

The last 32 slides were mostly of London: its harbor, John Wesley's house founder of Methodism and sixty miles, south, the Grand Hotel at Eastbourne, known as the Riviera of England.

Familiar landmarks were not neglected: Big Ben, Tower of London, Parliament buildings, American Embassy, Thames River and Selfridges, worlds largest department store. Outstanding and symbolic was the Merchants Building in which Davison and Newman, tea merchants, today conduct business. From here tea was sent to the Colonists in the 1700rds and we all know what happened. Today one of their brands is called Boston Harbor Tea.

He displayed a letter written 131 years ago (1841) by an ancestor from Lapham Institute. Her salary was one cent a day per pupil.

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WHEN GREENE WAS YOUNGER

Agnes A. Arnold

A few years ago workmen and equipment arrived at Greene and began tearing up the tracks of the railroad which, for over a century, had been passing through this part of the state. Of course the death of the railroad was not sudden, - it happened gradually over a number of years. But now it was final, and one could try to get over the habit of looking right and left when when crossing the tracks.

I have tried to picture what this part of Coventry looked like before the railroad cut through the sparsely settled country side. It appears that talk about a railroad began in 1850, and a map shows two proposed lines for the railroad, - proposed surveys for railroad to Plainfield. The first deed for land to the Hartford, Providence & Fishkill Railroad Company is dated 1852, and the rest of the land where Greene Station came to be located was purchased the following year. There must have been much excitement with the coming of agents to purchase land and surveyors, with their equipment, - much to talk about when families got together.

No doubt it was the road which meandered through this section, that was the reason for placing the railway station where it was finally located. The road came to be called the Coffin Road. In the road book of the Town of Coventry the Coffin Road is designated No. 28, and began at the Bowen School house, extending southwesterly "until it comes 6 rods westerly from the west butment of the bridge near Coffin's sawmill Road. No. 29 began at the west end of No. 28 extending westerly and southerly until it intersected with District road No. 23. And No. 23 began at the Turnpike Road (at Rice City) and ran until it met the 8 rod highway. Today what remains of the Coffin road has become a trail. No. 29 is now part of Route 117, and then becomes the Hopkins Hollow Road. The road from the Turnpike is now the Lewis Farm Road. Although there were cart paths through this area, so the scattered families could get to most any place, it was the Coffin Road which made it possible to get to Rice City, through the Lewis Farm Road. At Rice City were the church, taverns, post office and stores, and at the corner of the Lewis Farm road and the Hopkins Hollow Road a map shows the location of a coffin shop.

In his book on Greene, Squire Wood wrote, "In the summer of 1854 a small station was built on the south side of the tracks, and on Oct. 2nd, 1854, the first train for the use of the public was run from Providence to Willimantic". It would be interesting to have a picture of this great event. Soon after the building of the station a petition was made to the Town Council for a highway to connect Coffin Road with the Providence and Norwich Turn-

pike at Rice City, to begin about 40 rods north easterly from the Railroad Station, "as will best accommodate the Public". Since 1828 the post office had been at Rice City, but with the railroad mail and newspapers began arriving at the new station, and in 1868 the Rice City post office was ordered discontinued.

It is uncertain just when the station acquired the name of Greene. The Coventry records show that the Town Council had to meet at the station several times to settle various questions. On June 27th, 1855 they met purposely at Coffin Depot and ordered "It is required that said corporation (the Railroad Co.) widen the public road by a fill of 15 ft. westerly on the north side of the rails, so narrowing down to the present width of the said road at the sign posts and finishing the same well with grade not exceeding one foot in 25, well loomed". "Railroad crossing all to be well planked not less than 20 feet wide and Coffin Road Station to be planked from one Cattle guard to the other ---". There were several meetings with the Town Council and the station was called by various names, - Coffin Station, Coffin Road Railroad Station or Coffin Depot. But at some point it acquired the name of Greene, and it is thought that the man responsible for the change was Whipple Phillips. He is said to have prevailed upon the Railroad Company to change the name to Greene in honor of General Nathanael Greene.

Whipple Phillips was one of the first to see possibility of business enterprises at the new station. He had been running a store at Moosup Valley in Foster, so naturally he began by opening a store in his house. He became a large land owner, and his name was connected with everything, or so it seemed, that happened in the new village. He constructed the present Masonic building. At first the top floor was used by the newly organized Methodist church, and the lower room was used for a store room. Later the entire building was leased to the Goldsmith & Wheatley Manufacturing Company for the manufacture of horn jewelry and combs from cattle horns shipped here from the West in carloads, sawed into proper lengths, steamed soft, then split and pressed flat, sawed by machinery into the patterns desired, colored and polished ready for shipment. The industry flourished for a few years and then removed to Providence.

Another company was formed in 1866 consisting of Whipple Phillips, Leonard Tillinghast and Stephen H. Brown to erect a building and equip it for carrying on the wood and grain business. It was built with a high basement capable of holding one or more steam railroad cars to be loaded with kindling and short wood. A spur track was built from the depot, crossing the road by a high bank wall and into the mill. This spur track is shown on a map of 1870. The cars were taken back and forth by horse power, from the mill to the switch and then added to the freight train going east, - sometimes each day, sometimes every other day according to orders. An office was established in Providence to take care of the selling. The mill was run by steam power, and a large engine and boiler was installed on the north end on the ground floor which furnished power for both sawmill and a grist mill which was also located on the ground floor. The mill furnished work for many hands and several teams of horses were used in bringing in the logs and wood to be made into box boards, kindling, staves and shingles. This mill was in operation for nearly twenty years.

Whipple Phillips finally had financial troubles. After that he moved to Providence where he again became a successful business man. He died in that city in his 71st year. His grandson was H. P. Lovecraft, a writer of weird and macabre stories.

According to the 1870 map the railroad station was still on the southwest side of the tracks. At some period a new station was built on the other side of the tracks, with a second floor for the use of the station agent and his family.

(to be continued)

WHEN GREENE WAS YOUNGER

Agnes A. Arnold

(Continued from Last Month)

Although there was a decline in business enterprises the railroad did open up this western section of the state. It allowed people to seek work elsewhere. And it brought others to Greene. The Advent Camp Meeting grounds opened about 1880. Most people reached the grounds by foot or horse and wagon, but many came by train. This was especially true on Big Sunday when there were special trains from both directions. One writer reported on August 14th, 1898 "Big Sunday at the camp grounds was a quiet affair comparatively. The number in attendance was not as large as in former years. The weather was favorable but recent rains had demoralized the roads leading from the grounds from all directions. Two trains from Providence brought a thousand or more to mingle with those arriving in teams or on foot".

In her book entitled PLEASANT PLACES IN RHODE ISLAND, printed in 1893, Marian Tallman writes about a trip to Greene. "Even the brief railroad trip of an hour from Providence to Greene Station, our nearest approach to Beach Pond, showed us the violent contrast between the crowding villages of the Pawtuxet Valley -- and the lessening civilization as we sped on into Coventry and paused at Washington, Coventry Centre and finally Greene, with its scant two dozen houses, and blue, low hills hemming in the township". "We wandered about Greene, feeling in this strange country a hundred miles away from home; but Beach Pond was our goal, and we sought and found a charioteer, Daniel Tillinghast, a native and patriarch of Coventry, the father of Lloyd and Mason Tillinghast, and the other Providence brothers, now that years have unfitted him for the active duties of farming, lingers at Greene's station and conducts arriving strangers to the bourne where they would be. Our request for Beach Pond even, which was to involve 25 miles of driving over all manner of roads, did not stagger this worthy gentleman, and in 15 minutes our prancing steed was before the door". Apparently the long ride did not keep her from a desire to return to Greene. She writes, "But Coventry had a hold on our affections that would not let go - when vacation time drew near it beckoned more strongly. Could we not pitch our autumn tent there in the wilderness? Cheerfully then we undertook the quest, not a difficult one, for old farms and new, little ones and big, lay up this road and down that. But the ideal camp ground presented itself. It lay, approached by a winding cartpath through the woods, a scant mile from the station, -- the house itself, a collection of rambling ells and adjuncts to a primitive gambrel cottage, rose above its ascending orchards on a slight eminence, all the rolling, breeze-sweet, wild country before and below it and a silent pine grove behind, dropping to a moist and echoing glenn, where a spring, roofed and sheltered, made a haunt for the wild birds and a fountain for all the furry folk of the silent forest".

Describing their arrival at the abandoned farmhouse Mrs. Tallman writes "We entered into our bright kingdom by way of a winding cart road through the forest, enthroned on a mattress and a couple of trunks, while two very small dogs, each tightly holding a very large bone presented them by a dog lover at the little station, sat beside and completed the startling picture that drew the good folk of the quiet village hastily to front windows to see us rattle by and disappear in the forest.

The place mentioned is land that had belonged to Joseph and Abigail Hart when the railroad first came and cut their land in half, (She inherited her grandfather Nathaniel Arnold's bed and chest.) But the trains passing so close to the house didn't bother Mrs. Tallman. "So inoffensive and infrequent were the modest trains that sped through our farm that we bore no grudge against their transit but hailed their passing as the only exciting episodes

of the day as they sped by below us along the brook flats, and disappeared in the forest".

The Hart house has long since disappeared, and so has the cart path. But I had a desire to see where the house had been. My brother-in-law Henry volunteered to get me there in his trusty Jeep, and away we went. This Jeep fears nothing, branches, boulders, water, - and one arrives rather disheveled. After several false leads, trying to find a path, we finally arrived. There was the cellar hole and over the bank one could look down to where the tracks used to be. It is still a peaceful spot, and one could still feel a hundred miles away.

THE HUMMOCKS

When we recall the "good old days" we think of the clam bakes on the North Kingstown shore of Narragansett Bay. The Hummocks for more than 40 years was famed for its Rhode Island shore dinners and outings for every organization in the State from Boilermakers to Rotarians.

During its four decades the Hummocks was wrecked by fires and hurricanes only to be rebuilt and carried on. The 10-acre track, near Hamilton was purchased by John A. Murphy in 1945 to be developed into House lots.

Frank Johnson, "put up" the first clam bakes at the Hummocks for friends and later for farmers in the "back country" early in the century and his reputation spread.

Later civic, business and fraternal organizations from the city began making their annual trips to the Hummocks according to a history of the place assembled by Henry Johnson. They came by horse and wagon, bicycle, "one lungers," and bloomer cars on the former Sea View Rail Road.

There would be all manner of sport programs and for a few summers New England firemen of the old school held their "musters" there competing to see whose fire hand pumper could "squirt" water the greatest distance along paper covered boards for cash prizes, loving cups and glory.

The Hummocks area knew first hand the hushed activities of Rhode Island's rum merchants on dark South County nights with rum runners, "revenooers", and hijackers chasing each other in a continuous circle and residents of the shoreline cheering on their favorites.

The Federal men had a couple of windfalls along the shore but generally New England's thirst was amply supplied.

The Hummocks back in 1905 had a small open air building for its "bakes", sufficient "to keep the rain from diluting the chowder". A pavilion was built in 1910 and enlarged later to care for 1400 persons at one sitting. This structure was destroyed by fire in 1925 but the Johnson's after a few years rest built anew.

The next pavillion was erected in 1938 but that same year the big hurricane struck and "blew everything in the general direction of Providence." Henry Johnson came back to the Hummocks and built again but the 1944 Hurricane took the roof off that building and dumped it into the Bay; but not until there had been scores of clambakes there.

Several organizations have since had use of the property for outings but the old Hummocks spirit has been missing with Johnson expending his energies with seafood in Providence.

Henry Johnson, who succeeded his father in creating the Hummocks clam bake reputation purchased the famed, at least in South County waterfront circles, Point Wharf oyster house on Pleasant Street, Wickford.

Point Wharf was put out of the oyster industry in the State by the 1938 Hurricane. Thus ended the Hummocks, that was for nearly half century a favorite resort of Rhode Islanders.