

FRI-2/22/74

Looking Backward

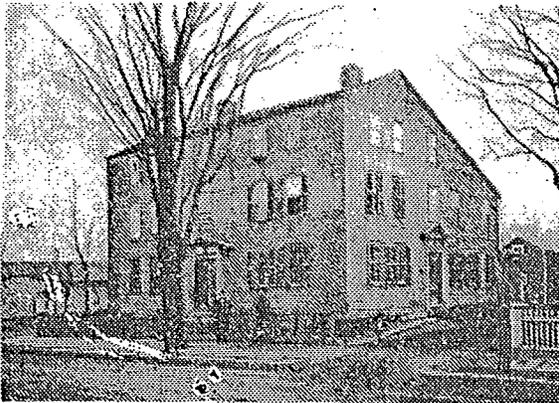
Washington Visited Here Twice

By WAYNE PHANEUF

In June of 1775, Springfield was in an uproar. Lexington and Concord and Bunker Hill were the talk of the day. The War of the Revolution had begun.

A contingent of Continental Army officers paced nervously in front of Zenas Parsons' tavern, near the present site of Court Square.

Suddenly, they sprang to the alert at the sound of hoofbeats. A coach drawn by four horses, with



Parsons Tavern around 1880.

a support force of outriders headed down Main Street, from the Connecticut River where they had just crossed by ferry. The waiting officers were from Cambridge, the man in the coach was to be their general and leader George Washington.

The general was on his way to take command of the Colonial Army in Boston. It was his first of two visits to Springfield.

After stopping briefly at Landford Parsons, Washington and his men headed east, through Wilbraham and Palmer.

While going through Palmer, on June 30, 1775, Washington and his men had lunch under an elm tree.

Today, a huge trunk, and a granite marker in front of "The Washington Shopping Center," mark the spot where the general stopped. Washington would not visit the Springfield area for another 14 years. This time as President of the United States.

On October 21, 1789, after his inauguration in New York, Washington once again came to Springfield. This time he stayed the night at Parsons Tavern.

According to an article in the Hampshire Chronicle, Springfield turned out in force to honor the President.

Once again in a four-horse coach, with a vast entourage of government officials and servants, Washington took the ferry from the West Springfield side of the river.

He was met on shore by many people on horseback who escorted him to the tavern.

The Independent Cadets, commanded by Col. Joseph Williams, fired a three volley salute.

Soon after his arrival, at about 4 p.m., Washington inspected the federal arsenal (Springfield Armory).

He had dinner with Col. John Worthington and other leaders of the town at Parsons Tavern, and spent the night.

While traveling through the area, Washington wrote in his diary:

"There is a great equality in the people of this state. Few or no opulent men, and no poor.

"Great similitude in their buildings; the general fashion of which is a chimney and a door in the middle...two flush stories with very good show of sash and glass windows."

Washington left Springfield the next morning. He had breakfast in Palmer and traveled through to Brookfield.

Looking Backward

City Pays Tribute to Daniel Shays

By WAYNE PHANEUF

It's been 150 years since the old self-proclaimed general died, obscure and impoverished, hundreds of miles from home. Right up until his death, in his early 80's, Daniel Shays remained a man of principle.

This Sunday, Daniel Shays will be honored in



Springfield for leading a rebellion that bears his name. A losing cause that cost him his home, and nearly his life.

Sometimes it takes a long time for wounds to heal. It has taken 191 years for Springfield to recognize and pay tribute to Daniel Shays.

It has also taken a group from outside of the city to lead the tribute.

The Daniel Shays Project Inc., a theater group

based in Northampton, will stage a ceremony at 11:30 a.m. Sunday at the Shays Rebellion marker on State Street, near the corner of Federal.

— It was near this spot, on Jan. 25, 1787, that Daniel Shays led his motley army of poverty-stricken farmers against the Massachusetts Militia protecting arms and supplies at the Continental Arsenal (which, in 1794, would become the Springfield Armory).

Gen. William Shephard of Westfield successfully defended the arsenal, sending cannon shot into Shays' ranks, killing four and wounding six others.

The booming artillery marked the beginning of the end for Shays Rebellion. Thousands of men scattered and began a wheeling retreat, hotly pursued by Gen. Benjamin Lincoln and Massachusetts Militiamen.

Shays, the Revolutionary War hero, the simple farmer from Pelham, fled for his life, retreating to Amherst, Pelham, Hadley and Hatfield.

On Jan 29, Lincoln said he would recommend to the General Court that all insurgents who lay down their arms be pardoned.

Shays replied that the rebellion was due to real grievances. He did ask Lincoln for an armistice until petitions could be presented the Legislature.

Lincoln had no authority to delay military operations, and on Feb. 2, after a forced march through a snowstorm, he attacked Shays' men at Petersham, routing them completely.

Shays fled to Vermont and was one of the few leaders of the rebellion refused a pardon.

Today's taxpayers can find genuine sympathy in Shays' cause, which he felt was as justified as the American Revolution.

After fighting in the war, many Massachusetts farmers returned to their homes to find their land being taken from them by creditors. Often, men who fought to create this nation wound up in debtors' prison.

Shays Rebellion led to the adoption of the U. S. Constitution when the colonies realized a strong central government was essential to the life of the nation.

However, Shays received little credit. He was branded a traitor and fled to New York. Eventually, a meager federal pension was restored to him.

Almost two centuries after the rebellion, Shays is getting the recognition he deserves.

As part of Sunday's ceremony, the Sixth Massachusetts Continentals will march down State Street, and the unit commander, Leonard Day will place a wreath at the Shays marker.

Day is a direct descendant of Luke Day, Shays' second-in-command from West Springfield.

Glover Saved the Cause

By WAYNE PHANEUF

Springfield had been a quiet little town when the American Revolution began in 1775, but by 1780 the community was bustling with activity.

In the summer of that year, Springfield was designated as the town where all Massachusetts recruits were to report to the Continental Army.

The man given the task of transforming the raw recruits into a viable fighting force was Gen. John Glover, one of the forgotten heroes of the Revolution.

When he arrived here in the summer of 1780, Glover was not unfamiliar with Springfield. He knew



the town as a major supply depot during the Battle of Saratoga campaign, and was also familiar with it as commander of the troops escorting thousands of captured British and German prisoners who passed through this region in 1777, following the New York battle.

In fact, Baron Frederick Von Riedesel, who commanded the captured German mercenaries, dashed off a letter to Gen. Glover, complaining about the treatment of prisoners when they reached Springfield.

But Glover's contributions to the American cause predated his assignments in Springfield. If it wasn't for John Glover, the American forces would have not been in existence in 1777. More than once, the merchant and sea captain from Marblehead used his skills to rescue Gen. George Washington's army and the Patriot cause.

Glover was a leader of the Patriot movement by 1772, when he was named to the Marblehead Committee of Correspondence. By this time, the former shoemaker, fish vender and merchant was a wealthy and respected member of the community. Marblehead was the second largest town in Massachusetts and was home for many Revolutionary War leaders.

At the outbreak of hostilities, Glover organized a brigade of his townspeople that became known as "John Glover's Marblehead Mariners." At a time when the Continental Army was nothing short of an unorganized mob, Glover's regiment of seafaring men, in their tarred trousers, were noted for their discipline and fighting skills.

British Force

During the last few days of August in 1776, the Continental Army was hopelessly hemmed in, with its back to the sea, by a vastly superior British force. As the English moved in on the Americans, it looked like thousands would have to surrender, bringing the experiment in liberty to a swift end.

Under cover of darkness, on Aug. 29, Glover and his men began one of the largest amphibious evacuations ever attempted by fighting forces of that period.

Using every sloop, scow and rowboat within the vicinity of New York, the sailors from Marblehead successfully carried off nearly 9,000 American troops in nine hours. They accomplished the impossible.

As the British moved towards the American lines for the kill, one surprised English officer wrote in his journal:

"In the morning, to our great astonishment, we found they had evacuated all the works...without a shot fired..."

Christmas Eve

Glover and his men were called upon for another impossible task on Christmas Eve of 1776.

But, again, they succeeded. This time in ferrying Washington and his men across the ice-choked Delaware River to capture Trenton and provide a much needed victory and boost in morale for the troops.

By the time Glover reached Springfield in the summer of 1780, he was one of Washington's most trusted generals, and he did not let the commander-in-chief down.

After completing his training assignment of the raw recruits in Springfield, Glover returned to the main army in September of 1780.

Glover left the service in 1782, suffering from financial difficulties and ill health. He died in 1797, in his 65th year.

FRI-10/21/77

Looking Backward

Some POW Views of Colonies

By WAYNE PHANEUF

Many of the doubts harbored by Western Massachusetts people that the upstart colonies could ever win the Revolution were put aside 200 years ago this week in the key triumph of the war, the Battle of Saratoga.

Hundreds of troops from this area participated in the battle, which ended in the defeat of Gen. John Bur-



goyne, and the capture of thousands of English soldiers and German mercenaries.

Since the American forces were commanded by an ex-British officer, Gen. Horatio Gates, he was more than willing to impose favorable conditions on the defeated English and German troops. The defeat itself was not called a surrender, but rather, "a convention." The prisoners were forever known to history as "troops of the convention."

The soldiers of this "Convention Army" were marched from the New York battlefield to Boston, via

two routes. The main force of English marched along the present Route 2, while the Germans took the lower road, through Blandford, Westfield, West Springfield, Springfield and east through Palmer and the Brookfields.

The journals of these prisoners provide us with a valuable first-hand account of what life was like in the Springfield area 200 years ago.

In fact, several of the prisoners were so impressed with the beauty of the Connecticut River Valley they deserted along the route to found new lives in this area so foreign to them.

The German soldiers, led by General Baron Von Riedesel, encamped in West Springfield on the common, near the Day House (still standing).

The baron and his wife, who followed along the line of march in a coach with her five daughters, were guests of West Springfield's pastor, the Rev. Joseph Lathrop. Von Riedesel spoke no English, and Mr. Lathrop no German, but they conversed in a tongue common to scholars of their era, Latin.

Writing in his journal, the German general said of the people of West-Springfield:

"They are tolerably kind, but damned inquisitive."

After resting in West Springfield for three days, on Oct. 31st, the prisoners were marched to the banks of the river and ferried across to Springfield.

One of the German officers noticed slavery was prevalent in New England at the time of the Revolution.

"From the Hudson to Springfield, one finds few habitations without a Negro family dwelling in a separate cabin. The children are well fed, especially while young, and their slavery is very bearable. The Negro is much like the peasant's hired man. He can go to war in his master's place, hence you never see a regiment in which there are not a lot of Negroes."

The German officer also went on to write that there were many "free Negro families who dwell in good houses, have means, and live quite in the manner of other inhabitants..."

Besides noticing the existence of slavery, the Germans also wrote about the houses and people of the area and were especially observant when they encountered military items such as in Springfield.

They noticed a "well built arsenal and armory" in Springfield, and one German even took the time to sketch the magazine.

"The store and magazine houses were filled from top to bottom and workmen of all trades were seen in all the houses, engaged in the manufacture of ammunition wagons, guns, etc..."

After leaving Springfield, the troops marched east to Boston, encountering hostilities in Brookfield, where the townspeople refused to let them stay in their homes.

Once in Boston, the troops spent the winter in Cambridge and were marched in the fall of 1778, all the way to Virginia. Few ever returned to their homelands.

FRI - 9/29/77

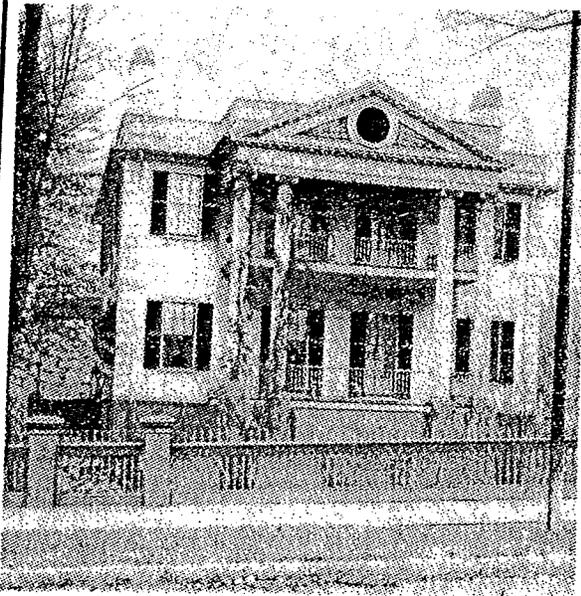
Looking Backward

Famed Artist Called It Home

By WAYNE PHANEUF

The Alexander House at 284 State St. can boast many famous occupants in its 162-year existence. Businessmen, mayors, a lieutenant governor, a negotiator of the Louisiana Purchase, all lived in the stately mansion, but none ever gained the fame of Chester Harding.

Born in Conway on Sept. 1, 1792, Harding later moved with his family to the wilds of upstate New



ALEXANDER HOUSE

York. At the outbreak of the War of 1812, he enlisted in the Army as a drummer boy and almost died of dysentery.

After his discharge from the Army, Harding began manufacturing drums, and, after the war, entered the cabinet-making business.

He was always one step ahead of his creditors, but slowed down long enough on the day of his wedding to Caroline Woodruff to be arrested for debt

Threatened with a long imprisonment, the man who would later be the social lion of Europe and America, fled his home of Caledonia, N.Y. for the pioneer town of Pittsburgh.

First Step

Penniless, Harding was able to borrow enough money to open up a shop as a sign painter, the first step in the career of one of America's most famous portrait painters.

After an itinerant artist painted Mr. and Mrs. Harding's likeness, the future artist tried his own hand at working on his wife's portrait and was "frantic with delight" at the results.

Soon after, a journeyman baker offered Harding five dollars to paint his portrait and the sign-painter was launched on his career as an artist.

He settled in Paris, Ky., where he began painting portraits for a living. In six months he painted 100 portraits at \$25 each.

Harding traveled through the woods of Kentucky to find and paint Col. Daniel Boone in his cabin.

After spending a few years in the West, Harding moved back East, spending some time in Washington, New York, and moving to Northampton in the early 1820's.

He moved to Boston for a time and became a favorite on the Hub's social scene, painting 80 portraits in six months and greatly expanding his bank account.

On Aug. 1, 1823, Harding left his family in Northampton and sailed for Europe, where, again, he prospered and became a cog in the fashionable scene.

On his return to the United States, Harding moved into the Alexander House on State Street, a beautiful columned mansion built in 1815 by Springfield businessman James Byers.

Three Presidents

He painted the portraits of Presidents Madison, Monroe and John Quincy Adams, Chief Justice Marshall, and Senators Henry Clay and Daniel Webster.

Harding and Webster became fast friends and the famous senator was often a guest at the Harding mansion. They hunted together in woods where Forest Park is today.

In 1845, Mrs. Harding died at the age of 50, leaving the artist with seven children.

His reputation grew. He painted many of Springfield's respected families. The George Walter Vincent Smith Museum owns a self-portrait of the artist.

The Civil War found the artist in a tragic predicament. Two of his sons fought for the Union, while two others were on the side of the Confederacy.

Indirectly, the war figured in Harding's death. He died while on a fishing trip after leaving Springfield for a few days before he put the finishing touches on a portrait of Gen. William T. Sherman in March of 1868.

Looking Backward

Luke Day: The Making Of a Rebel

By WAYNE PHANEUF

When an angry mob of debt-ridden farmers attacked the Northampton Jail to release one of their leaders in 1782, a veteran Revolutionary War officer from West Springfield helped quell the disturbance.

Four years later, Capt. Luke Day and many of the other Western Massachusetts men who marched in de-



fense of the courts and government were stepping to the tune of a different drummer.

Joseph Hawley, the great leader of the early Revolution, talked to many of the veterans who defended his Northampton hometown in 1782. Hawley discovered that the grievances of the defenders were similar to those of the mob.

Little Pay

The veterans received little pay, instead they were given certificates redeemable in the future, that were often purchased for pennies on the dollar by speculators.

...you may rely upon it that they are on the point of turning to the mob, and, if they are not relieved, they will become outrageous, and the numbers that side with them will be irresistible. Your sheriffs will be like stubble before their devouring fire," Hawley wrote.

His prediction was accurate. Four years after a mob of 500 demanded the release of Samuel Ely from a Northampton Jail, three times that number were mobbing the town to close the courts.

And who was the leader of this mob? Luke Day, the West Springfield man who'd reached the end of his patience with the government's promises.

Day's alienation from his former law and order stance did not come without thought, trials and tribulation.

Hard times after the peace with Britain was signed in 1783 worsened for Luke Day, who fell deeper and deeper into debt. Finally, in 1785, this proud man from an old West Springfield family was thrown into jail in Northampton for debt.

Summer Heat

For two months, Day endured the summer heat and poor conditions at the Northampton Jail. A man who could not pay his debts was jailed with thieves, counterfeiter and murderers.

His years of gallant service in the Revolution were quickly forgotten. Here was a man who marched at the Lexington Alarm in April of 1775, who accompanied Arnold on the bloody campaign to Quebec... humiliated, jailed.

On Aug. 29, 1785, he broke jail and returned to his home in West Springfield. Luke Day the rebel had been born.

Exactly a year to the day after breaking out of jail, Day organized and led the mob against the Court of Common Pleas, which was due to meet Aug. 29, 1786 in Northampton.

In a series of meetings and conventions the farmers had drawn up petitions of relief to the Legislature, but decided to close down the courts in the state, thus ending action against debtors, while the legislators considered their petition.

Long before the grey mist of dawn appeared, candles burned in remote farmhouses throughout Western Massachusetts and drummers beat out "the long roll" to signal the rebels it was time to march to Northampton.

The scene was similar to that April morning of 1775.

First Victory

True to Hawley's prediction, resistance to the estimated 1,500 angry rebels wilted in front of the courthouse in Northampton, and the judges moved the proceedings to a nearby tavern where they quickly met and adjourned, giving the movement that was to become known as Shays' Rebellion its first victory.

Other courts would be closed and Luke Day would soon band together as second-in-command to Capt. Daniel Shays of Pelham as the rebellion spread.

However, in January of 1787, the rebels were beaten and scattered in an abortive attack on the Springfield Arsenal, and the rebellion was over.

When pardons were granted and some of the hatred died down, Luke Day would return to West Springfield to live out his life in shame and debt. He was buried in an unmarked grave.

FRI - 2/6/76

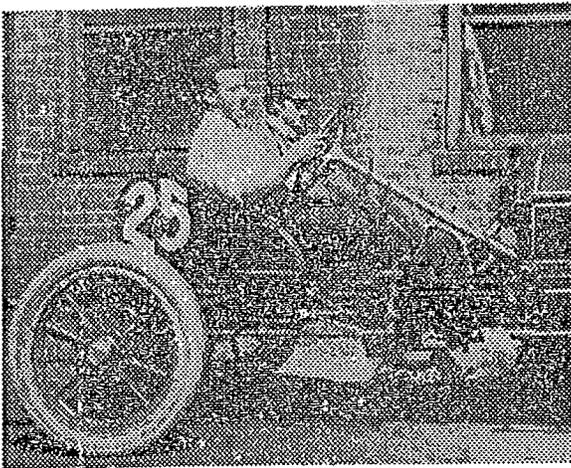
Looking Backward

He Raced In the First Indy 500

By WAYNE PHANEUF

When the super-powerful sleek racing cars thunder around the track at the Indianapolis 500, a Springfield man feels a special thrill because he knows what it was like back in that first race.

William Jahn, 84, of 860 Boston Road was there,



Driver Fred Belcher and Bill Jahn in Knox car.

riding in a Springfield-manufactured Knox in the first Indianapolis 500 in 1911.

Jahn visited the Springfield Historical Society meeting this week at the invitation of President Jack Hess, who lectured on the Knox Car Co.

Jahn kept the members of the society speechless as he spun his tale.

"It's a little hard to describe what racing was like 65 years later, but I'll try," Jahn said.

He explained that he joined the Knox Co., which was located at Winchester Square on Wilbraham Road, in 1907 as an apprentice and "worked my way up."

Jahn's big break with Knox came as the result of a tragedy that occurred at Indianapolis in 1909.

It was in that year that Wilfrid "Billy" Bourque and his mechanic, who drove with him, were killed in a spectacular crash of a Knox. In 1909, the Indianapolis race was 250 miles.

Following the death of Bourque and Harry Holcomb, his mechanic, Bill Jahn and driver Fred Belcher teamed up as the Knox entry in races throughout the country.

After a year hiatus due to the tragic accident, races were again held at Indianapolis in 1911. For the first time, the course was expanded for a 500-mile event.

Jahn said there were 33 cars entered in the race, and the Knox from Springfield made a "fine showing."

"We received a prize for turning in the fastest lap," Jahn said.

The speed of that lap was (remember this is 1911) an incredible 92 miles-per-hour.

Jahn said the entire race took 6½ hours at an average speed of 74.5 MPH.

"The only reason we didn't do better in the Knox was that we had six blowouts in the right front wheel," Jahn said.

Following the Indianapolis 500 of 1911, Jahn and Belcher competed in several more events that year, and the mechanic was transferred to Brazil, where he became chief mechanic for the Knox Automobile Co. in South America.

Jahn said Knox cars in 1912-14 were selling for \$5,000 each in Brazil. The autos weren't cheap in America either, where they sold for from \$3,000 to \$3,500.

The sale of Knox cars began to slip to the European market, because, even in the early 1900's, the Europeans made a more economical car that gave better gas mileage.

Jahn left the Knox firm to start his own company in Detroit before the start of World War I.

By that time, Henry Ford was producing cheap cars and Knox was put out of business.

But Jahn's success was just beginning in his business called "The Jahn Semi-Trailer Company..."

However, at the height of his business, Jahn received a letter from his draft board in Springfield, instructing him to report to the Army in 30 days.

Jahn sold his trailer business to a man named Augustus Fruehauf, but that's a whole other story.

FRI - 7/30/76

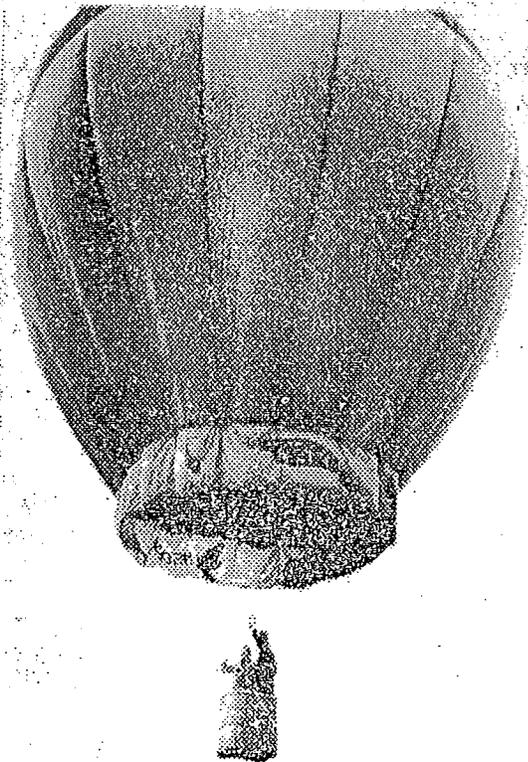
Looking Backward

An Early Space Effort

By WAYNE PHANEUF

There are few frontiers left in space. Jets streak through the sky, the moon hasn't been the same since men walked on it, and even Mars has one of our vehicles scooping soil on its surface.

If the clock were turned back in Springfield to the fall of 1852, one would find an uncluttered sky,



shared by passenger pigeons and migrating waterfowl.

On Sept. 30, 1852 the literal "high point" of the Hampden Agricultural Society Fair was the balloon ascension of Monsieur Petin.

Following a public dinner at the Cooley House, a huge crowd began gathering on Spring Street, near the Armory grounds.

As the spectators checked watches and the Springfield Brass Band alternated tunes with the Springfield Cornet Band, the giant balloon was prepared.

Besides supplying its regular customers of the day, Springfield Gas Light Co., provided Petin with 50,000 cubic feet of lift.

George Wells of Greenfield and H. N. Pomeroy of Springfield had planned to accompany Petin on the voyage, but there was not enough lift to carry the three and the Frenchman's helper, Gustave.

At about 4:15 p.m., the men of Eagle Fire Company pulling on ropes (two men to a line) led the huge balloon into full view from behind a board fence.

After shaking hands with friends and admirers, Petin climbed into the "boat" suspended below the balloon and the firefighters let go the ropes.

A cannon at the Armory announced the flight had started and a roar of approval was sent up by the thousands of onlookers.

Petin pelted the crowd with flowers as he drifted up across the Armory grounds, then was caught in a southerly breeze.

"A sea of upturned faces was a sight to behold, more eyes being turned heavenward than are often seen in these days of low morality," according to the Springfield Republican.

Petin and Gustave steered the balloon by using large American and French flags which were hanging from the basket of the craft.

After the crowd watched Petin disappear to the south, the throng turned its attention to the fair, where a large tent was erected at Main and Pynchon Streets.

In addition to a top notch horse show, the fair displayed fruits, vegetables, flowers, stoves, carriages, agricultural implements and cattle.

Monsieur Petin turned up safe and sound about two hours after takeoff down in Broad Brook, Conn.

Looking Backward

City Should

DEC 26 1975 D
Have Let

It Stand

DEC 26
By WAYNE PHANEUF

Another historic house has bit the dust, another piece of Springfield's past smashed to rubble.

This time it was the Primus Mason House, built somewhere around the late 1840's or early 1850's. It



PRIMUS MASON

was the oldest home in the proposed McKnight historic district.

Ironically, the house wasn't torn down by some greedy developer. It was taken down by the Housing Department of the City of Springfield.

Two months from now, the City Council would have probably passed the McKnight historic district proposal, placing the house under the protection of the Historical Commission.

But now, all that's left to protect is a vacant lot.

However, this vacant lot joins the ranks of many other vacant lots of distinction in a city that has chosen to bulldoze its history into oblivion.

Black History

The Primus Mason House was very significant in relationship to the city's black history, having been owned by a black family for 130 years and a black philanthropist.

Back in the early 1960's, another house linked to both local and national black history, the Franklin Street home of John Brown, was wrecked in the name of urban renewal.

Brown was the famous abolitionist who gave his life in 1859 to the cause of freeing all slaves, after an abortive attack on the government arsenal at Harper's Ferry, Va.

Primus Mason, a black born in Monson in 1817, traveled to the gold fields of California in 1849, only to return to find his fortune in real estate in Springfield in the 1850's.

When he died in 1892, Mason willed his fortune of about \$30,000 to set up a home for aged men. This home was the forerunner of Mason Hall, located today on Walnut and Union Streets.

Robert S. McCarroll, secretary of the Historical Commission and a member of the Planning Department, said the wrecking of the Mason House was an example of poor communication between city departments.

The Building Department sent out a demolition notice on the building two days after it was torn down, obviously too late for city planners to intervene.

Maybe this city should begin thinking about making a historical analysis of all buildings slated for demolition so more links with the past do not fall to the wrecker.

After all, are we going to celebrate the nation's bicentennial by eradicating the last vestiges of our past?

Looking Backward

Gen. Knox Picked Site Of Armory

DEC 22-1875 or

By WAYNE PHANEUF

When Col. Henry Knox and his men struggled with a train of artillery in January of 1776 up what is now State Street hill, the young officer must have taken special note of the barren sandy plain at the crest.

Just about one year after the artillery colonel successfully delivered the cannon to Washington, aiding in making the British quit Boston, General



HENRY KNOX

Knox persuaded the commander-in-chief to pick Springfield as the site for a Continental arsenal.

Springfield as the site for a Continental arsenal.

Hartford, Brookfield and Springfield were all in the running, but Knox' preference of the latter won out.

While inspecting the three towns in January of 1777, Knox discovered that a blast furnace, foundry and saw mills existed in Springfield.

Hartford had been ruled out because British warships could navigate the Connecticut River to that point, but could not travel above the falls at Enfield to reach Springfield.

Writes Washington

On Feb. 1, 1777, Knox wrote a letter to Washington saying, "if Congress should still adhere to Brookfield in preference to Springfield, it will delay everything for three or four months..."

Gen. Washington wrote to Congress on Feb. 14, 1777 that, "General Knox informs me on a mature inquiry and examination he finds Springfield to be more convenient and much better calculated for an elaboratory and cannon foundry than any other part of the New England states..."

"...He adds that a quantity of copper, tin and other useful materials can be had there..."

On April 6, 1777, Knox set down his reasons for choosing the Springfield site over Brookfield to James Bowdoin, president of the Massachusetts Council.

"Springfield is a place more proper than Brookfield with respect it is situated on the Connecticut River, and the great saving of transportation by water to and from any part of the continent can be realized."

Knox also pointed out that "provisions and subsistence is much more cheaply provided at Springfield than at Brookfield as the countey is more plentiful."

In finishing his letter, Knox told Bowdoin that the plain above Springfield is perhaps "one of the most proper spots in America on every account."

That was the same plain Knox' weary men dragged that artillery across the winter before.

On April 14, Congress passed a resolution repealing an order of Dec. 27, 1776, for erecting a magazine and laboratory in the town of Brookfield and replacing it with an order to build a magazine sufficient to contain 10,000 stand of arms and 200 tons of gun powder in Springfield.

Thus, the Springfield Armory was born, an establishment which would eventually turn a dying town along the Connecticut River into a booming city, more than half a century later.

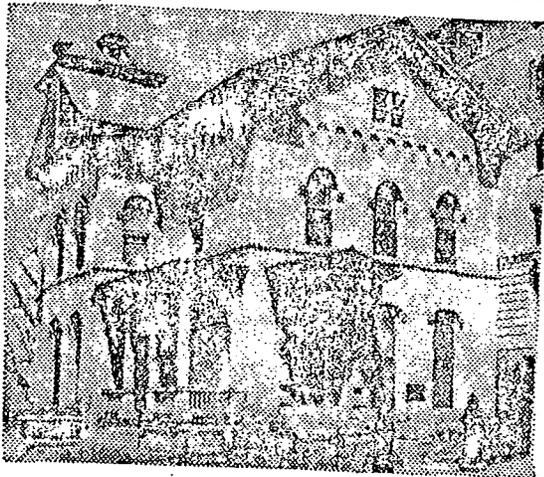
Looking Backward

Dispute Gave Birth OCT 17 1975 DM To Wesson

By WAYNE PHANEUF

The talk around town this week centers on the proposal to merge Wesson Memorial Hospital and Medical Center of Western Massachusetts. I guess old Daniel B. Wesson must have been 80 years ahead of his time.

Back in 1895, D.B. Wesson, Springfield's wealthiest citizen and founder of Smith and Wesson,



First Wesson Hospital

offered to give \$50,000 to the Springfield Hospital building program if the hospital would be open to homeopathy.

First, for you people who haven't kept up with the wave of hospital mergers, Springfield Hospital

is the forerunner of Medical Center of Western Massachusetts.

Minute Doses

Second, for those who don't know what homeopathy is, it is the treating of a disease by the administration of minute doses of a remedy that, in a healthy person, would produce symptoms of the disease being treated.

Confused?

Well, let's just say that D.B. Wesson (who had gold toilet fixtures), was considered devoted to his physician, Dr. John H. Carmichael, a homeopathic doctor.

Springfield Hospital spurned Wesson's offer, so the inscrutable millionaire donated his fancy house on High Street for the use of a hospital in January of 1900.

Wesson Hospital was born, opening first as Hampden Homeopathic Hospital.

The 132 High St. house, after undergoing \$10,000 worth of renovation, was used as a hospital for six years. In 1906, the Wessons built a 100-bed hospital next door, which still bears the family name.

The Wessons were also instrumental in founding a homeopathic hospital for maternity-connected medicine, which would become known as Wesson Maternity, then Wesson Women's Hospital, and finally, after last year, become a part of Medical Center of Western Massachusetts.

Diminishing Supply

By the end of World War I, a diminishing supply of homeopathic doctors resulted in the addition of "regular" physicians to the staff of Wesson Hospital.

Homeopathy was a dying practice, and modern medicine was beginning to emerge. By 1928, penicillin had been invented.

The present plans to merge Wesson and the Medical Center of Western Massachusetts are a fitting close to the story that began 80 years ago with that offer by Wesson of \$50,000.

Little did D.B. Wesson know that in a mere 75 years, his hospital, and that cross-town rival would be ready to merge their 3,100-member staffs and their \$63 million in assets.

FRI-12/20/74

Looking Backward

Ben Paid Some Visits Here

By WAYNE PHANEUF

Americans are now in the process of rediscovering the greatness of Benjamin Franklin through television shows and a growing interest in the upcoming bicentennial.

This 18th century genius, statesman, journalist, scientist and diplomat is not without ties to the Connecticut Valley.

Born in Boston in 1706, Franklin became an apprentice printer to his brother at the age of 12. He



began writing at an early age, but his brother always ran the articles under a pen name because Ben was only 16.

Invented Stove

After settling in Philadelphia Franklin began his famous experiments with electricity, invented the stove that bears his name and the bifocals that don't.

In 1753, Franklin was appointed deputy postmaster of all the colonies, a job that brought him back to his native Massachusetts on numerous trips.

Since Springfield was located on the upper section of the Boston Post Road, it is not unlikely that Franklin passed through this city on one of his

numerous inspections of the postal run.

A redstone marker, located inside the fence along State Street at the Springfield Armory, serves as a milestone, registering the distance from Springfield to Boston.

All the markers, which date back to the 1760's, were said to be placed there under Franklin's personal direction.

His account books and diary make frequent mention of Springfield's postal problems during his reign as deputy postmaster general.

Although Franklin was an ardent patriot (he's the man who came up with the let's hang together or all hang separately phrase), his son, William, did not share Ben's enthusiasm for "the cause."

New Jersey

William was named Royal Governor of New Jersey, and patriot Ben Franklin's son remained loyal to King George III through the Revolutionary War.

In July of 1776, William Franklin was seized by Colonial troops at his residence in Perth Amboy, New Jersey.

The New Jersey governor was shipped to East Windsor, Conn. where he was kept a prisoner until 1778, the time he was exchanged for some American prisoners.

While in East Windsor, William Franklin did not exactly live the life of a prisoner of war. He lived in regal splendor, complete with servants, in the home of a Lt. Martin Diggins.

In the summer, Franklin reportedly spent most of his time by a cold spring on the banks of the Podunk River where he had a bower erected for his use.

William Franklin's stay in East Windsor, about 10 miles from Springfield, must have served as a reminder to area residents that the Revolutionary War divided father and son as well as patriot and Tory.



Looking for some interesting Christmas presents and a chance to help Springfield Bicentennial Committee?

The committee has several commemorative items on sale at a shop in the corner of Valley Bank in Baystate West or at its headquarters at 284 State St.

One of the greatest bargains is a 28 by 22-inch parchment replica of a map of Springfield with every house and building drawn in. The map sells for \$1.

The Bicentennial Committee is also selling a replica of the 1636 Indian deed to Springfield for \$1, a 44-page coloring book for \$1, a 24-page illustrated book on the city's role in developing transportation for \$1.50, a needlepoint kit for \$15, note paper with city scenes for \$2 and a decal for 25 cents.

FRI - 8/16/74

But Revere Traveled Thisaway

By WAYNE PHANEUF

Listen my readers and you shall hear of the
recreated ride of Paul Revere.

On the 9th of September in '74, taking the Suffolk
Resolves to Philly was his chore.

And hardly a man is now alive who remembers
the route of that six-day ride.

* * *

With apologies to Longfellow out of the way, let's
get on with the business of Springfield getting cut



out of the recreation of Paul Revere's Sept. 11, (not
9) ride to Philadelphia with the famous Suffolk
Resolves.

On September 9, members of the Massachusetts

On September 9, members of the Massachusetts
Horsemen's Council will begin to recreate Revere's
ride from Milton to Philadelphia with the resolves,
which gave the Continental Congress an idea of the
spirit of dissent in New England.

From Milton, the riders will head west to Dedham
and finally to Sturbridge, where they will spend the
night at Old Sturbridge Village. From the village,
the ride will continue into Connecticut and through
to New York and Philadelphia.

It's a nice gesture, but the recreation is far from
accurate.

Most historians agree (including Esther Forbes,
Revere's biographer) that he travelled the Upper Post
Road with his dispatch to Philadelphia.

This road would have brought Revere through
Worcester, Brookfield and Springfield.

It was a road he was familiar with, having brought
the news of the Boston Tea Party along this route
to Philadelphia in December of 1773.

Through Springfield

During the French and Indian War, Revere passed
through Springfield on the Post Road at the head
of an artillery train destined for Lake George.

Joseph Warren, the great patriot leader who was
killed at Bunker Hill, authored the resolves at a
meeting of Suffolk County communities. He per-
sonally picked Revere to deliver them two days after
the meeting.

The resolves called for the resignation of tax
collectors and the withholding of public monies until
"constitutional government shall be restored."

Although the fame of the Suffolk Resolves was
widespread, Springfield patriot leaders had met on
July 12, 1774 and drafted a list of resolves at a town
meeting which lashed out at King George III and
drew a firm line against British rule.

Now, if this city can't get credit for its resolves
of 1774, Springfield should at least be recognized
as part of the route that Revere took with the Suffolk
Resolves.

* * *

Alan Hale, director of Springfield Bicentennial
Committee, has an idea that should be of interest
to anyone who wants to further the study of
Springfield's history.

Hale would like to see the recreation of a historical
society in the city, similar to the long-defunct Con-
necticut Valley Historical Society, where people in-
terested in history could get together, share and
disseminate information.

Anyone interested can write or call Hale at his
State Street office, or write in care of this column,
The Daily News, 1860 Main St., 01101, and I will
forward.

DR. CHAS. ...
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Looking Backward

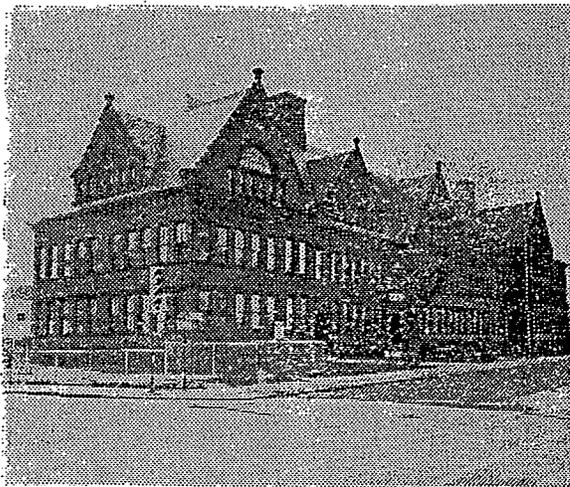
History Hits the Pavement!

APR 13 1974 W

By WAYNE PHANEUF

The "everlasting memorial" to Rev. Samuel G. Buckingham has been abandoned to the ravages of vandalism and neglect.

Apparently, Buckingham Junior High School has



just outlived its usefulness. First as a school, and now even as a building.

Opened on Sept. 1, 1891 as Buckingham Primary and Grammar School, it was the pride of a city experiencing a "golden age."

Business was booming for Springfield in the 1890's, and Winchester Square was the center of one of the finest residential neighborhoods in the country.

For the meager sum of \$57,330, Buckingham was built at the corner of Wilbraham Road and Eastern Avenue.

Dr. Buckingham

The school was named for Dr. Samuel G. Buckingham, who for more than 50 years had been pastor of South Congregational Church, and one of the city's most influential men.

Born in 1812 in Lebanon, Conn., Mr. Buckingham "answered the call" to the Springfield church in 1847.

For many years he served on the School Board, and was instrumental in forwarding the education of Springfield children. He died in 1898.

In 1916, the School Board voted to adopt the grade plan which created elementary, junior high and high schools.

By 1919, Buckingham had become totally a junior high school. Additions to the school were built in 1915 and in 1929, the year of the stock market crash.

78 Years of Service

After 78 years of service, the school was closed in 1968, after it had become racially imbalanced.

Students were transferred throughout the city, and since then inner-city students have not had their own junior high.

Up until last year, Springfield Action Commission, an anti-poverty agency, used the school, but the federal cutback brought Buckingham one step closer to oblivion when SAC moved out.

Now the imposing brick and redstone building sits alone and neglected. One fire has already been set in the school.

A task force of city agencies and school department representatives inspected the building, but no use for the rambling school could be found.

Torn Down?

Eugene Laino, superintendent of public buildings, suggested that the school be torn down.

Given the lack of interest in saving the old school, it is almost certain that the building will be torn down.

And Springfield will lose a little bit more of its history, and gain another vacant lot.

Good Fence Kept Out Neighbors

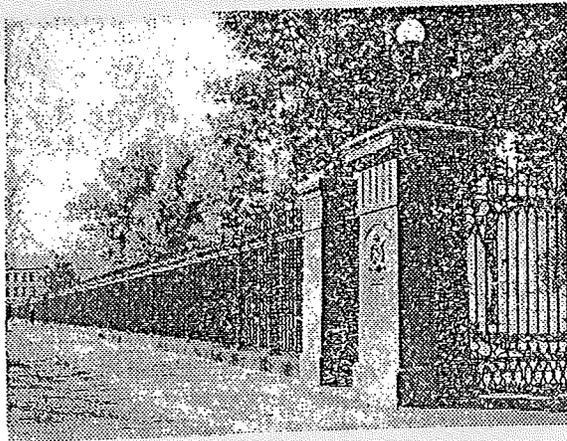
JAN 3 1975 ON

By WAYNE PHANEUF

Good fences make good neighbors...

The line belongs to Robert Frost, but Gen. James W. Ripley, commandant of the Springfield Armory during the 1840s and 1850s, was an ardent proponent of the "strong fence principles."

When Ripley was appointed to the Springfield post in April of 1841, he arrived in a town that was still



under the firm control of the Congregationalists. Ripley was an Episcopalian.

Unpopular Workhorse

Because of his religious differences, and the fact that he believed in an honest day's work, Ripley was not very well liked by the armorers of Springfield, who had it pretty easy.

Workers at the Armory were being paid on a piecework basis, which was formulated when most jobs were done by hand. However, by the 1840s, many of these jobs were done by machine.

A workman could run a machine for two days and get enough work done for a week's pay.

Ripley's successful attempt to change the piecework rate was met with heavy opposition from the Armory employes. They quit in mass in the early 1850s.

Ripley needed workers, but he couldn't find anyone in Springfield willing to suffer their neighbor's wrath. The feisty commandant sent to Kennebunk, Maine, where an armory had just closed and a lot of men were without work.

According to Thomas Wallace, curator of the Armory Gun Museum, the new workers were Irish Roman Catholic to a man. The Springfield Congregationalists who were upset with that Episcopalian Ripley, were aghast at the new employes.

Intolerance

Springfield has a shabby history for religious tolerance, and the influx of Catholics at the Armory led to a series of fights with the townspeople and at least three serious and suspicious fires on the Armory grounds.

As a means of securing the Armory, Ripley took tons of scrap iron cannons from the Revolution and War of 1812 and had them melted down to make the handsome iron fence that encircles the Armory grounds today.

The commandant even rented a quarry in East Longmeadow to have a supply of redstone for the base of the fence.

Today, Catholic, Jew, Protestant and atheists live together in Springfield, in relative calm, but the Armory fence remains as a monument to intolerance.

* * *

A meeting will be held Tuesday at the Armory Gun Museum to organize a local historical society. Members of Northampton Historical Society will be on hand to explain how to organize a society at the 7:30 p.m. meeting.

FRI - 9/7/73

Looking Backward

City Offers Few Clues To History

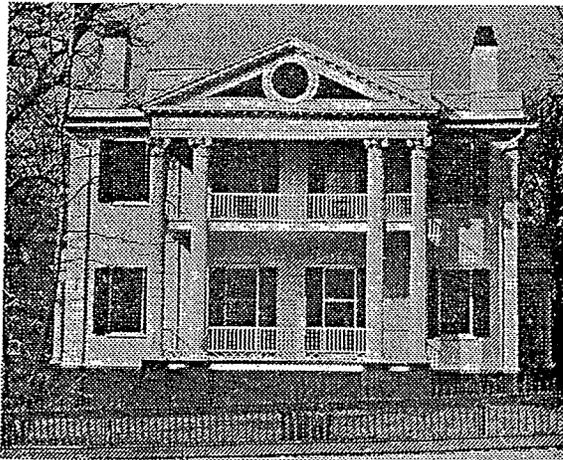
By WAYNE PHANEUF

Now that a few issues of Looking Backward have been printed, thus establishing a column on local history, maybe it's time to discuss the utter lack of historical sense displayed by the City of Springfield.

Does anyone know where the oldest house in Springfield is?

That was a question I asked myself more than a year ago, only to find out that nobody really has the answer.

Miss Juliette Tomlinson, curator of William



Pynchon Connecticut Valley Historical Museum, said that she believed the oldest house was the "Alexander House" on State Street between Spring and Elliot Streets.

The Alexander House, now operated as a museum by a Boston-based organization, was built around 1811. Since Springfield was founded in 1636, this leaves 165 years unaccounted for.

Months of research, perusing old maps, books and directories at the geneology room of the City Library, plus field trips, provided leads to older homes.

There are older houses still up (the oldest one I've found to date on Plumtree Road was built around 1799), but most houses of historical significance have been torn down.

More than once, I raced up to a site where research material promised an old 18th Century home, only to find an already decaying government housing project squatting on the land.

A building boom of the early and mid-1960's when the war on poverty was being waged full tilt, claimed dozens of old homes in the Hickory, Oak, Walnut, and Pine Street areas.

Prior to that, old fashioned urban renewal, working under the theory of bulldozing down huge tracts and starting from scratch, ate up many historic sites in the city's North End.

Included in the North End demolition was the home of John Brown, famed, pre-Civil War abolitionist.

In the early 1960s, the home of George Ashmun, former speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, was knocked down for new construction. The Ashmun house at 297 Union St., played host to politicians, heads of state and great educators.

Even the Springfield Armory, luckily fenced in for 150 years against developers, has seen the crunch of progress snuff out history. Just this year Springfield Technical Community College ripped down an 1836 building because funds were not available to have the structure moved.

In the summer of 1972 a Springfield Historic Commission was established. Hopefully, this organization will be able to wield some weight, but that remains to be seen.

It's ironic that as the United States moves towards its 200th birthday, Springfield cannot point to a single building which stood in 1776.

It would be idiotic to argue that every old building should be saved. But shouldn't some examples of how our forefathers lived be preserved?

Without some sense of the past, with what do we plan the future?

* * *

If any readers can supply data on old houses in Springfield, such information would be appreciated. Mail to Wayne Phaneuf, Daily News, 1860 Main Street, 01101.

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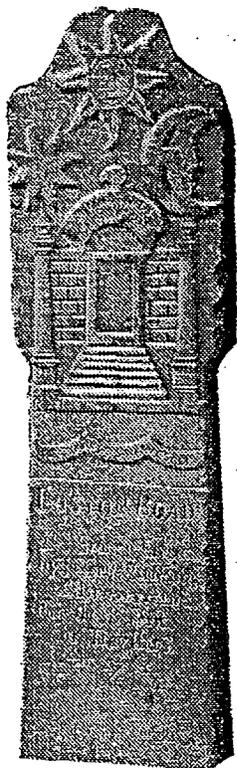
Why Is MAR 8 1974 ON Monument Hidden?

By WAYNE PHANEUF

One of Springfield's most precious historical artifacts has been lying on its side like a dead fish for more than two years at the Springfield Armory Museum.

It is time something was done about it.

The object in question is the Wait Monument, and if this tombstone-like piece of redstone could talk,



it would reel off the most exciting events in the history of this city.

The stone was placed on Boston Road (near the present corner of State and Federal Streets) in 1763 by Joseph Wait of Brookfield.

In the 1760's, Springfield was just a small cross-roads town. According to legend, Wait was lost in a snowstorm, and upon his arrival home, decided a marker should be set up for the "benefit of travelers."

When Gen. George Washington traveled through the city to take control of the Continental Army at Cambridge, he is said to have reined up near the stone and read its inscription.

When Col. Henry Knox' weary troops came struggling through with cannon from Ticonderoga in the bitter winter of 1775-76, they too passed the Wait Monument.

They must have been elated at the reference to Boston Road, hinting at their final destination.

One of the most fascinating marks on the stone, is the unmistakable pockmark of a bullet.

Some of Daniel Shays' soldiers used the monument for cover during their abortive attempt to capture the nearby Springfield Armory in 1786.

One may ask himself what in the world the monument is doing on the floor of the Springfield Armory Museum.

200 Years

Museum Director Thomas Wallace said the stone was removed from its position it held staunchly for more than 200 years because it was falling victim to vandalism and erosion caused by air pollution.

"We are holding it until someone decides what to do with it," Wallace said.

He emphasized that the stone "should be kept inside."

Wallace added that both the city and the state lay claim to the stone, but no one can decide what should be done with it.

May I add my humble opinion?

The stone belongs at the corner of Federal and State Streets, on the Old Boston Post Road...where it was originally put, where it should remain.

Joseph Wait meant that monument to guide travelers to Boston, he had no idea how historically significant the stone would become as it stood guard over a city's history.

Even if the city, or the Bicentennial Commission, has to build a shrine over the stone to protect it, it should be placed back where it belongs.

Bullet Mark

When I was young, I remember running my hand over the bullet mark, and looking over my shoulder at the Armory.

Images of whizzing bullets, cannon fire and shouting men danced in my head.

Not the same "sense of history" one would get, if the stone remains in some 9 to 5 museum.

Looking Backward

1835

Gunn Hall And Talk of Secession

By WAYNE PHANEUF

Four years before the guns at Fort Sumter signaled the start of the Civil War, there was talk of secession in Springfield.

Residents of Armory Hill, Watershops and Indian Orchard met in Gunn Hall in 1856 and conspired



State Street Hill in late 1800's.

to secede from Springfield and form the city of Delano.

Although both the tax protest and its originators are long gone, Gunn Block (Gunn Hall was upstairs) still remains at the corner of State and Walnut Streets.

In a report issued to the School Committee last week, the Planning Department discussed the area around Gunn Block as a possible high school site. Let's hope that any future plans include the retention of this building, one of the most historic in Springfield.

Built in 1835 or 1836 by Elisha Gunn, the block served for many years as the social and business center of a growing city.

Six stage and freight lines running from Boston to Springfield stopped at the block to load and unload cargo. Passengers and teamsters stayed across Walnut Street on the other corner in the famous Rockingham House.

The Rockingham was the first of the "Hill taverns." It was built in 1796.

Guests at the big three-story tavern-hotel would cross the dusty path called Walnut Street (cut to Watershops in 1815) and head for the strains of fiddles and the stomping of dancers as they "rocked the rafters" in Gunn Hall, one of the most famous dance halls in the city.

The dance hall was ventilated by two square holes cut in the garret floor. On hot nights, the proprietor would take a long pole and knock away boards covering the holes so fresh air from the semi-circle windows would circulate.

Elisha Gunn (born in 1790) died in 1859, and the block was willed to his sons Elisha Jr., and William. They got into the wholesale liquor business further down State Street and leased the lower floors of the Gunn Block to a number of merchants who ran grocery stores there.

In 1888, an item in The Daily News reported that the block would be "cut into tenements," and another old Springfield landmark would be "heading to oblivion."

Although the early newspaper account was partially right, the block has been heading towards oblivion for nearly 100 years, but never quite made it.

Gunn Block still stands, housing the Glendor Cafe and a pizza shop, and six tenements upstairs. Still stands, amid a crumbling neighborhood and a busy street.

John and Sal Scibelli, who recently bought the block and run the cafe, said they are interested in getting the building put on the National Historic Register.

"So nobody will ever tear it down," John Scibelli said.

He was leaning on the long hand-carved bar that once graced the Rockingham House, torn down several years ago to make way for a now-closed gas station. Upstairs, there is still a big room, all that is left of Gunn Hall.

If a high school is built on the spot, I hope our city fathers can keep the Gunn Block, maybe restore it and turn it into a library or counseling center for the new school.

We have a chance to save a valuable piece of our heritage. Let's not blow it.

By the way, the secession from Springfield obviously never occurred, although a petition was circulated and committee formed at one of the Gunn Hall meetings.

Looking Backward

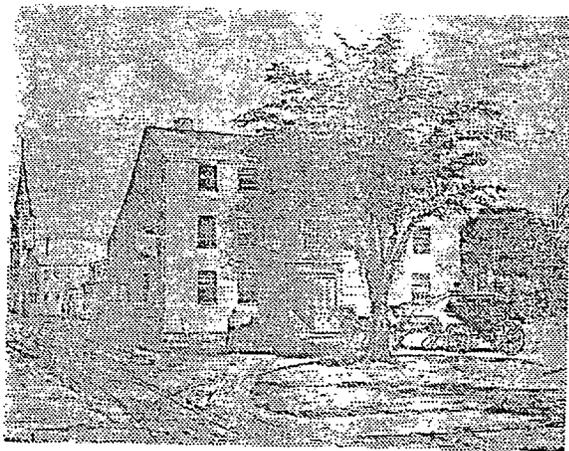
A Spy Helps Escort Washington Washington

DEC 27 1974 ON

By WAYNE PHANEUF

In June of 1775, two men left the Provincial Congress in Watertown and headed for Springfield on an important mission.

The men, Moses Gill and Dr. Benjamin Church, were picked by the Provincial Congress as its representatives to meet Gen. George Washington in



Parsons Tavern

Springfield at Parsons Tavern and escort the newly appointed commander to Cambridge.

To have won the confidence of the Provincial Congress, and the honor to escort Washington, Moses Gill and Benjamin Church must have been highly regarded by the patriots of Massachusetts.

Gill was destined to become lieutenant governor of the state, and, at the death of Gov. Increase Sumner, governor of Massachusetts.

On the other hand, Dr. Church died a traitor.

Rebel Government

But, in June of 1775, both men were respected officials of the rebel government. Gill was chief supply officer of the Continental Army massed around Boston, and Dr. Church was director general of the hospital.

Church and Gill must have briefed Gen. Washington

When they met him, Dr. Church

Gill was able to give Washington some idea of the supply problem, following the Battle of Bunker Hill. Church could have briefed the general on the condition of the wounded.

Church may have also taken an intense interest in the fledgling weapons industry that was supplying the troops from Springfield.

While the good doctor pretended to be a leader in the Revolution, he was actually a British spy working for Gen. Thomas Gage.

It wasn't until one of Church's letters was intercepted, and the code in which it was written broken, that the doctor was discovered.

Court-Martialed

On Oct. 1, 1775, Church was court martialed and found guilty of "holding criminal correspondence with the enemy." Gen. George Washington, the man Church met in Springfield, presided.

Church was sent to prison in Norwich, Conn., and exchanged for an American doctor in June of 1776.

Church was put on a ship destined for the West Indies, but the boat never arrived in port. He was lost at sea.

Moses Gill went on to have a long and distinguished career in Massachusetts politics.

When he died in 1800, while serving as governor, Massachusetts found itself, for the first time in its history, without a governor.

Washington Visited Here Twice

By Wayne Faneuf

Feb 22, 1974

June of 1775 Springfield was in an uproar; the war of the revolution had begun. On a coach drawn by four horses was general and leader George Washington. He was on his way to take command of the Colonial Army in Boston. 14 yrs later Washington was back but this time as president of the United States. Oct 21, 1789 after his inauguration in New York once again came to Springfield. This time he stayed the night at Parsons Tavern. Soon After his arrival at about 4 p.m. Washington inspected the federal arsenal (Springfield Armory). He had dinner with Col. John Worthington and other leaders of the town at Parsons Tavern. While traveling through the area Washington wrote in his diary: "There is a great equality in the people of this state. Few or no opulent men and no poor. Great similitude in their buildings, the general fashion of which is a chimney and a door in the middle.... Two flush stories with very good show of sash and glass window."

City Pays Tribute to Daniel Shay

By Wayne Faneuf

Jan 23, 1976

Over 150 yrs after the self-proclaimed general died, Daniel shay was honored in Springfield for leading a rebellion that bears his name, a losing cause that cost him his home and nearly his life. The Daniel Shays project, a theater group based in Northampton staged a ceremony at the Shays rebellion marker on State St. near the corner of federal. On Jan 25th 1787 Daniel Shays led his army of poverty stricken farmers against the Massachusetts Militia who were protecting arms and supplies at the Springfield Armory. Shays rebellion led to the adoption of the US constitution when the colonies realized a strong central govnt was essential. Shays received little credit and was branded a traitor. Two centuries later Shay received the recognition he deserves. As part of the ceremony the 6th Mass Continentals marched down State St. and unit commander Leonard Day, a direct descendant of Luke Day, placed a wreath at Shays marker.

Glover Saved the Clause

By Wayne Faneuf

Jan 20, 1978

General Glover as commander of troops escorted thousands of British and German prisoners through Springfield in 1777. Glover was familiar with

Springfield as it was a major supply depot during the Battle of Saratoga. The summer of 1780 Springfield was designated as the town where Massachusetts recruits were to report to the continental army. Gen. Glover, one of the most trusted Generals was given the task of transforming recruits into a viable fighting force.

Some POW Views of Colonies

By Wayne Faneuf

Oct 21, 1977

After the Battle of Saratoga ended, which hundreds of troupes from this area participated in, thousands of English Soldiers and German mercenaries were captured. Soldiers were marched from the New York battlefield to Boston through two routes. The English marched through the present Rte 2 while the Germans took a lower road through Westfield, West Springfield, Springfield, and then through Palmer. Through Journals prisoners provide first hand account of what life was like. They noticed that from Hudson to Springfield there were few homes with out a Negro family dwelling in a separate cabin. Although surprised of the slavery that was taken place they noted that slavery was very bearable, and the children well fed. They also noticed a "well built arsenal and armory" in Springfield.

Famed Artist Called it Home

By Wayne Faneuf

Sept 29, 1977

A businessman named James Byers built the Alexander House located at 284 State St in 1815. Many famous tenants occupied it in the 162 yr existence. From businessmen, mayors, lieutenant governors, negotiator of the Louisiana Purchase, and Chester Harding. After Serving in the war of 1812 Chester Harding began painting portraits. He is famously know for painting portraits of Presidents Madison, Monroe, and John Quincy Adams, as well as chief justice Marshall, senator Henry Clay and Daniel Webster.

Luke Day : The Making of a Rebel.

By Wayne Faneuf

Sept 2, 1977

Capt. Luke Day a veteran Revolutionary war officer along with a mob of 500 demanded the release of Samuel Ely from the Northampton jail. He had reached the end of his patients with the governments promise. In 1785 he was

thrown in jail for debt. Humiliated Luke Day broke out of jail. Exactly one year later he organized a mob against the court of common pleas. In January of 1787 the rebels were beaten on the Springfield arsenal, which led to the closing of the courts. Eventually pardons were granted and Luke Day returned to West Springfield to live out the rest of his life in shame and debt.

He Raced the First Indy 500

By Wayne Faneuf

Feb 6, 1976

William Jahn 84, of 860 Boston rd in Springfield drove a manufactured Knox in the first Indianapolis 500 in 1911. He started as an apprentice in 1907 and worked his way up. Jahn raced with 33 other cars and said he made a "fine showing". They received a prize for the fastest lap driving at speeds of 92 mphs. He then became the chief mechanic for Knox automobile. He soon left Knox and opened his own business. At the height of his business he received a letter from his draft board in Springfield instructing him to report the army in 30 days.

An Early Space Effort

By Wayne Faneuf

Sept 30, 1976

September 30, 1852 at the agriculture Society fair the balloon ascension of Monsieur Petin took place. Following a public dinner at the Cooley House a huge crowd gathered on Spring St. near the Armory grounds. While bands played the giant balloon was prepared. A cannon at the armory announced the flight. Petin pelted the crowd with flowers as he drifted across the Armory grounds. Two hrs later Petin turned up safe and sound in Broad Brook Connecticut.

City Should Have Let it Stay

By Wayne Faneuf

Dec 12, 1975

The Primus Mason House, the oldest house in the McKnight district was torn down by the Springfield department of Housing. A black family owned it for 130 yrs. Primus Mason a black man born in Monson in 1817 moved to Springfield to find his fortune in real estate. When he died he willed his fortune to set up a home for aged men. Which was the forerunner of Mason Hall located on Walnut and Union St. The wrecking of the Mason House was an example of poor

communication between city departments. The building dept sent out a demolition notice two days after it was torn down.

Gen Knox Picked Site of Armory

By Wayne Faneuf

Dec 22, 1975

One year after Col Henry Knox successfully delivered the cannon to Washington aiding in making the British quit Boston, he persuaded the commander-in-chief to pick Springfield as the site for a continental arsenal. Hartford, Brookfield and Springfield were all options but Knox preferred Springfield. He inspected all three towns and found a blast furnace, foundry, and sawmills all existed in Springfield. He wrote to Washington on Feb 1, 1777. Gen Washington then wrote to congress stating the Knox found Springfield to be more convenient for an elaboratory and cannon foundry than any other town in New England. April 14th Congress passed a resolution repealing an order to build in Brookfield and replaced it with an order to build an armory in Springfield thus the Springfield armory was born.

Dispute Gave Birth To Springfield.

By Wayne Faneuf

Oct 17, 1975

In 1895 D.B. Wesson Springfield's wealthiest citizen and founder of Smith and Wesson offer to give \$50,000 to the Springfield Hospital building program if the hospital would be open to homeopathy. Homeopathy is the treating of a disease by the administration of minute doses of a remedy that in a healthy person would produce symptoms of the disease being treated. The hospital turned down his offer so he used his house on High Street for the use of a homeopathic hospital. It would soon be know as Wesson Maternity, then Wesson Women's Hospital and finally part of the Medical Center of Western Massachusetts.

Ben Paid Some Visits Here.

By Wayne Faneuf

Dec 20, 1974

In 1753 Ben Franklin was appointed deputy postmaster of all the colonies, a job that brought him back to his native Massachusetts on numerous trips. A red stone marker, located inside the fence along State St. at the Springfield Armory serves as a milestone, registering the distance from Springfield to Boston. All

markers, which date back to the 1760's, were placed there under Franklin's personal direction.

But Revere Traveled Thisaway

By Wayne Faneuf

Aug 16, 1974

During the French and Indian War Paul Revere passed through Springfield on the Post Rd at the head of an artillery train destined for Lake George. Revere was personally picked by Joseph Warren to deliver the Suffolk resolves that called for the resignation of tax collectors and the withholdings of public monies until the "constitutional government shall be restored." July 12, 1774 Springfield's patriot leaders had met and drafted resolves that lashed out at King George III and drew a firm line against British Rule.