

**PROCEEDINGS**  
**OF THE**  
**BROOKLINE**  
**HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
**FOR 1969-1974**



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**HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
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## CONTENTS

### 1969

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

### 1970

OFFICERS . . . . .	19
REPORT OF THE TREASURER . . . . .	20
REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ROOMS . . . . .	21

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

### 1971

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

### 1972

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

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

### 1973

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



1974

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

1974  
OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

REV. FRANCIS A. CASWELL

VICE-PRESIDENT

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DR. IRVIN TAUBE, MRS. DANIEL TYLER,

MRS. WINTHROP WETHERBEE, and the officers, ex-officio

---

The Annual Meeting of the Brookline Historical Society will be held in Pierce Hall, at the First Parish Church, 384 Walnut Street, on Sunday, February 3, 1974, at three o'clock.

Following the business meeting, Dr. William B. Castle will speak on "Pernicious Anemia Yields to New England Character".

Carolyn H. Wetherbee, *Clerk*

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**THE BROOKLINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
**Treasurer's Annual Report**  
**1973**

Cash on hand January 1, 1973		
Brookline Savings Bank		
90 Day Special Account . . . . .	\$15,987.85	
Regular Account . . . . .	725.54	
Charles B. Blanchard Memorial Permanent Fund . . . . .	546.97	
Charles B. Blanchard - One half Annual Interest accumulated Fund for Special Use . . . . .	46.96	
Brookline Trust Company Checking Account . . . . .	71.38	\$17,378.70
<hr/>		
Income during 1973		
Membership Dues . . . . .	\$ 1,435.00	
Interest - Brookline Savings Bank		
90 Day Special Account . . . . .	934.83	
Regular Account . . . . .	39.66	
Charles B. Blanchard Memorial Fund . . . . .	32.44	
Income from the estate of Josephine H. Wilder . . . . .	67.49	
Book Sales - "Some Old Brookline Houses"		
History of Brookline . . . . .	6.00	
Proceedings . . . . .	3.00	
Donations - Admissions to the Putterham School . . . . .		
DAR meeting at the Devotion House . . . . .	33.60	
10.00		
Reproduction rights to portrait of Ebenezer		
Devotion (Dr. Alfred Newmeyer-Oakland, Cal.) . . . . .	15.00	\$ 2,598.02
		<u>\$19,976.72</u>
<hr/>		
Payments during 1973		
Secretary's Expenses . . . . .	\$ 245.44	
Treasurer's Expenses . . . . .	27.55	
Insurance Premium . . . . .	319.00	
Collations . . . . .	11.50	
Chair Rentals . . . . .	27.00	
Bay State Historical League Dues . . . . .	10.00	
New England Council Listing . . . . .	5.00	
Massachusetts Tax - Secretary of State Filing . . . . .	10.00	
Attorney General Filing . . . . .	3.00	
Audit and Tax Services . . . . .	50.00	
Putterham School - Equipment . . . . .	2.23	
Staffing during 1973 . . . . .	144.00	
Project study - Peter C. Rollins . . . . .	200.00	
Sampler repaired at Devotion House . . . . .	6.00	
Custodian Service at the Annual and Fall Meetings . . . . .	27.00	\$ 1,087.72
		<hr/>
Cash on hand December 31, 1973		
Brookline Savings Bank		
90 Day Special Account . . . . .	\$16,922.68	
Regular Account . . . . .	765.20	
Charles B. Blanchard Memorial Permanent Fund . . . . .	563.19	
Charles B. Blanchard - One half Annual Interest accumulated Fund for Special Use . . . . .	63.18	
Brookline Trust Company Checking Account . . . . .	574.75	\$18,889.00
		<u>\$19,976.72</u>

Respectfully submitted,  
**J. FREDERICK NELSON**  
*Treasurer*

January 24, 1974



## REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ROOMS

1973

The most important item to be mentioned in this report is the condition of the Devotion House. The problem of structural maintenance is very pressing. Original elements which are irreplaceable if they are allowed to deteriorate are now in poor condition. Our Curator, Mrs. McIntosh reports that several window frames and casings in the buttery and front bedroom, and door leading into the old kitchen need immediate attention. Exterior paint is shabby, gutters and clapboards need renovation. The house should be a credit to the Town during the big year of 1975. A structural survey should be made, preferably by a preservation organization who would understand the problems. Advise consulting Mr. George Wrenn at Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, 141 Cambridge St., Boston. There would probably be a charge for this service but the Brookline Historical should have it done. We hope the Trustees will consider the condition of the Devotion House as a priority at their next meeting. We are glad to report that a new hot air furnace with additional duct work was installed in August and is a much needed improvement. At that time a report was made to Mr. Wegner, Building Commissioner, but 6 months have passed with no results.

Two meetings of outside groups have been held in the house during 1973 – the Hannah Goddard Chapter of the D.A.R. on March 20, and a most successful Patriot's Day program. At 10 A.M. there were the usual William Dawes exercises in the house, then opening remarks by William Ward, Jr. of the Brookline Park and Recreation Commission. Invocation by Cantor Hammerman of Temple Kehilleth Israel, followed by flag raising by boy scouts, Exhibition by St. Mary's Senior Color Guard, reading of the Governor's Proclamation by John A. Businger and address by Selectman Haskell Kassler.

Several schools have sent classes to visit including 2 Brookline Day Care Centers, and the Devotion School. Children studying old houses came from the Lawrence School, and also a group from the Winsor School, studying local history. This is the first time to my knowledge that young people from a private school have availed themselves of what the Devotion House has to offer. Last spring Mr. Elmer Cappers and I had a long session at the Heath School with a large and enthusiastic group of children who were studying "old Brookline". I recommended that they visit our House with their teachers and hope they will be able to.

Two hundred and sixteen persons visited the House during the year, many from adjacent towns. Others came from Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, Michigan, Illinois, Virginia and California – the latter the family of Bob Nelson, son of Fred and Betty Nelson, who grew up in the house and did not need a guided tour.

On October 5th Mr. and Mrs. Little brought Mr. and Mrs. William E. Wiltshire, 3rd, of Richmond, Virginia to see the Ebenezer Devotion portraits. The Wiltshires had driven up especially for the visit, bringing a portrait of their own to compare with the Devotions to see if an attribution to the same artist, Winthrop Chandler, seemed correct. They enjoyed the House very much but the question of the attribution still remains unresolved.

Respectfully submitted,

NINA FLETCHER LITTLE  
*Chairman, Committee on Rooms*

## REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE PUTTERHAM SCHOOL

Efforts to open the Schoolhouse to the public during the 1973 summer season met with initial disappointment, but concluded on a successful note. Original arrangements for the services of a young lady referred to us by our friends of the Transportation Museum seemed satisfactory, until she made a last-minute decision to seek full-time employment. The resulting delay proved a blessing, however, when through Mrs. McIntosh of our Devotion House we were able to engage Mrs. Doris McDonald to take charge of the Schoolhouse. Although shorter than previously, the season was much the most successful to date. During a total of seventy-two hours which included weekends and two weekday afternoons, depending somewhat on weather and special requests, the schoolhouse was open and remarkably well attended. Mrs. McDonald undertook the responsibility with enthusiasm and afterwards wrote to tell the Committee that she had enjoyed the experience. Not only did she explain the history and significance of the school to visitors, answer questions and — on rare occasions — eject misbehaving youths, she saw to it that fresh goldenrod and asters filled a jug on the table, and that a few minor furnishings which seemed lacking were provided on loan from her own home. These included a Bible for the teacher's desk. Surely the Supreme Court will look the other way.

Our member, Mr. William Gillis, has repaired damage caused by a few minor incidents of vandalism, which fortunately have abated recently. The question of asking the Town for more extensive repairs, mentioned at previous meetings, has been deferred during discussion of how much work is essential fairly soon. It is hoped that a definite decision can be taken by the time good weather returns.

It is still impossible to close a report on the Putterham School without a reference to the tireless efforts of Mrs. Dean Peabody, who headed the Committee over so many years. Nor can the Chairman fail to acknowledge that little would have been accomplished without the work of Mrs. James McIntosh, who in a very real sense carries on the interest of Mrs. Peabody. The assistance of Mrs. Robert Kramer and other members of the committee must also be acknowledged.

Respectfully submitted,

Mrs. Yves Henry Buhler  
Mrs. Robert Kramer  
Mrs. James F. McIntosh  
William Gillis  
Bertram K. Little  
William D. Mehegan  
S. Morton Vose, *Chairman*

## REPORT OF THE RESEARCH COMMITTEE

February 3, 1974

During the past twelve months your Research Committee has been hard at work, but has accomplished little.

There have been a few requests for information about progenitors and where it could be discovered, the information was returned.

The chairman of the committee was requested to speak to an audience of students at the Heath School about the history of the old Heath School on Heath Street, and this he did.

A brief paper was prepared on Dr. Shattuck and a longer paper on the Historical Society, itself. Both of these papers were presented to successive meetings of the Society. A third paper has been prepared on the Paul Dudley milestones, but no disposition has been made of it as yet. It was mailed to a magazine on a Monday and returned on Wednesday following, so the writer has no reason to criticize the mail service.

Respectfully submitted,

ELMER O. CAPPERS  
*for the Committee*

P.S. The members are urged to be on the watch for the fifth milestone which was stolen from in front of Harvard Church last July, and which has not been found as yet.

## REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

February 3, 1974

As I finish my second term as President of the Brookline Historical Society I must record my deep gratitude to serve this organization which has been a most rewarding experience — thanks to the dedication and cooperation of our Trustees, Officers, and members.

During 1973 the Trustees met on the following dates — June 4, September 10, and December 3.

It will be recalled that in 1972 we had two outstanding home visits, one of which was timed to the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the birthday of Frederick Law Olmsted and was held at his workshop; the second at the home of the late Dr. George Cheever Shattuck where, with the cooperation of our gracious hostess, Mrs. Shattuck, our meeting was conducted as a memorial to Dr. Shattuck. At that time Mr. Elmer O. Cappers presented a biographical sketch of Dr. Shattuck, Mrs. Winthrop Wetherbee read a historical description of the property, and your President gave a paper on *Two Hundred and Fifty Years of Brookline Town Government*.

This year we were equally fortunate to visit the Sears Chapel, where the Rev. Thomas Newman gave an enlightening history of the church built for the Sears family. Following this talk, Rev. Newman, who is an archeologist connected with Harvard University, gave a most interesting illustrated lecture on his scientific missions to Palestine and Saudi-Arabia.

Our Fall Meeting was held at the Disalced Carmelite Monastery, formerly the Lapham Estate, at which time an interesting paper was presented by the Rev. Canon Francis A. Caswell, entitled *Some Remarks on Green Hill and Its Occupants*. In his inimitable fashion, our Vice-President, Elmer O. Cappers, presented a paper entitled *The Story of the Brookline Historical Society*. We are most grateful to the Rev. Adrian J. Cooney, Prior of the Monastery, for his gracious hospitality.

A word of thanks is extended to Mrs. W. M. Parker Mitchell and the members of the Hospitality Committee who provided refreshing delicacies following all our meetings.

Last summer the Selectmen appointed a Brookline Bicentennial Committee without prior consultation with the Society. Fortunately Jason A. Aisner, one of our past presidents, was appointed chairman of the group. We shall extend every cooperation to Mr. Aisner and the Ad Hoc Committee, that Brookline might have a worthwhile presentation at this notable historical milestone.

Respectfully submitted,  
ARTHUR A. O'SHEA, *President*



## PERNICIOUS ANEMIA YIELDS TO NEW ENGLAND CHARACTER

by DR. WILLIAM B. CASTLE

*Francis Weld Peabody Faculty Professor of Medicine, Emeritus  
Harvard University*

This afternoon I should like to tell you about how two Brookline doctors, George R. Minot and William P. Murphy, discovered a cure for a mysterious and fatal anemia. In the long view of the Brookline Historical Society the year 1926, when this took place, is not remote in time. The method of treatment was as simple in concept as it was effective in practice, at least when the patient could be persuaded or coerced into eating up to a half a pound of nearly raw liver a day. Nevertheless, this rather crudely-fashioned research marked the beginning of an era of great expectations and rapid progress in medical science that has since greatly altered the practice of medicine. Moreover, the immediate result was as absolute a victory over death as medicine has known; and it allowed any physician thereafter to restore completely the health of patients with pernicious anemia with increasing convenience, as potent liver extracts, first for oral use, and then for injection, were developed. By 1934 their life-saving use was world-wide; and in that same year Drs. Minot and Murphy were awarded the Nobel Prize in Medicine or Physiology jointly with Dr. George H. Whipple of Rochester, New York. Deservedly so, for, as we shall see, Whipple and his principal collaborator, Dr. Frieda Robscheit-Robbins, had shown by experiments with dogs in the early twenties that liver was the best food for combating the anemia caused by systematic, chronic bleeding. The reference to New England character in my title derives from the fact that, until applied by Minot and Murphy to liver feeding in pernicious anemia with vigor and persistence, Whipple's careful experimental work had yielded no clearly defined benefit for man, though it greatly inflated the price of cat food.

My excuse for undertaking this historical essay is that I knew at first hand the work of the two Brookline physicians, who at that time practiced in Boston. In 1925 I became a junior member of the Harvard department of medicine at the Boston City Hospital, under Dr. Francis Peabody; and when, after Peabody's tragic early death, Minot was appointed as its Director in 1928, I became a friend and was a close associate until his death at his Brookline home in 1950. I knew Dr. Murphy, who lived in Brookline and was on the staff of a different hospital, the Peter Bent Brigham, less well. He has only recently retired from active medical practice and a clinical professorship at Harvard.

What were those high and far-off times of the twenties like for such young doctors? After a year of research on blood coagulation at Johns Hopkins, Minot returned to Boston in 1915, married, and began work in medicine in a familiar pattern of the times: private practice with part-time

appointments for teaching and research in medical school and hospital. He became a junior staff member of the Massachusetts General Hospital where he had a small laboratory, at first actually little more than a bench with north lighting. Nevertheless, he carried out active research on various kinds of blood conditions, including hemophilia and pernicious anemia, at first with Dr. Roger I. Lee. And he had a small office for seeing private patients in his Marlborough Street home. But times were changing. In 1921 he became a founding partner in the early example of a group medical practice organized by Dr. Edwin A. Locke, a well-known and respected Boston consultant, who had converted the lower two floors of his house at 311 Beacon Street to this purpose. Viewers of the recent Channel 2 television program, *Upstairs and Downstairs*, providing vignettes of London's stratified society of the post-Victorian age, will have been reminded of the somewhat less pretentious household arrangements once enjoyed by successful Back Bay consultants. By the end of World War I these amenities were already on the wane. In the new arrangements for practice Minot had the advantages of an individual consulting room and of sharing a secretary and laboratory technician, who carried out the simple tests then utilized in the best private practices of medicine in Boston.

The interest in diseases of the blood felt in common by Minot and Murphy was reached from rather different backgrounds. George Richards Minot was born in Boston in 1885. His father was a private practitioner for many years a clinical teacher of medicine as a member of the staff of the Massachusetts General Hospital. As a matter of course young George went to Harvard College; and in spite of some anxiety about his physical capacity for the strenuous life of a doctor, entered the Harvard Medical School in 1909. Only during his final year did young Minot show a serious interest in hematology, the study of diseases of the blood, by enrolling in an elective course given at the medical school by Dr. Homer Wright, the inventor of the well-known polychrome stain for blood films. From Wright he also learned to use brilliant cresyl blue as a supra-vital stain for counting young red cells (reticulocytes), a technique subsequently to prove of indispensable importance in his work with Dr. Murphy. Minot's formal association with the Massachusetts General began in 1912 when he became a "house pupil" or intern there, shortly after receiving his M.D. degree. In 1928 he became Professor of Medicine and Director of the Harvard Medical Unit at the Boston City Hospital. Soon thereafter he built a house and moved to Sears Road in Brookline.

William Parry Murphy was born in Stoughton, Wisconsin, in 1892 and received the A.B. from the University of Oregon in 1914. After three additional years at the University of Chicago he transferred to the Harvard Medical School and was graduated M.D. in 1920. He then served for two years as intern at the Rhode Island Hospital, where he was one of the first physicians to carry out laboratory examinations of the blood that included blood counts, an interest that he continued during a medical residency at the Peter Bent Brigham Hospital. Thereafter in 1923 he began life-long

staff appointments at that hospital and at the Harvard Medical School and entered the private practice of medicine as assistant in Dr. Locke's group. There, in the early years, he carried out the preliminary clinical and laboratory studies of patients referred to Dr. Minot, many of whom had diseases of the blood. Dr. Murphy recently recalled that in the late afternoon the two doctors usually met to discuss the patients' problems and to study their blood samples in the laboratory. Thus began a most significant association for the future of hematology.

Around 1919 Minot had begun to transfer much of his research work from the Massachusetts General to the Huntington Hospital, of which he became Chief of the Medical Service in 1923. The Huntington, an institution for the study of cancer, was then located near the Peter Bent Brigham Hospital where Murphy had patients. This was to be a convenience for their future collaboration. Meanwhile, however, a serious change in Minot's health and personal life had taken place. In October, 1921, after noting for some days feelings of fatigue, weakness, and thirst, he tested his urine and found sugar. The next day Dr. Elliott Joslin, Boston's leading expert in the field, confirmed the fact that he had developed severe diabetes, for which the treatment then was a form of semi-starvation. The discovery of insulin by Banting and Best of Toronto, announced in 1922, came in the nick of time to save Minot's life. After a year of dietary restriction and weight loss, during which he managed to struggle each day to the hospital, Dr. Joslin was able to secure for his patient small amounts of insulin. Improvement was gratifying and rapid, but for the rest of his life Minot ate no food at home that was not weighed or measured and recorded. His wife, a charming and intelligent woman, was indispensable in sustaining the strict balance of dietary intake and insulin injections prescribed by Dr. Joslin. With such good care Minot was able to maintain a full working schedule as head of the department of medicine, to continue a consulting practice, and to travel to scientific meetings when necessary.

At the beginning of the third decade of this century the emerging specialty of hematology was in a relatively primitive state. The principal diagnostic procedure was a microscopic examination of a drop of the patient's blood spread on a glass slide and stained with anilin dyes. This permitted the identification of a few kinds of anemia, of leukemia, and of bleeding due to low blood platelet levels. Otherwise little enough was known of the clinical causes of bleeding disorders. The only useful drug among the few employed in the treatment of anemia was iron, recognized since the middle ages to be helpful in "Chlorosis" or "the green sickness" of lovelorn maidens. That condition is no longer seen; and iron has found other therapeutic applications then neglected for want of understanding. Transfusion of blood had only recently become a relatively safe procedure, that in the absence of blood banks was often used too little and too late. The X-ray treatment of leukemia was in its infancy, and surgical removal of the spleen was a hazardous procedure of permanent benefit to very few

conditions. In pernicious anemia the results of splenectomy had been carefully evaluated by Minot and others and had been given up.

Pernicious anemia was a condition of which diagnosis eventually became all too clear. On the wards of the Boston hospitals were to be seen pale, lemon-yellow, usually elderly patients with that mysterious and hopeless illness that progressed inevitably with increasing relapses and short-lived remissions to death within months or years. Their doctors had little to offer beyond the hope that with the help of bed rest, fresh air, good food and nursing care, perhaps supplemented by one or two transfusions, life could be for a time prolonged. This anemia had baffled physicians ever since Thomas Addison of Guys Hospital, London, had described it in 1855, and deemed it "idiopathic" because even post-mortem he could find no cause. By the beginning of this century it was recognized that, in contrast to the small, pale red corpuscles of the blood of chlorosis the blood picture of pernicious anemia under the microscope was characterized by large oval red cells well filled with hemoglobin. The trouble was there were too few of them. In addition to the usual symptoms of "tired blood" these patients often complained bitterly of sore tongues and some developed prickling fingers and unsteadiness of gait, progressing to paralysis as a result of degeneration of the spinal cord. And even seventy years after Addison no effective treatment had been found.

Like other physicians, Minot was puzzled by the erratic but inevitable downhill course of the dread anemia. However, ever since he had been a house officer at the Massachusetts General Hospital, 1912-13, it had been his habit to cross-question these patients as to the details of their diets. This was regarded by the callow house officers of my day there, 1921-23, as a harmless eccentricity of an otherwise competent physician. However, in this way Minot became convinced that pernicious anemia patients often lived on unbalanced or restricted diets, sometimes for years. This idea was consistent with the new and growing concept of nutritional deficiency disease that, since the turn of the century, had developed increasing support from experiments with laboratory animals and from studies of malnourished populations. By 1922 the effectiveness of dietary additions in Whipple's experiments with chronically bled, anemic dogs had become well known. These results resonated in Minot's mind with his prior suspicion about the defective diets of patients with pernicious anemia.

At that time George Whipple, whose ancestors came from Ipswich, Massachusetts, was Professor of Pathology and Dean of the new School of Medicine and Dentistry at the University of Rochester, New York. The published results of his experiments had attracted the attention of the medical profession. Some physicians had included liver in modest amounts in the diets of patients with pernicious anemia; and a few publications appeared reporting some improvement. However, the well-known tendency of the disease to exhibit temporary "spontaneous" betterment rendered uncertain in the minds of the observers the basis of these

remissions. In the end few authors chose to report their experiences with dietary improvements; and they concluded that the wise course was to continue the customary management with bed rest, fresh air, arsenic, and iron.

On the other hand, Minot continued to think hopefully about the possible clinical application of Whipple's work. In 1922 he prescribed for a few private patients a high protein diet to which he added the following year some liver, and even more in the next. Some patients' anemia lessened and Minot's interest increased. Then came a patient who really loved to eat liver and who rapidly improved. That did it. Without delay he asked Dr. Murphy to join him in an all-out trial of a diet rich in complete proteins, low in fat, and containing from 120 to 240 grams (half a pound) of nearly raw liver a day. Many patients were available at the Peter Bent Brigham and Huntington hospitals. In May of 1926 the two doctors reported to the distinguished audience of the Association of American Physicians the consistently beneficial results of this treatment for a nearly consecutive series of forty-five patients. Murphy's careful studies of the blood showed that within a few days of starting the diet there was an outpouring of new young red cells (reticulocytes) from their birthplace in the bone marrow as the anemia lessened and the glow of health returned.

Why was Minot successful where others had failed? Knowing him, I think that first of all it was because his prepared mind expressed itself through a combination of New England characteristics: native optimism, intellectual curiosity, belief in rational causality and in the virtue of hard work, together with his special genius, a capacity for taking infinite pains. Also as a diabetic patient of Dr. Joslin, he of necessity had become compulsively concerned with dietary control. Finally, especially convincing to other physicians, was the prompt and quantitative response of the reticulocytes. This made possible the rapid evaluation of the potency of the liver extracts soon to be developed in collaboration with Harvard's distinguished physical chemist, Professor Edwin J. Cohn.

In retrospect, it was fortunate that not until a decade after Minot's and Murphy's work was it appreciated that the favorable responses of Whipple's dogs to liver and to other foods were largely due to their available organic and inorganic iron content. This uncertainty provided for some years a different type of human anemia. Even the Nobel Committee, in making the award in 1934, believed that the justly honored recipients had jointly discovered a unique fundamental principle involved in the normal capacity of the bone marrow to produce sufficient red blood corpuscles in man and other animals. In fact, as was only revealed many years later by others in 1948, the patient with pernicious anemia cannot assimilate a sufficient amount of vitamin B<sub>12</sub>, a dietary component normally present in only small amounts, but fortunately in large quantity in animal liver. Today we know that less than thirty millionths of an ounce of vitamin B<sub>12</sub> a day is required by injection for the complete restoration



of the health of the patient. A far cry indeed from half a pound of raw liver! And so, from the pioneering work of these two Brookline doctors in seeking help for their patients has evolved the most potent drug in the history of medicine.

# BROOKLINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Membership List – March, 1975

Dr. Robert M. Adams  
Mr. and Mrs. Jason A. Aisner\*  
Mrs. Nile Albright  
Mrs. Horatio Alden\*  
Mrs. Mitchell Allen  
Mrs. Thomas Allen\*  
Mrs. John Alles  
Mrs. Geraldine M. Altman  
Mr. and Mrs. Russell W. Ambach  
Mrs. Rebecca G. Armknecht  
Mr. and Mrs. Henry R. Atkinson  
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Mrs. Raymond L. Buell  
Mrs. Yves Henry Buhler\*  
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