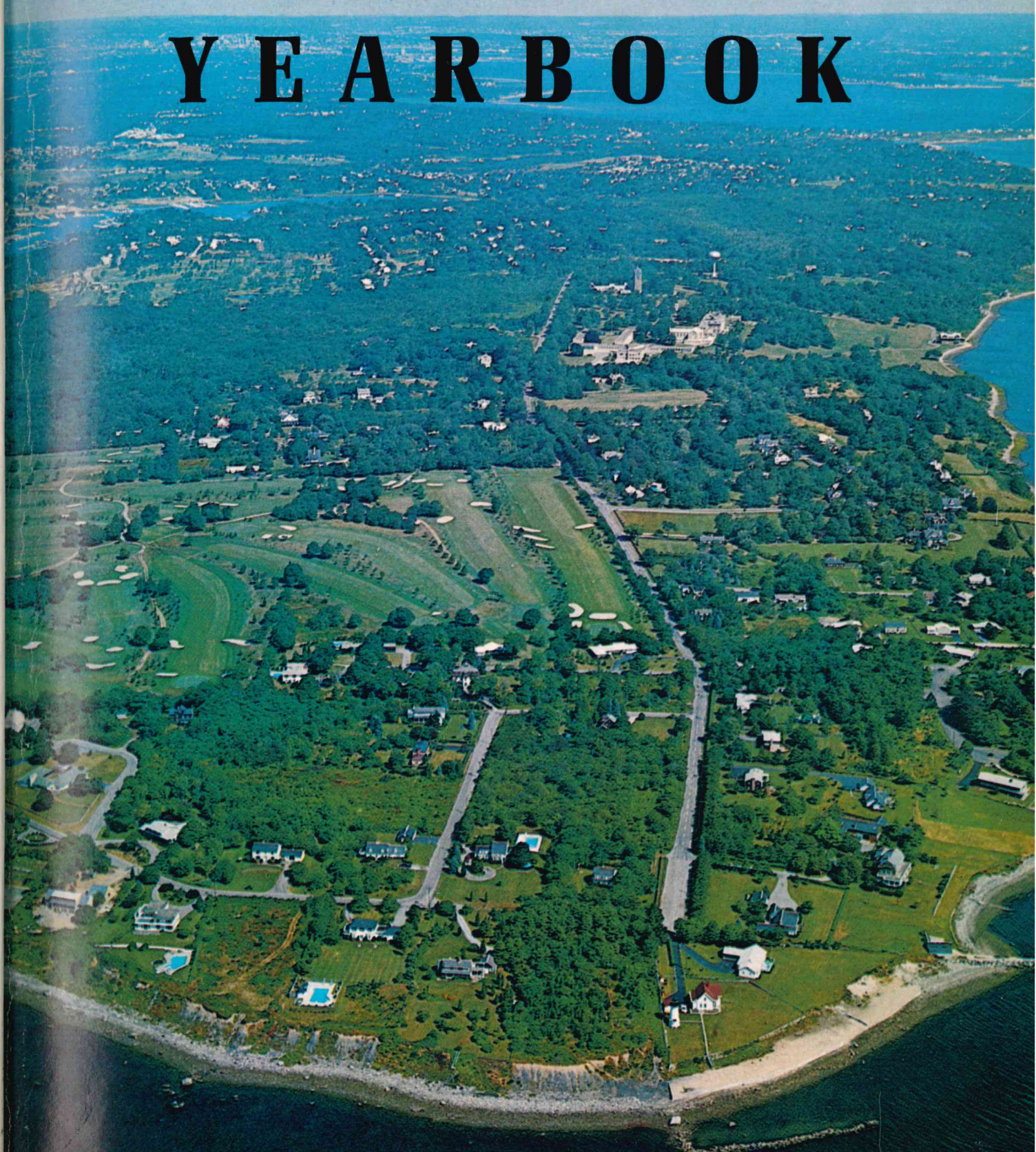


# RHODE ISLAND YEARBOOK



The Warwick Story . . . Whatever Happened to Miss Rhode Island? . . .

The Glorious Fourth By George Howe . . . Rhode Island Exodus . . .

Distinguished Doorways . . . History Section The 19th Century Part II





*"Rich man, poor man . . . Indian Chief" — they're all in line for the big celebration.*

## The Glorious Fourth—Bristol Fashion

### The Bristol Story — Part II

BY GEORGE HOWE

**T**HE institution which, next to marriage itself, does most to unite the various racial strains in Bristol is its famous Fourth of July.

Independence Day was observed in Bristol even before independence was won. Major Mackenzie of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers wrote in his diary for July 4, 1777, in the British redoubt across the Ferry:

"This being the first anniversary of the Declaration of the Independency of the Rebel colonies, they ushered in the morning by firing 13 cannon, one for each Colony, we suppose. At sunset the Rebel frigates fired another round of 13 guns each, one after the other. As the evening was very still and fine, the Echo of the Guns down the Bay had a very grand effect, the report of each being repeated 3 or 4 times."

The first official celebration was in 1785, just after the Revolution. Parson Wright of the Congregational Church in Bristol, who had lately been mustered out of Washington's army, led the village in prayers of grati-

tude for the nation's delivery, as well as for his own. He continued to do so each Fourth until he died in 1837. Each year the celebration grew a little larger and louder. By 1790, the Bristol Train of Artillery, in blue capes and red-plumed shakos, was firing its cannon on the Common at sunrise. The tradition lingered for a century and a quarter, in spite of the danger to nearby buildings — stray wadding several times set fire to the shingle roof of the Baptist church — until, in 1915, a misfire almost killed one of the guncrew. Then the sunrise salute was abandoned for good.

For the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration, in 1826, the Town Council made a special appropriation of \$30. Since General George deWolf, the impenitent slave trader, had bankrupted the town only a few months before, the sum was not as niggardly as it sounds. Patriotic citizens raised it to \$65 by subscription. While the militia were still asleep, the Uptown and Downtown boys were out in the darkness, blowing fishhorns and



conch-shells, and setting off firecrackers imported from China. By nine, the streets were crowded with sailors from the idle ships, the colored population of Goree and the town's burghers. Fathers carried their children in their arms, for baby carriages had not been invented. A procession marched through town, headed by the Train of Artillery, from the Courthouse on the Common to the Congregational Church on Bradford Street, where, says the Warren newspaper,

The service was enlivened by appropriate music from a select choir, and Parson Wight made a fervent and impressive appeal to the Throne of Divine Grace, and returned the unspeakable thanks of a grateful people to the God of Battles.

The smartest pupil in Madam Waldron's dame school recited the Declaration of Independence from memory. Twenty-seven veterans of the Revolution sat together in the box pews. Farmer John deWolf was one of them, along with the three Negro survivors: Cato Reynolds, who had been Lafayette's orderly; Bristol Peck, the servant of Capt. Sion Martindale; and John Casco, the fiddler for the troops. When the parson described how a British ball had knocked off his cocked hat during the battle on the Island, Casco stood up and shouted,

"It's the truth, boys! I was there and seen it."

After the service the parade marched to Horton's Hotel, on Pump Lane (now State St.), and there disbanded. Most of it drifted up to the Common, to watch a mock battle between the Train of Artillery and the Light Infantry Company. Some of the more convivial Bristol Clams (as they called themselves), with a few visiting Mussels from Warren, stayed on at Horton's for a fine dinner.

"After the removal of the cloth (wrote the reporter) several toasts expressive of the goodwill of both towns toward each other were quaffed in generous wine, and songs sung which went to show the prevalence of liberal sentiments among the patriots of each."

It sounds as if the patriots got drunk. The incident caused a revulsion against liquor among the townspeople. In 1835, the Fourth was taken over by the Young Men's Temperance Society, headed by Luke Drury, the Collector of the Port. From then until 1848 the dinners took place at Burgess' Temperance House, where "the Critter" was never served. In those years the festivities included a sermon on the evils of drink, and the choir was formed from an organization called the Cold Water Army, who chanted this song as they thundered along Hope St.:

A pledge we make no wine to take,  
Nor brandy red that turns the head,  
Nor whisky hot our guts to rot,  
Nor fiery rum that ruins home;

Nor will we sin by drinking gin;  
Hard cider too will never do,  
Nor sparkling ale, the face to pale,  
Nor brewer's beer — its curse we fear.  
To quench our thirst we'll only bring  
Cold water from the well or spring;  
So here we pledge perpetual hate  
To all that can intoxicate.

Human nature reasserted itself. In 1850, soup was served to all comers. It was brewed from a stock of Galápagos turtles which had reached Bristol from Ecuador aboard the Ushers' brig *Maria*. One of these monsters could feed a hundred people. Ever since, Bristol's Fourth has belonged to fun-loving boys and reminiscent homecomers. Proper Bristolians regard it as next in importance to the Day of Judgment. In 1902, at the coronation of King Edward VII in Westminster Abbey, Francisco deWolf and his wife heard a voice behind them exclaim, "There's never been anything like this except the Fourth in Bristol." Francisco, who was universally known as Hungry Frank, was the first cousin of his wife, née Isabella Colt. The family called her Aunt Belle, but the Swamp Angels called her Aunt Belly. She was the sister of Col. S. Pomeroy Colt and of the later U. S. Senator LeBaron Bradford Colt. All three were grandchildren of General George deWolf, the builder of Linden Place. When they turned around, they saw that the speaker was their official but unspeakable-to sister-in-law Dot (Mrs. S. Pomeroy Colt), so protocol forbade them to agree out loud, for she and the Colonel were estranged.

There is no one like a retired hero to inspire a patriotic parade. The Bristol Fourth had two of them in succession during the town's Indian Summer: General Ambrose E. Burnside and Private Ed Anthony. Over three-quarters of a century, they worked around the calendar to prepare for the great day.

General Burnside, by the time he died in 1881, had made the Bristol Fourth famous. He imported orators from New York and Washington, where he sat as Senator from Rhode Island. He sent to Boston for fireworks. In 1876, the centenary of Independence, he got the Navy to order a man-of-war to the harbor; the custom has not lapsed since. She was the steam sloop *Juniata*. Yachts and excursion steamers came from all over Narragansett Bay to share in the celebration. On the Night Before (it is never called the night of the third), every house in town was lighted by Japanese lanterns. In the parade, the General, as Chief Marshal, rode his Civil War charger Old Dick. A hundred sailors from *Juniata* marched behind the Train of Artillery band, and the town sergeant carried a standard which Nathaniel Byfield, one of the first proprietors in 1681,





*Bristol's big day is a day for everyone and everyone from everywhere turns up.*

had presented to the town in 1724. That night the fireworks on the Common included

Hexagon wheels of changeable colors, mutating to Roman candles which discharged jets, streamers, rockets and gold rain

to say nothing of

the representation of a beautiful Vase in mosaic work, with clusters of candles throwing stars and *bouquets de feu*.

Ed Anthony, who alternated with, and then succeeded, the General in command of the celebration, had been his "scout" — or, as he would now be called, his bodyguard — during the Civil War. He claimed that he had once been chased through a peach orchard in Georgia by a whole regiment of Rebels, and escaped them by hiding under a porch where Robert E. Lee was holding a council of war.

"If they'd known I was there," he would say, "they'd have cut my heart out."

Ed Anthony lived with his sister Medora in a white house at the turn in the Back Road — now renamed Metacom Ave. — where Griswold Ave. intersects it. The house is still there, but the intersection is overgrown now, and almost invisible from the new highway between Mount Hope Bridge and Providence. Neither Ed nor Medora was married. It was said that a legacy from Capt. Jim deWolf, who died in 1837, kept the two of them alive, long after the deWolf children had squandered their own inheritance. Each spring, Ed was the first man in town to get his onion sets into the ground. Winter and summer he wore the same blue peacoat, with a black string tie and a dirty roll-collar shirt. He explained that the heavy coat kept out the cold in winter and the heat in summer. He never walked, but al-

ways dog-trotted, even on the mile-and-a-half trip from his house to the Town Hall. Each year, still at a trot, he carried a Christmas tree down to St. Michael's Sunday School. He never knocked on a door, but announced himself by an Indian war-whoop from outside. He loved lemon-balls, the bigger the better. Once on the Fourth, the Committee had one specially boiled for him, as big as a fist. John Church, the Town Clerk, had to break it with a hammer into pieces small enough for Ed to suck.

He was a great marksman. With his own hands he built a target of white quartz behind the house, rowing the stones over from King Philip's throne on Mount Hope, heaving them into his skiff till the bow was out of water, and then climbing into the bow himself. In this position his oars barely bit the water, but he claimed it was easier to row downhill than up. He practised marksmanship with a ship's cannon. If the balls fell into the water, he retrieved them in his skiff; but this became costly, for he could not find every one. Thereafter, he used rocks for ammunition. Each summer he gave a shoot for the Train of Artillery, fifty muskets strong. He and Willy B. deWolf, Capt. Jim's grandson from The Mount, once, with telescopic rifles, strung up two ducks each with one bullet, by waiting for the birds to get in range and then firing at just the right instant to send the bullets through all four heads, at a distance of three hundred yards.

He vowed to collect thirty treasures before he died. The thirtieth was to be a wife. But since the twenty-ninth was to be a hen's tooth, he never married. The rich Codman sisters gave him a helmet-shaped coal-scuttle — or was it a scuttle-shaped helmet — which had belonged to king William IV. He coveted a collection





*This extremely rare one-cylinder Cadillac (circa 1907) is the pride and joy of Mr. and Mrs. Carleton J. Pinheiro of East Greenwich.*

of seashells which belonged to LeBaron Bradford of the Old Stone Bank in Providence. Bradford promised them to him as a wedding present, for his thirty-first treasure.

Even with his target finished, and his museum as full as it would ever get, he could not help tinkering with nature. Along his fence line he set tall poles, each braced in a cairn of white stones and topped by a cartwheel. He knew that the fishhawks would build their nests on the wheels at the beginning of spring. Even now, Bristol dates the arrival of springtime not from the calendar, but from the day when George Fish, the scoutmaster, reports the first fishhawk on Ed Anthony's cartwheels, or on the tall trees in Tanyard Woods nearby, above the new sewage disposal plant. In 1967, the great birds homed in on Friday, March 31, a week later than their usual return. That year, everyone had a late spring.

<sup>1</sup> As a footnote to history, it is worth recording that the Rhode Island Clambake was invented by a Bristolian, even though the site of the momentous occasion was, to be sure, Rocky Point on the West shore. Although our present Governor hails from Warwick, His Excellency can not refute this account of what happened in 1825:

He (schoolmaster Otis Storrs of Bristol) conceived the idea of taking his pupils across Narragansett Bay on an excursion. Some of the parents objected, but Mr. Storrs convinced them that no harm would come to the morals of the children. They sailed from Deacon Orem Spencer's dock on Thames St., which he used for a wood market. They crossed the Bay on the good sloop William Allen and anchored off Rocky Point, which was then a barren shore. After they had landed in boats, he discov-

Ed Anthony served on the Fourth of July Committee from 1864, with the Civil War still raging, until 1914, when he died from lifting a rock that was too heavy for his heart. He was its Chairman from 1884, three years after Gen. Burnside went to his reward, until that fatal year. No sooner had one Fourth ended than he started to make the next one even better. A whole year beforehand, he began begging the Navy for the largest ship it could spare. He blandished governors and senators into marching in the parade — which they still do — he negotiated for out-of-town fire companies for the afternoon squirt on the Common; planned costumes for the Antiques and Horribles; bargained with carnivals for the two-day concession; and started to fatten the porker which he donated each year to the Greased Pig Contest.

When the Fourth happened to fall on Monday, there would be special excursions across Narragansett Bay for a shore dinner at Rocky Point, in Warwick. "(Ah, Rocky Point, Mother of Clambakes! There were seven trips a day by Continental Steamboat, and the round-trip fare but forty cents! Ah, empty islands in her path: Prudence, Patience, Hope and Despair! The Queen Anne dining hall of Ocean House could seat two thousand; it claimed to be the largest in the U.S.A. Her clambakes, so far refined from the impromptu of Schoolmaster Storrs!"

The stones were heated by hickory wood alone; under the sailcloth, but a single bucket of water was needed to steam the dripping rockweed. The celebrants sat on benches at each side of the long tables; and if a gentleman cared to remove his hat, there was a continuous shelf on iron posts right down the center, where derbies could be parked between the cruets. When President Hayes visited her, 250 bushels of clams disappeared at a single sitting. Her amphitheater for dancing! Her Forest Ice-Cream Saloon, her bowling alleys, her rink with patent roller skates and full band of music! Her Coliseum, with minstrel entertainment! Her bathing beach, with suits to let! Her veranda by the sea, picture gallery, reception cottage for the ladies, merry-go-rounds and alligator ponds! Ah Jerry, her Indian fish-and-chowder cook! Ah, her indigestion!")

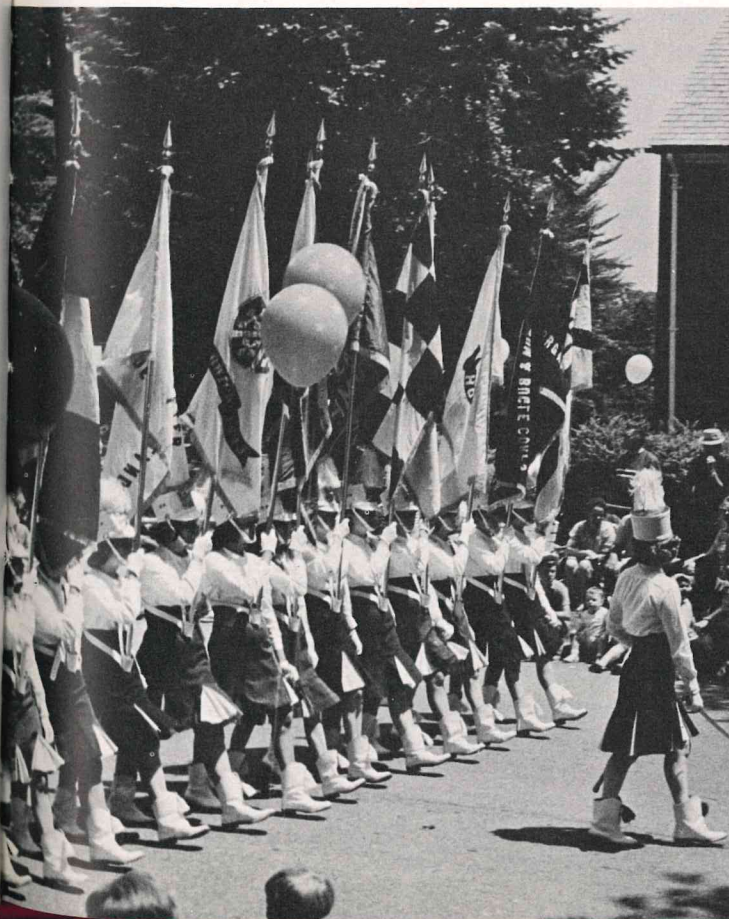
In most years, the Fourth began at sunset of the

ered that he had neglected to provide any refreshment, so he decided to make do with what the bounty of nature provided. He set the larger boys to kindling a fire of driftwood in the crevice of a large rock, heating some of the stones which abounded on the beach, and covering them with damp rockweed. The shore yielded clams in quantity, and the fish were eager for bait. Over it all Schoolmaster Storrs spread the William Allen's hatch cover. The girls strolled round the fields, plucking fruit and berries, which were found in great abundance. The dinner was eaten with the fingers, amid great hilarity. All had enough and good enough, with plenty to spare. About five o'clock the company embarked for home, bursting spontaneously into hymns and popular ditties. Just as the sun was declining in the West, they landed on the wharf whence they had started. The experiment of a clambake was a success.



Night Before, as it still does. Nobody expected to sleep that night. The sputter of lady-crackers, the roar of cannon-crackers, the report of pink-wrapped torpedos and the din of fish-horns hardly let up till dawn, when the church bells took over: the Baptist, the Congo and St. Michael's Episcopal. The first recorded industrial unrest in Bristol occurred in 1902, when the bell ringers struck for a raise from three dollars to five. That year, there were thirteen accidents on the Fourth. On the Night Before in 1905, the gang called the Swamp Angels stole a buggy on the Neck, at the North end of town, stuffed it full of hay and ran it blazing all the way down to the Ferry. The next year, the same boys found a hundred empty tar barrels stacked up outside the shed of the Highway Surveyor. The gang artfully split into three groups. Two groups started small diversionary fires at the Neck and the Ferry, to confuse the fire companies. Then the main body set fire to the shed, rolled the barrels up to the Common and set fire to *them*. The year after that, the Town Council ordered the police to jail anyone who started a bonfire on the Night Before. That sounded like tyranny to the Swamp Angels, who never had firecracker money of their own before pig-killing time in the autumn, and to some other independent citizens too. Storekeepers, farmers, sailors, lawyers and even Minister Locke of St. Michael's joined the Angels just before midnight in front of the First

"Hear the drum . . . here they come" . . . the Warwick Shoreline Drum and Bugle Corps.



Councilman's house to protest — he was Col. S. Pomeroy Colt, and the house was Linden Place. They were armed with anything that would make a noise or throw a blaze. Charlie Thompson, the Bristol historian, was there.

"At the stroke of midnight," he recalls gleefully, "we let loose with salvo after salvo of shotguns, horse pistols and cannon-crackers — six and ten-inchers. You never heard anything like it in your life, everybody hollering and cheering. Hundreds of Roman candles shot up all over the place. We set bombs under the green tubs filled with flowers, and the tubs rose into the air and vanished, flowers and all."

After that, the Council gave up trying to enforce a curfew on the Night Before. But no matter where they set the deadline, the boys always feel they have a challenge to outwit the law. As lately as 1953 some of them set fire to the official bonfire at Mill Gut on the night *before* the Night Before.

On the morning of the Fourth, the parade began at eleven, as it still does, or as soon thereafter as everyone could be "marshalled." It was headed by a platoon of police, as soon as there were enough policeman to form one. In belted knee-length blue coats and gray coal-scuttle helmets, they swung their truncheons in time to the bands. Behind them rode the Chief Marshal and his mounted staff, dressed in Prince Alberts and top hats. As early as 1906, Peter C. R. Morris, the Chief Marshal, had a mounted staff of twenty-five. A Chief Marshal was judged by his mount. He spent much time cantering back and forth along the line of march, ostensibly to get the parade moving, but actually to show off his horsemanship. His mounted staff had to be content with inferior horses, mostly rented from Josiah Peckham's livery stable, between the Town Hall and the jail on Court St.; but later, when automobiles drove the stable out of business, from the town's Poor Farm, above Mill Gut. The Poor Farm horses were as big and round as the town's yellow water wagon, and made little attempt to control their flatulence. They might shift an inch or two if a cannon-cracker exploded below their hooves, but otherwise they were shockproof. (When one of Col. S. Pomeroy Colt's sons, however, circa 1905, set off a cannon-cracker *with a pinwheel in it* under the mount of Col. Merton A. Cheesman, his father's factotum, the horse reared and bucked Chezzie off, to the delight of the crowd.) But Luigi Malafronte, the Chief Marshal in 1908, had a white circus horse which could dance in time to the music. And more recently, many remember the palomino ridden by Matt Brito, and the sombrero which set it off.

After the staff came the barouches of the local and visiting dignitaries, and then the comrades of the Grand



Army of the Republic from the Soldiers' Home on the Back Road, lining both sides of a bonton and leaning back from the long benches to wave their campaign hats of the Civil War to the crowd. Then came Ed Anthony, dressed as Uncle Sam and driving the eighteen-foot Historical Float behind four gray horses, each led by a boy dressed as a Minute Man, and with the Goddess of Liberty back of him, and thirteen girls — one for each colony — all under a red, white and blue canopy. The horses themselves wore straw hats, with holes through so that their ears could shoo away the inevitable hot-weather flies.

Then came The Military: Train of Artillery, First Light Infantry, detachments from the warships and from Fort Adams at Newport, and visiting militia — the chartered commands of the Revolution and the War of 1812, and even earlier, from all over the state, and even from Massachusetts and Connecticut. All were in Continental uniform, and each command had its own band, and most of the warriors were short of breath. Next came the fire companies, with sirens screaming. The firemen walked beside their pumpers, carrying flower-filled cornucopias in their red shirtsleeves. The King Philips were the only company with a distinctive uniform. They wore blue pants with a red piping, and had the motto ON TO THE RESCUE embroidered on their caps and belts.

Beginning at the turn of the century, "foreign" organizations joined the parade. In 1901 it included the St. Mary's Total Abstinence Fire and Drum Band, the Dom Luiz Felipe Band, and the band of the Società Italiana di M.S. Reale Principessa Elena di Napoli, which gave a concert that afternoon on the Common, during the Bristol-Warren baseball game. The "foreign" bands were best of all, and each carried its national flag. Last were the Antiques and Horribles, a group of short-legged children got up as elephants, Zulu chiefs, giants, skeletons and dragons. At the head of each division was a Division Marshal, an American flag and a band. The tune which each band played at least once on the weary circuit through town was "Why don't you Marmaduke Round Here?" approximately to the tune of "We Won't Go Home Till Morning." Nobody knew what the title meant — and the Department of Music at the Library of Congress has not found it in its archives for this writer. But it was vaguely supposed to derive from Mr. Marmaduke Mason, the expert cobbler of Bristol.

In years when Sir Thomas Lipton had challenged to wrest the *America's* cup from the boats which the Herreshoffs of Bristol had built, the harbor was full of yachts and of yachtsmen, Sir Thomas among them, rolling along the sidewalk of Hope St., and cheered on from the balcony of John B. Herreshoff's Hotel Belve-

dere, or from the piazza of the Bristol Hotel on State St., by groups of convivial young men in ice-cream pants, rakish straw hats and brass buttons, whom the *Phoenix* of 1904 dismisses as "boys of better birth than breeding," all singing with the crowd below, "How Dry I Am."

Every house flew the flag. The oldest belonged to Miss Evelin Bache, at 86 State St.; it had only sixteen stars in the field. Miss Evvie was a great-granddaughter of Benjamin Franklin. She kept the last dame school in town. Her fee for tuition was 50 cents a week. No inside plumbing was included in the price, for it did not exist in houses built in 1810. But there was a Necessary in the back yard, under the pear tree, and a chamber pot for each pupil, mostly of pink or blue staffordshire, decorated with scenes of the State House in Boston and the Capitol in Washington, with a lid for each. In emergencies, a student need only raise only one or two fingers, depending on his or her need, to get the nod of permission from Miss Evvie. Though unmarried and childless herself, she loved children, and understood them. When one of her eight-year-old pupils refused to spell the word "pig," she knew why: he had small blue eyes, blond bristly hair and a flat nose.

"Just because you *spell* 'pig,' Jim," she told him gently, "doesn't mean that you *are* a pig."

"Why didn't you say so to start with, Miss Evvie?" the boy sang out. "P-I-G."

Those of the Great Folks (the deWolfs and their relations) who lived on the route of the parade kept "Open House," but no one except the other Great Folks dared walk in without an invitation. Outlying deWolfs would sift in to watch the parade from the piazzas of their kin: the descendants of Don Marcos from Poppasquash, of Farmer John from Griswold Avenue, of Henry from the Neck, and of the prolific Bishop Howe from the Back Road. Mrs. Middleton, granddaughter of Major William deWolf, was driven in from Poppasquash with her two daughters Annie and Alicia, all three cocooned in white, by their Negro handyman, whose name was also William deWolf. The best post of observation was Miss Minnie Perry's piazza at the corner of High and Union, for there you could watch the parade on its way southward, and then, by running down Union to its foot at Hope, catch it on the return. But the best punch was served at Lizzie Diman Cabot's on Hope, between Constitution and Church; and the best candy at Miss Maria Norris', next door to Linden Place, whence Rosalie deWolf had eloped in 1844 with the blackface minstrel John Hopper. As the parade passed each house, the guests would run out, punch glass and orange cake in hand, to the mounting block or hitching post which stood in front of every doorway.





*Members of a Chartered Command in their colorful regalia enjoy "a pause that refreshes" in front of the home of Dr. and Mrs. Ralph E. Gauvey.*

Their loudest cheers were always for Ed Anthony.

In most parades the Colt brothers — Uncle Pom the Colonel and Barry the Senator, — rode together in Capt. Jim deWolf's old coach, which Unkie had bought from Willy B. at The Mount. It was not the heavy travelling-coach which Ben Mann and Polydore used to pilot to Washington, but the light chaise for short-distance use in which Mrs. Braddy deWolf had called on the mother of the Colts, Theodora Goujaud deWolf Colt, daughter of the scapegrace General George, to welcome her back to her kindred on her return from her exile in Cuba. In 1910 the floor of the coach fell through below the brothers as the ancient vehicle passed Minnie Perry's piazza, with Tom Downey as coachman and George Kimel as footman, behind two buckskins. Between the cannon-crackers and the bands, Downey did not hear the brothers' call for help. For half a block their heads were out of sight, and their two august pairs of legs had to trot behind the buckskins, till laughter from the crowd warned the coachman to pull up. When the brothers were extricated they laughed too; that is the kind of brothers they were. And after the parade disbanded at the Common, the marchers, hundreds strong, were welcome to Unkie's hospitality at Linden Place,

to sing "The Star-Spangled Banner" with the Portuguese-American band and a girl soloist from one of the churches, to hear Barry's forensic voice read the Declaration of Independence, and to drink Unkie's punch. Like the chorus in a small-town opera, the files passed up the marble walk from Hope St. to the portico of General George's flamboyant mansion of 1810. There would be a punchbowl on each flank in the vaulted hall, with George Easterbrooks and his helpers behind it, in striped pants. Most of the patriots, having drunk once to the Colonel's health, went out the back door, around by Wardwell St. to the front, and up again, at the tail end of the procession, to drink to the Senator's. The G.A.R., always guests of honor, were as spry and as thirsty as any. Until late in the afternoon they could be seen reeling out to the bonton which waited to carry them back to Soldiers' Home. They might stop off at Speedy Chadwick's saloon, where Willy B. deWolf would ease their fatigue by unstrapping their wooden legs, and strapping them on again when they were ready to go home. If the Fourth happened to coincide with pension day, they might line up at a certain house on High St., beyond Franklin, where three mulatto girls lived behind the shutters, and not get home till mid-





*Members of the R. I. Saddle Club display their horsemanship.*

night. It was not often the veterans got a free ride to town, so they made the most of it on the Fourth.

In the afternoon, if you had children, you took them to the circus on the Common. Mother had laid out a good lunch, and Father took a drink, if it was the only day in the year that he did. On the steps of the Baptist church the Swamp Angels had set up a refreshment stand: jawbreakers and hard pink cookies and a pail of lemonade, with a dipper in the middle and half a dozen tin cups hung around the rim. Their pitch was the chant:

Cold lemonade  
Made in the shade,  
Stirred with a stick by an ugly old maid.

The circus — or, as it was called in the earliest days, the Caravan — set up in the northeast corner of the Common, with orders from the Council not to encroach on the baseball game or the firemen's muster. It is a mystery how room was found for all three, to say nothing of the crowds who came to watch them. The children naturally preferred the circus, which offered such attractions as these:

REYNOLDS' WORLD UNITED SHOWS — A VERITABLE NOAH'S ARK OF WILD BEASTS! INCLUDING GIANT ALBINO CAMEL FROM THE SAHARA DESERT! THE ROYAL ROMAN HIPPODROME! THRILLING REVIVAL OF ANCIENT CHARIOT RACES, CAMEL RACES, & C & C! THE MAMMOTH ELEPHANTS BALDY AND QUEEN JUMBO! ALL PRESENTED UNDER ONE VAST CANOPY OF WATERPROOF CANVAS!!!

Sometimes the circus arrived by sea, from the Island — Baldy and Queen Jumbo swimming across Bristol

Ferry, and the rest of the troupe aboard the horse scow.

The middle-aged watched the baseball game against Warren, standing in rows around the diamond. There were no bleachers, nor even any ropes to keep spectators off the field; the players had no uniforms, but wore their everyday clothes.

Old-timers loved to watch the stream-throwing contests of the fire companies off at the southeast corner: Hydraulions, King Philips, Ever-Readys and Defiance, the one remaining bucket-tub. On a hot afternoon the pumpers who manned the heavy bars would take off everything but their pants, for they built up three hundred pounds of pressure before they would let go.

The Fourth was a day of reunion, as it still is. If you have a cousin out of town, or a friend from the old country, the Fourth is the day you ask him home. If you live away yourself, it is the one day of the year when you make sure of returning, as Archie Hawkes, even in his nineties, flew on from California with his wife, and put up at the Belvedere. In 1895, for instance, the veterans of the whale fishery assembled.

"Fifty years ago," one of them told the *Phoenix*, "the brig *Governor Hopkins* sailed from Bristol on a plum-pudding voyage. There are only four survivors of that gallant crew, not counting the hands we picked up in the Western Isles (i.e. the Azores). We were welcomed at the depot by our venerable shipmate Thomas Springer in time to review the parade, after which we were driven to his residence. We arrived eager to partake of the sumptuous dinner prepared by his daughter. As we drew near the house, she gave us the usual salutation, "THERE SHE BLOWS!" which we quickly answered with "WHERE AWAY?" After dinner, pipe-



smoking and speeches were the order of the day, and the time passed pleasantly until the next morning, when we took our departure."

Anyone who felt like it could join the parade. There were sometimes more marchers than spectators. Oskytel Clark ran up his own uniform for the day, all white, with a cap like a postman's; he looked as grand as Admiral Dewey. By nine o'clock, Sam Slocum would appear at Gooding's Corner, up toward the Neck and across from North Burying Ground, in an immaculate suite of white marseilles, and a frock coat doubly starched. He carried a silver-tipped baton, sported a flower in his lapel, and flaunted a gilded stickpin in his tie and brilliant rings on all his white-gloved fingers. But he never got far from the corner, on his way to town, before one of the Swamp Angels sneaked some lighted lady-crackers into his hip pocket. Even so, he always reached the Common in time to fall in behind the Train of Artillery band, and strut with them all through the parade, keeping time with his baton like a drum major. Willy Green from the Poor Farm marched in the parade every year — not in it, exactly, but beside it, in the gutter. For the Fourth he always wore his Other Suit, which was white. He sported a red, white and blue streamer in the band of his straw hat, and a last year's badge marked COMMITTEE in his lapel. He was a stubby little fellow, with pink eyes in a chubby pink face. He would start abreast of the mounted staff, at the head of the procession, but his legs were so short that he soon fell behind, to wind up alongside the Dom Luiz Felipe Portuguese-American band in the last division. He held a harmonica to his mouth. If anyone on the sidewalk asked him, "Whatcha playing, Willy?" he took it from his lips long enough to call back, "Yankee Doodle." But since he had short breath and few teeth, it is likely that he made no music at all.

The Fourth was the briskest day for peddlers like the barrel-man and the basket-man. It was a superstition that the former would bring rain in the afternoon, and the latter fair weather. One man always came down from the City, as Bristolians call Providence, in a brimless Canadian cap with eartabs. He inched through the crowd, calling out, "Balm of Gilead, Balm of Gilead! Daddy makes it and I sell it!"

<sup>2</sup> In his latter years, Blondie abandoned saloon keeping to become a veterinarian. At the lower edge of Tanyard Woods, he built a storehouse insulated with seaweed, in which he preserved through the winter the mulberry wine and oysters which he had gathered during the summer. His specialty was the alteration of cats and dogs. Miss Madie Wyatt, the teacher in St. Michael's Sunday School, once brought him her tortoise-shell tomcat for the ignoble operation. When she picked up her pet later, she asked Blondie what she owed him. "Why, nothing at all, Miss Madie."

"That's very kind of you, Blondie," she told him. "I hope I can do the same for you some time." "NOT BY A DAMN

Mr. Wright the hull-corn man hawked a three-gallon can of what looked unpopped popcorn, but was soft enough to eat with molasses. He lived on the Neck, in that unredeemed territory which Warren stole from Bristol in 1872, and has not yet returned. Everyone knew that his wife would not let him come home until he had sold the whole canful, and had three dollars in his pocket. He wore a full-length linen duster and a curl-brim derby hat. He had no trouble getting rid of his hull-corn on the Fourth; though once, it is said, he feared that he might not, and in desperation whammed the can onto the needle-sharp pickets in front of the Congregational church, letting his whole stock in trade spill down to the sidewalk.

As for the tramps which infested every town in New England, they not only got their usual handouts from the soft-hearted, but were often lucky enough to filch a chicken from the coop or a ham from the empty sink room, for the householders were all away, watching the parade. Capt. Goff of the police force had a setter named Tige, who could diagnose a tramp by his smell, and on the other 364 days of the year nudge him down to the Tramp House at the foot of Bradford St. for a night on pilot biscuits and water, till his master arrived next morning to usher the tramp out of town; but on the Fourth Tige always marched behind the captain in the parade.

Off the route of the procession, the saloons were crowded all day. Blondie Rawson's on State St. was so noisy that a man couldn't hear himself think.<sup>2</sup> In one corner at the back were four bulldogs in continuous battle; in the other were two Negro minstrels from the City, one playing the piano and the other singing. (The one who sang bore the impressive name Valorous Glorious George Washington Hathaway Peck Stout.) In the middle of the mahogany bar stood a washboiler filled with well-salted chowder. At one end a parrot clung to the rim, swearing; at the other, two monkeys skidded on the varnish, jabbering at each other.

But the sun never set that Wash Gorham, the old whaleman,<sup>3</sup> could not stagger out of Blondie's in time to pay his yearly visit to Mrs. Andrew Sherman on High St. He would climb unsteadily over the piazza rail and tell her,

*SIGHT YOU CAN'T, MISS MADIE," Blondie roared at her.*

<sup>3</sup> Wash, who descended from the John Gorham to whom Massasoit sold one hundred acres in 1660, long before King Philip's War, made his living by cutting grass and sweeping horse chestnut leaves off people's sidewalks. The boarders at Miss Minnie Perry's said they would rather listen to him than to Ralph Waldo Emerson. He once said to Minister Locke,

"Mr. Locke, I do love you so!"

"Well, Wash, if you loved me you'd quit drinking whiskey."

"Now, Mr. Locke, you can't ask anyone to love you that much. It's plumb stuck-up of you."



"Now Sade, let's you and me sing our favorite hymn, and if I go before you do, I want you to see that they sing it at my funeral."

And the neighbors, rocking on their own piazzas, would hear the strange duo, their irredeemable bibber and motherly housewife, raise their voices together.

"Pass me not, O gentle Saviour,  
Hear my humble cry;  
When on others thou art smiling,  
Do not pass me by."

All the vanished patriots, I think, come home again to Bristol every Fourth to watch the parade, along with thirty or forty thousand others who crowd into the old town. Nowadays there are a dozen divisions, or more. The hand-pumpers have given way to diesel and gasoline. Even the division of antique automobiles must seem far in the future to General Ambrose E. Burnside and Ed Anthony; and Parson Wight, before returning heavenward, must rub his old eyes at the antics of the drum majorettes. But he would not scold them, for in Bristol everything is forgiven on the Fourth.

In 1883, during the Indian Summer of the Great Folks, Minister Locke wrote an eloquent prayer which always bears repeating. He had come to St. Michael's

for two weeks in 1867; he stayed there for fifty-two years, until his death in 1919. I, who am his grandson, know that he foresaw, even in 1867, the town's growth from a Yankee hamlet to a bustling admixture of many races, for he told me so.

In the Episcopal prayer book it is called a

#### PRAYER FOR OUR COUNTRY

Almighty God, who hast given us this good land for our heritage, we humbly beseech Thee that we may always prove ourselves a people mindful of Thy favor and glad to do Thy will. Bless our land with honorable industry, sound learning and pure manners. Save us from violence, discord and confusion; from pride and arrogancy, and from every evil way. Defend our liberties, and fashion into one happy people the multitudes brought hither out of many kindreds and tongues. Endue with the spirit of wisdom those to whom in Thy name we entrust the authority of government, that there may be justice and peace at home. And that through obedience to Thy law we may show forth Thy praise among the nations of the earth. In the time of prosperity, fill our hearts with thankfulness; and in the day of trouble, suffer not our trust in Thee to fail. Amen.

*Most popular man at any parade is the inevitable peddler.*

