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THIS BROCHURE CONTAINS A

TRANSCRIPTION OF A TAPE RECORDING

OF THE

HISTORICAL RECOLLECTIONS OF FOUR MEMBERS

OF THE

WINTHROP IMPROVEMENT AND HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

RENDERED DURING A MEETING OF THE
ASSOCIATION IN THE BARN

2 FEBRUARY 1960

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PREFACE

THE FOLLOWING COPY IS SET UP WITH MR. ERNEST BENTLEY, PRESIDENT OF THE ASSOCIATION AND A LONG TIME RESIDENT OF WINTHROP, ACTING AS AN INTERROGATOR OF THE OTHERS, WHO WERE:—

HARRISON BELCHER - A LONG TIME RESIDENT AND KNOWN AS "HARRY"

LOUIS COBB - - - BORN ^{AND} BROUGHT UP IN WINTHROP. DESCENDANT IN THE FLOYD LINE. HE ^{AND} MYRTLE HIS WIFE WERE THE RESIDENT CUSTODIANS OF THE DEANE WINTHROP HOUSE FOR OVER 30 YRS.

SIDVIN TUCKER - - RESIDENT OF WINTHROP SINCE 1900. MARRIED RUBY GILLMORE, WHO IS A FLOYD DESCENDANT FROM CAPT. JOHN FLOYD OF 1636.

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MRS DRURY WAS --- ^{and} --- STILL IS THE SECRETARY *of* THE ASSOCIATION.

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THE NAME OF A SPEAKER IS GIVEN FIRST AND THEIR REMARKS FOLLOW.

WINTHROP IMPROVEMENT AND HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Mr. Bentley: Ladies and Gentlemen, this is the regular meeting of the Winthrop Improvement and Historical Association. The first item of business will be the reading of the minutes of the last meeting. Mrs. Drury.

Mrs. Drury: A regular meeting of the Winthrop Improvement and Historical Association was held at the Barn, Tuesday evening, January 5th, 1960, following a baked ham dinner served at 6:30 PM. The President of the Association, Mr. Ernest Bentley, presided at the business meeting. The Clerk's minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved. The Treasurer, Mr. Arthur W. Hodges, read the monthly financial statement. The cash on hand being \$384.24. Mrs. Leon P. Dutch, the Corresponding Secretary announced a meeting of the Bay State Historical League on Saturday, January 16th, as guests of the Women's Archives of Radcliffe College at Longfellow Hall in Cambridge. On recommendation of the Executive Board and on motion of Mr. Arthur W. Hodges, it was voted to accept Mrs. John C. Ashworth, 19 Orlando Avenue, and Mr. and Mrs. Ralph E. Hamilton, 86 Sherwood Road, Medford, as members of the Association. Thanks and appreciation were expressed to the Dinner Committee, which consists of Mrs. Louis Cobb, Mrs. Harrison Belcher, Mrs. Leland Floyd, Mrs. Joseph Poor, Mrs. Walter Rowe and Mrs. Warren Wickwire. The gift of a copy of the Winthrop Sun, dated May 22, 1897 which was acquired at an auction in New Hampshire, was acknowledged. Also noted was a gift from Mrs. Arthur Campbell, of a picture of Colonel and Mrs. Sylvester with Mrs. Kate Paine. Business meeting adjourned. Mr. Bentley introduced Rev. Gene Rose, Pastor of St. John's Episcopal Church, who told of his experiences with the Sioux and Chipewa Indians while attending a seminary on an Indian reservation in Minnesota. Mr. Rose completed his talk with a showing of colored slides of the Indians and their surroundings. Julia M. Drury, Clerk.

Mr. Bentley: Thank you very much Mrs. Drury. May we now have the Treasurer's report, Mr. Hodges, Please.

Mr. Hodges: December 19, 1959. Balance \$384.24. Receipts, membership; \$1.00. Dues; \$1.00. Dividends; \$79.86. Pacific Gas & Electric dividend; \$49.40. Miscellaneous; \$24.00. Total receipts; \$155.26. Expenses: Water Tax; \$6.50. Telephone for December; \$5.00. Bank charges for November; 78¢. Gas and electricity; \$20.10. Total expenses; \$32.38. January 23, 1960, balance, \$507.12. Arthur W. Hodges, Treasurer.

Mr. Bentley: Thank you very much, Mr. Hodges. Ladies and Gentlemen, this is the regular February meeting of the Winthrop Improvement and Historical Association. Because it is a regular meeting, it is a very irregular program. We have been very fortunate upon prevailing on three members of the Association, all with connections with some of the old times of the Town; some with direct connections, some with connections by marriage; nevertheless all having connections going back considerable time in the history of Winthrop. It was the feeling of the Committee when this program was arranged that perhaps some personal items might be introduced. Histories of Winthrop are available to us and Winthrop has been referred to and some of its history has been recorded in various publications. But if we can get any personal items we think it will add to the history already known to us and it is our purpose to add this recording to the archives of the Association.

Mr. Bentley (cont'd).: Might I first of all introduce to you the members, and if they have at this time anything they wish to say they might use this opportunity to expound the introduction that I might give. First, on my right we have Mr. Louis Cobb. (applause). Louis, by the way tells me that today is his 27th anniversary. (applause). It was 27 years ago today that they moved into the Deane Winthrop House. That right Louis?

Mr. Cobb: The first meeting that we attended after we moved in was 27 years ago tonight.

Mr. Bentley: The first meeting that they attended. You wish to say anything else about your background Louis or your availability to this house?

Mr. Cobb: Well, you might say it's kind of a family affair here. You know, a lot of these old families here couldn't throw any stones because you'd hit one of your relatives. On this panel tonight Harrison Belcher is my first cousin and Sid Tucker's wife is my second cousin. So you see, it's all in the family.

Mr. Bentley: Not only that, but when I was over to the Cobb's house the other night he showed me a book that had been given to some preceding family member signed by a Winthrop. Perhaps you'll tell us about that?

Mr. Cobb: Well, there's a Bible in the house that was given to my great-grandmother who was Sally Tewksbury, by Mrs. Thomas Winthrop in 1816.

Mr. Bentley: On my immediate right we have Mr. Harrison Belcher, frequently known as Harry Belcher. I don't need to say anything more about Harrison; the name indicates that he is one of the descendants of one of the old Winthrop families. Harrison do you want to say anything further?

Mr. Belcher: Not at this time, Mr. Bentley.

Mr. Bentley: Not at this time. And the third member of this panel is Mr. Sidvin Tucker; known to all of you as the Historian of Winthrop. He is the member of this panel who is not of himself of one of the old Winthrop families, but he is married into one of them and has spent perhaps more time investigating old Winthrop history than the rest of us. And for that reason we are happy to have him part of this group tonight. Sidvin?

Mr. Tucker: Yes; Ernest I'd like to call this to your attention. I think that perhaps this tape recording, the notice that I got, said that it was for the conservation -- the conservation of our conversation; I guess that's what it is. Conservation. Well, so that you'll know that this is on a very high plane tonight I wore my spats. (laughter). My wife said "Oh, take those off tonight." Well, Louis' already indicated that this is a family affair. The Deacon David Floyd's house used to set up on Revere Street here, on the northerly corner of Locust. That was moved in 1895 down by Ocean Spray Station, and it's still there. So the first house I lived in in Winthrop was the Deacon David Floyd house by Ocean Spray and not very many years after that I married Deacon David's great-great granddaughter. So that's the family connection there.

Mr. Bentley: Thank you very much, Sidvin. I think if we try to take things a little bit chronologically; as I say we did have a meeting and agreed about some of the things we were to mention. The first of them, rather rightly I believe, would be the connection of Indians with Winthrop. Now, Winthrop was originally of course, a part of Boston. Boston was settled in 1630. No one knows of course whether there were actually Indians here at this time, living in Winthrop; but we do know that Indian relics have been found in the Town. Perhaps some member of the panel can tell us something about that. Does anybody know anything about the Indians in Winthrop?

Mr. Tucker: Well, I think we pretty generally know that over by Winthrop Center Station, about where Gordon Fullerton's Garage is, there were Indian graves over there and when they were putting the railroad through, that was quite a hill there. And they dug the hill down so's to put the railroad through up by Pleasant Street, and they came across the Indian graves. That was back in 1887 or 1888. They needed a photographer to have men come down from Harvard, some professors, and they wanted a photographer to take pictures of those graves, and they couldn't find anybody but they

Mr. Tucker (cont'd): finally located Harry Whorf who was in school at the time but he came out and took them and they came out very well. They've got copies of those pictures over in Harvard, and we've got copies here in Winthrop also. So there were Indians in Winthrop; they could'nt have found graves of Indians unless there were Indians here.

Mr. Bentley: I must say I was looking through one of the histories of Winthrop this afternoon and mention was made that the Indians were a pretty wild group of people; they were not the "noble" people said the writer that we picture them as being today. It said that the settlement of Boston probably would not have taken place as quietly as it did except that in 1617 and 18 a pestilence had struck the Indians and had dessiminated their numbers. They're not sure whether it was smallpox or some similar pestilence that had visited them. It had not only decimated them, but it had taken the best of their blood, so that when the Puritans landed in 1630 they found little resistance initially. You have something to say on the Indians, Louis?

Mr. Cobb: On the corner of Pauline and Pleasant Street for a great many years, was a large stone there and it was said to have been used by the Indians for grinding corn. Hardly a great many people saw it on account of a vine growing over it and that had been brought there; it was originally on a hill near Woodside and Pleasant Street. I think when they cut the hill down the story is that it was moved by some of the Newton family to Pauline Street. But this Association tried to acquire that stone when Dr. Haley built that new building on the corner and one of our members tried to approach him on it and they said "No" they were going to keep it. And when they moved the stone and busted it up they tried to give it to us but it was in probably a dozen pieces and gone beyond doing anything with. But that was another Indian relic that has been here but is gone by.

Mr. Bentley: Harrison, know anything about the Indians in Winthrop?

Mr. Belcher: Well, they were building a house next to where I live now and they dug up an Indian body, that was in 1902.

Mr. Bentley: 1902. I also understand that when they dug the foundations for the Edward B. Newton School, an Indian grave was found, and the book I was reading this afternoon brought this out too. It said we think of the Indians as being pretty heavy around these parts. It said that by the very nature of things they lived purely by hunting, and hunting requires very large areas over which to hunt. It said, as a matter of fact, there are more Indians in New England today than there were at the time of the Civil War, which doesn't go back as far as we're talking about but you see, it would indicate there never were the tremendous number of Indians as we might of thought. And I think of the reasons that there were not so near because of the pestilence which I'd previously referred to. Well, suppose we pass on to another subject. We're meeting next door to one of the oldest houses in Winthrop, there seems to be a little question as to the exact date which the house next door was built; the Deane Winthrop House. But there are also other old houses in Town. I wonder if each of us might just say a word about some of the old homes?

Mr. Tucker: Yes, but before you leave the subject of the Deane Winthrop House, I think that we should emphasize the fact the nearest date that we can get authoritatively is 1637 and we should make the point that Deane Winthrop or Governor Winthrop didn't build the house; it was built by Captain William Pierce of Mayflower fame and he sold it to Governor Winthrop for his son, Deane. Deane lived there all his life, and that's why you call it the Deane Winthrop House. I'd like to call your attention to the fact that in my day across the street where there's a flock of houses now that was quite a good sized apple orchard. I picked apples there myself; you'd hardly believe it; right across the street was an apple orchard.

Mr. Bentley: Any more old houses? You know of any Louis?

Mr. Cobb: Well, there's quite a few old houses that existed in Winthrop. The Bill House, that I think most of us remember was down on Beale Street. It was built by a man by the name of Reverend John Oliver. He was one of the original grantees of land here, and that house looked very similar to the Deane Winthrop House and was built about the same time. That was torn down about 1930. There's a picture of it on the wall over there somewhere. Also, there was the Gibbons House which was near the Gibbons elm which was down on the corner of Pleasant and Winthrop Street. And then there was a house known as the Parliament House on Sunnyside Avenue, occupied by Joseph Belcher and the name Parliament House was put on it because of the gatherings of the people of the day there to discuss politics. Then there was the Tewksbury House at Point Shirley on Siren Street which was built in 1730 and I don't know whether it was burned or taken down in 1902. Then of course, we had some homes of some famous people over in the Park section. There was a George B. Emerson who built a home there in 1844 and he owned 30 acres over there of that land and he was a well-known educator and naturalist. And there was a Judge John Lowell, a son-in-law of Emerson, and also a home of Judge Edward G. Loring, who was Chief Justice of the Court of Claims; and his house was over on Court Road, near where Albert and Elmer Avenue is now. And that building was afterwards turned into a hotel and torn down when I was a boy.

Mr. Bentley: Have you any houses in mind, Harrison?

Mr. Belcher: Well, I have in mind one up there near the Methodist *Church* which was built by a man by the name of Dadmun. He was a minister at Deer Island. And I haven't got the date on that.

Mr. Bentley: It is rather interesting, I think, to remember that Winthrop has had several names; largely because it has been part of various other towns. Recently of course, it was part of Boston. Then I guess it became part of Chelsea and was known as Pullen Point, which is a corruption of the word "Pulling" Point. As I get it, boats tried to get through the Shirley Gut at that time, and finding the current so strong and having difficulty sailing through they landed a member of their crew and they had a rope and they pulled, and they helped to pull it through. So it was Pulling Point. And that is one explanation which has been given though there may be some other explanation for it. And then of course, it was known and is known as Winthrop. Well, suppose we pass on.

Mr. Tucker: Might I interrupt here?

Mr. Bentley: Yes, yes indeed.

Mr. Tucker: Very quickly, I'll point out this to you; there's quite a few old houses in some of the houses that you know around here. Beacon Villa, for instance was built in 1870. That's pretty nearly a hundred years ago. 210 Main Street, opposite Herman, that was built in 1842 and at the time that that house was built there wasn't another house to the West of that and there wasn't another house on this side except the Deane Winthrop House and in 1842 there was a house across the street called the Seashore Home. Winthrop was just a great big area and the next house to it, built in 1854, that's the Davidson House, it's right there; and Beacon Villa in 1870 and the house that you practically know, the Whittier House up on Ingleside Avenue, that was built in 1830. But it wasn't built where it is now; it set where the Ingalls House used to set right across the street from that and they moved it in 1875 to where it is now. And some of the walls in Gene Whittier's house are made of brick, that was built by another of the Tewksbury's family, William Tewksbury, who was a relative of Mrs. Pauline Tucker, no relation ~~to~~ mine.

Mr. Bentley: It's not easy for us to remember how recent growth is the real development of Winthrop. In 1840 they took a census; most of the population was living in Point Shirley, at that time. And the total population in 1840 was 156, and of that 156, 142 were either Tucker's, Floyd's, or Belcher's; Tewksbury's, excuse me, Tewksbury's Floyd's or Belcher's. 142 out of 156. Now, that is evidence of the comparative youth of the Town of Winthrop as we know it. There are not many industries in Town today, but there are a few rather small ones for the most part; but Winthrop has had various industries in it's history. I wonder if we might have a little information on that point. Louis, do you know anything about the industries of the Town?

Mr. Cobb: Well, I think Harry has a list of some of the older ones; I have some of the newer ones.

Mr. Bentley: Oh, how about it Harry?

Mr. Belcher: Well, of course you know Point Shirley was the busiest part of the Town in the old days, and they had a copper works down there started by Paul Revere's son; that was in 1841 and ran until 1869, then it moved to Canton. At that time, copper ore was discovered in this country. The previous copper ore came from Chile and Peru, so it was cheaper to move to Canton to refine it. Then the Salt Works; the pipe from the Salt Works is hanging on the wall over there; that salt was you know put into these trays and then the sun evaporated and you'd have the salt in the bottom of these trays. As I said for thirty years. Then there was a torpedo factory on Putnam Street. This was also in business thirty years, and the building is still standing today. It's near the end of Putnam just where Buchanan bends. And my grandfather used to take quarters or half dollars, and break them in two with a vise then they'd put them in either sulphuric or nitric acid and it went into making the torpedos. These are the torpedos the children used to throw down; the

Mr. Belcher cont'd: little red heart-shaped torpedos. The powder was put into the gravel and then that ignited the powder. Then, in the general vicinity of Girdlestone Road and opposite the Pleasant Park Yacht Club was a kerosene refinery. On Winthrop Street, opposite North and South Avenue, there was a leather tannery and a little later on it was changed to a chocolate factory. This was run by the Paine family with which Kate Paine was connected. Later the building was torn down and the lumber used in building the Bangs Storage warehouse on Madison Avenue. And of course there was a milk business here started by Nelson Floyd. He started from his father's place on Willow Avenue and later moved and established his barns down where the Elks building is and later moved to Buchanan and Winthrop Streets where Caggiano's Funeral Home is today. Then early in the twentieth century we had an artificial ice plant on Argyle Street. The foundations you'll still see there today and connected with the ice company and the Floyd Milk Company we had two deep driven wells, and they were the only two in town. That completes about it all.

Mr. Bentley: It would be interesting to hear a comment on the fishing station at Point Shirley. In connection with that the Point got its name; it was Pullin Point previously, but it became Point Shirley and can you tell us why, Sidvin?

Mr. Tucker: Yes, in 1753 some business men in Boston got the idea of starting a fishery industry and picking out Point Shirley to do it. That was Thomas Goldthwaite. And to start it going they had quite a celebration down there and they had Governor Shirley come down to speak to them, and he did and that's why they call it Point Shirley. I'd like to say a thing or two about this Pullen Point business. Pullen Point was the whole of what is Winthrop; not just merely Point Shirley but the whole of this area was Pullen Point. Right here, Ernest, I would like to point this out to you too; that when that fishery business was going it's assumed that they had a church down there. They built a lot of buildings down there and one

Mr. Tucker cont'd: of Mather's relatives came down and he preached in presumably what was the church and that was presumably a Congregational Church, Ernest. That should be of interest to you, so if we get digging back too far we'll find that maybe the first church was the one at Point Shirley in 1753.

Mr. Bentley: I was interested in reading a little bit this afternoon and I hope that none of the descendants of the people responsible for our fishing industry, our fishing station; I hope there's none of them here tonight, because it said that they came down from Boston to build themselves homes down there and they spent so much money building their homes that they didn't have enough money left to run an efficient business. That's why they only lasted a very, very short time.

Mr. Tucker: There's an item about Louis going to speak about recent industry so I thought I'd get this in before he talked about the recent ones. I don't know whether you'd call cutting hair an industry, or barbering being an industry, or whether an undertaker is an industry but back in the old days, up on the corner of Pauline Street and Hermon Street there was a barber shop run by Barry Mitchell who was a colored barber. This was away back in the 1881's thereabouts; and when Mother wanted Johnny to get his hair cut, she'd have to look at the tide calendar to see whether she could send the boy to have his hair cut because if the tide was low Barry Mitchell would be out clamming, so you couldn't get your hair cut. Now, another industry, which is the other extreme is the undertakers. The first undertaker in town, rightly enough, was a John Floyd. By and by he sold out to Sumner Floyd and then Sumner Floyd sold out to Bennison, and now Bennison's is Marsh's; so there's continuity right there. Then we had a blacksmith's shop right near the S.W. corner of Magee's Corner where the drug store is now. There used to be another one down here right by Cherry Street. I remember both of those very well. Those are old, but not recent industries Louis; why don't you talk about the recent ones.

Mr. Cobb: Speaking about the undertakers; you all remember Charles Bennison. Well he went into several enterprises, and when I was a boy he acquired a whale. Some of the people might remember it; and this whale was in a livery stable at the Highlands; Argyle Stable. People remember it was over there on the corner of Argyle and Revere Street. And I remember very well one night, I think it was a Saturday night; the fire alarm came in and we looked out the window and it was late at night and the sky was all lit up there from the blaze. My father went to the fire and when he got home we said "What was on fire?" and he said the Argyle Stable burnt up and cooked Bennison's whale. (laughter). Another thing of interest, or might be of interest to you the number of theatres that we have had in Winthrop. This is all within my time but a lot of people here probably didn't know about them. The first movie theatre I knew of here in Winthrop was called the Pastime and that was located down in Constitution Hall; a building that burned here just two or three years ago. And then after that they built the Green Theatre, the building still standing, and that was called the State. That was built around 1910 or 11. And then after that they built a theatre up here at Ocean Spray, called the Empire Theatre, and that was on the site of the present Ocean Motors, the Ford place. That didn't last too long and after that they had the Gem Theatre; as kids we used to call it the "Germ". And that was over where the Odd Fellows building is; and of course the present Winthrop Theatre which was built in 1914.

Mr. Bentley: Schools are always of interest and it would be interesting, I think to have a little recording about the first school; if we know where it was and how the others came into existence. Do you know anything about that Sidvin?

Mr. Tucker: Well, I don't want to do all the talking here.

Mr. Bentley: Go ahead, we'll let you this time.

Mr. Tucker: All right. Where the Post Office is now and the Town Hall previously; beside of it there was an old school that was built away back in 1834. Later on that was enlarged or improved, and when the first Town Hall was built; (the old Town Hall) in 1856, they moved that school building down to Winthrop Street and it's still there on Winthrop Street, right opposite George Street. The man who bought it, I forgot who bought it, up until recent years a man by the name of Green used to own it; he raised it up, and the school room is the second floor and it is the same building that was there way back a hundred years ago. I've been up in the attic, and I've seen the place where the chimney used to go, and the blackboards were there, but they've been taken down now and that is still in Winthrop now right opposite George Street. I guess the people'd let you see it if you wanted to go and see it, but it looks thoroughly modern now, I'll tell you.

Mr. Bentley: Didn't one of the Belcher's have a school in their home at one time?

Mr. Tucker: Prior to that; back in the 1700's, over in the Bill House they had a school over there and I guess they were all Tewksbury's, Belcher's and Floyd's too. That was back in the 1700's.

Mr. Cobb: I have a book here that was used in the school up there on the site of the Post Office, that belonged to my grandfather. He went to that school he was born here in the Deane Winthrop House in 1834 and he went to school in that building when he was five years old, and he said they had one class-room and the children were from 5 to 21 years of age, and they had four sessions a year or four periods, and each period they had a different teacher, and each teacher started at the same place and he said it was like a frog jumping out of a well in the day-time and jumping back at night. And this book I find has got Chelsea Point marked in it and it's got his name in it, Lucius Floyd - and it's got L.F., and the F is backwards, it's printed in here with ink, and it says "new school book" and it's dated August 24, 1846.

Mr. Bentley: Anything else on the schools?

Mr. Tucker: Back in those days, in the later period when the old Town Hall was in existence, they used to have the grammar school up there, the Town Hall, and Judith Gardner was one of the teachers, and she used to teach the Tewksbury's, Belcher's and Floyd's. Speaking of the Town Hall reminds me of this Ernest, that a little bit away from the school was the library, away back in 1885 there was what was called the Lycoum, and the town granted them the use of a room up there for a reading room on nights when the band wasn't practicing.

Mr. Bentley: Within the memory of most of us here in the room tonight, I think, transportation in and out of Winthrop has changed very considerably; and the process of getting from Boston to Winthrop used to be quite a substantial one, unless you wanted to come by boat. However, in the 1800's they did put a bridge across from Main Street across to Orient Heights, which was not Orient Heights at that time; it was Winthrop Junction. And that shortened the traveling to Boston pretty considerably. It is interesting to note it was a toll bridge; what year was that?

Mr. Cobb: I have a toll book here from that toll bridge; it's Monday, September 6, 184 and we have four of these books here in the House. You can look at them and see the amount of money they took in. I don't know how they could afford to pay anybody any money. There's the date; \$1.14, \$1.86, 88¢, \$2.98; they didn't make much money.

Mr. Bentley: Is that the total for the day?

Mr. Cobb: That was the total for the day; it's listed here. Then I also have a political poster here, that David Floyd, Jr., in 1850 run on a Free Bridge ticket, to do away with toll bridges, and his opponent was also a Floyd, who was Edward Floyd; and we think that

Mr. Cobb cont'd: David won because after 1850 there was no more toll book, so he must have won the election. And he was a member of the Wig Party and it is quite interesting to see what they have to say about each other on this poster here; afterwards you can look at it.

Mr. Tucker: It's pretty interesting to think away back in 1650 thereabouts, as Ernest says, the only way you could get to Boston was to row. Would be a lot quicker than going up through here to Revere; through Malden, up across the Mystic River; down through what is now Cambridge, and out to Roxbury and back through the Neck at Dover Street. Later on, of course, they went around the same way; and when they got to Chelsea they went down to the Win-nisimet Ferry and crossed over. And later on than that, when the ferry was put through at Maverick Square; of course Tewksbury's ran stage coaches to Maverick Square; across that way. That was a lot quicker and that toll bridge was organized in 1839. Now, speaking of the coaches going on the ferry, Ernest, it's interesting to note this. Back in 1860 it was the practice for the coachman to ride the coach with the passengers in it down onto the slip waiting for the ferry to come in. Well, at one time when the coachman had driven down there, he got off for a minute to wait for the boat to come in, but it slipped and the whole coach went right into the harbor, except that the passengers did have time to scramble out but they lost the coach and the horses too. Not a very humorous thing to remember but those were the hazards that they had.

Mr. Bentley: Well, talking about toll bridges and ways of getting in and out of Winthrop suggests a little thought about transportation within the Town. There have been several railroads that were projected, built and operated. The one that we remember most of course was the Narrow Gauge which has already been mentioned, but there were several other railroads, a surprising number of railroads which have come into the Town. Have you anything on that subject any of you? Have you anything Harry?

Mr. Belcher: I think probably Mr. Tucker's got something.

Mr. Bentley: Have you got anything, Sidvin?

Mr. Tucker: Well, in fairly recent history, before the Narrow Gauge came in here to Winthrop, it used to run from Boston to Lynn and then there was a short line organized by a different company that ran from Winthrop to what was then called Winthrop Junction. I've heard it said that the track was so slender and the ties were so slender that in extremely high tides those ties would come up like this on end and the track would be up in the air. Well, that was what they called the "Peanut Train". Some of you must have heard something about that. It came down near Magee's Corner and went through the marsh, and very much later, went to above Revere Beach. And Lynn took it over. 'til they put the belt around the Town. That was in 1888. Prior to that there used to be a horse railroad in Town here; used to circuit the Town on track; that was in 1876.

Mr. Bentley: Does anyone know how long the Narrow Gauge ran; how many years it operated?

Mr. Tucker: 1940 it closed.

Mr. Bentley: It closed in 1940; when did it open, 1888?

Mr. Tucker: 1888.

Mr. Bentley: 1888, twelve, 52 years.

Mr. Belcher: We also had a steamboat company here, that ran from Lewis Wharf on Shirley Street to Boston and stopped at Cottage Park. A good many of the times they got stuck on the mud flats and just didn't get there, so it didn't last too long.

Mr. Cobb: We also had a "Toonerville Trolley" that ran from Winthrop Beach to Point Shirley. It was originally built by Mr. Ridgeway that operated the Pit at Revere; and afterwards it was sold to the Narrow Gauge Railroad, and since they put a bus on.

Mr. Bentley: A subject which I think will interest us all, I took occasion to ask Louis about one time, has to do with the Water Tower. Of course, living that near it, we are a little bit more interested in it than some folks; but I think it will be interesting to the people here, to know how it has been built; to know how you get into it or keep it painted, or any information. What do you know about it, Louis?

Mr. Cobb: Well, water was first piped into Winthrop about 90 years ago by the City of Boston, which ran a line from Boston down from Orient Heights, down Main Street to Shirley Street to Deer Island. And anyone living along that line was given the privilege of tapping in on that line and getting water. But in 1888 the Revere Water Co. came to Winthrop; a privately owned company and operated here. That was really the first water company here. In 1905 the Town of Winthrop bought out the Revere Water Co. and I understand at that time there was quite a lot of politics over it; whether they should do it or not. The water tower itself was built in 1910 and that tower sets on a hill. It's 102 feet above sea level and the water tower is 100 feet high. It holds a million gallons of water and the plates at the top of the tower are a quarter of an inch thick and at the bottom they're one and one-sixteenth's inch thick; and the total weight of the tower and the water is 5000 tons. Now the water in that tower is fed by gravity. Believe it or not, the top of that tower is 202 feet above sea level, and the water in the tower is fed by gravity from Spot Pond out in Stoneham. This is the Metropolitan Reservation Reservoir for this area. And that tower is drawn on during the day time. It holds the pressure up on the hills and down at Deer Island, and like that it's drawn during the daytime; the water will go down and that; and at night when there's no flow of water that will build

Mr. Cobb cont'd: up again. Some years ago they -- at the present time we have regulators on that so that you can tell in the office at the Town Hall just how much water is in that tower at all times. But previous to that, we used to have to climb the tower a couple of times a year. Go up at midnight, we'd turn the water off at the Town line coming in, and I have been up many times myself with another fellow, and we'd climb that at midnight and set there for three hours on the rim of that tower; the inside all open and we would measure every ten minutes with a tape with a float on it. And determine the flow of water out of that tower and see if there were any leaks in our system. It was quite a thrill. My wife would never go to bed 'til I got home. Don't know whether I'd fall in or not she said. And we used to receive a day's pay for it; but that's all been done away with now, with an automatic regulator on it.

Mr. Bentley: And I think you told me something about getting in there to paint it every two years?

Mr. Cobb: Well the tower itself has a little building on the front of it and of course the tower can be emptied out with the valves that feed it, and it empties out down onto the beach, and every couple of years that is emptied and there's an opening through that little building that they take and open up there; it's all fastened with bolts; and they go in through that opening and they take their equipment; they go in with power brushes and paint it with paint with no lead in it; especially made paint for water towers.

Mr. Bentley: Speaking of water, Winthrop has lots of it, it is known as the "Water Town" and the "Water Main", because it's all around us. And there must be interesting activities in the water around Winthrop, which we can consider part of Winthrop's history. For instance, I saw that there was a storm in 1878; there were four vessels blown ashore at Ocean Spray and Great Head. Four in one year; in one storm. And there must have been other activities around; it said that many people came down from Boston to see

Mr. Bentley cont'd: these boats being pounded by the waves. But four in one storm was quite a serious occurrence I would say. Have there been any naval activities around the shores that should be recorded here? Do you know of anything Harrison?

Mr. Belcher: No, I don't.

Mr. Bentley: Sidvin, what can you tell us?

Mr. Tucker: I have fairly general information that there was a battle that was called the "Battle of Shirley Gut" and Mugford lost his life down there in the Revolutionary War. That's one thing. Then there's another thing that perhaps isn't generally known, that the first Naval battle of the Revolutionary War was fought right over here in Chelsea Creek where those gas tanks are. The Battle of Chelsea Creek. Another thing to do about the water surrounding the Town which isn't so much like war, Ernest; back in the 1880's, this was before Washington Avenue dike and bridge was built, that was Fisher's Creek, and the tide used to come right in there. And in those days the mariners used to bring in their big ships; there's been three-masted schooners right there in what is now Lewis Lake, tied up for the winter. Believe it or not.

Mr. Bentley: Louis, do you have anything?

Mr. Cobb: Well, I might say, at Point Shirley, there was a fort there, built in 1775 in the Revolution, and that fort stood there until the early 1900's when that hill was cut down. It was cut fifteen feet to make Bay View Avenue. And a couple of years ago, a lady in Dorchester wrote us a letter; this Association, and presented us with a cannonball that was fired at that fort from a British ship during the Revolutionary War. It's five pound shot and was dug out of Siren Street where they were building a house. And we also have a picture of that fort; or the ruins of it, which was taken just prior to them taking it away. You can see the house which is still standing on Siren Street, there in the background.

Mr. Bentley: Well, now the tape is almost running out. If we have just a word about the hotels that have been in Winthrop, I think that might be interesting; particularly the Taft Hotel down at the Point. I found that at one time it was considered the leading hotel in America for the serving of fish and game. It was said that Delmonico's might have a reputation for general service, but it was thought that Taft Inn served game and fish to a greater degree and served it better than any other hotel in the world. Does anyone know anything about any other hotels around?

Mr. Tucker: I'd like to get this little word in before