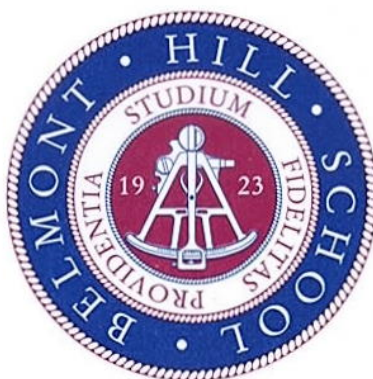


Memories of My Father
And the First Ten Years of
Belmont Hill School

Richard O. Howe '33



“The sextant is a symbol of orientation, the chief purpose of education. For it is only finding ourselves, by discovering our capacities and attitudes, that we can be of service to the community.”

Reginald Heber Howe
First Headmaster

**MEMORIES OF MY FATHER
AND THE FIRST TEN YEARS OF BELMONT HILL SCHOOL**

RICHARD O. HOWE '33

As I begin this project, I want to thank my good friend Jack Connors for providing the encouragement and opportunity for me to dictate it. I also would like to extend my gratitude and deep sympathy to Lisa Spagnoli who is tagged with the job of transcribing it and to my beloved daughter, Judith Behn, for editing and making some order out of chaos.

This project has two aims. First, to give a personal picture of my father, Dr. Reginald Heber Howe, who was the founder and first headmaster of Belmont Hill School, and second, to relate my recollections of the school during Dad's tenure. I will try to do this in a somewhat logical order. However, as I rack my eighty-one-year-old brain, one memory leads to another, not necessarily in the proper sequence. Bear with me and I hope that the hodge-podge that results will present some interesting tidbits.

* * * * *

Dad was born on April 10, 1875, the son of an Episcopal minister in Quincy, Massachusetts. The name Reginald Heber comes from the great hymn writer who, although no blood relation to the Howe family, was much admired by Dad's grandfather, Bishop Mark Antony DeWolfe Howe. Dad was usually called Heber, and he always used the signature of R. Heber Howe. Although his signature had a nice look to it, it was pretty much illegible often causing the family much amusement from correspondence from people who tried to decipher it. The one that we laughed over the most was a letter addressed to R. Helo Herps.

The Howe family emanated from Bristol, Rhode Island, where Dad spent many summers of his youth and where he developed his life-long interest in nature and sailing. Bristol was, along with Newport, a great yachting center and home to Herreshoff's boatyard, probably the most famous yacht-building facility anywhere. Dad used to tell about sailing with old John Herreshoff, one of the boatyard's founding brothers. Herreshoff was blind and often asked Dad to go along in the boat with him as his guide. But other than needing a visual aid, Mr. Herreshoff had no difficulty sailing the boat. He would sit at the helm, dip his hand into the water, then hold it up in the air and sail the boat perfectly by feeling the wind on his wet hand.

My mother considered going to sea in any boat short of an ocean liner a very risky affair. Yet, somehow, Dad convinced her that going on a sailing cruise with him would be a very romantic honeymoon. Thus, with his family's yawl tied up at the dock, sails luffing in the breeze, he managed to get her safely aboard. He then returned to the dock and made a huge mistake by letting the bow line off first. While Dad was tending the stern line, the bow fell off to leeward letting the sails fill just as Dad got the stern line untied. Dad was fairly strong for a small man, but he was no match at all for that boat. So, all of a sudden, Mother found herself alone in the boat sailing through Bristol Harbor with Dad trailing behind in the water holding on desperately to the stern line. Somehow,

Dad managed to pull himself up to the stern—no easy trick with the boat sailing at three or four knots—and climbed aboard. I was never told about the ensuing conversation, but whatever it was, the marriage remained an extremely happy one for life. Mother never went aboard a sailboat again, however.

Dad also began his study of birds in Bristol. As a teenager, he had articles published in the *Boston Commonwealth* and the *Evening Transcript*. His first published book, *Birds of Rhode Island*, appeared in 1895. *On The Birds' Highway* was also written in his teens, but not published until 1899 by Small, Maynard & Company. Handwritten by Dad in my copy is the following notation: "Written a long time ago and very poorly. The results only of boyish pleasure and ambition. The publisher, a bigger fool than the author—my one solace." The frontispiece is a full-color reproduction of a painting of chickadees by the famous bird artist, Fuertes. The artist gave Dad the original picture, which we have here in Belmont.

On The Birds' Highway was written over several years and required travel by foot, train and horsedrawn wagon to places along the migratory flyway in Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and the Adirondacks. Three quotes from the book, one practical and two more or less poetic, give a sense of Dad's teen-age ingenuity and reverence for nature:

* With a bird call—that is, a thin piece of paper birch-bark stretched between two small sticks—
I brought a half dozen blue jays in the trees above our heads...

* This flight-song is one of the most wonderful of bird utterances and surely we are wont to cry
out to the bird as he springs upward again,

Teach me half the gladness

That thy brain must know,

Such harmonious madness

From my lips would flow,

The world should listen then, as I am listening now.

* Such songs as these seem to call out the good in a man and make him humble himself even
before a bird, for surely he is without a soul who would not pause to listen to such divine
melody.

When Dad gave *The Birds of Rhode Island* to two of his students, he wrote in the front, "Go slowly, be careful and thoughtful, painstaking and generous in your scientific work." This advice he certainly applied to himself.

Another of Dad's most consuming interests was the study of dragonflies and, over the years, he developed a massive collection. The dragonflies were mounted on pins stuck into the cork bottoms of drawers in large metal cabinets, all classified by genus and species with their Latin names. He discovered some dragonflies that had never before been observed, one of which he named after Mother using the Latin version of Marion. When I was a boy, it was very seldom that we went anywhere during spring, summer and early fall without having a couple of butterfly nets and a formaldehyde mason jar with a screw top in the car. On any country road, near swamp, wetlands, open water or stagnant pools, we were likely to stop to hunt dragonflies.

There is no doubt that Dad was the leading expert on these beautiful insects. For many years after his death, we used to get inquiries about his collection and writings on the subject. Before he died, Dad gave his entire collection to the Natural History Museum in Boston. When Brad Washburn moved that museum and renamed it the Museum of Science, the collection was moved to Boston University. At a recent meeting in Brookline concerning Hall's Pond, I met the Assistant Director of the Massachusetts Audubon Society, who is himself an expert on dragonflies. He told me that he still uses Dad's collection.

Dad graduated from Noble and Greenough School in 1893. He then worked for several years for the Plymouth Cordage Company in Plymouth, Massachusetts to earn enough money to enter Harvard. While at college, Dad volunteered in the cavalry during the Spanish American War, but by the time his group got to New Orleans, the war was over, so he never saw any action. His expertise as a horseman, however, enabled him to earn money for college as a so-called Gentleman Jockey riding in steeple chase races.

Although an excellent horseman, Dad, like all riders, did get thrown a few times. One such occasion was especially memorable. The Paine family in Chatham had a beautiful horse reputed to be a great jumper; they asked Dad to ride the horse in the Barnstable fair. The course involved a fair number of difficult jumps. Over Mother's protests, Dad accepted the invitation. The Paines, Mother, my sister and I sat in a front-row box right beside one of the jumps. The horse jumped beautifully over several of the jumps, but suddenly balked at the jump right in front of us, throwing Dad into the box—right onto Mother's lap. Mother, who saw that Dad did not appear to be seriously injured, leaned over his face and announced in a loud voice, "Heber, I told you, you were too old for this!"

Dad graduated from Harvard in 1901, where he was a member of Phi Beta Kappa and won a varsity letter in crew, of which he was a coxswain (he was 5'8" tall and weighed 118 pounds—his weight throughout his adult years). After graduation, he became a member of the original faculty of Middlesex School. The initials of these original faculty members are carved in the old oak door that is the entrance to the Middlesex Administrative Office. It is worth noting here that Middlesex School had a substantial part in the early years of Belmont Hill School.

The most precise and authentic summary of Dad's professional career from 1901 through the first three years of Belmont Hill School is his Harvard 25th Reunion Report from which I quote:

After being for three years a non-resident teacher at Middlesex School, I accepted the permanent position of Master of Natural Science, which position I held until 1920. In July 1904, I traveled through the West, and in the summer of 1905, I visited nine countries of Europe. My other summers were spent in Rhode Island, until I established a summer camp school for boys at Fitzwilliam, New Hampshire, known as South Pond Cabins. In 1905, I raised a fund to build the Thoreau Museum of Natural History at Middlesex School, a building including an exhibition hall and a laboratory.

During these years at Middlesex, I specialized for an avocation in the study of lichens, and published through various media some three-hundred pages of biological research of one

kind or another. In 1910, I was extended a botanical research scholarship by the New York Botanic Gardens, but was forced to give it up on account of overwork.

The most important event of this period, if not my life since graduation, was my sabbatical year, which extended from July, 1911 to September, 1912. In July, I went with my wife to New Foundland to collect lichens, returning in time to sail on August 1 for England. We spent the summer in Normandy, going to Paris in September, where I entered the Sorbonne. I spent the winter completing 'in residence' my work for a Doctorate's degree on lichenological research, published my thesis, and received a degree of Docteur de L'University (in Natural Science) in the spring. [Dad's academic robe was the fanciest one I have ever seen. It was colorful and trimmed with ermine tails.]

We lived in the Latin Quarter, and while I studied, my wife and small daughter enjoyed the wonders of Paris. We returned home by way of London, where I spent six weeks in further botanical study at the British Museum of Natural History.

Three other events of interest to me during this period were: First, the birth of our son [that is I]; second, my withdrawal from partnership in the boys' summer camp known as South Pond Cabins; and lastly, my appointment to the secretaryship of the Middlesex School. During these years, by the most constant and painstaking care from Dr. George C. Schattuck, was my health, seriously affected by overwork in Paris, restored to its normal frailty.

...In 1920, I spent a sabbatical year in research work for a Master's Degree at Harvard in the Department of Entomology at the Bussey Institution. During that year, I was in charge of the Freshmen rowing squad, and coached the 1924 Freshmen crew. At the request of the Harvard University Rowing Committee, Middlesex School extended to me another year of absence, and I held an instructorship in the Department of Physical Education, while continuing my research work, and was appointed Director of Rowing. During that year, I coached the University crews, as well as the Freshmen crews. At the end of that year, I resigned from Middlesex School to continue as Director of Rowing, but did not coach the Varsity or Freshmen crews. The policy that I inaugurated was to make the usefulness of rowing at the University of recreational value to a greater number of students.

Though appointed for the following year as Director of Rowing, I resigned to found the Belmont Hill School, at Belmont, Massachusetts, which I opened in September, 1923. [Harvard] President Elliot making the opening address. Since then, as Headmaster, I have conducted the school with the help of a very active Executive Committee, my wife, and an unusually conscientious faculty. The school is now entering on its third year. Two members of the Executive Committee are Middlesex School graduates [Robert Atkins and Henry Meyer]. The main building was dedicated, at my request, to Dean Shaler, and a recitation building to Frank

Bolles, both of whom I remember at Cambridge with affection. During 1924, I raised a fund, which built for the school a Natural History Museum. As an avocation, I've continued research work in biology. [This research, among other things, included years of research on dragonflies.]

Publications: (Books) *Middlesex school in the War*, (World War One), (Editor), 1921; *The Education of the Modern Boy*, (Co-author with Dr. Alfred E. Sterns, Dr. Samuel S. Druery, Dr. Endicott Peabody, W. L. W. Fields, and Dr. William G. Thayer), Small, Maynard & Co., 1925.

Clubs and Societies: Harvard Club, New University Club, Entomological Club, Boston Society of Natural History, and Societe Linneenne de Lyon.

Dad's professional career extended to February, 1932 when he died suddenly of a massive heart attack.

Dad's withdrawal from his partnership in South Pond Cabins is by no means the whole story. He and Mother had started that camp themselves and, as it grew, they drew in Roland Gallagher, Dad's close friend and associate on the faculty at Middlesex. The only time I remember seeing Dad cry was when he received a telephone call telling him of Roland Gallagher's death (for a six-year-old boy to see his father cry is a scary and unforgettable experience). Dad and Mother then gave the camp to Mrs. Gallagher who ran it very successfully enabling her to make a good living and send her children to college. Her son and daughter ultimately took it over and ran it for many years.

Before I get into my memories of the early years of Belmont Hill School, it is worth looking at what conditions were in those days that affected the daily living of the students, their parents, the faculty and administration. Telephoning was pleasant, but undoubtedly less efficient than today. To phone the school took both hands, one for the earpiece and the other for the mouthpiece. When you gave the number, "Ivanho 1700," to a cordial female operator, there was a pretty good chance your call would go through. If the line was busy, the operator told you so—you did not have to listen to any buzzing. Best of all, there was no chance whatsoever that you would get an answering machine. There were no area codes—you just said what city or town you were calling. My mother, like many people of her generation, thought it was necessary to speak louder the longer the distance of the call. Dad used to tell her that, if she would open the window, she would not need the phone.

There were no washing machines, no dishwashers, no air conditioners, no thermostats. Bathtubs were much more prevalent than showers, although this was not true for the boys in the locker rooms or the dormitories. Heat for the buildings and hot water were provided by burning coal, so the furnaces had to be tended at least twice a day. Instead of refrigerators, we had ice chests which were cooled with natural ice delivered two or three times a week.

Supermarkets, shopping malls, and discount chains were non-existent. There were only two catalogues: Sears Roebuck and Montgomery Ward. They were the size of telephone books and old ones were used for toilet paper in outhouses that were still evident in rural areas. Zippers were not available. The discreet way to tell a boy that his fly was open was to say, "It's X o'clock at the button factory"—X being the number of buttons not fastened.

Movies were not rated. Most of the ones rated PG today would have been considered shocking. A bikini would have gotten you arrested and if you "got a girl in trouble," as the saying went, you were expected to marry her. This was often termed a "shotgun wedding" suggesting the method used by the girl's father to get you to do right by her. A well-worn copy of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* was the only pornographic material I remember in the early days of Belmont Hill. This is not to say that sex was not an interesting subject for conversation, but it was mostly speculation and unfounded boasting and not based on actual experience.

During the early years Belmont and the surrounding towns had many fewer nearby homes to draw from and commuting to Belmont Hill was much more difficult. There were no super highways, no Route 128, no Rt. 2, no Mass Pike, no Route 9. The subway ended in Harvard Square and you took a trolley from there to Belmont Center and either walked up the hill or took an ancient taxi. Cars had no heaters, no air conditioners, no automatic shift and could not make it up the hill in high gear. Crank-up windows and powered windshield wipers were too new to be on all cars. Snow tires did not exist—you used chains. Snow and ice on the roads took much longer to clear and treat.

The first automobile I remember my father owning was a Maxwell touring car. Touring cars had four doors and a fabric top that could be put up or down—if you had time and a passenger to help. The sides could be shut in with fabric curtains that were attached with steel rods and snap fasteners over each door—a very poor arrangement for sudden showers. The curtains had isinglass windows sewn in. Isinglass was sort of a primitive cellophane that gave a yellow cast to everything observed through it and was prone to crack after awhile. Signal lights had not been invented, so a driver had to make hand signals by extending his left arm out of the car and pointing. Thus, the side curtains had slits through which one could push his arm. The curtains were far from airtight and the car had no heater. This persuaded Dad to attempt to replace the side curtains with wooden window frames with glass panels. Dad solved the problem of signaling by having a small sliding door which he had to open before he could put his arm out.

The only public weather forecasts in the 1920s appeared in the newspapers of which there were plenty: *The Herald Traveler*, *The Transcript*, *The Morning and Evening Globe*, *The Boston Post*, *The Record American*, and *The Christian Science Monitor*. Public radio was extremely limited and television was about twenty years in the future. This, coupled with the difficulties of commuting, all made it impractical to call off school because of a storm.

These were compelling practical reasons to have many boarding students at the school. Dad also felt that a wider geographic spread of boys provided a broadening educational experience. During my father's time, forty-five percent of the enrollment was boarders. In fact, in 1932 when Dad died, there were approximately 185 boys in the school, of which 84 were boarders—over four times the current number. There were boys from several states and Cuba. This meant that the lion's share of the faculty had to live at or next to the school as well.

If not for the Atkins family, it is doubtful that Belmont Hill School would ever have gotten started. Mrs. Atkins, whose husband had been one of the original partners in the American Sugar Company, knew Dad because

her son, Robert, had been one of his students at Middlesex School. Dad had spoken with her about starting a school three years before Belmont Hill was founded. The Atkins family controlled a great deal of the land on Belmont Hill and had great influence in the town. They were the most important financial contributors to the school in the early days and various members of the Atkins clan have continued that support for many years. Mrs. Atkins' son Robert was the first head of the trustees and her son-in-law, William Claflin, was the first treasurer of the school. Henry Meyer, another of Dad's students at Middlesex, was the first secretary of the trustees. He was later the head of the Board of Trustees for many years and was tremendously helpful to my father during Dad's years at Belmont Hill.

Mrs. Atkins used to drive around Belmont in an old Model T Ford until she was well into her nineties. Whenever her vehicle appeared, everybody in town, including the police, got out of the way. Parking was never a problem for her—she just stopped wherever she was going. Nobody ever minded because she was much beloved for all the good things she did for the town.

For the first few years of the school, Dad used to have the boys go into the woods with Mr. Innis, the manual training teacher, to cut about a six-foot-long Yule log. It was then delivered to Mrs. Atkins for Christmastime by the entire school.

The first time I saw Belmont Hill was in the winter of 1922 when Dad drove us out from Cambridge in our Nash to check on the house that was to be the school. We found the front door slightly ajar—the lock obviously broken. Dad went charging in and took a quick look around the first floor, found nothing, and started up the stairs with me reluctantly following him. At age seven, I could imagine all sorts of bad things that might happen. At the top of the stairs, there was a long hallway running to the left with three bedrooms on the right-hand side, the master bedroom, a dressing room and bath at the end, and one bedroom on the left, as well as a second bathroom to the right of the stairway. Dad found no one in the first two bedrooms on the right. Then he smelled cigarette smoke from the one on the left where he found two young boys sitting in the fireplace smoking. The two kids were scared to death and obviously not the ones who had broken the lock. Dad sent them running home. Further exploration of the interior of the house showed considerable vandalism and thievery of plumbing fixtures and various other hardware.

By the time the school started, the house had been totally renewed and the third floor converted to a dormitory for about eight boys. Dad, Mother, my sister Sue and I lived on the second floor along with Dad's failing father and his nurse. The first floor with its spacious entrance hall, living room, study, dining room, glassed-in porch, kitchen-pantry and one small bathroom served as both our home and a school for 43 boys in grades three through nine with five faculty members including Dad. All of the spaces had to be used for chapel, classes, meals, faculty meetings, and for the boarders in the evenings, so the only privacy our family had was on the second floor.

Soon after the school opened on September 26, 1923, it became apparent that trying to run a school for 43 boys in the Headmaster's house was impractical. I do not think it was more than a month later that a portable building was erected on the present site of the Byrnes Library. For some years, as I recall, that building contained

only one big room about the size of a basketball court. The entire school had chapel services in this building for the first year before the Chapel was moved into the new wing on the Headmaster's house.

When the school began, I was eight years old, in the third grade, and I really do not remember very much about those first days except that they seemed hectic, crowded and confusing. I do recollect Bruce Fernald, my classmate, arriving at school the first day dressed in a white sailor suit with short pants and white stockings. The poor kid was kidded unmercifully. I suspect Dad called his mother because he never arrived in that outfit again. Bruce, Jack Hanes '33 and I are the only people who went to Belmont Hill from its first day—ten years from Grade 3 through 12. I have always assumed that the reason Dad started the school with the third grade was because that was the grade I was in. However, the school did continue to maintain the third grade for a number of years thereafter. The third, fourth, fifth and sixth grades, which were referred to as Class One, Two, Three and Four, comprised the Lower School. Then you joined Form One in the Upper School.

This promotion to the Upper School was an exciting time because you switched from wearing knickers and long stockings to wearing long pants. It was also an embarrassing time because your voice kept switching an octave without warning. Female parts in the Gilbert and Sullivan plays that were put on once a year were always played by boys whose voices could be counted on to remain soprano throughout the entire process of producing and staging the shows.

My classmate Paul Killiam was a gifted actor who played the female lead in at least two of the Gilbert and Sullivan shows, *Pinafore* and *The Mikado*. He later became a very successful documentary film producer. Bruce Fernald became a successful actor and an extremely popular model, appearing in ads in *Life* magazine, *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Look* and many other publications, but never in a sailor suit.

I had my own trouble with Gilbert and Sullivan. When I was very young, I was called Dicky. Mother often addressed me as "Dicky Dear." This continued through the first few years of Belmont Hill and caused me some serious kidding due to *Pinafore*. A number of my classmates and I were made up by faculty wives to be beautiful girls in the soprano chorus. Unfortunately for me, one song was, "Dicky bird, dicky bird why do you sing, 'Tit willow, tit willow, tit willow?'" You can see the possibilities for kidding that this brought forth.

Several years before Belmont Hill opened, Dad had purchased a beautiful old Cape Cod house in Chatham, Massachusetts. It had a round, brick cellar with a dirt floor for storage. The first and second floors were made from boards ten to twenty inches wide. The main beams and rafters were fastened with pegs and wedges. The outside had cedar shingles, while the inside walls had open studding. On the paneling immediately above the fireplace in the living room, Dad hand-lettered the following verse: "The wind, the wave, the flower, the field.

Sweet song of bird, calm thoughts that rise. Each one to me delight can yield, but all at once mean paradise." The hand-lettering was beautifully done and I believe that the verse was Dad's own and entirely fitting for the location.

The house had no electricity. There was a dug well from which the water was pumped by a gasoline engine up to the second floor into an open wooden tank lined with zinc. This tank was located directly over the

one bathroom which was on the first floor. In those days, to flush a toilet you pulled a chain that opened the valve in a tank that was hung near the ceiling. The pressure in this small tank was augmented by the huge tank immediately above it. This resulted in the most sensational flush you can imagine which echoed throughout the house, usually stopping all conversation. For garbage we had a "glory hole," a round pit five feet deep and six feet wide about fifty yards behind the house. Over the garbage we shoveled hot lime. Combustible trash was burned in an incinerator near the glory hole.

Dad bought the house for six-hundred dollars from an oyster fisherman by the name of Orick Young. This sounds like a steal and I guess it was to a certain extent, but the house was in terrible shape and absolutely filthy when the transaction was made. I still have a picture of my mother and her sister with towels wrapped around their heads about to enter the house to literally fumigate it.

Orick Young was one of Chatham's characters. For a year or two after Dad bought the house, we used to see him rowing his skiff against the southwest breeze stopping every now and then to turn around in his seat and yell at the wind, "Blow! Goddamn you, blow!"

The house was located on two or three acres of shore front land on the north side of Oyster Pond, a fair-sized salt water inlet from Nantucket Sound. For a year or two, our house was the only one on its side of Oyster Pond, but then Dad designed a typical Cape Cod house which Mother's younger sister and her husband built on four or five acres adjoining ours. Today there are at least a dozen houses crowded into the same area.

We had a separate one-car garage to which Dad added stables for two horses. There was a paddock with an adjustable rail jump to practice horse jumping and a clay tennis court. When I was nine or ten years old, Dad bought me a Welch pony named Patsy. Welch ponies are the size of a horse and Patsy had a nice broad back for easy riding. I used to ride her a lot with just a bridle and reins, but no saddle. Patsy was twenty years old, with a mind of her own and had one embarrassing habit; when she heard nature's call, she paid full attention. She did not keep moving like other horses do, but just stopped and stood there giving total concentration to the job at hand. This was okay in the countryside, but I used to ride her up into Chatham Center where the attention she drew was mortifying.

It was at our home in Chatham in the summer of 1923 that Dad designed the Belmont Hill seal with its sextant. The sextant was a natural choice for him because of his navigating experience and interest in astronomy. It also has obvious pertinence to his ideals of educating boys. In June, 1924, Dad explained to the Class of '28 that the sextant is a "symbol of orientation, the chief purpose of education." He added, "For it is only finding ourselves, by discovering our capacities and aptitudes, that we can be of service to the community."

Since the school had a fair number of full-time boarders during Dad's tenure, there were always a few boys who for one reason or another could not get home for Thanksgiving, Christmas or Easter vacation. Dad and Mother would always have them stay with us if they had no other arrangement, so our house in Chatham became a popular refuge. Some of my fondest memories of Chatham are of taking boys down to camp out in the house. Simply driving down to Chatham in those days was an adventure. It was 104 miles and took at least five to six

hours. Our route took us through Mattapan, Milton, and Hanover Four Corners, but the big crisis was climbing over the Plymouth Hills. I do not know where those Plymouth Hills are today, but at that time there was a steep, winding road and the car would inevitably boil over before the final summit was reached. This required at least a thirty minute stop to wait for the car to cool down. Once a rear tire and rim came off, passed us, then turned around, came back and ran into the left headlight breaking it. The next crisis was the Sagamore Bridge, which was a draw-bridge that always seemed to be raised to let some ship go through. We usually stopped for a picnic somewhere between the Plymouth Hills and the canal or, if things had gone really well, just after crossing the canal. From there, the trip was usually quite relaxed as we passed through the centers of Sandwich, Barnstable, Hyannis, Dennis, Bass River, Orleans, Harwich, and Harwichport before reaching Chatham.

On arrival, we would get fires going in the kitchen stove and the fireplaces in the dining and living rooms and light the kerosene lamps. Willie Sims, a wonderful black woman, would cook us a magnificent dinner ending with Heavenly Goo, her unique chocolate dessert. After dinner, we would help Willie clean up the dishes and then play hearts, rummy, Parcheesi or checkers. Dad and Mother would often read to us or tell stories. Daytimes, we would explore the then sparsely populated Cape.

We especially liked to go to Eastham and Nauset beaches, Pleasant Bay or some of the inner beaches at Chatham. Dad and Mother would identify birds and tell us about their migration, breeding habits and what peculiarities to watch for. Dad used to band birds, so he could tell us interesting stories about where they had been found. I remember that one seagull he had banded in Chatham was found in France, apparently having followed a steamship across the ocean. Tree swallows that he banded in Chatham returned to the same bird box several years in a row.

Dad's generation was more knowledgeable about the ways of horses than it was about the mechanics of automobiles. I remember one time when Dad was driving my friend Eugene Emerson '34 and me down to Chatham, we had a flat tire somewhere near Bass River. In those days, the spare tire was carried outside the car either on the side above the running board or over the rear bumper. There was usually some kind of a locking device to thwart thieves. That day we could not get the locking device undone, so Eugene and I suggested that we hit it with a hammer. Dad would not allow that because he said nothing mechanical should be treated with force. Eventually, he got a passer-by to send a mechanic who arrived, fiddled with the key for a minute or two and then said, "I'll give it a slap with the hammer." That produced the desired result. These days I am just as leery about pushing mysterious electronic buttons as Dad was about hitting that lock, but, at the time, Eugene and I found it difficult to restrain a laugh.

The summer of 1926, Dad hired Lawson Cole '27 to work for us in Chatham. This was somewhat a make-work program to help Lawson earn money towards his education, but it turned out to be extremely beneficial for both parties. Lawson was a born mechanic and carpenter who could do almost anything related to repairs or construction. He did all sorts of good things around the house and grounds, but his biggest project with us was building from scratch an outboard-powered speed boat. Building even the simplest wooden boat involves complex

curves and requires precise fitting. It was amazing how Lawson took to it. The project took the entire summer to finish, but when done the boat did not leak a drop and would go like mad—if Lawson was around to get the Lockwood outboard motor started. That was the early days of outboard motors and that Lockwood did not like dampness, which seemed quite inappropriate for a boat motor. Lawson's solution was to take the magneto off the engine, warm it up in the oven, and reinstall it fast enough so that it was still warm when he cranked the motor. It was then important not to let the engine stop until you were safely back to shore.

Lawson also learned to ride horseback that summer. His approach was to climb on the horse as it was grazing in the paddock—no saddle, bridle or reins. This got some interesting reactions from the horse, who gave Lawson his first lesson in the art of falling off. However, he was fearless and by summer's end, with some lessons from Dad, Lawson became an excellent horseman.

Lawson did a lot of maintenance work on Dad's sailboat as well and became a very proficient sailor. This turned out to have a substantial influence on his life's work. After graduating from Harvard, he worked for quite a long time for Henry Meyer, Chairman of the Belmont Hill School Board of Trustees, maintaining and operating his yachts. Lawson also became the manager of one of the piers in Boston Harbor, much of that time living on his own auxiliary sailboat at the dock. In the end, he was badly burned in a fire on his boat and died a short time later.

Other boys who went to Chatham with us included Eddie '27 and Norcott '28 Henriquez and Harry Pullam '31, all of whom were from Cuba. They were the sons of executives of the American Sugar Company, which operated sugar plantations in Cuba. Their introduction to Belmont Hill was through the Atkins family. Bob Hurlbut '29, a wonderful fellow of great promise killed in World War II, spent an Easter vacation with us. And physics teacher Parker Hamilton and Dilly spent part of their honeymoon in a tent on our property.

Since the school had a number of third, fourth, and fifth graders as boarders, Mother also used to provide homestyle entertainment for them at Belmont Hill. I remember many evenings when she would take us all into her kitchen to make fudge, peanut brittle, or what she called "pull candy." The latter was a form of caramel that at a certain point in the making required pulling. We would butter our hands, pick up gobs of this caramel stuff, grab it with both hands and then stretch it out to arms' length. Sometimes it could even be stretched between two boys making strips as long as six feet. We would then push it all back together and repeat the process several times. I have forgotten how this pulled and stretched stuff was finally converted into pieces of candy or even how it tasted. However, the entertainment value was terrific. Mother preferred to have us make fudge or peanut brittle.

Although Belmont Hill has always been a non-denominational school, this did not prevent Dad from beginning each day with a chapel service which he usually conducted. Other faculty members did so when Dad was unavailable. The Chapel under the dining room had rows of oak benches, each bench holding five or six people. The younger boys sat in the front rows with the Sixth Form and faculty members in the back. There was a raised platform and podium from which the service was conducted.

The service opened with a hymn, followed by a prayer, and then a short talk by Dad. I would not call the talk a sermon, although it usually had a moral of some sort. Some announcements, a doxology and a closing hymn

ended the service. I remember one doxology was in Latin and began; "Integer vitae, sceleresce purus." We translated this in Latin class, but I have not got the slightest idea what it means anymore. The English doxology began, "We gather together to ask the Lord's blessing. He chastens and hastens His will to make known." Two favorite hymns were *Onward Christian Soldiers* and one that started off, "Oh Jesus, thou art knocking outside the fast closed door, in lowly patience waiting to pass the threshold o'er." I cannot remember anymore except that Jesus waited so long knocking that there was a line that went, "and lo that hand is scarred." As you might expect, the most commonly-used prayer was *The Lord's Prayer*. Another favorite was the *Twenty-third Psalm*.

Phil Wilson was one faculty member who loved to sing the hymns. He was the only person who held the final note of each verse for the full count, something the average, amateur hymn singer does not do. Occasionally, some of us would try to outlast him on these finishing notes—this was not always appreciated. However, while we were irreverent at times, I know most older alumni hold these chapel services among our happiest and most meaningful memories of our school days. It is too bad the Supreme Court or political correctness seems to have caused the demise of such daily services.

One favorite theme Dad preached in Chapel was "Do as you would be done by." Another thing that Dad often emphasized in his remarks at Chapel was to "take care of number one," not in the sense of the so-called "me generation," but rather to learn self-reliance and responsibility for one's self. Dad first taught me this lesson at age seven when he taught me to sail. When alone in a sailboat, one must deal with the forces of nature without any outside assistance.

Dad had purchased a second-hand, 8-foot, flat-bottomed, unsinkable wooden skiff in Chatham. He and I took it to Good Walter Eldridge, a beachcomber who lived on the beach in a house he had made mostly from wreckage salvaged along the outer bar. There were two Walter Eldridges in Chatham. I do not think the other one was bad, but Good Walter really was good. He had sailed on clipper ships and spent winters making absolutely beautiful, museum-quality, clipper ship models. So Dad figured it would be no problem for Good Walter to install a center board, rudder, mast, boom and leg-o-mutton sail on my skiff. We named her Tern after my favorite sea bird.

On a nice summer day with a moderate southwest wind, Dad and I set out to sea in Oyster Pond. He spent about an hour teaching me the fundamentals of sailing at which point he had me put him ashore to set out by myself wearing a life preserver. I sailed along very well until I got out into the middle of the pond and decided it was time to come about. That was when I got in irons. For the benefit of non-sailors, this means that you get stuck heading straight into the wind with the boat dead in the water. I trimmed the sail in as tight as it would go—exactly the wrong thing to do because then the boat continues to head straight into the wind like a weather vane. I started yelling for help with no response from shore. Finally, I got so frustrated that I began to cry, said the hell with it, let go of everything and just sat there. This turned out to be the right thing to do because the boat automatically fell off sideways to the wind enabling me to start her sailing and stop crying. It also enabled Dad to reveal himself and he continued to watch me sail around Oyster Pond for the next hour or so. That was a very

good lesson in "taking care of number one."

I had one terrible experience in Chapel that I still remember. Doris Keyes, a very attractive young woman and the only female, full-time member of the original faculty, taught third and fourth grades. (She was also of considerable interest to the older boys and certain single, male members of the faculty.) For one assignment, Miss Keyes had each boy memorize a poem to recite before the entire school during Chapel. For my turn, I was assigned Longfellow's, *The Arrow and the Song*. I started out okay with, "I shot an arrow into the air. It fell to Earth I knew not where." At that point, however, stage fright took over and I never could locate that damn arrow, much less "breathe a song into the air," despite hoarsely whispered cues from Miss Keyes. I suppose it was an embarrassment to her as well to have the Headmaster's son perform so miserably, but I never thought of that aspect until now.

As long as Dad was at the school, he also had every meal begin with grace and nobody sat down until the grace was said. I can recite it now: "Bless O Lord this food to our use and us to thy service for Christ's sake. Amen." Knowing this has come in handy from time to time when a hostess has made a surprise request for me to say the blessing.

In addition to Chapel services at school, Mother and Dad would take the boarders to church on Sunday mornings in Belmont Center. The church attended varied from Sunday to Sunday and usually one or two faculty members would accompany us. I do not know that church should be considered family-style entertainment, but, as you might expect with a bunch of boys, some mischief was attempted occasionally. Smuggling the funny papers (comics) into church for a little clandestine reading or one or two marbles to roll down the aisle to liven things up a little added levity to our religious experience. The only trouble was that Mother and Dad seemed to have an uncanny way of anticipating such behavior, nipping it in the bud. However, it was worth the try.

My most vivid memory of eating at the school during the first year is of Saturday and Sunday midday dinners in the Headmaster's dining room. Dad sat at the window end of the table with Mother presiding at the opposite end nearest the kitchen. It is odd that I do not remember any faculty members at those dinners, but some of them must have been there. Eight or ten full-time boarders ate with us, one of whom was Johnny Thayer ('31), the son of the Headmaster of Saint Mark's. I remember him because it was said that his older brothers had held him by his feet hanging out a second-story window at home, threatening to drop him. Johnny replied that they didn't dare and apparently they didn't.

At one dinner, Dad had somehow acquired an extra ticket to the Harvard/Yale football game to be played that afternoon. I was dying to go, but Dad felt that the only fair thing to do was to raffle the ticket off. Johnny Thayer won it—I wished his brothers had dropped him. Incidentally, in those days Harvard was a national football power. The stadium was sold out for practically every game, including seats in wooden stands that used to be at the open end of the stadium. Tickets sold for what was considered to be an outrageous price of \$5—the equivalent of over \$50 today.

During duck hunting season, for Sunday dinner we would often have wild duck that Dad provided. It was

delicious except for the bird shot. Dad was an expert with a shotgun and at one time was the New England skeet shooting champion. He was also an expert at carving meat which he tried to teach to faculty members who were expected to carve at the tables in the dining room. His teaching of this subject, however, met with only moderate success.

Dad had more success teaching science classes in biology, astronomy and anatomy. These courses were taught in the Little Museum, the building attached to the outer end of the glassed-in porch off the Headmaster's living room. This porch was at first a classroom before it became the faculty room. For astronomy, Dad built a model of the solar system with a vertical center rod on top of which was the sun, a wooden ball about the size of a tennis ball. The planets were on rods that could be rotated around the sun and their size and distance from the sun were all done to proper scale in relation to the sun. Dad also used the Little Museum as an important adjunct to the teaching of biology, not only using its existing collections, but also assigning boys to find and identify various flora and fauna that could be found and collected in the woods, fields, brook and springs that were so abundant on the school grounds and in the surrounding countryside.

Another of Dad's teaching tools was the miniature weather station he installed on a post at the top of the hill outside his office. It looked like a very large birdhouse with slatted, vented sides to let the air through. It was painted white to reflect the sun and contained various weather instruments including a maximum-minimum recording thermometer, a wet bulb thermometer, and a recording barometer. Dad also subscribed to a service that sent him weather maps by mail. There were very few days that he did not make weather observations and predictions for the next twenty-four hours.

Dad taught me and other boys the different kinds of clouds (stratus, cumulus, nimbus, cumulonimbus and vernacular names such as mackerel, mares' tails, and thunderheads) and their implications for the future. He espoused certain principles including the following:

- * A rising barometer with a northwest wind meant clearing so long as the wind had changed from its previous direction in a clockwise movement.
- * On hot, humid days, thunderheads to the north were likely to move against the southwest wind and, if you saw little, wispy, lighter gray clouds moving quickly under the thunderheads, prepare for a violent squall.
- * A storm featuring a northeast wind would last three days, a southeast wind would usually mean rain or fog for a day or so.
- * Mackerel skies usually meant rain, especially with a falling barometer.
- * A rising barometer was a good sign, a falling barometer a bad one, and a very rapidly falling barometer said to batten down the hatches.

If you follow these principles, you will do about as well as the TV weather people in predicting the weather for the next twenty-four hours—maybe even better. Neither you nor the pros with their satellites are likely to do very well long-range.

Though Dad was an Episcopal minister's son, I don't think he ever worried much about religious denominations, but he certainly believed deeply in God. He had to reconcile this with his belief in science and the scientific method. He proclaimed that each new scientific discovery added to our understanding of the wonders of God's work.

When Belmont Hill School opened, there were no athletic fields, but we had sports nevertheless. During the summer preceding the school's opening, Dad sent out a letter to all of the boys about to enroll encouraging them to suggest school colors and designs for athletic jerseys. I think he set this up as a contest, but I never knew who won. In any case, red and blue were the chosen colors and our first athletic uniforms featured one-inch-wide, horizontal, red and blue stripes. Football jerseys had black sticky stuff on the chest for backs and ends to aid them in catching and holding onto the balls.

The entire student body was divided into Reds and Blues, a designation that stuck with you through your entire matriculation. All intramural contests were Reds versus Blues. For football, to keep teams physically compatible, a coefficient system was used based on age, weight and height, tempered by Dr. Barstow, the school doctor, who administered yearly physical exams to all contestants. Practice and games were played wherever a more or less flat place could be found.

The first and only football game played against an outside opponent in the fall of 1923 was against a young team from a Belmont public school, played on a makeshift field located at the foot of the hill in front of the Headmaster's house. Our team was made up of ten Second and Third Formers plus one teacher who had played at Harvard the year before. The teacher, Phil Wilson, who was to become my brother-in-law, played quarterback on offense and safety on defense, but he was not allowed to run with the ball. Neither team had more than a couple of substitutes. Football rules through out Dad's tenure allowed very limited substitutions. Coaches could not send in players with the next play. Furthermore, signaling from the bench was prohibited. The quarterback chose the plays himself. I'm sure Dad would be appalled at the idea of taking the responsibility of play calling away from the players. He saw sports as a way to teach self-reliance, leadership, and cooperation. Despite my future brother-in-law's best efforts and the brave play of our boys, Belmont Hill absorbed its first defeat.

I do not remember whether Belmont Hill played any other sport against another school that year, although I am sure we had hockey and baseball games with Reds versus Blues. With only 43 boys and the total lack of any regulation athletic facilities, it was impractical to have anything more than informal contests and our boys were not old enough to play varsity teams of other schools. By the next year, we had facilities and enough boys to play intermediate teams of other schools.

Rivers School, then known as Rivers Open Air School for Boys, was among the first schools with which Belmont Hill scheduled athletic contests. It was called Open Air because there was little, if any, heat and classroom and locker room windows were kept open. This system was supposed to be great for one's health, but this was hard to believe, especially while dressing for a hockey game.

I remember one hockey game at Rivers. They had a big fellow centering their first line who was quite

good. His ability, however, was enhanced by the addition of a two- or three-foot extension to his stick handle. From center ice, he could reach practically to the sideboards. This gave us considerable trouble until Coach Wilson called for a measurement and the stick was rejected.

Finch Keller, one of the school's most colorful teachers and coaches, was a refugee from Rivers. Some of us figured that he came to Belmont Hill to get warm. Finch was a big man and somewhat overweight. His stature, plus the fact that he had played in the New York Giants baseball organization and coached both football and baseball, gave him instant respect from the boys. Although he was a great teacher, he was somewhat terrifying to the younger boys in first-year Latin, which met right after recess. Sheer fear of being called upon in class spoiled my recesses for almost a year.

Finch had a pack of cards on each of which he put one student's name. He would shuffle the cards and then ask the unfortunate boy who sat immediately on his right to cut the deck. The boy whose name came up was called upon to recite. Then all of the cards went back into the deck to be reshuffled and cut again. This meant that even if you had already been called upon, you still could not relax for the rest of the period. Also, if you made a mistake while translating or conjugating a verb or whatever, Finch would fire a piece of chalk at you with all the speed and accuracy he had developed as a ball player for the Giants. This method certainly inspired the young student to do his Latin homework. One day Bruce Fernald tried to duck the chalk and hit his forehead on the sharp edge of the table around which we all sat. When Finch saw the blood flowing, he did not ignore it or laugh as we had been led to expect, but turned pale and rushed with Bruce up to the infirmary. Much to our surprise, Finch had a heart after all.

The first Halloween at Belmont Hill was exciting and showed the ingenuity of the early faculty members, several of whom had just graduated from college. After dinner, in the dark, they took us out on the open field between the school and Prentiss Lane (there was no Tyler Road) where they told us ghost stories accompanied by eerie sound effects. What I remember best was when they blind-folded us and asked for volunteers to fly in a primitive airplane. The volunteers were taken off one at a time. They had us step up onto what they said was the floor of the plane, but was actually just a narrow wooden plank. The plane's engine started—it was an egg beater operated in a pan. The plane took off as two teachers lifted the plank. Of course, you were only a few inches off the ground, but with a blind-fold on, the egg beater noise, a hand-operated fan blowing air in your face, and the plank moving under your feet, you felt as if you were flying. It was quite exciting. Most of us fell off the plank quite quickly to be caught by a teacher. It was then fun to watch other kids undergo the same treatment.

During the school's second year, one personal, academic crisis stands out—an ill-advised attempt to have me skip the fourth grade. This was a total disaster which terminated quickly in Jack Braydon's math class. Mr. Braydon was a very scary character, at least for me. After only a few days of classes, he announced a test for the following morning at which time I decided to be sick. Upon awakening, I told my parents that I was feeling terrible. Dad immediately put a thermometer into my mouth and, fortunately, left the room. This gave me the opportunity to touch the thermometer to the radiator by my bed. When Dad returned, he was shocked to see that I

had a temperature of 108 degrees. For a minute or two, he thought I was really sick. But then he asked me if I thought it would be a good idea to recheck my temperature while he remained in the room.

When I was in the Lower School, every two weeks an honor list and an effort list were displayed on a bulletin board for all to see. Report cards not only had your grades, but also whether or not you were on the effort list. (Getting on either of these lists was considered a worthy performance but, now that I think about it, getting on the effort list but not on the honor list might be interpreted negatively.) In June, honor pins were bestowed on boys who achieved honors for their year's work. Despite my disaster in Mr. Braydon's math class, I received an honor pin for my performance in Class II (fourth grade). It is a small, round pin about 3/8ths of an inch in diameter. It displays the school seal in red, blue and gold. Today, I wear it to all school functions in the hope that someone there might remember what the pin was all about.

It was also in either the second or third year of the school that the big bell near Bolles arrived. Mrs. Atkins arranged to have it shipped from one of the sugar plantations in Cuba. Actually, the bell was the second one sent to the school as the first one never arrived. In rough seas, it shifted in its cargo bay and fell through the bottom of the boat. Some people say it is very bad luck to move a bell and in this instance that certainly seems to have been the case. However, the second bell made the trip with no trouble, but I would not stand under it, if I were you.

From the time the bell arrived at the school, each month a different boarding boy was assigned the task of ringing it. As I recall, it was rung for Chapel, the end of recess, lunch, and dinner. Five strokes of the bell were specified. It was also rung for special occasions, such as a celebration of some great athletic victory.

The first wedding held at Belmont Hill School was in June of 1925 when my sister Sue married Phil Wilson. The wedding was held under the old oak tree that stood on the lawn approximately halfway between the Hamilton Chapel and the Henry Sawyer Memorial Bench.

Sue had a female German Shepherd dog named Mitzy who became a prominent member of the Belmont Hill community sometimes going to classes, always attending recess for milk and graham crackers and often an unwelcome participant in football and baseball games. Sunday afternoon touch football games in which faculty, their wives, and boarders all participated were especially exciting for Mitzy. She could get to the ball to break up a pass better than anyone. Unfortunately, Mitzy preceded Frisbees by many years because she would have been a champion in those games.

By the fall of 1925, an amazing amount had been accomplished both in terms of enrollment and facilities. The Shaler wing off the Headmaster's house had been completed. This housed the Chapel on the first floor, the dining room and kitchen on the second floor, and a sizeable dormitory, a common room and an unmarried master's quarters on the third floor. Bolles House, with locker rooms and showers on the ground floor and four classrooms on the second floor, was completed and a two-story house for the school matron and about six maids was finished. (Although the Development staff is now in this house, for many years it was occupied by the Densmore family and

later by the Funk family.) It would be nice to honor those two families in some appropriate manner there. The third floor of the Headmaster's house was converted to the infirmary and nurses' quarters headed by Miss Harve, the school nurse.

In 1926 Dad built a home on Tyler Road adjoining the school property. The back wing of this house was a dormitory for four boys. The main house provided quarters for Phil and Sue Wilson. The driveway extended up across some of the school grounds to the back of Elliot House, which allowed coal to be delivered to the school's furnace. Two other faculty members, Tom Morse and Parker Hamilton, built houses on either side of Dad's house. The Morse house, now owned by Henrietta Dane, had a dormitory for twelve boys and quarters for an unmarried master on the third floor. A metal fire escape installed on the outside of the house made it legal as a dormitory. Parker Hamilton's house included a small wing on the back that was used as a dormitory for two or three boys.

A log cabin was constructed in the woods where the lacrosse/soccer field nearest Tyler Road is now located. This was the biggest project of the manual training classes and Mr. Innis was its designer and construction supervisor. The boys cut the trees for the logs and notched them for a good, tight fit. The door, benches and floor were made with rough-hewn boards. This cabin was approximately fifteen feet square with a big fieldstone fireplace and chimney at one end opposite a wide door on the opposite end that led out to the edge of the ice on the so-called lagoon, where the first hockey rink was located. The cabin had a pitched, shingled roof and benches were built against the interior sidewalls where people could sit while putting on or taking off skates or simply to relax and get warm by the fire. This cabin was damaged in the 1954 hurricane and a year or two later had a spectacular demise when a young boy set it on fire by mistake. He was trying to surprise his parents by having the fire ready for a cookout, but he was more successful than he anticipated.

A great many Belmont Hill hockey players and their opponents donned their skates in that cabin, as did many local kids and their families who skated on the lagoon on weekends and vacations. Doc Pike, Board chairman John Pike's father, and Pa Claffin often demonstrated their extraordinary stick-handling skill in Sunday shinny games.

By 1925, art classes were established and taught by Mr. Demetrius in the cellar of the maid's house one or two afternoons a week. Although I cannot remember if the course involved a full year or if it was taught to Fourth or Fifth Formers, I know that every boy was required to take Mr. Demetrius' course. These classes featured modeling with clay (plastercine) and life drawing using charcoal and pencil. Models for life drawing were members of the class who posed in jock straps. The clay modeling was mostly in relief making copies of Greek and Roman works which Mr. Demetrius supplied.

Music classes were also taught in the early years. Miss Bakeless was the teacher and, to my recollection, she primarily gave individual piano lessons. I remember learning the scales and stumbling through *Mary Had A Little Lamb*. After this experience, Walter Tufts and I managed to switch to tap dancing lessons taken with an excellent instructor who came out from Boston. We did a routine before the whole school on the stage in the old field house to the tune of *Pennies from Heaven*.

The new Chapel under the dining room was not only used for Chapel service every morning, but also for special events. Three in particular stand out in my mind. One was the day Professor Copeland from Harvard came to Belmont Hill to read high-powered literature to the entire school. For at least a month prior to Professor Copeland's arrival, Dad had stressed that the Professor was very temperamental about any disturbance whatsoever occurring during his reading. The famous professor arrived on a gloomy winter afternoon. The Chapel was crowded with students, faculty, some trustees and parents, but you could have heard a pin drop as Copeland started his reading. His performance really was spellbinding—until the big radiator that ran along one side of the room began to bang. It was as if somebody was hitting it hard with a hammer. For the boys, of course, this was hilarious. It was anything but that for the Professor and Dad. The only thing to do was to wait until the radiator quieted down which took about five minutes. To the Professor's credit, he did see the humor in the situation and carried on with no further trouble.

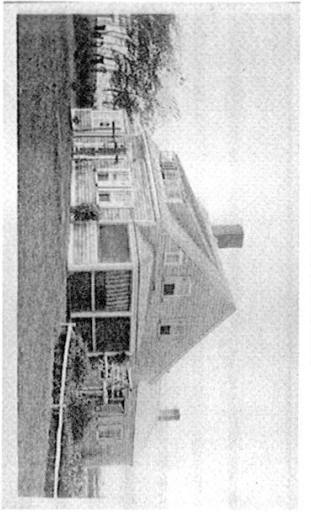
Another time, a strong man came to talk about body building and to demonstrate his ability to lift huge dumbbells. After a short speech, he started shedding clothes in order to demonstrate his muscles. He quickly got down to a leopard skin—a narrow strip which went over one shoulder and widened as it descended into something resembling a pair of leopard fur jockey shorts. The audience hushed as he slipped the shoulder strap off and started rolling it down over his chest and stomach. He did stop in the nick of time, but that was by far the most memorable part of his performance. He was never invited back.

The third event that I remember with great pleasure was a wonderful quartet of black men. They had no instrumental accompaniment, but performed with just their voices using their hands and feet for rhythm. Their songs went back to their African tribal times and their days of slavery. The quartet had extraordinary rhythm emphasized by the bass singer whose voice was so low that it would make a fog horn sound soprano by contrast. The number we all liked best was *Jubba*. It started off "Jubba this, and Jubba that, Jubba killed a yellow cat, Jubba!" They were brought back to the school several times by popular demand.

Bill Bourne, a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Yale and the holder of a Ph.D., was the first faculty member to supervise and live in the new dormitory in the Shaler wing. He was of medium height, thin, stood very straight, had black hair and, though clean-shaven, the blackness of his whiskers darkened his face. I do not remember him in anything but a dark suit. Among the first group of teachers, he was undoubtedly the most qualified academically and was a very nice, thoughtful man. But for some reason, the boys loved to pull his leg. His method of trying to attain discipline was to carry a small yellow pad on which he wrote the names of offending boys, threatening to give the names to the Headmaster. This, in fact, he very often did, which used to irritate the heck out of Dad and never established Mr. Bourne's objective.

After dinner, the boarders all attended evening study hall for an hour or so and, following that, every week or two, Mr. Bourne would invite us to his quarters to read to us. Remember, we had no television or radio. One evening, Eddie Wigglesworth brought along a reostat. It was about the size of a dime and when placed under a lamp bulb caused the bulb to go out after a few minutes. Then, after another minute or two, it would come on

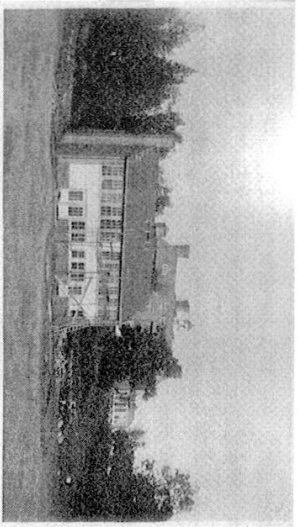
The Chatham House



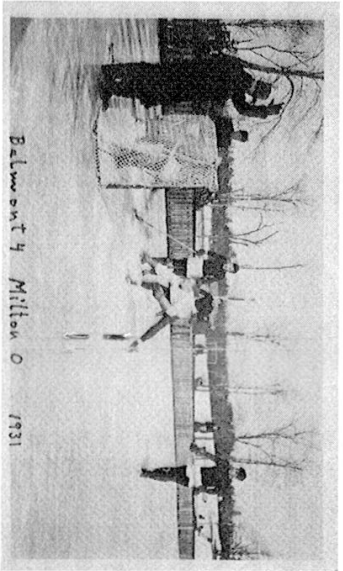
My sister Susan and Mizzy



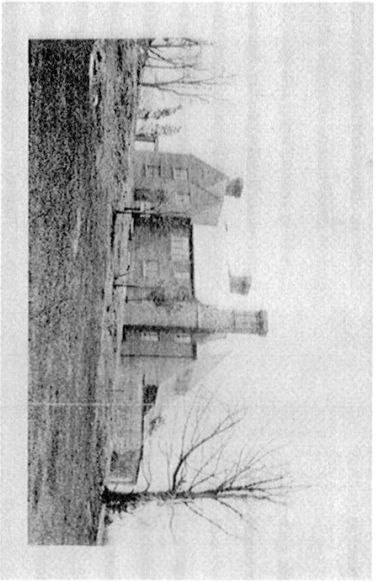
Boles, the first permanent addition, classrooms above, locker rooms below



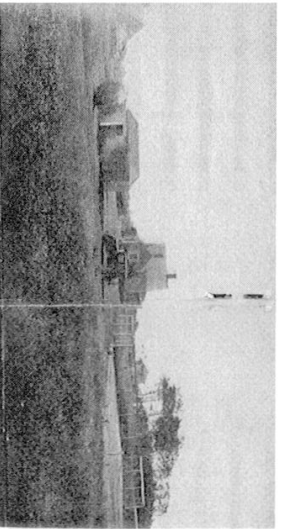
One of the trinks in 1931
(I imagine the Milton coach had some suggestions for his defensemen)



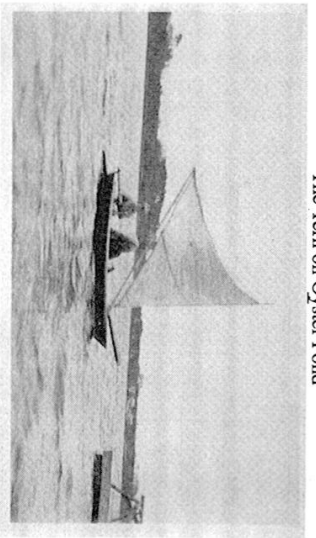
The School as it was on Opening Day 1923



The Chatham House



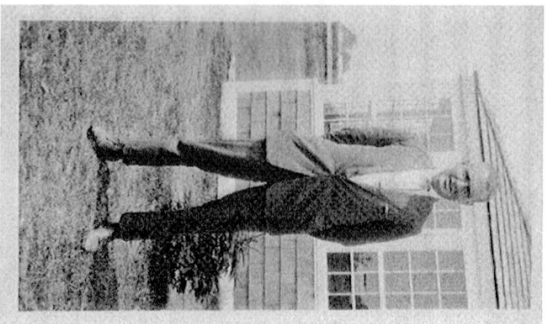
The Tern on Oyster Pond



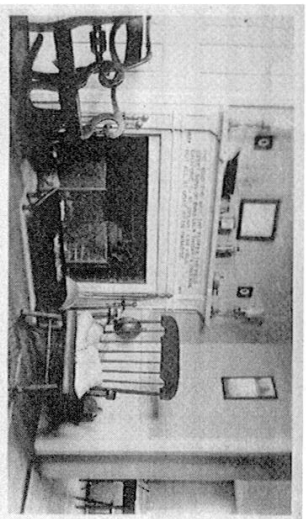
Patsy with Tufts and me aboard



Uncle Bill Barker, "Sir" to me



The Wind, the Wave, the Flower, the Field



again. As the lamp grew warmer, the bulb would flash on and off quicker and quicker. Anticipating the reading session, Eddie put his restart into Mr. Bourne's reading lamp. When we were all assembled, Mr. Bourne turned on the light and began to read. When the light went off, he checked the switch and tightened the bulb—the light came on. Just as he started to read again, out it went. As the on and off flashing picked up speed, the room was soon in an uproar, the reading session ended, and Mr. Bourne wrote all of our names down on his yellow pad.

There were many interesting characters who boarded in that dormitory under the supervision of Bill Bourne. One was Bradstreet Spear '27. Brad was truly a brilliant scholar and a pretty good athlete. I know my father was extremely pleased to have someone of Brad's quality among the school's first graduates to go to Harvard. What intrigued me about Brad was his interest in fencing. He kept in his room a pair of foils, chest protectors and protective face masks. The foils were about four feet long with thin, flexible blades that tapered to a point. A rubber pad was put over the point to prevent anyone from getting stabbed. The dormitory had a nice common room at one end, which was the site of many duels as we tried to imitate the Three Musketeers. None of us could ever compete with Brad, but we had many spectacular, though clumsy, duels among the novices. The only problem was that, if Mr. Bourne was around, your name wound up on the yellow pad.

Unfortunately, this story has a sad end. Brad graduated from Belmont Hill with top honors, but before he did so, he got a serious blow to the groin playing football. My father always thought this may have been the cause of his death from cancer while at Harvard.

Tom Hunter '31 got special attention in this dormitory as well. He and his roommate caused a fairly spectacular midnight explosion; a jug of hard cider that they were trying to make harder by aging it in a too-tightly corked jug burst, spreading small pieces of glass and cider all over their room. This event got enough attention that it superseded the yellow pad.

Tom was a very special person. As a young child, his legs were paralyzed by infantile paralysis, now more commonly known as polio. Tom had metal braces on his legs and got around on crutches. He was an extremely able student, but it was his courage and positive outlook on living that made him tremendously admired by everyone. I remember vividly his playing goaltender on one of the intramural hockey teams. Although he could not wear skates, he could stand in the goal with one crutch and the goalie stick. Tom never wanted any special consideration by the opposing players. He was also coxswain and captain of the crew and went on to cox the varsity crew at Harvard and the varsity crew at Oxford, where he was a Rhodes Scholar.

Tom had a very successful medical career and was the head of the University of Virginia Medical School for many years. He won the Belmont Hill School Alumni Award in 1963—certainly one of the most deserving recipients.

Public radio came into being in the mid-1920s. The first radios I remember were crystal sets, which operated mysteriously with a battery and a crystal. No loud speakers were available, only earphones. Reception varied from day to day and, while there was not much worth listening to, the novelty of radio was interesting. Shortly, much better sets with vacuum tubes became available and programming began to develop quite quickly.

In the dormitories, bed hour, when the lights went out, was ten o'clock. However, we were still able to listen surreptitiously to our radios using the bed springs for aerials. I had a little one-tube set—a black box, about the size of an eight-inch cube, with a single tube sticking out the top. The first program I remember was Jones and Hare, *The Interwoven Pair*, sponsored by Interwoven socks for men. Another early advertiser was Kolynos toothpaste, "Half an inch on a dry brush is enough." Some of the boys' favorite early programs included jazz played by big bands such as Duke Ellington, the Casa Loma Band, and smaller groups like Red Nickles and His Five Pennies, Louis Armstrong, Earl "Fatha" Hines and the like. If you had a good radio and just the right atmospheric conditions, you could count on good jazz from a dance hall on the Pompton Turnpike in New Jersey. The boys used to boast about how far away their radios could bring in stations.

One of the early buildings was Elliot where study hall was held in the big room on the top floor. The supervising master had a small table and chair on a platform at the east side of the room. The boys had individual chairs with special arms that served as small desks and were arranged in rows facing the master. Along the west wall, under the windows, were built-in boxes, two rows high, that were open on the front side. Each boy was assigned a box with his name on it in which to keep books, paper, pencils, etc.

Supervising study hall was the acid test of a faculty member's ability to keep discipline. The majority of teachers, especially those who coached upper-level teams, maintained discipline merely by their presence. There were a few, however, who were easy marks for the boys. An ill-advised placement of the fuse box outside the men's room on the lower floor made it very chancy for a poor disciplinarian to accede to a request by certain boys to go to the bathroom, for it was bound to cause pandemonium when the lights went out.

It was the custom in the spring to assign Sixth Formers to supervise evening study hall. As I recall, each boarding Sixth Former would draw the assignment for a week. Here again, it was interesting to see which ones had no trouble at all maintaining order as opposed to the few who faced disasters. In general, the athletes had less trouble than the others, but this was not always true. I do think the boys were easier on the Sixth Formers than the faculty because they knew that the day would come when they would have to be in charge.

The athletic facilities had expanded by the fall of 1925. The Hallowell athletic field was ready for football and baseball for the older boys. The lower grades continued to use open spaces such as the open field that was east of the Headmaster's driveway. An open-air, covered cage was available for basketball and informal boxing. Two outdoor, natural ice hockey rinks were created by damming the brook that ran from springs in the woods where the track is now, through the marshy wooded area that is now the varsity football field, and on down Belmont Hill. The dam, which was near the Koslowski's house, was closed right after football season to flood the rinks in time for the first freeze. Another feeder spring was located in the woods near the southeast corner of the bus lot. One wonders whether all of the changes in the landscape required for the school to operate could have been done under today's environmental constraints.

During the fall, the marsh grass was cut and cleared away where the rinks were to be. It was not long before we had permanent boards for two good-sized rinks. And there was considerable open ice as well. The first

rink ran more or less north to south roughly where the soccer/lacrosse field nearest Tyler Road is located now. The second rink ran east to west where deep left field on the varsity baseball diamond is today. The open-ice area ran beyond that towards the Koslowski's house. Ultimately, there were two more full-sized rinks over on today's track area. Those rinks were parallel to each other and ran in the same direction as the straight-aways of the track. There was a small additional rink with temporary boards a foot high roughly where the far curve of the track now runs. Because we had so many rinks and more good ice than most other schools, we enjoyed a real advantage in developing good hockey players.

Flooding the rinks also flooded part of the woods, so we could skate through the woods as well. This was especially good fun as the ice began to melt in the spring. The ice would bend as you skated on it and if you stopped, you were likely to go through into three feet of very cold water. Playing tag on this kind of ice was especially hazardous.

Dad's idea for the school was to have a minimum of rules with penalties determined on an individual basis. This had not been true at Middlesex when he was there—if you broke a rule you had to run a certain number of laps around the quadrangle according to the severity of the crime. Dad, however, believed that kindness, thoughtfulness, consideration of others, self-respect, cooperative goodwill to achieve common goals, plus respect for property were the general principles that should govern behavior. He stressed good manners and respect for authority. Dad also expected students to own up when any misdemeanor was discovered. Under these guidelines, only a few practical rules were necessary. One such necessary rule was that people were not to walk on the dam that was used to make the brook flood the swamp for the hockey rinks.

One morning in Chapel, Dad asked the boy or boys who had walked with football shoes on the dam the day before to please stand up. Walter Tufts and I stood up, were mildly reprimanded, and the necessity of the rule was explained. That was the way it worked. If you were man enough to acknowledge your sin before the school, the penalty was light. If you had broken something, you were expected to fix it—often with Mr. Innis' assistance. If you did not own up and were discovered, however, you were then in real trouble.

In addition to our many rinks, the hockey program had the advantage of having Phil Wilson as a coach. He had played hockey at Andover before going to Harvard. At college, he coached the junior varsity hockey team to help pay for his education. He knew the game and was an experienced, excellent coach for whom the boys had great respect. His enthusiasm and leadership got the entire school interested in the hockey program. Everyone, including parents, would come out to clear the snow off the ice after a storm and, during games, to scrape the ice between periods.

The school had a second-hand Chevy truck known as "The Bluebird." When the ice was considered strong enough, Phil could use the truck with a plow to help remove snow, but it was used more often with a sort of plane that would literally plane the ice. This was helpful when wet snow froze to the ice. It was not uncommon for Phil to get too anxious to use The Bluebird so he would wind up with it falling through the ice. This always caused great consternation and argument about conflicting suggestions as to how to remove the truck from the

water.

Muskrats were another problem, especially once we got players' boxes built beside the boards on what became the varsity rink where the track is now. The muskrats liked to build their nest under the floor of the boxes, which caused the ice to melt, leaving a foot or two of weak ice or even open water for a few feet along the boards. The best solution was to trap the muskrats. Since trapping muskrats was done for commercial reasons in those days, help was available.

By the time the Class of '27, the school's first graduating class, was in its final year and enrollment had increased to about 150 boys, Belmont Hill was able to field respectable varsity teams in hockey, football, baseball and crew. Letters were awarded to boys on varsity teams who qualified. Heavy woolen sweaters with a "B" knitted into the front were provided by Brine's Sporting Goods Store in Boston and paid for by the letter winners. As I recall, hockey letter sweaters were white with a blue "B" outlined in red. I do not recall the color arrangements for football, baseball and crew. Letter winners were also entitled to wear a blazer. These were really nice jackets made to measure in Cambridge, England. They were dark blue with red cuffs and the band across the back of the neck was also red. On the breast pocket was the school seal done in red, blue and gold. (Paul Killiam recently unearthed his and gave it to Beverly Coughlin for the school archives.)

These blazers were very snappy when worn over white flannel trousers, which were required for commencement. Non-letter winners wore plain, dark blue blazers with the white flannels. My father warned the boys to wear white undershorts so no colors would show through the white flannels. Dad was known for attention to details! Along with this outfit, most of us wore white and brown saddle shoes with red rubber soles, but these shoes were not considered wearable until they were properly scuffed up and adequately soiled. They were especially admired if they curled up at the toe.

Our hockey teams rapidly became competitive with most other schools. Phil Wilson then began to schedule our first two games of the year with the Harvard Freshmen and JV teams. The games were played in the old Boston Arena and assured Belmont Hill of getting a head start on the season. Although we did not win those games, we did not get buried either. And we always found ourselves playing against several of our former teammates, which added spice to the games.

My senior year, we also played the Yale Freshmen in New Haven. Our team had a member of the Siamese royal family as our goaltender that year. Part of his Siamese name was Debredy Devequle '34, but he was generally known as Tow. Tow, a nephew of the King, was sent to the U.S. with the hope of attending Cornell to study agriculture and thus become Siam's Minister of Agriculture. Unfortunately, his English did not develop well enough for him to be accepted by Cornell, but he did go to Massachusetts Agricultural College (now the University of Massachusetts). By the time he got back to Siam, however, there had been a bloodless revolution that changed their system of government, so he never was Minister of Agriculture. But he did achieve fame as Thailand's leading agricultural scientist.

As a goaltender, Tow was a magician at preventing goals from up close, but due to nearsightedness, he

could not see the puck when it was shot from outside the blue line. We were leading the Yale Freshmen until one of them, in frustration, took a shot from near center ice, which Tow never saw. In those days, goalies did not wear a helmet or mask and contact lenses had not been invented, so wearing glasses was considered dangerous for a goalie.

In addition to lots of ice and a top-notch coach, the school's early hockey success was greatly enhanced by the three Martin brothers. Kenneth Martin '27, known as Tech, was certainly among the very best all-around athletes the school has ever had. He dominated our football, hockey and baseball teams and dazzled our opponents, but hockey was his favorite. He was big for those days, powerful and graceful. His brothers, Franny and Roger, were in the classes of '28 and '30. All of the Martins were hockey captains at the school and Franny and Roger were also captains at Harvard. Tech is Kenny Martin's father, the other two his uncles, so it seems especially appropriate that Kenny is now the school's athletic director and hockey coach.

While I was at Belmont Hill, we never had a regular varsity basketball schedule with other schools. However, I do recall a couple of times, during extended periods of no ice, when the hockey team, plus Ted Silver '34, became the basketball team pro tem. I believe these games were with Milton and Rivers. Ted was already an expert at basketball and Louis Carr, who was by far the best all-around athlete in the school in 1933, had no trouble converting from puck handling to shooting baskets. These two, with occasional help from two very good hockey forwards, Traff Hicks '34 and Eugene Emerson, gave us good scoring power. Our trouble was on defense where Walter Tufts, Jack Lawrence '33 and I applied our hockey technique. This proved to be quite effective for a few minutes, but led to almost immediate foul trouble that caused Belmont Hill's first ventures into interscholastic basketball to go down to defeat.

While my father was very interested in sports and felt they played an important role in the overall education of boys, he was very leery of what he called "over emphasis" on sports. For a number of years he resisted having professional referees at games, rather, the refereeing was done by teachers. Apparently all of the other schools that we played in sports, which for the most part were the same ones played today, went along with this policy because all of our games in the early years were refereed by faculty members from both schools. While I know that a lot of the faculty members really did not like being game officials, the system did work very well. It encouraged good sportsmanship and certainly minimized arguing with the officials—when the ump might soon grade your next paper, you tended to modify your passion. Furthermore, the amateur officials did a very good job and leaned over backwards not to be partisan—almost to a fault.

Also, one of the school's rules was that the boys were to address male faculty members as "Sir." This meant that we always called the game officials "Sir," which would not be such a bad idea today. (In my case, this meant that I addressed both my uncle Bill Barker and my brother-in-law Phil Wilson as Sir. I was, however, allowed to call my father Dad.) I must say that the opposing teams might have been a little concerned if they had known that, when I was playing catcher, the umpire behind the plate calling balls and strikes was my uncle, Bill Barker. Any catcher will try to pull a close pitch into the strike zone as he catches it trying to make the ump call it

a strike. Uncle Bill, however, knew that trick having been a varsity catcher at Harvard.

Bill Barker, my mother's younger brother, came to the school in 1926. He had fought with the army in World War I and had stayed overseas with the Red Cross during the reconstruction. He had also traveled around the world, so he brought a good deal of sophistication to the school. He and his wife, Jane, presided over Underwood House and later he ran the lower school. He had a very dry, subtle sense of humor and loved to engage boys in conversation about all sorts of subjects or issues. Unfortunately, he died in 1938 of a massive heart attack when alone at his place in Vermont.

There were two men on the school staff who did not teach, but whom the boys called "Sir" and treated with the same respect as regular faculty. Both men were very popular. One was Bert Haynes, an Englishman; the other was Tom Dabney, a wealthy sportsman. Their function was to supervise study hall periods, do some coaching, help with team transportation and perform various other jobs where a mature adult with common sense could take some of the burden off the teaching faculty.

Bert Haynes was a world-class sculler and coached freshmen and 150-pound crews at Harvard. Dad had first employed him at South Pond Cabins before Belmont Hill was founded. Bert's son Jack was a day boy at the school for seven or eight years, graduating in the Class of '33. Jack was later killed in the Coconut Grove fire. Bert had a very British way of saying, "Quiet, boys!" which got instant results and was imitated by the boys only when Bert was not around.

Bert had survived World War I as a machine gunner in the British Army. My father, who was always very health conscious and felt it extremely important to be "regular," once told me that this was one way that Bert survived the war. For a machine gunner in Flanders, it seems not surprising that constipation was not a problem.

Tom Dabney had a great sense of humor and used it very effectively, but never sarcastically, to maintain discipline with the students. He was like a friend whom you wanted to please and, boys being boys, his 16-cylinder, light blue Cadillac convertible did not hurt.

I remember him especially for his thoughtfulness and kindness to me and Mother after Dad died in my Fifth Form year. Tom realized that I would have to earn money to pay for college and asked me to be his paid hand, navigator and cook on his Q-class boat, about a fifty-foot sloop with no power. I lived on that boat all summer in 1932, when we raced in Buzzard's Bay and Marblehead. Late in the summer, we sailed down east to Grand Manan and then back to Wareham, Massachusetts, Tom's summer home. This was about a three-week trip for which he invited a friend and let me ask Walter Tufts along. Tom paid me three-hundred dollars plus expenses, a fortune in those days when Harvard's tuition was four-hundred dollars. Tom died young of a heart attack while traveling in France. I remember him with great fondness and appreciation.

Between athletic seasons, we used to explore the woods, the brook and some of the beautiful pools around the springs. Following hockey season was an especially good time because then we could find salamanders, snakes, turtles, tree toads, polliwogs and, best of all, bullfrogs. Eddie Wigglesworth, whose father was the director of the Boston Society of Natural History before Brad Washburn made it into the Museum of Science, and I got very

adept at catching bullfrogs. We made hooks out of pins, baited them with little pieces of red cloth, and fastened them with about three feet of good, strong thread to six-foot sticks. We then dangled the hooks about two feet in front of the frogs. The trick was to move that little piece of red cloth around to resemble a flying bug. It was astonishing to see how the frogs jumped to get hooked. After we caught them, we released most of them, but kept enough to develop a taste for frogs' legs.

We also used to see a lot of birds that we never see around Belmont Hill now, including beautiful pheasants and bluebirds. The latter were especially common around an old apple orchard and a defunct racetrack for horses near where the Belmont Hill Club is now located. As soon as the hockey season was over, the dam was opened to drain the rinks, which was necessary in order to make the athletic field dry out enough for baseball. This left enough water for a while to attract ducks. One day during recess, Phil Wilson and a few boys happened to be standing around the sundial in front of the Headmaster's house as a duck flew overhead. Phil picked up a stone, threw it at the duck, and, to his amazement as well as that of the rest of us, the duck dropped dead at our feet. The odds of hitting that duck that way must have been about one in a thousand. Phil was a very good cook, however, as he demonstrated to the few of us who witnessed the duck's demise.

Playing marbles was a school-wide recreation in the early days. We used glassies (pretty round marbles made with mixed colors of glass) and a few agates. Since real agates were highly treasured, it was important to know how to identify one. The secret was to give the agate a firm rap with another good-sized marble. If it was genuine, the rap would leave a little, round, miniature eclipse of the sun. As I recall, this could be erased by rubbing the agate against the side of your nose. Clay marbles, called miggies, were shunned. Two games were prevalent.

One was Popsies, where the owner of a big glassie about the size of a golf ball or, in some cases, a valuable agate would sit down with his back against the wall of a building, usually the west side of Bolles, spread his legs and place the valued marble about a foot in front of himself. Another boy or boys with regular-sized glassies would then stand behind a line marked in the gravel ten or twelve feet away and try to hit the prize marble by throwing or "popping" their run-of-the-mill glassies at the big one. The boy on the ground got to keep all of the marbles that missed their mark, but if you hit the big marble, you became its new owner.

The other and most popular game was called Nearest-the-Wall. This could be played anywhere there was a wall either indoors or outside, but by far the favorite place was in front of the concrete steps going up to the covered walkway in front of the classrooms (now the Administrative Offices) in Bolles. At the foot of these two steps was a metal mat about four feet by six feet with little one-inch squares into which marbles could be trapped. Players stood behind an imaginary line that ran at a right angle from about the middle of the outside door into the MacPherson Room. The trick was to bounce your marble on the concrete walkway in front of the mat in such a way that it would get caught in a square nearest the steps. There were usually two to four contestants and the person whose marble was nearest the steps won the other marbles. If two people tied, they would divide the loot, but if three or more people tied, everyone got his marble back.

Some boys formed secret companies. Walter Tufts, Eddie Wigglesworth and I were one company. This enabled us to be playing three against one which would usually allow us to fleece the poor sucker of his marbles. These games were usually played during recess when graham crackers and milk were served from a table on the field near Bolles. We also played between dinner and evening study hall.

Speaking of recess reminds me of one of the boys' favorite characters, Mack McGlynn. Mack was a happy Irishman with a beer belly and a red nose who had an engaging way of speaking and a genuine Irish wit. He was a general maintenance man at the school for many years. Mack stoked the furnaces, waxed floors, etc., but the jobs that he most preferred were running the school pound and serving milk and graham crackers for recess. (It cost a nickel to retrieve a lost item from the pound, the money going towards books for the library and such.) These two jobs gave Mack a chance to socialize and use his Irish banter with the boys.

From 1927 on, Dr. Albert Shapiro (who later changed his name to Shepard) was our French teacher. Dr. Shapiro was a short, stocky man with at least a size eighteen neck which he had developed as an amateur wrestler. While we never had a wrestling team back in the early days, Dr. Shapiro was ready to demonstrate to anyone interested. Parker Hamilton, a big teacher who coached crew, challenged the doctor only one time—he was flattened in about two minutes. In French class, Dr. Shapiro converted our names from English to French. I became Monsieur Coment. Eddie Wigglesworth's name became a phrase—*ca vaut s' tortiller* (worth a wiggle). Dr. Shapiro would astound the whole class when he wrote whole sentences in French or English on the blackboard. With both hands at once, his left hand writing from left to right and his right hand writing from right to left, he would complete the sentence when his two hands met.

We also had a wonderful English teacher, Tom Morse, who was a favorite of the class of '33. He was a very kind "Mr. Chips" type, but he could emphasize a point quite sharply at times. We entered his classroom at the south end of Eliot one day to see the word "puerile" in large letters on the blackboard. Mr. Morse asked the class what puerile meant, which most of us could answer. Then he asked me if I might guess why he had written that particular word on the blackboard. Sensing bad news, I pled ignorance. It turned out that it reflected his opinion of a silly poem I had written about crew being a sport that you did sitting down and going backwards.

During our sixth-form year, the class of '33 noticed that Mr. Morse's selection of neckties was limited to one very tired, dull and frayed piece of cloth. On the last day of classes, we presented him with a colorful, but tasteful, genuine silk tie. A non-*puerile* poem, created, as I recall, by Mark Dahl and/or Paul Killiam, highlighted the presentation.

Dad and Mother considered it important for the boys to learn good manners and social graces. These things were stressed in the dining room and throughout the school. Mother also thought that Belmont Hill boys should practice these qualities outside of school and arranged to have the boys invited to some of the dance series in Cambridge and Boston. One of these series was at Buckingham Hall, part of Buckingham School which, in those days, was a girls' school (before it merged with Browne & Nichols). These dances, known as the Bucks, were for kids fifteen through seventeen years old. The Eliot Hall dances were for the Sixth Form age level. Most of the

boys at these dances were from Noble & Greenough, Milton, and Roxbury Latin, although some would come in from Middlesex, St. Mark's, Groton and the like.

Mother arranged for Belmont Hill boys to receive formal invitations stating that the pleasure of their company was invited to a series of dances to be held at to which most of us replied that we accepted with pleasure (often more truthfully under duress) the kind invitation to attend the series of dances to be held at A few replied formally that Mr. X regrets that he cannot accept the kind invitation to attend ... Unfortunately, some boys did not bother to reply at all which was deemed to have reflected badly on the school and made Mother mad as heck. I, of course, had no choice in the matter. I went to the dances no matter what.

The weekend of the first Buck, I was invited to stay with my classmate Jim Ford at his home in Cambridge. My preparation for the dance consisted of being outfitted with a tuxedo, a pre-tied bow tie, and my father's studs, plus a stern lecture from my mother that I must dance with Mrs. Ford, my hostess for the weekend and a chaperon of the dance. This was an appalling idea since I had never danced or had a lesson in my life. You must remember that this was ballroom dancing in which you approached your partner face to face, grabbed hold of her in a certain approved manner and then were supposed to move your feet in some sort of system in time with the music, and in such a way that your partner had a fighting chance of keeping her feet out from under yours.

Mother had stressed that I should not dance with anybody else until I had danced with Mrs. Ford and it seemed clear that Mrs. Ford was expecting immediate action on my part. So I screwed up my courage and asked her if she would do me the kindness of this dance. She said she would be delighted, so then I was really into it. All I seemed able to do was to go forward, shuffling one foot after the other and hoping other couples would keep out of the way. Mrs. Ford kept up a steady stream of conversation, but I was so distracted that I had no idea what she was talking about. The music finally stopped and she took my arm while I, sweating profusely, walked her to her seat.

I spent the rest of the evening observing and experimenting with a few girls who looked sympathetic and seemed to really know what they were doing. By the time the dance ended, I could go backwards as well as forward and even make a turn or two. Something about those girls also caused me to look forward to the next dance.

The Eliot Hall dances were run by Miss Souther, a friend of Mother's. She really ran a tight ship. She hired freshmen athletes from Harvard as ushers. Their duty was to collar the stags who were not dancing and drag them over to so-called wallflowers, girls with whom none of the boys wanted to dance. The only way to escape those ushers was to cut in on a girl who was already dancing or to retreat to the men's room, which was usually fairly heavily populated. It featured a window which had two-way traffic: inward for boys who were crashing the dance and outward for those who were escaping. I should point out that about a third more boys than girls would attend these dances and for the most part the two sexes arrived at the dances separately, the exception being when a girl had a dinner party before the dance.

One thing Miss Souther could not abide was a view of cleavage. She watched the girls entering the Hall

and took those with cleavage showing into the ladies' room where she installed strips of opaque lace to cover the offending spectacle. To the boys, these obvious additions to the girls' dresses, while a disappointment, did have the implication of a seal of approval and probably caused more speculation and conversation than would the sight of the cleavage itself.

Spring proms were held at Belmont Hill starting in 1927. These were dances to which you brought a date, so there was an even number of boys and girls. The dances were well chaperoned by faculty members and their wives. These were card dances that required the boys to do a lot of negotiating for several weeks preceding the dance. The idea was for you to sign up your girl to dance with other boys in return for which you would dance with their girls. Each boy had a card on which the dancing assignments were recorded. The dances were numbered and announced by the orchestra leader. To achieve just the right balance between the number of times you gave your girl away as opposed to the number of dances you kept her for yourself was a very sensitive issue. If you did not give her away enough, she did not think you were proud of her. If you gave her away too much, she might think your relationship was in jeopardy.

A main feature of the school proms was when the orchestra played a Viennese waltz. This would always attract Mother and Dad to the floor while discouraging the young people from dancing at all. This was just as well because when Mother and Dad were waltzing, it was safer to stay clear. I mean, they could really waltz and they loved doing it. It was worth watching—from a distance.

The most popular Boston band in those days was Ruby Newman. He played the debutante parties, the Eliot Halls and the Bucks. You might call him the proper Bostonian band and, as I recall, he usually played at the school proms. A popular song in those days was *Dancing Cheek to Cheek* and that is what we did. Because your cheeks and chests were the only body parts that were supposed to touch, couples somewhat resembled pyramids. Fortunately, this exaggerated posture did not last long as a more modified cheek to cheek took hold. Dances that were similar to the separate gyrating of today were the Charleston and, to some extent, the Jitterbug. However, even in these dances, it was always clear who was dancing with whom. At midnight, the lights were dimmed, the band played *Goodnight Sweetheart* and the couples drifted around with their eyes closed until the music stopped.

It was the custom in those days for boys to call on girls on Sunday afternoons at which time the girls would usually serve tea. Somehow I cannot imagine this happening today, but we did it in the old days. One of my close friends, Eugene Emerson, and I often went calling together. Prior to our calling, I would often spend the weekend at the Emerson's home in Cambridge. They always had dinner midday on Sunday presided over by Dr. Emerson. (Dr. Emerson started psychiatry at Mass General Hospital.) While he had a great sense of humor, he was also very strict, especially about table manners. I remember once I tipped my chair back. All conversation stopped at the table while Dr. Emerson stared at me as I slowly returned the chair to its upright position.

Dr. Emerson had a Cadillac to which he gave great care. One Sunday, Eugene asked his father for permission to take the car to go calling on girls. The Doctor resisted this request until Eugene said, "Dad, I'll drive that Cadillac as if it were a hearse and you were in it." Permission granted.

Eugene had an interesting nickname. At that time, the school had a janitor by the name of Mr. Easter, who had been a woodsman in Canada. He could do wonderful things with a hatchet, an ax and especially a jack knife. With a jack knife, he could convert a piece of wood into a chain with separate but connected links at the end of which would be sort of a wooden cage with a round ball loose inside. During Christmas and Easter vacations, Eugene and I would often work for Mr. Easter waxing floors, helping on the grounds, washing windows, etc. for which we got thirty-five cents an hour. Mr. Easter would often leave me doing one job and say, "Emus an' I will go ..." As a result of this, I have called my old friend "Emus" ever since.

During the summer of 1927, Mother, Dad, and I went to England, Scotland and Wales. Dad had Dick King '31 join us. Dick was the son of the President of Amherst College. He was a good student and could run like the wind, but only in a straight line which frustrated the football coaches. I remember that once he and Dick Green '31 got into a short-lived fist fight next to Elliot House. It was short-lived because Dick King's initial haymaker missed Green, but did not miss the brick building. End of fight.

We sailed from Boston to Liverpool aboard the Scythia. Although I do not remember many details of that trip, it was certainly great for me to have Dick along, even though I was two years younger than he. We both got sick of spending days in art museums, but were intrigued by the Tower of London with its horrendous collection of torture devices, such as the Iron Lady and the Rack. For political reasons, these are not displayed today. I also remember the cathedrals, of which there was a large supply, most especially Chester Cathedral. It was from Chester Cathedral that Dad brought back the little gargoyle door knockers for the two doors of his study, Rick Melvoin still has them. Westminster Abbey, Big Ben, the changing of the Guard and Stonehenge were also impressive. I was sick in Scotland and I do not remember Wales at all.

Dick and I had a terrific time on the ship. The passengers were divided into first class, second class and steerage. You were not supposed to go into areas of the ship which were not part of your class. However, for two young boys interested in exploring the entire ship, that restriction became a challenge; we got into a certain amount of trouble seeing enough to convince us that we were extremely lucky to be in first class. Steerage was really God-awful. The poor immigrants who were packed in below decks, stacked in tiers of hammocks for two weeks, sure must have welcomed the sight of the Statue of Liberty.

That trip was the first time I ever saw Mother and Dad take an alcoholic drink. Once outside the twelve-mile limit, Prohibition was no longer relevant, so Mother and Dad could legally drink whatever they wanted. Even though they did not agree with Prohibition, they would never drink at school or in the States because they felt that their position at the school made it mandatory for them to obey the law.

I think it was in 1928 that Dad bought a 32-foot, Alden-designed auxiliary sloop called the "Kappi." In the fall, we would sail that boat up from the Cape to Manchester-by-the-Sea where it was moored until the end of October, when it was put up for the winter. In April, it went back in the water and remained in Manchester until summer. Dad used to pay Mr. Innis to do some work on her on weekends, but mostly he kept the boat in Manchester to be able to take boys day sailing. Once, when we were sailing the boat overnight to Manchester from

the Cape, we had several boys, including Reggie Wing '30, with us. This was Reggie's first experience at sea and I believe it was a factor in his decision to spend his life at sea with the Merchant Marine.

My father mentioned his health problems from overwork in the Harvard 25th Reunion Report. It is my understanding that he was threatened with tuberculosis, but whatever it was, his recovery was complete because he led a very active life thereafter. Dad did, however, have one problem that laid him up once or twice a year—severe migraine headaches. These attacks would come on without warning and would put him to bed in a dark room for two or three days. I remember once, when I was thirteen or fourteen, he and I had driven about halfway back to the school from Manchester when he announced that I might have to drive before we made it all the way home. This certainly made me nervous, but on the other hand a chance to drive would be exciting. I was relieved that he did manage to drive all the way, however, even though I was a little disappointed that I did not get a shot at driving.

In my class, my best friend was Walter Tufts, a five-day boarder who commuted to Worcester for the weekends. His father, who was president of two banks in Worcester, always sent his chauffeur to pick Walter up and I often accompanied him home. It was about a two-hour drive in those days up the old Boston Post Road. This was well before Route 9 was built and the Mass Pike was not even a dream. Peasley, the chauffeur, enjoyed sharing with us his extensive knowledge of automobiles and how to drive them. This was particularly interesting because Mr. Tufts was among the first people to own a Cord automobile—the first front-wheel-drive cars. It was hard to shift gears in them, but they could go like the devil, which Peasley often demonstrated for our benefit. I was so enthusiastic about Cords that I invested my entire life savings of sixteen dollars into one share of stock in the company that Dad arranged to get for me. About a year later, the company went broke and so did I.

One weekend in Worcester on a Sunday morning, Walter and I found in the cellar some shotgun shells and a small, muzzle-loading brass cannon. We loaded it with powder from the shells, glass marbles and paper wadding packed in with the ramrod. For lack of a fuse, we stuffed match heads into the touch hole. Our plan was to aim the cannon carefully through the cellar door into an open area outside, but we could not get it to fire. After several attempts, Walter suggested that we should pack the load more firmly into the barrel, so I stuck the ramrod into the barrel and hit it with a hammer. This move caused an instant, deafening explosion that shot the ramrod like an arrow into the back of Mrs. Tufts' new Chrysler sedan followed by the marbles. Walter's parents, in their nightclothes and quite wide awake, arrived instantly to view the damage. Their surprise at finding us alive and well somewhat modified their anger.

Another escapade I remember involved the Carpenter's swimming pool. The Carpenter family was the first to install a swimming pool anywhere near the school, perhaps in all of Belmont. Their lovely house has been fairly recently turned into the gigantic brick edifice partially visible in the woods above the varsity football field. On warm spring evenings that pool became too much of a temptation for the boarders to resist. After bed hours, some of us would sneak out of the dormitories, naked except for perhaps a towel wrapped around our middles, and dash across the athletic fields into the woods to the swimming pool. Clandestine escape from the dormitory over

the school dining room was occasionally aided by the availability of coiled rope, fire escape contrivances that were hung on the inside wall by the windows of each cubicle. Once at the pool, great care was taken to get into the water quietly. One night, however, Al Miller '33 could not resist doing a cannonball dive off the springboard. This sent us all scurrying into hiding places in the woods.

Diving for cover while naked in the woods at night is a very chancy maneuver. Although we were not caught that night, we were done in a couple of days later when Johnny Strauss '32 wound up in the infirmary with poison ivy in places that Miss Harvey, the school nurse, was not accustomed to treating. This required a conference between her and my father to whom the Carpenters had previously said that they thought perhaps some Belmont Hill boys used their pool. Anyway, it was fun while it lasted.

Poor Johnny Strauss was really sick and spent about a week in the infirmary. Like Dick Wiswall, Johnny was an outstanding student who had never gotten into any trouble. I never heard that his parents were pleased with his swimming episode, but his stature went up in the eyes of the boys, although I do not know whether he thought it was worth the price.

One tradition that Dad brought to Belmont Hill from Middlesex was that every member of the senior class was required to carve a panel in order to graduate. The panels were carved on gum wood, about a foot square and an inch thick. You could carve anything you wanted. With considerable help from Mr. Innis, I carved a bell buoy on a choppy ocean. Today, these panels are incorporated in the walls of many buildings and it is great fun to go back to look at them. Unfortunately, there were a few years after Dad died when carving a panel was optional. It is interesting, however, that some of the fellows who opted not to carve a panel then have come back later to do it. In fact, Greely Summers, who graduated in 1937, is currently in the process of carving his.

During the spring of senior year, all Sixth Formers wore academic robes to Chapel, classes and through lunch. These were dark blue, knee-length robes of light-weight cloth. If you were due to graduate from the school with a diploma, your robe had three red velvet stripes just below the right shoulder. The stripes were in the shape of a very wide, inverted V. Four stripes indicated that you were graduating with honors. Two stripes meant that you were getting a certificate of completion, but not a diploma. The small room to the right just before you entered the Chapel (now the MacPherson Room) was reserved for the Sixth Formers to don their robes before Chapel and to hang them back up after lunch.

I recall only one two-striper out of the twenty-one members of the Class of '33. Today he would have been recognized as dyslexic, but nobody had heard of that in those days. He had been bounced around from school to school in the South and by the time he arrived at Belmont Hill he was two or three years older than the rest of us in our class. I do not know what had happened to his parents, but he was under the guardianship of his uncle, Robert E. Goodwin. Goodwin was one of the original partners in the law firm of Goodwin, Procter & Hoar and a classmate and fellow coxswain of my father's at Harvard. Dad decided to take the boy into the school and allow him to progress along with his class without further repeating even though he did not pass all requirements. So Bob Snelling entered the school in Form I or II, I am not sure which. The arrangement worked out extremely well

for Bob, but also for the school.

Bob was built close to the ground, muscular, with huge legs; thus, his sometimes nickname, "Piano Legs." He played guard for three years on the varsity football team, was manager of the hockey team, and captained the crew. He was a great hero the day the crew beat St. Mark's for the first time. Belmont Hill was leading by about a boat length, roughly a hundred and fifty yards before the finish line, when Jake Chapin's '34 outrigger broke. Bob had the presence of mind to direct Jake to throw the oar clear and to stay in rhythm with the back and forth motion of the other oarsmen; all the while, Bob kept rowing himself and shouting his encouragement for the crew to keep going. Belmont won by about three feet.

Bob and Henry Sawyer '32 were very good friends at Belmont Hill and joined Battery A in the Army Reserve together. Bob enlisted as a buck private and came out of World War II as a Captain decorated for valor. He joined the staff at the Fogg Art Museum at Harvard and ultimately became a leading expert on antiques. He managed Courtwright House, a sizeable, upscale antique store and interior decorating establishment on Newbury Street in Boston. Bob also became advisor to the Boston Public Library and the Fogg Museum on antiques. On his death in 1963, the school received a bequest which was used to establish the school library named in his honor. That has now become the MacPherson Room since the school added the Byrnes Library. The plaque in the former Snelling Library honoring Bob has been moved to a small reading room in the Byrnes Library. I must say that I do not feel that this is very appropriate. It should be placed either somewhere in the arts building which would at least have some relationship to Bob's interests or be in the MacPherson Room with an appropriate notation. Incidentally, his bequest to the school of \$10,000 would be equivalent to about \$100,000 of today's dollars.

It is interesting to note that, in these days of so much concern about failing family values, Dad used the following quote from Harvard's President Elliot in one of his first graduation speeches. "The family affections and joys are the ultimate source of civilized man's idea of a living God—an idea which is a deep root of happiness when it becomes an abiding conviction." In the same speech, Dad stated, "Every school master will tell you that when he signs term reports of his boys to be sent home, a high percentage of failures go to homes where one of the following conditions exist: Incompatibility between parents, lack of an affectionate and understanding atmosphere, lack of cooperative interest, lack of reasonable control, lack of companionship, intemperance, responsibility assigned to servants, undo extravagance, lack of common sense."

As long as my father ran the school and for sometime thereafter, most of the boys went on to Harvard. The others generally chose Yale, Dartmouth, Princeton, Amherst, Wesleyan, Bowdoin and Trinity. All of us took college board exams for several years to accumulate points for college entrance. This was the "old plan" under which you had to accumulate at least fifteen points, spread over a proper assortment of courses. Fortunately for me, a "new plan" was introduced in the nick of time, since I would have been shy a point or two under the old plan. Under this new plan, you took college board exams at the end of the Sixth Form year. I remember taking English, American history, physics, French and Latin. Latin could be substituted for math, a peculiar twist which enabled me to get into Harvard.

At that time, most of us just expected to go to Harvard and never thought of applying anywhere else. There was no such thing as early admittance and we did not hear whether or not we were in until the end of July or early August. I remember getting my acceptance to Harvard in Sorrento, Maine where I was working for the Wheatland family taking care of their boats, teaching their kids to sail and tutoring one of them in math—certainly the blind leading the blind.

The last time I saw and talked to my father was the day he died. He was in his study, obviously in some pain. He said he thought he had acute indigestion and told me to go on to school, which I did. The next thing I remember is being called back from class and arriving in our living room to find my mother, sister, brother-in-law, Uncle Bill Barker and Dr. Barstow, the school doctor. I remember how appreciative we all were to Dr. Barstow, who stood by Dad to the very end after Boston's leading heart specialist had left the scene saying Dad would be all right. He sent a bill for \$1000—Dr. Barstow charged nothing.

Things are sort of a blur after that. I do remember Mother saying that at least she knew Dad had a happy life. I have also never forgotten how gently and kindly Uncle Bill took command of the situation and how thoughtfully he treated me. The next thing I remember was somehow getting off by myself on the school grounds not far from Underwood House and bawling my eyes out as I walked down towards the athletic fields.

The service for Dad was at the Church of Our Savior in Brookline where his father had been the rector for many years. The tremendous, overflow crowd that attended was an extraordinary tribute to Dad and a great consolation to us all.

After Dad's death, a special issue of *The Sextant* (Volume IX, Number 3) was published by the boys of Belmont Hill School. One copy, beautifully bound in blue leather with red and gold trim and including the school seal on the front, was presented to Mother. It is signed by all of the trustees, faculty and boys. We still treasure it.

The lead editorial of this issue states in part:

...Their [Dr. and Mrs. Howe] warmth of spirit combined to give the school at all times the sterling attributes of community warmth with which it has always been invested.

Dr. Howe's patience and understanding inspired in the boys and masters and in all connected in any way with the school a loyalty which was second only to his devotion to them and the school. This makes it sure that the spirit of 'cooperative goodwill' with which he endowed Belmont Hill will be its everlasting heritage.

Belmont Hill School has had a number of Headmasters since my father and each one has left his mark on the school. Fred Hamilton, in particular, must be credited with saving the school, when, in June of 1942, he took over at a time when only about 40 boys were enrolled for the following September. Somehow, he managed to open the school that fall with slightly over 100 students. This began another period of substantial growth in both

facilities and enrollment.

Dad was more than simply the first headmaster of Belmont Hill School. He was also its founder, hired by the Executive Committee to establish a school for boys. Dad gave the last ten years of his life to doing just that. My father was not handed an already established institution to run. Rather, he was presented with a house and land and had absolutely outstanding Trustees who were prepared to do their part in providing support for the project.

It was Dad who set the tone and character of the school. He established the priorities for new facilities, supervised and negotiated with the architects and contractors who built the plant, hired the faculty, established the curriculum with their assistance, recruited the students, designed the school seal, and chose the school colors. It was Dad who got his friend President Elliot of Harvard to make the opening address regarding cooperative goodwill.

From 1923 until February of 1932 when he was struck down by a massive heart attack, Dad guided the school through the Great Depression building enrollment from 0 to 184 students. The plant grew from one house and no athletic facilities to an institution with three classroom buildings, two separate dormitory buildings, a large wing on the Headmaster's house containing a dormitory, school dining room and Chapel, a Natural History Museum, the Atkins Library with a classroom underneath, and a house for the school matron and maids. Athletic facilities included a field house with locker rooms, squash court, common room, and a basketball court convertible to a theater with a good-sized stage at one end, two cages, two tennis courts, five outdoor, natural-ice rinks and two full-size football fields that also accommodated baseball diamonds.

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The March 1949 *Belmont Hill School Alumni Bulletin* marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of the school was dedicated to Mother and the memory of Dad.

...no greater tribute can be paid to those co-founders of Belmont Hill than to write that after twenty-five years 'working together' is still its fundamental idea.

That Bulletin included numerous letters from graduates, parents, headmasters of other schools and friends referring to Dad's and Mother's part in founding the school. One letter from Henry Hixon Meyer includes the following quote:

...Dr. Howe went to work and how he made the dirt fly. He had only an idea and a team. The School had no money, no land, no buildings, no teachers and no boys. But Dr. Howe believed in the project and sold it to everyone he met. And of course there was Mrs. Howe. One could say 'no' to him but never to her. You know what happened. The School opened a little more than a year later with more boys than it could properly accommodate. A few of you will remember that first year of Belmont Hill. Perhaps you would not care to

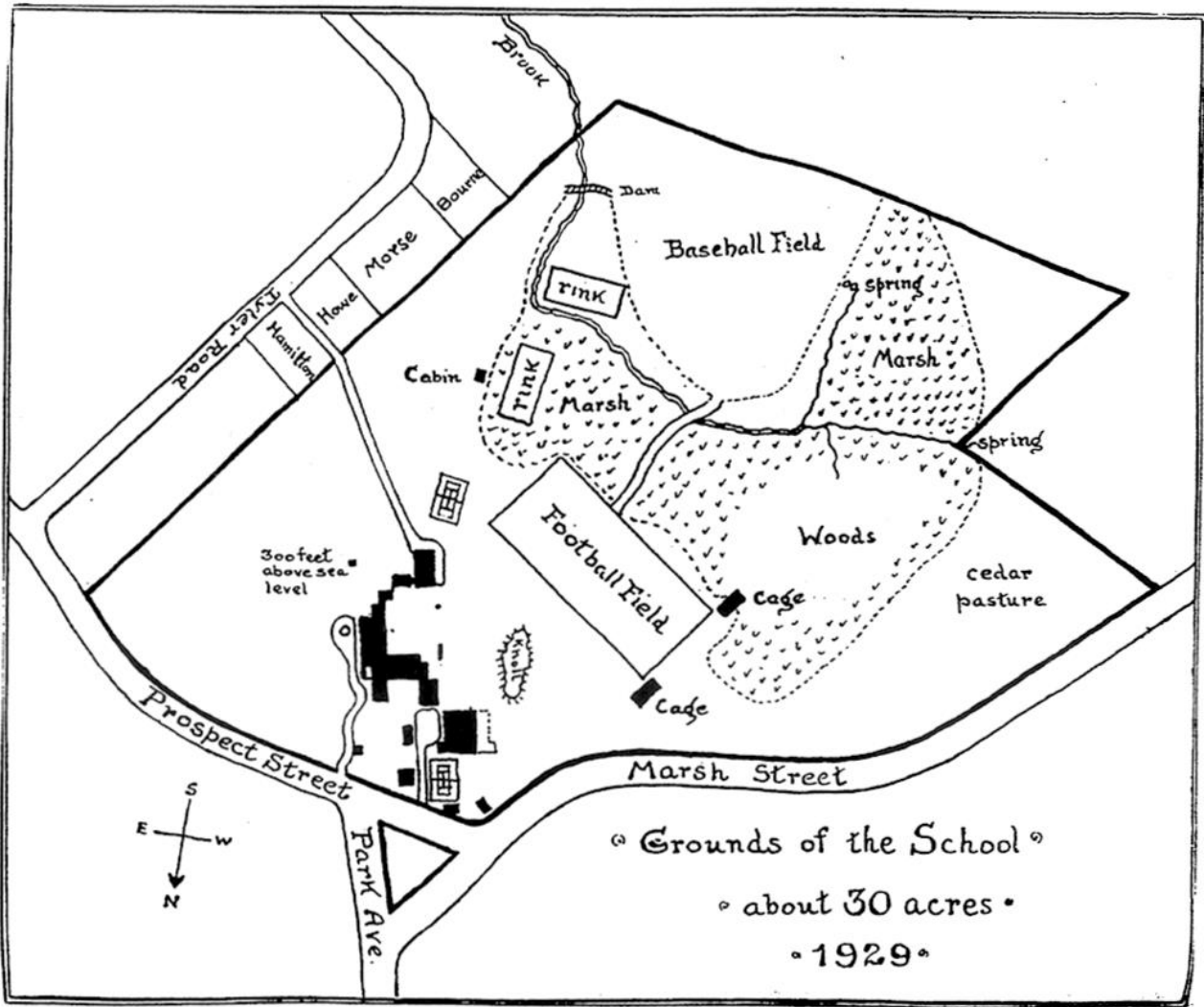
repeat it, but I'm sure you will never forget it.

During his years as headmaster, Dr. Howe built a foundation so sound that his successors have not found it necessary to discard a single principle. And so it will be always for neither time nor circumstance will diminish the virtues of hard work and fair play for which he stood, determined.

Finally, a tribute to Dad at the thirty-fifth reunion of his Harvard Class of 1901:

...Heber's career was crowned by the founding of Belmont Hill School. After twenty years of effective mastership at Middlesex, he struck out for himself, and in September, 1923, began the work which for nine years grew under his wisely stimulating grasp. As naturalist, as sportsman, as educator, Heber Howe brought colorful conviction to whatever task he essayed.

If pupils are biographers, a tale of sympathetic appreciation summarized Heber's career. What a funeral! What an outpouring of mute boyish sadness and grateful parenthood! The Church of Our Saviour, where Heber's father had long been rector, was crowded with a hushed throng of venerating classmates, associates and disciples. To his life they paid final their tribute on Saturday, January 30. *da ei requiem aeternam, Domine, et lux perpetua luceat in eum.*



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