the inhabitant of Topsham, but we find that one John Smith, an illegitimate, was born in Litchfield about the year 1785 and that his mother was married to..... of Brunswick about the year 1791, to which place (Brunswick) she moved and there with her infant son gained a settlement. If this person is the John Smith you refer to in your favor of the 22nd of June, we presume you will be satisfied that he is an inhabitant of Brunswick and that you will not require us to support your paupers."

The Selectmen of that long-ago day, bearded and dignified as they were, seemed to have been addicted to a habit which we may think of as modern. They "doodled" while thinking, just as we today doodle while at the telephone. Several of the letters I have bear unmistakable evidence of that. Can't you see those worthies, as they met in solemn conclave to consider, for example, that letter from their brother officials of Topsham? There's no record as to where they met—the first town house wasn't built until 1836—but they must have had an office of some sort. Gravely discussing the refusal of Topsham to support "John Smith", one of the trio reaches for his quill pen and ink-horn, and with the letter before him, idly draws an intricate pattern of squares, oblongs and triangles. Perhaps he was Brunswick's first doodler!

Many Familiar Names

Among the papers I have is a home-made book, with its pages carefully sewn together, in which are listed the voters of Brunswick for the year 1842—just a little more than a century ago. There were 1,020 of them—all men, of course, as women were not then considered competent to vote. Many of the names are familiar—Andrew Campbell, a grocer whose home was on Lincoln Street, and his store at the corner of Lincoln and Maine; John Crawford, trucking business; Lorenzo Day, the shoemaker; Andrew Dennison, founder of the great Dennison Manufacturing Company; Daniel Elliott, the merchant; Benjamin Furbish, the tinsmith; Dr. Isaac Lincoln; Theodore McLellan, who became publisher of one of Brunswick's early newspapers; William Otis, the sea captain; Rev. Benjamin Titcomb, in whose home Longfellow lived while attending college; Dr. Nathaniel Palmer; Aaron Varny; Prof. Thomas U. Upham; Prof. A.S. Packard—the list is long.

And there's a fleeting glimpse of Brunswick's governing body of a century and more ago—long before such an official as a "town manager" had even been thought of!

The last year of Wheeler's newspaper articles in the Record was 1951 when there were three printed. They dealt with barber shop customs and growing up in Brunswick, economic problems of the pat and a political battle among Republicans.

A shaving mug triggered Wheeler's memories of barber shops in Brunswick and how young men were ushered into that "inner circle" of manhood in the 80s.

Forgotten Shaving Mug in Attic Revives Memories for William Wheeler January 4, 1951

Searching for some papers in my attic recently, I came across a souvenir of early days which brought back memories—an old-time shaving mug, bearing my name in gold leaf Old English letters. I recall very vividly how proud I was when that mug took its place on the shelves in Charles York's barber shop, along with those of many of Brunswick's prominent citizens—it meant to me that I had reached manhood!

In every barber shop, in those days, might be seen row after row of these mugs, each with its own cake of shaving soap and brush; and each labeled with the name of the owner. Transients and those who were only occasion customers had their faces lathered from the common mug, and with the common brush.

Prideful Ownership

Just why I should have wanted a mug is now a puzzle to me. My youthful whiskers needed only occasional shaving, and anyway I had learned, with some facial damage, to wield the customary old-style razor. A barber's shave cost 10 cents, and dimes were not often available for luxuries. My wages, at that time, as night operator at the railroad station, was \$30 a month—and it must have been only on special occasions that I spent a tenth of a day's wage on a professional shave.

The mug itself cost me a dollar—I worked a 12 hour day to pay for it, I can only account for that expenditure now, as a sop to self-esteem—the satisfaction of having a mug bearing my name rest on the shelves along with those of the town's best known citizens.

As a matter of fact, I wonder now, if some such reason governed all of those whose mugs adorned the barber shop cabinet. I doubt if the individual mug was used solely for sanitary reasons—those were the days when little or no attention was paid to sanitation. Many who may be reading this will recall the drinking water tank in the old "depot" with dipper hanging by a chain. None of us hesitated to drink from that unwashed receptacle regardless of whose lips had touched it before ours. Flies swarmed unmolested on the goods and on the meats in the underground markets. No, it wasn't because we objected to the use of a common shaving brush that we had our own; it was the satisfaction of being labeled as a regular customer of the barber.

Hirsute Adornments

Looking back, I am a little puzzled, too, that in a period when most men were bearded, there should have been so many shaving mugs on the barber's shelves. I can hardly recall, at that time, an adult male citizen of Brunswick who was clean shaven. Some, to be sure, wore "sideburns" with the chin and neck shaved; some wore only a "goatee", shaving the cheeks; a few displayed only a magnificent moustache—it must have been these gentry who owned the mugs and patronized the barber.

Today, shaving is an insignificant part of the barber's work. The advent of the safety razor and later the electric razor, and the growth of the custom of daily shaving, has made that operation a part of the home toilet. When the only shaving equipment was the old style razor—a wicked weapon in incompetent hands—many men preferred to get their twice-a-week shave at the barbershop.

Tonsorial Temperament

There were, of course, other barbershops in Brunswick than that of Charles York, but somehow I recall most clearly the emporium, and his assistant Leo Nutter. First in the then Odd Fellows Block, and later over what is now Merserve's drug store, York and Nutter were, I believe, Brunswick's best barbers that early day. Charles York had his peculiarities—if he disliked a man, he usually found some excuse for refusing to shave him, even going as far as to close the shop early for some trumped-up reason. I've seen that happen.

Hair cuts then cost a quarter. There were sometimes, more or less transient shops where cut rates prevailed, and a hair cut could be obtained for 15 cents. York and Nutter never attempted to meet the competition; they continued to make the customary charge—and remained in business long after the cut rate shops had closed.

To many of the boys of my generation, a professional haircut was a luxury seldom enjoyed. Dads generally made a stab, more or less successfully, at cutting their youngster's hair—four or five haircuts a month, at a quarter apiece ran into money. The exception was the summer clipping when most boys had their heads practically shaved—and that was usually the barber's job.

Summer Freedom

Boys of today have many advantages which we lacked, but they didn't know the sort of hairless heads and shoeless feet in summer! We ran barefoot all summer long—but there's a vast difference between the dusty streets of that day and the hot pavements of today. There'd be no opportunity today to curl the town in the warm, soft dull dust of the road or to scruff through the fallen leaves of autumn. The clipped heads meant no brushing—even if they made the kids look like little monsters!

No Soup Strainers

But to get back to the shaving mug, which is what I started to talk about. Finding this brings to my mind another utensil, not related to it—the frequently used moustache cup. I wish I knew where mine is now—for I had one. It was a fairly large coffee cup,

with a bar across designed to keep the customary luxuriant moustache out of the morning coffee. It worked too—but there was no similar invention to protect the hirsute adornment when eating soup! In an old book of etiquette which I recently read the author refers to the rule that soup should be taken from the side of the spoon. “But,” he says, “I would rather violate the rule than to strain my soup through my moustache!”

In July, Wheeler recounted that the “good old days” that people of the early 50s were reminiscing about may not have been that good.

“The Good Old Days” Had Dollar Problems, Too, Says William Wheeler July 12, 1951

Most of us are griping nowadays—and for good reason—about the high cost of living, the rapidly spiraling prices of everything we eat, wear or use, and the devalued dollar. Those of us who can remember back far enough are inclined to recall the “good old days” when a dozen, fresh eggs could be bought for a dime, and a good loaf of bread cost only a nickel.

Things were better then—or were they?

Just for fun, let’s compare wages and prices of today with those paid in the Brunswick of the early 80s.

Yesterday I employed 13 year old Jimmy to mow my lawn and do a few odd chores around the garden. He worked three hours—and I paid him three dollars. A dollar an hour—that’s the going price for such labor, even for a boy.

Long Hours For Less

At exactly Jimmy’s age I worked for one summer in Al Townsend’s stationery store in the Arcade Block. My hours were from seven in the morning until six at night, with an hour for dinner. Every Saturday I proudly took home my “salary”—three of the old fashioned dollar bills. In other words, I earned in a six-day week of ten hours a day just what Jimmy earned in three hours. I really worked for that tremendous wage, too. I swept out the big store, ran errands, tended the telephone switch-board, delivered telegrams, handled freight shipments from the “depot” and unpacked them and even helped wait on customers.

Jimmy gets a dollar an hour; I got five cents an hour. But let’s see what those wages would buy: Milk, back in the 80s, sold for six cents a quart. It took me a little more than an hour, therefore, to earn enough to pay for one quart. Jimmy’s wages for one hour will buy more than four times as much! A pound of good rump steak could be bought, in my boyhood, for 25 cents. At my rate of pay, I’d have had to work five hours to earn the price of a single pound. Today, my butcher quoted me, for grade A rump steak, the reasonable price of \$1.31 a pound. Jimmy could buy that after working just an hour and a half, and have enough left over for a hot dog or an ice-cream.

But Jimmy’s a boy, and so was I at the time I’m talking about. What about the wages of grown men?

Twice As Much Now

Recently I employed a mason to rebuild some brick steps. It took him exactly eight hours, and his bill, for labor alone, was \$16—two dollars an hour. In my boyhood, a good mason could be hired for two dollars a day—and that really meant a day, too; not a day limited by the number of bricks laid. So, while the old-time mason could buy his pound of steak after an hour and a quarter, today's craftsman earns the wherewithal for nearly twice as much in the same length of time.

In the 80s, a good pair of men's shoes could be bought for three dollars. The brick mason could buy a pair after working a day and a half. An equally good pair, today, costs around \$8. Today's mason, therefore, works only half a day for his shoes.

Common labor, in those early days, was obtainable at around ten cents an hour. I've seen a man work hard all day sawing cordwood, and then gratefully accept a dollar for his ten hours labor. That hard-earned buck bought him a five-pound pork roast for his family's dinner—but my Jimmy has to work only three hours to buy a similar roast at today's prices.

Horses a Luxury

Automobiles, of course, were undreamed of in the 80s, while today there is scarcely a family anywhere that does not possess some kind of a car; and even a shack in the woods is likely to have a garage attached. We did have horses, of course—that is, the well-to-do did; and only the well-to-do could afford it. Outside the farmers, who necessarily employed horse-power for the work now done by tractors, the grocers, who used horses for delivering their goods, and the draymen who did the heavy hauling, few indeed were the Brunswick citizens who owned horses. Most of the time we walked; legs were useful in those days. When it was actually necessary, we could hire a horse at one of livery stables, but this was a luxury rather than an every-day occurrence.

A fairly good horse could be bought for \$100—an excellent one for \$150. A buggy cost \$50, and a harness \$25. Two hundred dollars would buy the whole outfit. No excise tax, registration or driver's license were required; there was no tax on the hay and oats which "fueled" the power plant. But a man earning an excellent salary at \$15 a week could hardly scrape up the wherewithal to invest in such luxury; and anyway, he didn't need a horse as long as his legs would provide the transportation he required. As to the ten-cents-an-hour laborer, of course a horse and buggy were beyond his wildest dreams.

Today almost every workman drives to his place of employment in his own car, for which he paid from a thousand dollars up. He pays the required taxes, the fees for registration and licenses, the cost of fuel, upkeep, and insurance, and every two of three years he trades in his car for a later model at a cost several times that of a horse and buggy.

I grant that in those early days whatever the wages earned, the payee got it all—there were no deductions for income tax, social security or pension payments—and when he spent it, he paid no sales tax, use tax or nuisance taxes. When he earned a dollar by a hard ten hour day's work, he had a dollar to spend. That dollar, however, didn't buy as much, in the long run, as today's dollar, devalued as it is, and emaciated by the squeezing

it gets from the tax collector, when one considers the amount of time and effort it required to acquire it.

Well, were those really the “good old times?”

Wheeler’s last entry was an historical description of a political battle between Thomas Brackett Reed and Weston Thompson.



Hon. Thomas B. Reed

Weston Thompson, Esq.

**Brunswick a Hot-Bed of Political Strife in 1880,
Tom Reed Defied
August 9, 1951**

Mr. Ernest Beach of New Meadows has sent me the manuscript of a political speech before the Brunswick Democratic Club in 1888 by the late Weston Thompson. It brings to mind a story of Brunswick politics which will be recalled only by my contemporaries but which may be of interest to the younger generation as well.

Distinguished Lawyer

Weston Thompson was one of Brunswick’s outstanding lawyers—a quiet unassuming man, with legal acumen and ability which gave him a high standing in his profession, not confined to the limits of a little town. He was a native of Bowdoin and was admitted to the Maine bar in 1821, shortly after his 21st birthday. For many years he was President of the Brunswick Savings Institution, and was active in public affairs. In 1881, and again in 1883, he was the successful Republican candidate for representative to the Maine legislature from Brunswick.

Right there the reader may say, “Wait a minute! You say he was a Republican, but you have him delivering an address before the Democratic Club. How Come?” Well that’s the story!

Yes, he was a Republican and an active one, until the campaign year of 1888, and the cause, or at least one of the causes, of his desertion of the elephant for the donkey was the Honorable Thomas B. Reed, member of Congress from the First Maine District.

“Czar” Tom Reed

It was Reed, as you know, who gained the title of “Czar”—and a far less complimentary appellation—because of his firm and unyielding control of the House of Representatives as its speaker. For many years minority groups were able to delay or defeat legislation by means of the filibuster. By being silent during roll call they were counted as absent and when enough followed this procedure the records showed that a quorum was lacking. Speaker Reed ruled that the physical presence of a member whether or not he answered roll call counted towards a quorum. His stand was bitterly opposed, but it prevailed, and is the rule of the House today.

A Stormy Career

Reed’s political career was a somewhat stormy one. He was first elected to Congress in 1876. At that time, James G. Blaine was dominant in Maine political circles, but Reed was not a man to yield readily to dictation. His insurgence and rebellion against the “machine” made it difficult for him to garner the necessary votes to elect him—but he did it, and served seven terms as representative, although frequently his majority was a close one. Throughout his political career he had to fight animosity and jealousy, even in his earlier days when he served in the Maine Legislature and as attorney general of the state.

So much for background—let’s get on with the story.

In the latter 80s, with a Republican President and Congress, James W. Crawford was a candidate for the office of postmaster in Brunswick. He was a popular and highly respected citizen, and had an honorable record as a soldier in the Civil War, which, in those days so close to the closing of hostilities, meant a great deal. A veteran of the War Between the States was considered entitled to special consideration and honor. So, when Mr. Crawford expressed a desire to be made postmaster, pretty nearly the whole town gave support to his petition.

Crawford Controversy

But Tom Reed, whose recommendation meant appointment, had other ideas. Candidate Crawford was not a politician; he controlled no votes other than his own, he was not a party leader, although a staunch Republican. So Reed who definitely was a politician, handed the coveted plum, not to the man whose application was almost unanimously supported by his fellow citizens, but to a local party leader.

It is but a memory of my childhood but a vivid one and, I believe, a correct one, that when this became known, a delegation from Brunswick was sent to see Reed to protest his action. “Your constituents, to a man, want Crawford,” he was told. And his reply was definite and in few words. “To hell with my constituents.” Whether or not this is true, and I am sure it is, the reply was not inconsistent with Reed’s nature. One of his biographers said of him that he was ungracious and had little tact. He was gruff and undiplomatic, riding rough shod over all opposition. He had made up this mind, and the opinion of his constituents meant little to him.

Whether or not his action in appointing a postmaster contrary to the wishes of his party members could have resulted in organized opposition to him, I don't know; but the quoted reply to the Brunswick citizens who called upon him proved to be the spark which set fire to the cannon-cracker.

Anti-Reed Club

The "Anti-Reed Club," composed of pretty nearly every Republican in Brunswick, was organized for the sole purpose of defeating Reed when he came up for re-election in 1888. The club met in the small room then used by the Women's Christian Temperance Union, over what is now Merserve's drugstore, and once the barber shop of Charles York. As a small boy I attended one of the Club meetings with my father, and I recall clearly the bitter resentment represented by the speakers of whom Weston Thompson was one.

That was before the days of primary elections, and candidates for office were nominated at district conventions. To the convention, then, the Anti-Reed Club sent a delegation headed by Weston Thompson, to oppose the nomination of Reed. In a vigorous speech, beginning with the words, "I come from the ancient town of Brunswick with an indictment against Thomas B. Reed." Thompson set forth the story of Reed's defiance of his constituents, and called for his defeat. When the votes were counted, however, those of the Brunswick delegation were the only ones against Reed's nomination and he went on to election for a seventh time.

Changes Party

Maybe there were other causes for Mr. Thompson's desertion of his party; but it is significant that it was immediately after the Reed episode that the change of base occurred. And so, on this evening of Aug. 6, 1888, we find him the principal speaker of the Democratic Club of Brunswick; and in his speech he may have conveyed a hint of his resentment when he said, "Republicans are servants; Democrats are free men."

Just where this meeting was held does not appear. It may be that the club had its own rooms. However, the report indicates that there was a large attendance at the meeting—so large that midway of the Thompson oration the chairman called for an adjournment to Lamont Hall in order to accommodate the crowd. Lamont Hall, then the largest auditorium in town, was at the corner of Maine and Pleasant Streets, now, I believe, the home of the Knights of Pythias.

Pennell Presidency

Presiding was William M. Pennell, a lifelong Democrat, later sheriff of Cumberland County. He introduced Mr. Thompson as "a man who for the sake of the right of opinion, holds to his own view regardless of any ties that formerly bound him."

While the address was devoted to a discussion of protection vs. free trade, a topic which was then the issue of the day, there is found in the manuscript a few sentences which have a similar ring today. The speaker referred, for example, to "the high cost of

living”; and told of having to pay \$1.75 a day for a man to drill a rock ledge. The exorbitant costs he declared were caused by the Republican tariff.

And does not this sound as though it might be said by a political orator of today? “I desire to have you understand the enormous weight and burden of taxation which the people of the United States are paying. You do not appreciate it, because the tax which you are paying constitutes a portion of the prices of things that you buy. You do not see it be itself.” What would the gentleman think if he were here today? And if he were here paying the new sales tax, he might repeat what he said then, “The objection to it is that it is a tax upon consumption and not on wealth and that, I say, is iniquitous to the last degree... It is a question of human rights. For instance a millionaire might be without family and he might be a miser. He pays a tax, not to the proportion to what he owns but in proportion to what he consumes. The laboring man, having nothing but his wages to subsist upon, and having a family of six or seven children, consumes a great deal more than the millionaire consumes and therefore pays a great deal more taxes.” Does that sound familiar? It’s being said today about the Maine sales tax!

The Public Debt

The public debt, too, disturbed the speaker. “We are a mighty nation of 80 million people,” he said, “and the maintenance of a government like ours is somewhat expensive. In addition we have to pay the interest and principal so far as they accrue, of the public debt—a very heavy burden.” Well, in 1888 that public debt which gave him such concern was approximately one quarter billion dollars. At the end of 1950, it was well over 257 billion dollars! We might well apply the term he used, “a heavy burden”, to the present situation.

Weston Thompson had a keen sense of humor and a fund of stories which he told quietly, but with a twinkle in his eye. When, on that night in August, 1888, the meeting adjourned to Lamont Hall, and he again faced his audience to resume his talk, he referred to the large attendance, and said, “It is unfortunate, gentlemen, that the Democrats are so numerous—but perhaps I need not tell you whose misfortune it is!”

Thus we have traveled along with William A. Wheeler on his journeys through Brunswick history. His work has left a valuable insight into Brunswick and its people. One can never know where to go if one does not know where one has come from. Wheeler has made that history alive and personal—an admirable feat and gift to all of us.

RFS