

**PROCEEDINGS**  
OF THE  
**BROOKLINE**  
**HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
FOR 1959 - 1963



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BROOKLINE, MASSACHUSETTS

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1963

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## OFFICERS

1960

### PRESIDENT

DONALD K. PACKARD

### VICE-PRESIDENT

S. MORTON VOSE

### TREASURER

J. FREDERICK NELSON

### CLERK

OWEN M. CARLE

### TRUSTEES

Jason A. Aisner, Miss Elizabeth Butcher,  
James M. Driscoll, Lea S. Luquer, Arthur A. O'Shea  
Miss Maud Oxenham, Mrs. Gardner Washburn  
and the officers ex-officio

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## SUMMARY REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1960

The Annual Meeting was held on January 17th, 1960, at the Edward Devotion House.

The meeting was called to order by President Packard who spoke briefly welcoming the members.

Elected to membership were Dr. Joseph Craven, Miss Dorothy H. Smith and Mrs. Margaret H. Smith.

Daniel Tyler Jr., Chairman of the Nominating Committee, submitted the following slate of officers and trustees for this year. Kenneth Bond and Russell Hastings served as members of the Committee: President—Donald K. Packard; Vice-President, S. Morton Vose; Treasurer, J. Frederick Nelson; Clerk, Owen M. Carle. Trustees, Jason A. Aisner, Miss Elizabeth Butcher, James M. Driscoll, Lea S. Luquer, Arthur A. O'Shea, Miss Maud Oxenham, Mrs. Gardner Washburn and the officers ex-officio.



Upon motion duly seconded the Secretary was directed to cast one ballot for the election of the slate.

Mr. Tyler reviewed the matter of the Widow Harris House, which was built in the late 1700s, stating that he felt it advisable for the Society to consider preserving this old house for posterity. He thought that the property could be made self-supporting, or nearly so, by renting it to responsible tenants who could double as custodians. Mr. Packard agreed to review this matter with the Board of Selectmen. This was duly voted unanimously.

Mrs. Florence Palmer Peabody, Society member and member of the School Committee, was introduced and then spoke on "When I Went to School"—a history of the Heath School of which Mrs. Peabody is a graduate. This talk was delivered at the dedication of the new Heath School on November 11, 1959. It was announced that Superintendent of Schools Caverly had copies of Mrs. Peabody's talk available in limited quantity to interested Society members. Mrs. Peabody's talk was received with heartfelt enthusiasm by all. Mr. and Mrs. Lewis A. Goldsmith, longtime friends of the speaker, were guests at the meeting and presented to the Society an old school bell, which will be preserved in the Society archives as will an old fire bucket also presented by the Goldsmiths.

It was announced that the bronze plaque of the old Town Pound on Pound Lane (now Reservoir Road) behind St. Lawrence's Church has been installed.

Annual Reports were submitted by Nina Fletcher Little, Chairman of the Committee on Rooms, and by J. Frederick Nelson, Treasurer.

The usual tempting, delicious collation that we are accustomed to annually was served by Mrs. Nelson, wife of our Treasurer.

There was no Spring Meeting.

At the Fall Meeting on October 9th, 1960, Mr. G. Peabody Gardner was host to the Society at his home, 135 Warren Street. Mr. Gardner talked very informally about the house which has been in his family since 1842 and was built in 1806.

# BROOKLINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## TREASURER'S ANNUAL REPORT

### Cash and Securities on hand January 1, 1960

|  |            |             |
|--|------------|-------------|
| Brookline Savings Bank .....                 | \$9,193.75 |             |
| U. S. Series K Bonds .....                   | 2,000.00   |             |
| Brookline Federal Savings & Loan Ass'n. .... | 1,017.50   |             |
| Brookline Trust Co. ....                     | 16.60      |             |
|  | <hr/>      | \$12,227.85 |

### Receipts for 1960

|   |           |             |
|---|-----------|-------------|
| Membership Dues .....                           | \$ 445.00 |             |
| Interest — Brookline Savings Bank .....         | 312.86    |             |
| Interest — Brookline Savings & Loan Ass'n. .... | 35.91     |             |
| Interest — U. S. Series K Bonds .....           | 55.20     |             |
| Sales of Book "Old Brookline Houses" .....      | 14.00     |             |
| Donations .....                                 | 6.75      |             |
|   | <hr/>     | \$ 869.72   |
|   |           | <hr/>       |
|   |           | \$13,097.57 |

### Payments for 1960

|   |          |           |
|---|----------|-----------|
| Secretary's Expense .....               | \$ 85.70 |           |
| Treasurer's Expense .....               | 24.60    |           |
| Restoration of Chippendale Chair .....  | 24.50    |           |
| Insurance .....                         | 15.00    |           |
| Collations .....                        | 14.49    |           |
| Chairs — Rental .....                   | 12.00    |           |
| Bank Charges .....                      | 10.71    |           |
| Bay State Historical Society Dues ..... | 4.00     |           |
| New England Council Listing .....       | 2.00     |           |
|   | <hr/>    | \$ 193.00 |

### Cash and Securities on hand December 31, 1960

|  |            |             |
|--|------------|-------------|
| Brookline Savings Bank .....                 | \$9,561.81 |             |
| U. S. Series K Bonds .....                   | 2,000.00   |             |
| Brookline Federal Savings & Loan Ass'n. .... | 1,053.41   |             |
| Brookline Trust Company .....                | 289.35     |             |
|  | <hr/>      | \$12,904.57 |
|  |            | <hr/>       |
|  |            | \$13,097.57 |

Respectfully submitted,

J. FREDERICK NELSON,

## REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ROOMS

ANNUAL MEETING, JANUARY 17, 1960

During 1959, the Devotion School has again used the house, with its period furnishings and historical collections, as a teaching aid. On April 1st all 8th Grades visited the house with their teachers, and the 7th Grades came on November 24th, bringing about 100 students each time. During the spring two boys who were doing a project on the house made appointments to take pictures and measurements. Also, in November, we made the house available to students from Miss Abel's class who were doing special work, and, in December, to others working on a school paper. On June 3rd, we entertained a group of teachers including an exchange teacher from Berkeley, California.

During the Christmas holidays, students from Smith College and Brandeis University came to study the architecture. As well as visitors from other towns and cities in Massachusetts, we have welcomed travelers from New Hampshire, Maine, New York, Minnesota and California.

Two large gatherings were held in the house during the year: the Annual Meeting of the Historical Society on January 18th, and the Hannah Goddard Chapter, D.A.R., on November 16th. The Annual Patriot's Day celebration was held as usual on April 19th.

A gift to the Historical Society of particular interest came from Miss Amelia Peabody: a red leather fire bucket inscribed with the name of the original owner, N. GODDARD. Nathaniel Goddard, one of the sons of John Goddard of Brookline Revolutionary fame, was an ancestor of Miss Peabody's stepfather, William Eaton of Boston. Another interesting gift is a wooden model of the old house at 10 Walter Avenue which was originally part of the Ward farm in the Village and appears from the architectural evidence to have been built about 1830, with later additions in the rear. The house, which is soon to be demolished to make way for a new housing development, has been occupied for almost thirty years by the Brookline Friendly Society, which has given us this model to commemorate an old Brookline landmark.

The town has continued its policy of doing some needed repairs each year, under the direction of Mr. O'Hearn, Building Commissioner, and supervised by our Chairman of the Committee on Rooms. The floors in four bedrooms and the back stairs have been re-painted, and reproductions of appropriate period wallpapers have been selected for the parlor and lower room in the ell. The parlor woodwork has been re-painted with great care to match the sample of the original soft green which was found to have been the first color used in this room. The Historical Society has done its share toward upkeep of the furnishings by reupholstering an



old wing chair, recovering the seats of a Hepplewhite and a Devotion family Chippendale chair, and repairing an old fashioned rocker.

As always our special thanks go to Mr. and Mrs. Nelson, our custodians, who show the house so willingly to visitors—not only on Wednesday afternoons when advertised as open to the public, but on numerous other occasions to school children and other interested visitors.

Respectfully submitted,  
NINA FLETCHER LITTLE  
*Chairman, Committee on Rooms*

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## WHEN I WENT TO SCHOOL

by

FLORENCE PALMER PEABODY

(Letter read at the dedication of the New Heath School, November 11, 1959)

Dear Faraway Family:

As usual, I apologize for the length of time since my last letter. This time I think I really have a good excuse. You'll remember, of course, the project on which all of us have been working for several recent years, the getting of a new Heath School built to replace the former inadequate one. Well, the new one is now built and in use from the opening of school this past September. At the regular meeting of the School Committee in September, the Chairman asked me to serve as Honorary Chairman of a committee to plan dedicatory programs on November 11th. Helen O'Brien, our Committee secretary, being a Heath School graduate was also asked to serve on this Committee, under the Chairmanship of the principal of the Heath School, Dr. Ethel M. Jenkins. The Committee finally worked out was made up of staff members who are heads of their departments, past graduates who are especially qualified or have certainly turned out to be, and parents who are former or present heads or members of committees which have been active in bringing the new school into existence.

Our first meeting during the last part of September was a busy and hilarious one, with some of the "boys" remembering shenanigans of youthful days. However, we ended up with a pretty good program, which, of necessity, had to have some changes later. I was given the interesting job of producing an informal history of this school.

As this series of recollections is entitled, "When I Went to

School," I think I may start back at the first experiences. I am sure no child in those days could have had a happier or better start in school than we did who went to school for the first three years under the warm, competent guidance of Miss Mary Hyde. She taught in the Newton Street School from 1870 through 1900, stopping then, as many teachers did, only because of failing health. Until 1914, there was no really adequate pension plan for teachers who had served us in our schools. I really cannot see how men or women could have taken up the career of teaching, unless they were really dedicated, as of course most were. In 1850 or 1851 there is a note in a school report that a music teacher could be hired for \$75 per annum. In the report for the year ending January 31, 1857, the teacher at the Newton Street School received \$250 for the year, and other primary and grammar school assistants, \$350 to \$400. A grammar school "master" received \$1400, the high school principal, \$1800 and his assistant, \$500.

A teacher's life must have been an onerous one. One finds them having been under the watchful eye of one or another member of the School Committee, part of whose responsibility it was to visit, inspect, and, at the appointed time, examine the pupils. Often, when the result of this examination seemed to rate the teacher as inadequate, he, or more often she, would resign. Occasionally, this teacher would be discovered back on the job later. As no salaries were mentioned in those early days, one wonders which needed the other more, the school finding it difficult to replace the teacher or the teacher finding no other way to earn even the small salary then in vogue. Probably she was one of those who loved the work, always hoping to find a better way to get across the subjects supposed to be taught. A quotation from the school report of a hundred years ago tells of one of these examinations. "The examinations began at the South-west Primary School (Newton Street School). The whole number of pupils during the year has been 32. The present number is 21. The present average attendance is 15. The teacher reports her pupils to be unpunctual, but orderly. There are four classes in Reading and Spelling, five in Arithmetic, four in Geography, one class in Grammar; and fifteen children are taught to write . . . The South, or Middle District Primary School, came next in order. Here the house is too bad to be even alluded to without pain. Miss Hannah P. Stearns has been the teacher from the beginning of May last. The pupils are reported as orderly, but unpunctual. The character of the Schoolhouse, its unsightliness, its uncleanliness, and its unwholesomeness, form obstacles hard to be overcome."

The large number of absences and unpunctuality seem to have been the main bugaboos of those earlier days, one-third to one-half of the listed number of pupils being tardy or absent daily. Probably the distances from homes to school accounted for much of this, but the School Committee seems to have felt that the parents were not

properly impressed with the importance of regular attendance for all concerned, the teacher having to spend so much of her time "catching up" those who had been absent. In the early days of the "grammar" schools, when the only requirement was that the pupil be nine years old to enter, you can easily see why there was a real problem in getting the scholars from grammar schools to fit into a high school program.

This has been one of my characteristic digressions, I fear, but you will have to expect more before I end this. My search for facts has led me up so many interesting byways. However, to return to the three happy years at the "little" school. By the time I went there the school had first, second, and third primary grades, although, in a few cases, younger children were taken in or allowed to attend to be sort of kindergarteners for part of a year if their birthdays came as mine did just too late to qualify to enter the first grade in September. Five years was entering age. There were from 18 to 24 of us while I was there. It was a most cosmopolitan school, four or five nationalities being represented in its membership (most of the parents being recent immigrants to this country), ranging from the children of a well-educated French engineer to a small son of a Polish family who lived in a most dreary small habitation on a corner of town land west of the school. He was a bright little chap, always cheery even in the winter when I remember him saying one cold morning that his mittens were better than ours as his had finger nails on them. I know he was given mittens by some parent or the teacher, who felt that mittens with finger nails were more appropriate for spring and summer than for icy days of winter.

The building was one room, with a huge barrel stove in the back. The iron chimney ran along under most of the length of the ceiling before turning at right angles to go through the roof. Still nearer the front of the room, a huge ventilator pierced the roof and ceiling, which must have made the temperature around the teacher's desk a bit more comfortable than it had been before its installation. This school was originally built, according to school records, in 1768, although as early as 1713 permission was given to the residents of the south part of the town to build themselves a schoolhouse. In 1768, help in the building was offered and a teacher assigned. In 1839, it was enlarged. For 1854, I find this paragraph: "The Newton-street house is large enough for the very small school it now contains; but the ceiling is so low, and the building so ill ventilated, that it is unhealthy even for that small number. Justice to that district requires that an appropriation should be voted, sufficient to defray the expense of raising the roof, and also of providing it with comfortable modern desks and chairs, in place of the uneasy plank structures on which the children now sit."

This suggested work seems to have been done, as in the following year we read: "The ceiling has been raised eighteen inches;

the windows have been enlarged; and the old uncomfortable desks and tables have been replaced by some which were formerly used in the schools in the Town Hall." I think the school, as I remember it, was about as these changes left it. We entered through a short, narrow hallway at the back of the school. This hall had hooks for clothes on one side and a shelf on the other, on one end of which was kept a large bucket of fresh water for drinking purposes. This was brought over from the high service pumping station next door each morning, Mr. Webber, engineer there, being the janitor for the little school. He was in league with Miss Hyde, I am sure, to make our days in that school some of the happiest and most worthwhile of any of our school days. Rudimentary sanitation was attempted. Each pupil was required to have an individual drinking cup. Wood for the huge stove was kept outside in a sort of closet in the "ell", west of the entrance. If the day's supply which was left in the morning beside the stove gave out, the older boys could renew it. Then, still further along at the end of the "ell", was our one out-of-door facility. Another was added during the years I was there.

Perhaps you will think I am writing too much of those early years, but I am sure that our thorough grounding in the subjects studied stood us in good stead when we went from the third grade to the Heath or any other grammar school. We found the transfer easy and many of us were double-promoted wherever we landed.

The fall of 1899 found several of us moving up to the fourth grade at the Heath School. This school building had been originally built in 1855 after repeated requests from the School Committee to the town. It was the first of the name, its predecessor having been called the Middle District or South Primary School. That building had been characterized as "in every respect, insufficient and disgraceful to the town." Difficulties had been encountered when the special committee set up as the result of a vote of town meeting in March, 1851, tried to carry out the rather explicit vote of the town meeting. The vote required the committee to select new sites and obtain terms on which the old building and sites could be sold. In March of 1852, at the Annual Town Meeting, the committee reported that they could find no sites where they were desired, and, not finding a proper site, had done nothing about making arrangements to sell what they had. Sounds complicated, doesn't it?

Well, something must have been done as a later school report tells us that "In November, 1854, the new schoolhouse on Heath Street was completed." The primary school was moved in to the lower floor and it was then found necessary to establish a grammar school in the same building. There were 59 pupils in the primary school under one teacher and 38 in the grammar school under a man. These seem like huge classes for one teacher to try to teach, especially when you remember that there were sometimes as many as six classes involved. The large size of classes was helped (or

hindered?) by the lack of regular attendance, often from one-third to one-half the listed number being regularly absent.

Evidently, proper proportion of furnace size to that of the building wasn't figured as exactly in those days as is possible today. One year later, the winter of 1855-56 must have been a really severe one, as the furnace "was found to be altogether inadequate, it being found often impossible to raise a Fahrenheit thermometer above 50 degrees . . . . In consequence of this, those furnaces have been replaced by others of greater power, which have proved entirely satisfactory."

So much for the early days of the 1854 building. Soon, another teacher or "assistant" was added in the primary school, and gradually the attendance increased in both schools, as well as the number of teachers.

Following through the school reports, the next big event was a concrete expression of the interest in public schools which had been growing, perhaps as a result of Horace Mann's efforts. An Act of the Legislature affecting the towns of the Commonwealth was approved in May of 1857. It spelled out requirements for the make-up, regulations, and responsibilities of each town's "Board of School Committee", and is the basis for our present-day laws affecting the public schools.

In 1871 and 1890, additions were made to the Heath School. Once it was to add two rooms at the front, one up and one down.

This year of my first going to the Heath School seems to have coincided with the beginning of activity by the School Committee to change the conditions then housing the school. In the School Committee report of 1899-1900 (January 31), we find: "Some years ago two rooms were added to the building on the street front and they are the only rooms which are fit for occupancy; the rest of the building is antiquated, dark, inconvenient, and if we were to say unsanitary we would not be far wrong . . . . A new building must soon be provided." The following year's report continues the subject of the school's need for a new building. It is described as "an old building utterly unworthy of the town of Brookline, and lacking in the chief essentials of a modern schoolhouse. The staircase halls, corridors and dressing-rooms are cold, with no ventilation whatever. Most of the rooms are insufficiently lighted. There is no sewer in the street, and we have therefore been obliged to maintain old-fashioned privies. . . It is likely that another lot will be needed, as it will be necessary to continue the present school until the new building can be erected, and the shape of the present lot, with certain restrictions, makes it desirable to secure another location."

Moving from our little school on Newton Street where we worked and played together as one big, happy family, being few in



numbers and of a variety of ages, to the far off larger school was a big event in our young lives. There were three rooms to a floor with two classes to a room, except for the kindergarten and first grade, which each had a separate room. Each grade was of about the same size as the whole school had been at Newton Street. We went to this big school with several of our old companions at Newton Street and, as in my case, many of us had older brothers or sisters to cushion the shock. We found our way to school by various means. Some rode bicycles, some walked, some, as in our case, made use of the family horse and wagon to get there. Getting home was an even more uncertain matter.

The school building was set in the front part of a long, not very wide, lot. There was not much room for play in front, but, as I remember it, there were trees to climb. Behind the building there was more room, but this, too, had been reduced by the building of a "shop" to which the boys went for wood-working. I remember vividly one of the favorite and most exciting games we played at recess time consisted of two long lines, one of boys and one of girls, about 8 to 10 in each, holding hands and running around the building in opposite directions until we met with the inevitable crash. Of course this was discouraged as dangerous and, for us, most unlady-like.

I remember the fourth grade as being the place where we really began to read in earnest and do long division. Anyway, I was by now using my eyes a great deal for close work, with the result that I had long bouts of "seasickness." These were suspected as having some connection with my eyes and I ended up having to start wearing glasses. This was supposed to be a great cross for an active youngster such as I, but I do not remember that it curbed my activities. The metal frames of those days were bent out of shape and back again and replaced often, but I never broke the lenses.

By this time, other changes had taken place in school arrangements, especially in the means of getting to and from school. The time when I began to go to school also turns out to be about the time when kindergartens began to appear as definite parts of the school program. They had been tried at various spots and times in the eighties on an experimental basis. By 1893, there were several detached kindergartens about town and attached to all the primary schools, except the Heath School. The following September one was opened at that school also, Miss Kingsbury being transferred from the Sewall School to take charge of it. A few years later, Miss Sophie Butler came there as what we could now call a "practice teacher" to stay on as a paid assistant to Miss Kingsbury and to be in charge herself on Miss Kingsbury's retirement in 1906. The report of January 31, 1900, made the definite assertion that "kindergartens are no longer an experiment."

This opening of a kindergarten at the Heath School seems to

have focused the attention of parents and the School Committee on the problems of how these small people could get to school. The result was that the following year, in September, 1895, transportation by barge began for kindergarten and primary pupils from the corner of Heath and Hammond Streets to the Heath School. This service was continued without a break, at least until 1934.

About the time I went over to Heath parents in the so-called Putterham section of the town were agitating for transportation of pupils from that part of the Heath School district. The stipulation seems to have changed from that requiring they be kindergarten and primary grade pupils to "pupils" and for the winter months. I remember quite vividly that we first started to have this service after Thanksgiving and that the first barge was horse-drawn; of course, automobiles for such use were not yet available. It was an open wagon or pung and when the snow came we all sat or buried our feet in the deep straw in the bottom. We did not make fast time and the bigger boys ran along beside the barge, easily getting ahead when we came to a slight rise or a real hill. The discipline on these barges was then, as it still is, a continuing controversial question. As I remember it, the driver of the barge was the key, being able or not to keep his young riders interested in something besides rowdy conduct. Mr. Fegan was one of the early drivers and was still driving motorized vehicles when they carried the children from the same district to the Baldwin School. I am sure you remember even today some of the old songs he taught you all to sing as you rode through the countryside. The simplest form of discipline was to deny the use of the barge to those who mistreated that privilege. Of course, this was pretty hard on the barge driver, who was supposed to drive carefully and competently, entertain his young charges and keep the supposedly punished ones from riding. If the older pupils were kept after school for any reason, it meant a walk home of a mile and a half or more. As there was no form of public transportation in our part of town, mothers who might have gone to shop in the village or Boston would plan to visit school and ride home in the barge too. The first real public transportation nearer than Cypress Street was not in use until about 1903 when the electric car line was extended up the recently-widened Boylston Street to the Newton line in Chestnut Hill. Even that was a mile and a half from where we lived.

Cooking classes were added to the curriculum at almost the time that the kindergarten was started. To take care of these two new needs for space, a partition was built in the back room downstairs, but this was almost at once found inadequate. The kindergarten had grown fast and needed all the space. So the partition was taken down to enlarge the kindergarten. A one-story wooden shop was built in 1899 to provide a place in which to teach the boys. A second story was added the next year and equipped to teach cooking and sewing to the girls. I remember this room especially

for its lightness. The windows were more plentiful and the building was out in the open away from the dense spruce trees which seemed to touch the main building and were so high. Some of them are still standing along the line which used to mark the edge of the school yard. I think I must have pointed them out to you on some visit home.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, there was a continuing fight against absence and tardiness, the biggest handicaps to the quality of education in our public schools. All the schools had suffered, but the Heath School more than many. Education of the citizenry and especially of the parents as to the importance to all the children of regular and prompt attendance had been going on for many years, and, by the end of the nineties, there had been a great improvement, 91% being now the town average. However, the past was still affecting the present and scholars going to the High School were finding it difficult to move ahead there as they should have been able to do. This, of course, had not been helped by the crowded conditions at the school. Additional teachers were brought in; older ones, unable to cope with the problems facing them, retired. The first big problem to be solved was the great need of a new, larger, sanitary and modern school building. So again at the end of a half century we find a repetition of fifty years before. First, we had to persuade the town of the need, then decide where to build such a school. The present lot would be much too small and no one was willing to sell adjacent land. In January, 1903, the School Committee reported that, finally, the previous spring an answer had been found, and in June, 1902, the town had voted to acquire a part of the Reed Farm, situated at the corner of Boylston Street and Reservoir Lane. This was hardly the perfect school lot, being mostly a steep, rocky slope from the corner down to a brook-fed marsh at the lower or northern edge. \$40,000 was paid for the land and an additional appropriation of \$10,000 was placed at the disposal of the Park Commissioners for grading and otherwise improving the lot. At the same meeting, the School Committee was authorized to spend \$100,000 for a schoolhouse. When the bids were opened, it was found that this amount was not enough, so, at a special meeting on December 30, an additional \$25,000 was made available and the School Committee was now able to proceed.

The overcrowding at the Heath School had become so serious that two rooms not yet being used in the new Runkle School building were used for the overflow from Heath until the new Heath was ready for use in September, 1904. I'm going to quote here from the School Committee's own description of the new Heath School just opened: "In certain respects, this new structure will be an advance upon any grammar school yet built in the town. It contains nine principal class-rooms, rooms for cooking, manual training, and sewing, an assembly hall and sundry recitation rooms. In addition to the foregoing, the gymnasium will be the best to be found

in any of our schoolhouses, and adjoining it is a system of shower baths and lockers. . .” Dedication ceremonies took place on October 27, 1904, and another Heath School started on its way. Many changes have taken place in the half century that followed in the school’s curriculum, its staff and the busy neighborhood which has grown around it. In some ways, it was a pathfinder, with its installations of showers and lockers, a gymnasium; even its facilities for cooking and woodworking, poor as they have seemed to us in more recent years, were way ahead of such rooms in most other schools when this school was built.

The Brookline Education Society began its activities about 1895. As I remember it, and as the records seem to show, it started out being a sort of combination parent-teacher organization with broader overtones, such as a Council for the Public Schools might provide. Both Mr. Dutton, who was Superintendent of Schools for ten years until February, 1900, and his successor, Mr. Aldrich, mention it approvingly for the great help it was in being a liaison between the schools and the citizens of the town. It suggested and even with permission was responsible for experiments in various fields of instruction. The introduction of music, of art classes, and especially of a physical education program was influenced by the work of this group of citizens. Sometimes their enthusiasm was a bit too much for the School Committee, whose responsibility it was to determine the actual curriculum to be followed by the pupils of our public schools. I don’t suppose you girls remember Grandpa Palmer very well, but long before your day, and as long as the Society existed, he was a most active member. I remember his great enthusiasm and the hard work he put into one “program” which the Society sponsored. In 1903, School Gardens were carried on at three of the schools, two being primary schools and one a grammar. Private individuals loaned the land; the Society paid the expenses of running the gardens which provided plots for 300 children. The teacher was appointed with the approval of the Superintendent of Schools and paid from funds collected for the purpose by the Education Society. Later, the School Committee helped with some donations and considered tying it in with the vacation schools. In the summer of 1906 the School Committee took on full responsibility for this project, still on an experimental basis, six schools now taking part, including the Heath School. Evidently it was a fairly successful summer. Entries were made in the Fall Showing of the Horticultural Society at Horticultural Hall and there was a final note of thanks to your grandfather for his help. The gardens were continued for another five years, but practical aspects of administration and the difficulties met in carrying out the work resulted in gradual ending of the experiment.

Some time around the beginning of the century, Latin in the eighth and French in the ninth grade were offered in some grammar schools. A suggestion was made at about that time, when the

enlarged Runkle School was ready for use, that the two rooms meant for the eighth and ninth grades be left unoccupied and that the carfares of the pupils be paid to other schools where the languages were offered, thus saving the town considerable expense for the necessary salaries. This appears to have been done as the two rooms seem to have been available the next year for the use of the overflow from Heath. It sounds almost as complicated as the temporary housing we have to arrange sometimes nowadays.

During the year, the steps necessary for the elimination of the ninth grade as part of the elementary system had been taken, and, beginning with September, 1921, the grammar schools contained only eight grades. This had been thought of for quite some time. Tests had been made and records of ages, etc. of ninth-grade pupils had been kept. Nine grades seem to have been more than the average steadily-attending pupil needed to prepare for high school. The ninth grade was a place where many who were irregular in attendance and older than the regular pupils put in their time until they could leave school and go to work. Some other arrangement for taking care of the desires and needs of these older pupils seemed fairer all around.

Physical examinations became a part of the program of the schools and music and art had special directors, as did the greatly increased program of the physical education department. Before these additions to the curriculum had affected us too much, the efforts to get a new school built to house the second Heath School were successful. We had the distinction of being the last class to be graduated from the old building. When we moved down to the High School, to some other school, or to a job, the rest of the school moved into new quarters in the "New" Heath School on Reservoir Lane.

Barges drawn by horses were still carrying pupils from our part of town to the school. More were in use and discipline became a serious problem, so that petitions and letters were continually being presented to the School Committee. In the mid-twenties, motorized barges or buses took the place of the horse-drawn ones, although they continued to be called barges for some time. These were crowded, which resulted in several accidents. There was improvement in the kind of bus but no great change until later when Boston Elevated bus service was begun and used for the children, with bus tickets being provided as they are today. There are still sections where no public service is available. Recently, we have had to add school buses to carry the kindergarten and primary pupils to the Baldwin School from these scattered homes. The Baldwin School was opened in September, 1927, relieving the congestion which had developed at Heath by housing the children of the kindergarten and first three grades who lived nearby, as well as those of the families scattered about in the so-called south part of town. These would



have to be transported to whatever school they attended.

The beautiful, modern, new Heath School worked hard at its job of trying to house the growing numbers of pupils and find space for new curriculum projects, such as in-school beginner's instrumental music lessons. I recall trying to visit such a class. A student guide was offered me, whom I didn't think I needed but was very glad to have as I followed him downstairs through passageways to what was intended for a storage room by modern standards. The poor old school grew old and weary, as well as worn. Spindles on stairways gave up and pulled out under the slightest strain. State fire regulations became more strict and fire doors and other devices were resorted to in order to comply. A school lunch program, such as we carry on in all of the grammar schools, had not been more than dreamed of at the time the school was built. The "hall" became much too small as a gathering place in which to carry on the sort of program we wish to nowadays, not to mention the almost completely useless tiny stage. Much of the hall space was now being needed for auxiliary classrooms, library for a time, and overflow from the "lunchroom." Heat failure began to set in as the heating system wore out at a frightening rate. Hot water for showers was something to be carefully rationed. The girls' showers became unusable, with no heat, not enough hot water, and equipment which was wearing out. Could any of the glaring defects be repaired or renewed? Advice was sought and more and more the advice pointed to only one practical solution.

Do you remember my quoting from a School Committee report before the 1854 building was built, telling in detail of the previous school as being "in every respect insufficient and disgraceful to the town"? Then, fifty years later, that fine, up-to-date school of 1854 becoming an "old building utterly unworthy of the town of Brookline, and lacking in the chief essentials of a modern school house"? Does this have a familiar ring? A report from those days in 1902 says: "The Heath School seems to have been the Cinderella of our educational family, and it is greatly to be hoped that the day of its deliverance is not far distant." This has been recently quoted and I feel sure the fairy godmother has tended to that and that our "Cinderella" is indeed a beautiful princess in her own right.

This has been a long letter, but you know me when I start out to write you, it usually ends being quite an epistle.

Love to you all,

MOTHER

## GREEN HILL

by

G. PEABODY GARDNER

On October 9, 1960, Mr. G. Peabody Gardner was host to the Society at his home, 135 Warren Street, and talked very informally about the house and its occupants.

Green Hill has been in the possession of the Gardner family since 1842 when John L. Gardner bought it from Deacon Thomas Kendall of the Charles Street Baptist Church in Boston.

The house was built by Captain Nathaniel Ingersoll in 1806 on land that was part of the large farm of Nehemiah Davis. After the latter's death in 1785, George Cabot purchased the entire estate in 1793 but in 1803 sold the land to Stephen Higginson Jr., from whom Captain Ingersoll bought the land at the top of the hill. Captain Ingersoll built the present house in 1806. In 1823, the house and nineteen acres of land were sold to Charles Tappan who shortly after sold them to Deacon Kendall.

Following his talk, Mr. Gardner invited all present to tour the grounds and to view the trees then at their peak of autumn beauty. Then he showed the members through the house and called to their attention the many paintings and sculptures collected by Mrs. "Jack" Gardner and never moved to Fenway Court.