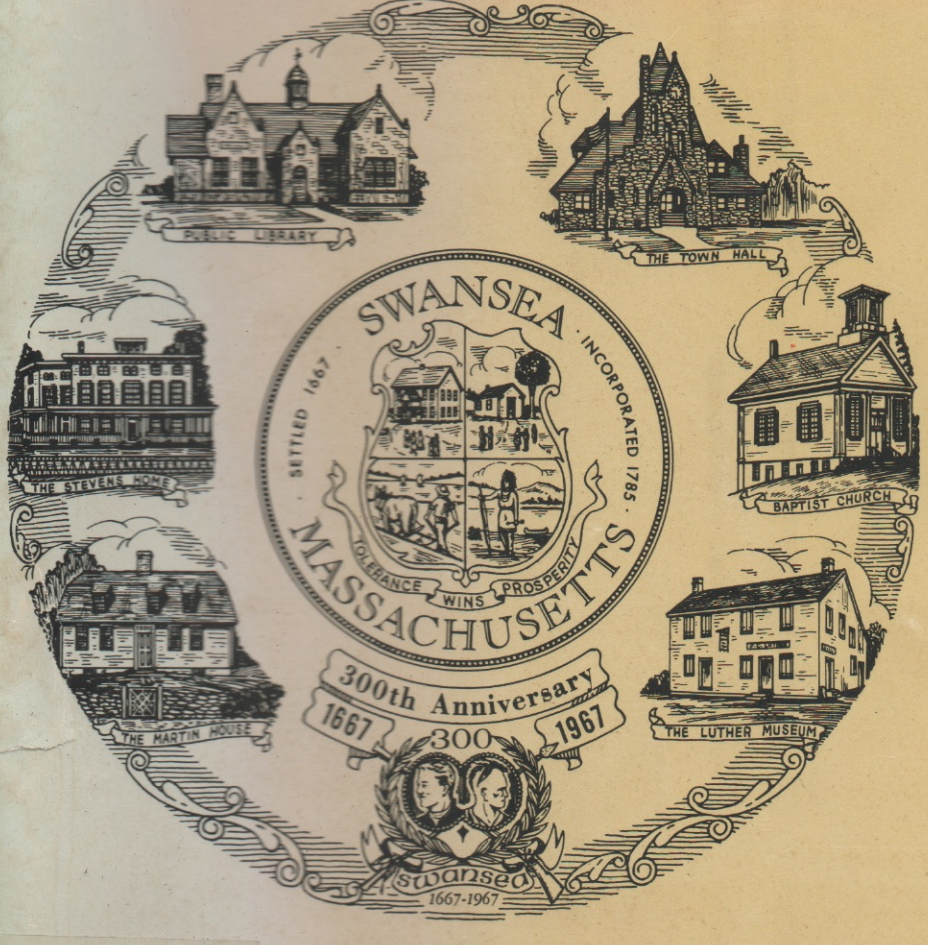
Swansea Tercentenary



1667

Swansea

1967

Chronicles of Life in Swansea


NECK
Kickemuit
River
SWANS
CONSUMPSIT
or Mount Hope Neck, (9½ miles long)
Bristol
Sowams
Warren.
River
Myles Garrison
CHACHACUST
New Meadow Neck
Popasquash Neck.
Chachapacass
Sowams
Barrington
POPANOMSCUT.
or Peebees
Neck
NAYATT
Mouscochack Cr.
SOWAMS
River
Annawomscut Cr.
Mosskituash Cr.
WANNAMOISETT NECK
Pomham Rock
now Providence River.
Riverside
SOWAMS BAY
now, Narragansett Bay
N



Swansea Public Library

Swansea

Map of
INDIAN LOCALITIES
from the book
SOWAMS
By THOMAS W. BICKNELL

Drawn by
E. W. Ross
Civil Engineer
Providence, R. I.
February 1908

Courtesy of Fall River Historical Society

Statistics

Population 11,767 (1965)
Area ..... 22.79 square miles
Assessed Valuation $11,813,668.00
Senators in Congress
Edward M. Kennedy – Edward W. Brooke
Representative in Congress
Margaret P. Heckler
State Senator
John F. Parker
Representative and General Court
Antone S. Aguiar, Jr.
Member of the Governor's Council
Nicholas Mitchell

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23 The Mason Barney Ship Yard – *Rex Heustis*
25 North Swansea – *Helen R. Pierce*
27 Touisset – *Barbara Ashton*
29 Hortonville - Swansea Factory – *Daniel Hale - Marian D. Reilly*
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45 James Birch – *Francis R. Sears*
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Rachel Emery
55 In Praise of Clambakes – *Mary E. Nottingham*
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58 The Snake Line – *Helen R. Pierce*
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Foreword by Harold Riendeau

On a warm sunny day in the summer of 1621, two Englishmen came trudging into the neck of land jutting into Mount Hope Bay called by the Indians, Mattapoisett. This beautiful spot is now known as Gardner's Neck. These men, Edward Winslow and Stephen Hopkins of the Plymouth Colony, were here to talk to the chief of the Wampanoags, Massasoit, about settler-Indian treaties. They brought with them an Indian interpreter, Squanto. Massasoit was summering at Mt. Hope so he sent his sachem, Corbitant, to meet with them. Although no record was made of the outcome of this conference, the meeting was recorded and is the first historical reference to this part of New England, now called Swansea.



History continued to be made in Swansea and books have been published telling of the historical heritage of this beautiful town on the shores of Mount Hope Bay. This brochure is not intended to take the place of these histories but only to add some tales to those already told. If this booklet can stimulate more people to read of their town and the people who helped to shape it, its purpose will be accomplished.

A large group of dedicated people, who are deeply interested in Swansea's history, was recruited to assemble the material. All are residents of Swansea except John Raymond Hall who grew up in Swansea, but now lives at 5733 North 27th Street, Arlington, Virginia. He is an authority on the early history of Swansea. They have worked hard and well in doing this research and writing. It was decided to write of neighborhoods of the town, people who lived in them and events that took place in them. You may find something about your family, your neighborhood, your backyard, or even about the house you live in.

Credit must be given to the *Christ Church Harvester*, an annual newspaper put out by the Church in conjunction with its fair, for inspiring some of these articles.

Pictures were solicited from many sources. A number are from the files of the Swansea Historical Society. A number are from private files of old families. We are thankful for all of them.

We hope you will find this brochure an interesting one. It is put together with respect and an awareness of Swansea's past and present. We have every certainty that the future will be even more interesting. Hail to our 300th Anniversary!

Harold C. Riendeau
Chairman

Tercentenary Brochure
Subcommittee

Greetings – Selectmen

This year is Swansea's Birthday. Our proud town is now 300 years old. The mere passage of time in itself is of little consequence. What is important, is the record and heritage of our fine community.

From its earliest beginnings the citizens of Swansea had courage and an independence of spirit. They conquered the elements, hostile Indians, and religious persecution.

These hardy pioneers made use of our fields and our rivers for their sustenance. Hardships merely strengthened their wills and bodies.



James C. Murphy, Horace A. Pellétier, Antone S. Aguiar, Jr.

During this celebration year, each and every one of us will have an opportunity to relive and remember that glorious past, to ponder and plan the future.

King Philip's War, the struggle for religious freedom, the building of the First Baptist Church, the wonderful Indian legends – such as the tale of Abram's Rock, Luther's Store, and the history of the Stevens and Case families are things worth remembering. From the past we can learn much about our future.

The Board of Selectmen congratulates each citizen of Swansea on this 300th birthday of Swansea. It will be a celebration for us all. We sincerely request that each one of you join in the year's activities.

Our anniversary will be as interesting, worthwhile, and as much fun as we make it. Let us join together and make this a glorious year for Swansea.

Greetings – Governor John A. Volpe

JOHN A. VOLPE
GOVERNOR

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON

TO THE TOWN OF SWANSEA
ON ITS 300TH ANNIVERSARY

I am, indeed, pleased to extend my personal greetings and those of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to all the residents and friends of the Town of Swansea on the occasion of its Tercentennial Observance.

On such a significant anniversary, it is fitting to recall the proud history of this Town which has progressed from the days of the charter from the Plymouth Colony to our own as it keeps pace with the 20th Century.

Through all these many years, countless citizens of Swansea have repeatedly demonstrated their faith in this community by distinguishing themselves in every field of endeavor. Desolated during the cruel King Philip's War, Swansea today is a town of 12,000 citizens with a deep and abiding interest in our State and its affairs.

Please accept my heartiest best wishes for a memorable and meaningful Tercentennial celebration, and for the continued good fortune, prosperity and progress of Swansea in the years ahead.

Sincerely,

John A. Volpe
Governor

Greetings – Swansea, Wales

THE GUILDHALL,
SWANSEA.

Felicitations and best wishes to the people of Swansea, Massachusetts from the citizens of Swansea, Wales, on the tercentenary of the foundation of their township.

We have a strong and enduring link between us. Rev. John Myles, one of your founders, came from Swansea. His Baptist Church was situated nearby in Ilston, Gower - in an area of outstanding natural beauty - the first area so designated in Great Britain by Her Majesty's Government. A Commemorative bronze plaque on the original stone pulpit was unveiled some years ago by one of our greatest Prime Ministers who was a Baptist - David Lloyd George. Little now remains of the building I am sorry to say. It is said that many of its stones have found their way to your country. I hope this is true as they will serve to bind still more closely our two communities.

Swansea, Wales, has been 800 years a town. Norsemen, the pirate traders of the 11th century, scouring the Bristol Channel first saw the possibilities of the natural harbour at the mouth of the River Tawe on which Swansea stands. About 100 years later the Normans came and built Swansea Castle and settled around it and Swansea received its first Charter from William de Newburgh some time between 1158 and 1184.

For hundreds of years Swansea was little more than a small trading Port. Present day Swansea is a town of many parts with a population of 170,000 and there are few places which have more to offer.

Swansea, Wales, conscious and proud of its link with Swansea, Mass., salutes and congratulates its people on their tercentenary, and invokes upon them every good fortune and blessing.

T. R. Davies
Mayor
(Alderman T. R. Davies, J. P.,)

Swansea: The Beginning

On a June day in 1675 a Boston man, busy at his writing desk, made careful note that, according to news just in from Plymouth, the Indians had attacked the English of that colony in a place called Swansea. As a proper Bostonian, he might have added that it served Swansea right. Although he did not, others did. Others said that the massacre was a certain sign of divine wrath; that God had rendered judgment on Swansea for giving comfort to those Baptists.

Why this controversy about Swansea? Why did its beginning – the short eight years which separated its establishment in 1667 from the attack on it in 1675 – generate such anger as well as great satisfaction? To understand this beginning, we need answers to two questions: Why was Swansea established when it was? Why, once it had been, did the Wampanoags wait for eight years before attacking it? To answer the first question, we need to know something about the times in which Swansea began; to cope with the second, we need to look into the camp of King Philip, the last sachem of the Wampanoag Federation.

In 1667 the land which would become known as Swansea was Indian country bordered by English towns: Rehoboth to the north, Rhode Island across the bay to the south. It was a tempting landscape; and around it, in ever wider circles, English towns were springing up wherever they could find a weak place in the local Indians' position. On his picturesque hilltop of Mount Hope, King Philip knew that already the English had pushed beyond the Mohawks and other Iroquois near the Great Lakes and had ventured down the Atlantic Coast past the Shawnees and Delawares to the Spanish settlements in Florida. He knew that an English ring was closing around him and the neighboring Narragansetts and Nipmucs. Did he have nowhere to go and nothing to do but wait for the inevitable end – an old age in serviture to some English settler?

He probably knew that Captain Willett, and his business associates living in Rehoboth, already owned the English rights to his country. He certainly knew that the lure of this land was enough to make the English eager to get it; he had bargained with them before. They were hard to match in a land deal. But, unknown to Philip, two additional, more immediate, reasons for wanting his land were rapidly becoming even more important than the land itself. There was the need for sheltered seaports to get bigger profits from the Atlantic sea trade. And there was the need for another home town for certain Baptists, recent refugees from Swansea, Wales, who were currently living contentiously amid their disapproving Congregationalist neighbors in Rehoboth. If King Philip had known all these reasons behind the English interest in his lands, he might have grimly prophesied that their grab for sea and land profits would ultimately end in the fantastic English losses of what history would call King Philip's war.

The English need for seaports on Narragansett Bay arose out of two real problems facing Captain Willett and his fellow New England merchants. First, there was the high cost of sailing ships along the stern and rockbound coast of the Atlantic; second, there was the awful mess in the operation of the ex-Dutch port of New York by the British. To help straighten up the port of call, the British sought out Captain Willett, an original Pilgrim from Leyden, and made him the first English mayor of New York City. By 1667 Willett had served two terms and, perhaps in disgust or perhaps in hopeful expectation, he returned home to translate his holdings in Philip's Indian country into a new town which would provide a seaport where trans-Atlantic ships and small coastal vessels might meet – to the profit of all concerned. He argued in Plymouth for permission to open a "town of trade" on New Meadow Neck with a deepwater seaport and transhipment area at Poppasquash. The Colony Fathers may have thought him foolish to think of competing with the British-harassed, Dutch-inhabited port of New York; if so, Willett must have been backed by other pleaders for his cause.

Among these would have been the "Old-Comers". In 1667 it was important to have been an original Pilgrim, or a descendant of those who came to Plymouth first. These "Old-Comers" – like Hugh Cole, Zachariah and Caleb Eddy – were second or third generation Pilgrims and therefore had settlement claims on any additional lands

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270 Pearse Road
Swansea, Mass.

which might become available in the Indian country. They would argue persuasively for Captain Willett's proposal.

Still the Plymouth Fathers might well have resisted such arguments. They could honestly have replied that this was a simple case of war or peace; they could have flatly predicted that the Wampanoags would not stand for giving up any more land to English settlement, the follow-on to a town's establishment. At this point, we may assume, Captain Willett advanced two irrefutable arguments. He probably brought in King Philip's assurance that he would not object to a town under the firm control of King Philip's respected friend – the great merchant, landholder, and government official – Thomas Willett. This is quite credible because, as shown above in the New York case, Willett was a widely-used peacemaker by both Europeans and Indians. Philip might have agreed to Willett's proposal in order to buy a time of quiet to plan and organize for some purpose he had in mind for the future.

At the same time, Willett probably pointed out to Plymouth Colony that he could maintain civic and religious calm along the Indian frontier. He could do this by drawing the border between Rehoboth and the new town in such a way as to separate the Baptist community, which would provide the established church in the new town, from the opposition Congregationalists who would remain the only church in the old town of Rehoboth. With this agreement, all the Baptists could worship at Pastor Myles' church in the new town; all the Congregationalists in both towns could go to Pastor Newman's church in Rehoboth. Confronted by such arguments, the Plymouth leaders could give in and agree to the careful, very careful, opening up of the new town south of Rehoboth.

What would Captain Willett call his new town? Why, Swansea, of course; Pastor Myles wanted to call his refuge in the new world after his home in the old: Swansea, in the colony of New Plymouth.

In his careful, very careful, opening up of Swansea, Captain Willett maintained a firm hand over the incoming settlers. In fact, he gave Pastor Myles much concern that other Baptists, hurrying from the old world to the new refuge, might be denied admittance at the town's border. Nevertheless, by 1674, forty fair dwellings, not dirty log cabins, stood on high ground that overlooked the many rivers that drained the town. Captain Anthony Low, Captain Dix, Captain Samuel Woodbury, as well as Captain Willett, were in the town. The Browns and the Allens, Captain Willett's relatives or long time business associates, lived closed by him. The "Old-Comers", Hugh Cole and the Eddys had arrived. Already the Luthers, the Butterworths, the Albys, the Tanners, and the Pastor Myles family made up the Baptist community just south of the Rehoboth line. Around this solid core several outsiders – with valued skills or special connections – were allowed to come in: John Harding, a blacksmith, Captain Willett's adopted son, and a bachelor or two if they were referenced as diligent, courageous, and prudent. Over this group we may well expect that Willett exercised continuing restraint – as he had promised King Philip.

But, to the great misfortune of both English and Indians, death came to Captain Thomas Willett on August 3, 1674. Within the year the Indians had burned much of Swansea and, escaping from the converging English forces, had spread the war throughout New England. It is not hard to conclude that King Philip, badgered and buffeted by the land-hungry colonists, had lost hope that, with Willett gone, he could call on any Englishman with enough stature or interest to maintain, if not justice, at least an endurable peace. In the months following Willett's death, Philip had become increasingly irritable; his warriors became increasingly aggressive. By mid-June of 1675 the inevitable bloody business was underway. Thus, Swansea, the colonial town of Captain Willett's vision, died with him.

Today, in retrospect, we may observe, with some humility and much pride, that the beginning of Swansea – like most landmarks in history – is memorable for both its human shortcomings and its human achievements. In a time when driving the Indian from his tribal lands was considered a way of life, Swansea's beginning marked one of many low points in the chronicle of man's inhumanity to man. And, today, after three hundred years of further thought, we prefer to recall that, at this low point, Swansea's beginning also marked a step upward – although a small one – in the seventeenth century climb of the European peoples toward religious toleration. Swansea, from 1667 to 1675, was unique in its official acceptance of religious choice. Neighbors lived and worked together, but went to separate churches. This was unthinkable in Boston. But, in Swansea, it was the new way of life.

The First Baptist Church

Few Baptist churches in this country, indeed few churches of any denomination, have reached the age of three hundred and three years of continued ministerial activity. This church holds the distinction of being the first Church of any denomination founded on the American continent by Welshmen. It was the fifth Baptist church organized in New England; it is the oldest Baptist fellowship in the State of Massachusetts, and mother of the church which founded Brown University of Providence, Rhode Island.

The First Baptist Church, Swansea, was established by the Reverend John Myles, who is believed to have been educated at Brasenose College, Oxford, and who founded a Baptist Church at Illston, Wales, in the year 1649.

When the Reverend Mr. Myles, fleeing in 1662 with his Baptist brethren from Charles the Second's Act of Uniformity, landed first either in Boston or Salem, he noted at once the spirit of persecution which still lingered there and sought the more tolerant atmosphere of Rebohoth. Here, in the home of John Butterworth, he and six other venerable citizens re-organized the constitution of the original Baptist church fellowship in Wales, forming the present Baptist Church located in the town of Swansea.

Still suffering under the burden of intolerance, the small group was forced to move to Wannamoisett, a part of present-day Barrington, where they built their house of worship. The Plymouth Colony government, in spite of the fact that it had exiled the Reverend Mr. Myles and his followers from Rehoboth, was indisputedly more religiously tolerant than other groups of that day. This fact gave impetus, no doubt, to the eventual granting by it in 1667-8 to this Baptist organization, a portion of land to be called SWANSEA, named after the town the Reverend Mr. Myles left in Wales. Here they would be at liberty to exercise all the rights and principles which they believed as Christians.

We cannot entirely disassociate the name of Captain Willett from that of the Reverend Mr. Myles. Willett descendants still live in North Swansea and Thomas Willett Duckworth bears his name. Captain Willett was not a Baptist, but allotted to that fellowship of Christians, from the



keen perceptiveness of an unbiased mind, the definition and interpretation of the town's first laws, realizing that the Baptists were prominent numerically and socially within the boundaries then being organized. The firm bond that was formed between the church and the community was so strong in the years that followed, that the members of the town helped the Baptists to relocate and rebuild their meeting house after the destruction of King Philip's War.

After the death of the Reverend Mr. Myles in 1683, to Captain Samuel Luther, ordained in 1685, befell the difficult task of carrying on the work which had been so firmly established by his predecessor. Although his ministry was not tried with the seemingly insurmountable barriers which we know confronted the Reverend Mr. Myles, there was no doubt that his memory too is linked with an influence that is far more profound than history's facts could possibly relate to us. He served as pastor of the church almost thirty-one years and died on December 20, 1716.

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Through the years of tribulation that followed, the years of the Revolutionary War and the great stresses of the Civil War, the Swansea church continued to preach the Gospel message of Jesus Christ. Out of its fellowship others were established and still stand to this day as living memorials to dedication and faith.

The present church was built in 1849. A total of thirty-nine ministers have served the church through these many years with the Rev. Robert S. Carlson as its present pastor. The church continues to minister to the needs of all who live in Swansea and the surrounding communities. In April 1966, ground was broken for a new educational building and auditorium to cope with the expanding ministry and demands of the church and community. The present-day members of the church labor together with the same fervor and dedication to their Lord and Master as was that of their forefathers. The church is proud of its rich heritage but is always conscious of the fact that it can only repay its debt to the past by making the future a debtor to the present. The only way it can honor its pioneering founders is to be as faithful to their vision today as they were to theirs of yesterday, and it can only be worthy of its past by surpassing that same past. The oldest church in Swansea realizes that if today it is able to see farther than its ancestors, it must in all humility remember it is because it is standing upon the foundation laid by these people who have gone before, who worked to achieve victory through Jesus Christ over intolerance and prejudice in the church and the town.

Swansea: The War Against King Philip

It was 1675. In early June all eyes in New England were on their neighbors. Swansea watched King Philip, Plymouth watched Swansea, Boston watched Plymouth, and the Quakers across the narrow strait in Rhode Island watched all the others with increasing horror. Believing war to be a matter of hours, Quaker leaders crossed the water on the night of the 13th, met Philip on Mount Hope, and urged him not to fight.

It was too late, they said; Philip must yield, for the English were too strong for him. Remembering how his father Massasoit had shielded the Mayflower Pilgrims, the now knowledgeable Philip said bitterly: Then, let the English do for the Wampanoags what the Wampanoags did for the English when the Indians were too strong for them. Silenced by this golden argument, the well-meaning Quakers returned to their island to await the inevitable. It was seven days in coming.

Yet, in truth, it had already been underway for five days. The inevitable had begun on the 8th. On that date, in Plymouth, the Colony authorities had hanged two of Philip's warriors—allegedly for killing one Sassamon upon the orders of Philip himself. What had Sassamon done? Who knows? He was a Christian Indian, a former Harvard man, and for a time he had been Philip's English-speaking secretary. Given his contacts in Philip's camp, perhaps he had informed Plymouth of Philip's war plans. Or, as Philip's confidant, perhaps he had been bribed by Swansea men to get Philip's signature on a deed to Poppasquash, the proposed harbour site. Or like Abram at Abram's Rock, perhaps he had been punished only for being a Christian or for refusing to come to Mount Hope when summoned. Whatever the reason, the execution of Sassamon at Assawompsett Lake was significant historically. It marked the beginning of the end for King Philip and the beginning of a time of troubles for Swansea.

The hanging of Philip's agents sparked the Indian uprising. His braves roared for action; strange Indians from the outside rallied to his side. On all sides of him the pressure built up to do something. But what could he do? He had no

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289 Pleasant Street, Fall River, Mass.



Indian Village circa 1617

Courtesy Bronson Museum — Attleboro

war plan that promised any real solution. It was not enough to decide that his Pokanoket tribe, under Chief Annawon, could overrun the Swansea settlements: Wannamoisett, Mattapoisett, Kickemuit, New Meadow Neck, and the Meeting House area. If the inhabitants took shelter in their garrison houses — Brown's, Myles's and Bourne's — his flaming arrows could burn them out one at a time, and his warriors could massacre the people as they fled the flames. Yet this was not enough.

If his Pokanokets fell upon Swansea, would not Plymouth Colony send its cavalry to Swansea's relief? To stop Plymouth, Philip would need his sub-chiefs outside Mount Hope: his sister-in-law, the lovely Weetamoe of the Pocassets (Tiverton); the squaw sachem Awashonks of the Sakonets (Little Compton); and the black sachem Tuspaquin of the Assawompsetts. If a war could be confined within the Colony, his chiefs could fall upon Taunton, Rehoboth, Dartmouth, Bridgewater, and ultimately, upon Plymouth itself. Given luck or good tactics, the desperate Wampanoag Federation could massacre the English and take back the area for Philip, the son of Massasoit. But, this was not enough either.

If, by skill or fanaticism, these chiefs seemed likely to succeed, would not Massachusetts Bay Colony send its Boston troops down to crush the rebellion at its Mount Hope source? To stop Boston, Philip must see that the powerful Narragansetts (Providence Plantations) kept the Bay Colony busy. But the Narragansetts, an ancient Wampanoag foe, were themselves pinned down by a new enemy on their flank. These were the Mohegans (Connecticut) who, under the villainous Uncas, had once helped the English to massacre Sassacus's Pequots. Now they panted to do the same to the Narragansetts. Still farther to the west, blocking the escape routes from New England, the invincible Mohawks waited, — confident that they could kill or repel any despised refugees from the eastern tribes. This they had already proved by butchering helpless Sassacus. With such unlikely allies to count on, Philip knew that he had no war plan with which to attract the timorous Awashonks or to woo the thoughtful Canonchet of the Narragansetts. It was, at best, a plan of desperation for, as Philip knew, his allies were allies in spirit only. In fact they were either weak, outflanked, or unreliable.

But if it was not a plan, it was at least a hope — a rationale for reacting to the impact of the dangerous events that now came sweeping at him. Already his raging warriors had frightened the English. Swansea, — alarmed by the war drums, the dancing, the strange new Indians, the increasing threats, and the blood-dripping scalps that the more imaginative settlers now saw in the sky

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overhead — now sent its leaders to Philip's camp. They brought messages promising to deal justly with Philip; but, surfeited with English justice, Philip was not persuaded. His warriors frightened the leaders further by harassing them from the camp.

On the evening of the 19th the Indians moved from threats to deeds. In an exercise of civil disobedience, a band of delinquent braves ghosted down to the nearest house and broke into it. It was Job Winslow's, cousin to the Governor and nephew to that Edward Winslow who, many decades before, had trudged through a Swansea winter to cure Massasoit of an illness. In the Job Winslow affair, no one was hurt. Had Job been warned? If so, was it by the son of Massasoit?

On the next day, Sunday the 20th, Baptists and Congregationalists went their separate ways to church. There the news of Winslow's narrow escape probably frightened them again. In the meantime, back on Mount Hope the Indians, emboldened by many-told tales of the Winslow adventure, gathered new daring for further attacks at Kickemuit. So it happened that, while the settlers' houses stood vacant in the forenoon, an Indian party ranged out of Mount Hope and broke into two more houses. When the shaken Kickemuit English returned home from church, the Indians were still at large. Seeing a brave on his father's land, John, the son of William Salisbury, shot him.

The Indians quickly retired to Mount Hope, bearing the unlucky warrior with them. The whites gathered together to consider the awful possibilities. Everybody at Kickemuit had heard of the Indian prophecy that the side that drew blood first would lose. Had the Indians tormented the whites into firing first? If so, the Indians could now be re-grouping on Mount Hope for a massive attack on all the Swansea settlements. Without delay — while the wounded Wampanoag was still being helped back to his tepee — the Kickemuit settlers — some sixteen men and fifty-four women and children — hurried to the Bourne garrison house. At the same time, they sent warnings to the other settlements and Governor Winslow at Marshfield near Plymouth. By nightfall, all in Swansea were safe, but all were sure that if they saw daylight again it would be only through God's great mercy.

During the night, the leaders on Mount Hope and in Plymouth had been working on courses of sensible action. At his headquarters Philip had been confronted by his followers; all signs, they said, pointed to victory. But caught between the hopelessness of his war plan and the unreasoning rage of his people, Philip — like Hamlet — could not make up his mind to act. In contrast, Governor Josiah Winslow acted immediately. He ordered the Colony cavalry to protect the garrisons and police the area. On the 21st and 22nd, these Plymouth forces trotted into Swansea and smartly deployed to cover the three fortified dwellings of John Brown, Pastor Myles, and Jared Bourne. At first, the Indians recoiled, remained disorganized and uncertain, as if awaiting orders that never came; they seemed overawed by the military. But gradually, noting that the cavalry kept close to the garrisons, the Indians found that they were free to raid among the desterted dwellings. By nightfall on the 22nd, they had worked themselves up to fever heat and were ready for greater violence.

In retrospect, the next two days should never have been. Under more dynamic leadership, the Colony forces could probably have swept the uncertain and overawed Indians back into Mount Hope. This would have helped return the delinquents to Philip's control. And it would have frightened off any out-of-colony chief that yearned to follow the Mount Hope example. However, under the 70-year-old Major Cudworth's leadership, the troopers lapsed into a defensive inertia that invited Indian attack. Therefore, on the morning of the 23rd, Mount Hope disgorged a horde of savages that pillaged, burned, and wrecked at will. Too, they began shooting at people, beginning with the sentries at the garrison houses.

If Josiah Winslow had been in command, King Philip's war might not have happened. It was he who, a decade before, had ridden right into Mount Hope to arrest King Alexander, Philip's older brother. Looking ahead a few months, it would be Winslow who would lead the combined English forces in a surprise slaughter of the Narragansetts. He was a no-nonsense man, but he made two serious errors in planning his Swansea strategy. He gave command to the desultory Cudworth, and he ordered a Colony-wide day of worship for the 24th that, in its effect, required the Swansea settlers to leave their safe havens and venture forth into Indian ambushes. This day would become known to history as the massacre of Swansea.

By nightfall some ten people had been killed; many more had been wounded. Thus, Thomas Mann's wife and child were tomahawked at their home near the Rehoboth border. Legend reports that the child was ill. This is assumed to be the reason why Rachel was not at church. It could also be the reason why the Mann family was not sheltered at Pastor Myles's garrison.

WARING FUNERAL SERVICE
178 Winter Street
Fall River, Mass.

As the Congregationalists were returning from the Rehoboth church under military protection, the Indians managed to kill one and wound others as the group entered their ambush. When two riders went for a surgeon, they were butchered. If all of Swansea had gone to church, the few deaths thus reported would speak well for their military escort. However, when everybody was back in the Bourne garrison, they remembered too clearly that they were about out of food. Therefore, over the objections of the cavalry on guard, a small group of six settlers slipped out of the garrison and over to their vacant barns. Searching for food amidst the ruins, they were seen, killed, and decapitated.

In spite of these deaths and the Indians' increasing aggressiveness, the Plymouth troops remained on the defensive over the next four days. On the 28th, a strange but powerful expeditionary force came into North Swansea from Boston. At the head of mounted militia rode Captains Henchman and Prentice; at the head of a hundred volunteers swept from the streets and jails of Boston rode Captain Samuel Moseley, normally a sea-going adventurer but now seeking his fortune by the conquest of an Indian empire.

After losing several soldiers to Indian snipers, the combined force of Plymouth and Boston troops got underway for Mount Hope. Tense and trigger-happy at first, they fired at each other. At Kickemuit they writhed at the decapitated heads of the Bourne settlers slain on the 24th. Finally, they pushed into Mount Hope to find Philip gone; the Wampanoag king and his forces would now try to see how far his war plan would work. He was now with Awashonks, Weetamoe, and Tuspaquin in the heartland of Plymouth Colony.

The English had failed to bag him in Swansea. Later, they failed to keep him trapped in Plymouth Colony. He escaped to Massachusetts Bay and saw the Nipmucs there rise and attack Mendon. But, nevertheless, within a year it was all over. Pursued relentlessly, Philip's Wampanoags deserted him rapidly. He wandered to the west for Mohawk help, they repelled him, and he wandered back. As he wandered, the English and Mohegans massacred the powerful Narragansetts. Finally, still pursued by the colonists and their Indian allies, he wandered back through Swansea to Mount Hope. Having lost tribe, federation, friends, and family, he in August 1676 lost his life. While camped at the old headquarters some distance from Job Winslow's wrecked house, he was surrounded. As he tried to escape, one of his late sister-in-law's braves, treacherously working with the English, shot him. His head was stuck on a stake in Plymouth. His wife and young son, the heir presumptive to his tribal lands, were sold into Caribbean slavery.

Thus, with King Philip dead, nothing — or so it seemed — would stand between Swansea and its use of the lands around Mount Hope.



Myles Garrison House

Swansea Historical Society

AL RAINONE ORCHESTRA
343 South Main Street
Fall River, Mass.

F. L. COLLINS & SON, INC.
102 South Main Street
Fall River, Mass.

SWANSEA PLUMBING & HEATING CO.
527 Wilbur Avenue
Swansea, Mass.

The Three Rank System of Swansea

or The Mystery of the Third of June 1681

At the close of King Philip's War, the Plymouth Colony authorities gave the Mount Hope lands to non-Swansea people who named them Warren and Bristol. Denied the Indian lands, the Swansea inhabitants had to satisfy their land hunger by competing with their neighbors for the lands already encompassed and available within the town's borders. As time passed, some town leaders became increasingly unhappy with the formula whereby they got their share. So they began to give some thought as to how they could use it to increase their benefit. On the third of June 1681 they acted.

The formula, known to history as Swansea's Three Rank System, was devised by Captain Willett and accepted by the town at a meeting held in 1671. It placed all heads-of-family in three ranks, reflecting each man's influence and usefulness in the town. It provided that, in any future land divisions, the first and second rank men would get, respectively, three and two times the land received by each third rank inhabitant. The total number of heads-of-family in town would be limited to sixty. Each man's rankright, when accepted by both man and town meeting, constituted a contract for a specified share of the town's undistributed lands. This rankright was valuable; it was a property that each man could will to his heirs or assigns forever.

Everybody of significance wanted to be in the first rank. The rewards were measurable. If Swansea contained about 192,000 acres and if Swansea's sixty inhabitants were distributed as ten in the first rank, twenty in the second rank, and thirty in the third rank, then each first rank man could expect to acquire 5,760 acres, each second rank man 3,840 acres, and each third rank man 1,920 acres. Manifestly, if a second rank man could get himself raised to the first rank, he would receive as much again as a third rank share.

On the third of June 1681 five town leaders acted. They arranged with three other leaders, who were on a committee with the ranking authority, to raise them from the second to the first rank. Done secretly, the action was covered up for two years. When discovered, it was voted null and void by a town meeting held on January 1, 1684. Why did the town meeting veto the sub-committee action?

Logic and the town records support the conclusion that it was vetoed because an approval would have cost each voter a measurable amount of land. To move the five men into the first rank would have cost each head-of-family 276 or 184 or 92 acres, depending upon his rank. Each man, apparently, voted his pocketbook.

In the nationally-circulated history books, the reason given is not economic but political. Most of Swansea's first rank men were relatively rich. They enjoyed political, economic, and social privileges and immunities. When the five second rank men were secretly recorded as being in the first rank, the action was described as if they were gaining hereditary aristocratic privileges. The description suggested a burgeoning landed nobility. Therefore, the history writers concluded that the town meeting stamped out an attempt at founding a hereditary aristocracy in Swansea.

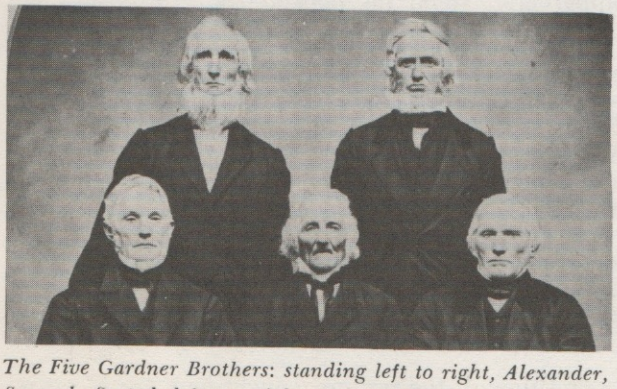
Although the writers' conclusions are in error, the Three Rank System deserves to be in the history books. It is unique in that it is the only case in colonial economic history where a man's share of the town's common land, was determined at the time he entered the town. This principle was reconfirmed at the 1684 town meeting. It remained in force until the 19th century.

FALL RIVER TRUST CO.
43 North Main Street
Fall River, Mass.

South Swansea

South Swansea or Mattapoisett has been the home of Indians, English colonists, Tory sympathizers, dissenters, farmers, fishermen, sailors, "the summer people" and the former city-dwellers. All have found it a good place in which to live. With Mount Hope Bay to the south, Lee's River to the east, and Cole's River to the west, water has been a means of communication and trade, a source of livelihood and recreation.

The Indians came by canoe and camped by the clear springs. They fished and farmed and buried their dead. Many a sinker, stone axe, and arrowhead have been found when farmers have ploughed their fields. An Indian cemetery was uncovered at the end of Mattapoiset Neck.



The Five Gardner Brothers: standing left to right, Alexander, Samuel. Seated left to right: Preserved, Job, Peleg.

At first, the Indians were friendly to visitors from the Plymouth Colony. It is reported that Governor Winslow, in March 1623, stayed with Corbitant, a Sachem of the Pocassets, at Mattapoiset on his way to visit the ailing Massasoit at Sowams. After King Philip, the second son of Massasoit sold Mattapoiset to William Brenton of Newport in June 1664, resentment grew against the English. The Indians realized their favorite camping and hunting grounds were no longer their property. Nevertheless, a few hardy families moved into the Neck along with Jared Bourne, the manager of the Brenton lands. They built near his house which was fortified as a garrison for their protection. This was burned at the start of King Philip's war in 1675 after the settlers had been evacuated. A white boulder at 770 Old Gardner's Neck Road marks the site. All the houses on the Neck were burned by the Indians. For almost twenty years, Mattapoiset was again a wilderness.

In December 1693 came Samuel Gardner, formerly of Newport, more recently of Freetown. He and his partner, Ralph Chapman, bought Mattapoiset for 1700 pounds from the Reverend Ebenezer Brenton, son of the first English owner. South Swansea began to be subdivided when Ralph Chapman took the northern half, and Samuel Gardner, the southern half. A stone wall ran from the Lee's River to the Cole's River as the dividing line. Some of this wall can still be seen as the wall of the Gardner Cemetery on Old Gardner's Neck Road.

Samuel's only son, Samuel, built his homestead down the Neck back of 1345 Gardner's Neck Road sometime before 1719. Here he could combine fishing with farming. As his sons came of age, Samuel deeded the southerly part of the Neck with the home farm to Peleg and the northerly part to Samuel, Jr. These sons caused a population explosion – Peleg with ten sons and six daughters; Samuel with five sons and eight daughters. It is easy to see how Mattapoiset Neck became Gardner's Neck.

Peleg became a Lt. Colonel under the Crown. It is said that British visitors from Newport, after rounding Mount Hope, steered for the towering elm trees by Peleg's house. The farm hummed with activities to support such a large family. Fields and orchards were cultivated. Livestock and poultry were raised. The women preserved fruit, made cheese, and wove the linen. Slaves assisted with the chores. Some of these were buried on the farm and others in the Old Gardner Cemetery. Plain stones mark their graves. Cart paths led to Cedar Cove on Cole's River where there was a pier and anchorage for the fishing boats.

Peleg's son, Samuel, found fishing more profitable than farming. A fish house and warehouse were built near the pier. Seines were spread in the Bay for menhaden which were salted down, packed and stored until they could be shipped. In a good year, the Gardners sent 1500 barrels

POIRIER BUICK, INC.
594 Pleasant Street
Fall River, Mass.

PACIFIC OIL COMPANY
358 Central Street
Fall River, Mass.

from the Cove to the West Indies. The great gale of 1815 almost cost the lives of Samuel and his five sons. Three of the sons, Job, Peleg, and Samuel, were fishing and were swept to shore near the pier. Peleg and Samuel fastened the boat to a tree and managed to stay afloat until the wind and water subsided. Job left the boat and lashed himself to a cedar and nearly drowned. The father, with Preserved and Alexander, was carried to Long Beach on the roof of the fish house. All managed to survive this early hurricane and the five sons were photographed together when they were over seventy years of age.

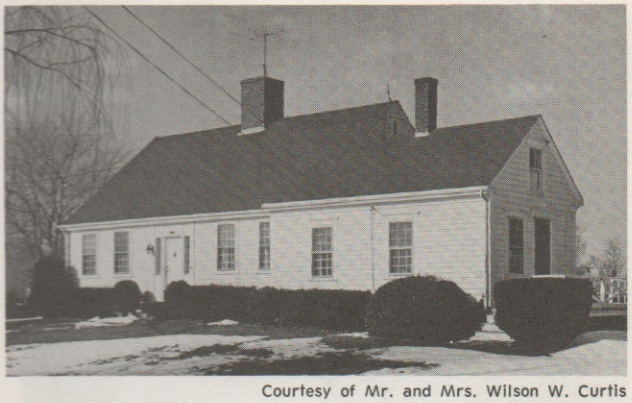
At the time of the storm, Samuel, known as "Lower Sam", was living in the home he had built at 1443 Gardner's Neck Road on land deeded to him by his father. Lower Sam's son, Samuel, when he married, built at 1407 Gardner's Neck Road. Another son, Job, returned to live in the old homestead which stood until 1921 when it burned to the ground. Lower Sam's brother, Joseph, built at 1205 Gardner's Neck Road and another brother, Peleg, near 1129 Gardner's Neck Road. Lower Sam's uncle, "Upper Sam", raised thirteen children in the house he had built at 1035 Gardner's Neck Road. His son, Hezekiah, built at 1087 Gardner's Neck Road and another son, Anthony, at 903 Gardner's Neck Road. A map of 1851 shows fifteen families living on the Neck and eleven bear the name of Gardner.

As the family continued to flourish and build, some Gardners left South Swansea to settle elsewhere and some left to see the world. Captain Henry Gardner, grandson of Colonel Peleg, took off on long sea voyages to Cuba and the West Indies. His son, Captain William Richmond Gardner, known as "Captain Bill", sailed to far countries before he retired from the sea to live and die in Bermuda. At one time he was *master of the Monarch of the Seas,* which was the largest ship of the United States merchant fleet of that day. Mr. Job Gardner, a great-grandson of Colonel Peleg, graduated from Wesleyan University and came back to the homestead on the Neck to take an active part in Swansea affairs until his death in 1907, at the age of eighty-one. He taught school; was Superintendent of Schools; and a member of the School Committee as well as of the Board of Trustees of the Public Library. He was a Selectman and Representative to the General Court.

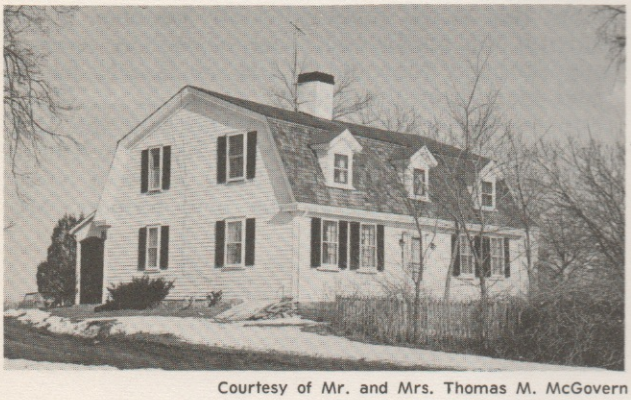
GARDNER HOMES



Courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. Harold K. Hudner



Courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. Wilson W. Curtis



Courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas M. McGovern



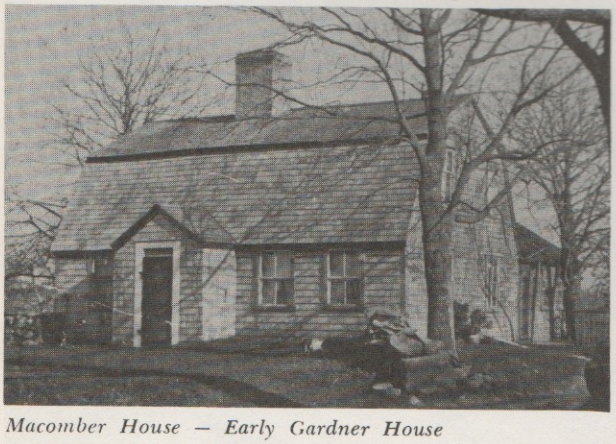
Courtesy of Mrs. Stephen L. French

R. E. SMITH PRINTING CO., INC.
62 County Street
Fall River, Mass.

During his lifetime, the Gardners began selling parcels of their properties to outsiders. The railroad came to town and brought in new people.

Until the spring of 1865, South Swansea had been connected with the rest of the world only by water and a dirt carriage road bisecting Gardner's Neck and leading to Swansea Village. Then the Fall River and Warren Railroad ran a steam train from Providence to Fall River with a stop in South Swansea. The steamer, Oriole, ferried the train from the Somerset shore to the Ferry St. Station in Fall River. The Old Colony Railroad bought out this line in 1871. Five years later the Slades Ferry Bridge was opened and the trains went swaying over the rails on the top of the bridge. A railroad station and freight shed were built in South Swansea in 1882 and the first stationmaster was Mr. Frank Arnold. The trains brought "the summer people" for their vacations. Many built summer homes along the shore. Among the summer residents were the Andrew Bordens and their daughters, Emma and Lizzie. Mr. Borden bought considerable property from the Gardners, and established his family in Joseph Gardner's old home. This he extended to the south so that his business partner, Mr. William M. Almy, and his family could share the pleasures of summer on the farm.

Courtesy Mr. George O. Chorlton, Jr.



Macomber House — Early Gardner House

A map of 1871 reveals the beginning of the flight from the city to the country. It shows the home of Mr. George T. Manchester, formerly of New Bedford, on land owned previously by Henry Gardner east of Gardner's Neck Road facing Lee's River. Mr. Manchester's wife was Elizabeth Gardner. The next house north on the map was owned by Mr. Edward M. Thurston, who came from Fall River and married Caroline Gardner, daughter of Henry. Mr. Thurston remodeled the Gardner house at the foot of Hetherington Drive and called his estate "Point Pleasant". He was a most hospitable man. He entertained summer boarders and prepared succulent clambakes which he served in a special pavilion. Guests came by train and boat for the bakes and weekly hops. Mr. Thurston was Superintendent of Schools in Swansea and was elected to the General Court as Representative. With the help of Mr. Borden and other neighbors, Mr. Thurston was instrumental in getting legislation to enable the building of the bridges over the Lee's and the Cole's Rivers in 1890. No longer did those on the Neck have to go out or in the long way round through the Village; and South Swansea entered a new era of prosperity.

Spacious new homes were built up and down the Neck. Mr. Charles W. Anthony built at 871 Gardner's Neck Road. His farm property extended into Ocean Grove and included Great Island which pastured his sheep. His brother, David M. Anthony, bought the southern tip of the Neck and built at Bay Point. His farmer raised potatoes for market and silage for the herd of dairy cows. Both brothers were excellent sailors as was Commodore A. Homer Skinner who built a handsome home opposite the old Gardner homestead. All had sailboats and yachts which took their friends and neighbors on many a moonlight sail on Mount Hope Bay. Mr. William B. Bliss built a house at 389 Gardner's Neck Road which was large enough for eight children and the entertainment of their many friends. It included a conservatory for his wife and was the first house to have central heating. Produce from the farm was sold in Mr. Bliss's grocery store in Fall River*. Mr. Elihu Andrews built at 115 Wilbur Avenue. His daughter, Nelly, taught in District No. 1 school. His hardware store in Fall River was the first in the area to sell gunpowder. Mr. Jonathan Davis built on the northwest corner of Wilbur Avenue and Gardner's Neck Road. His son, Leroy, had a band playing at the opening of the L. A. Davis store on the opposite corner. This was the first grocery store on the Neck. Mr. Charles A. Chace built at 945 Gardner's Neck Road and sold windmills, tanks and silos to the new farmers. Mr.

TROY CO-OPERATIVE BANK
15 Purchase Street, Fall River, Mass.
Incorporated July 10, 1880

IRV & AL'S SUPER SERVICE STATION
579 Grand Army Highway
Swansea, Mass.

NELSON'S DAIRY
51 Swindells Street
Fall River, Mass.



Steam Train on Lee's River Bridge

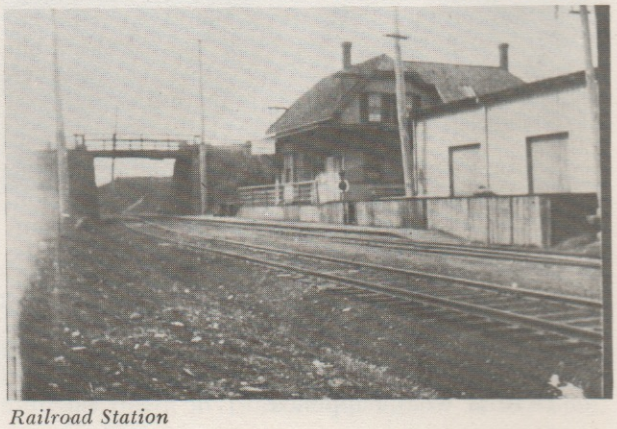
Courtesy Mr. Louis O. Manchester

Leland Gardner, grandson of Captain Henry, built at 1129 Gardner's Neck Road. His two sons, Francis and Chester, engaged in market gardening on a large scale. Their greenhouses had 50,000 square feet of glass, and the produce was shipped as far as the New York market. Both sons carried on the Gardner tradition of service to their town and country. Mr. Francis L. Gardner devoted forty-four years of his life to the office of Selectman. Mr. Chester Gardner served as postmaster of South Swansea for over twenty years.

The turn of the century brought more changes. The railroad was electrified and trains ran every half hour. The Wilbur Land Development Company surveyed the many acres of uninhabited land to the south of Gardner's Neck Road some of which bordered the shore and beaches and the railroad. The Company started a development and called it Ocean Grove. A park, grove and sandy beaches attracted crowds for picnics and outings. Many who came bought lots and built. Balloon ascensions created a stir especially when deeds to lots came floating down to earth for lucky finders.

Ocean Grove, with South Swansea, continued to grow and to be further sub-divided and developed. With the sparkling waters of the Bay to provide

Courtesy Miss Rachel L. Gardner



Railroad Station

good fishing, sailing and swimming, with good soil for farms and gardens, and cooling southwest winds to make summers a delight, no one has ever wanted to give the land back to the Indians.

*Mr. Bliss's house and Mr. Skinner's were taken down recently to make way for new homes.

SLADE'S FERRY TRUST COMPANY
140-142 Slade's Ferry Avenue
Somerset, Mass.

The Town Meeting of 1712

Swansea was founded on the principle of religious tolerance. Though the ink is brown and the pages worn, the handwritten minutes of the Swansea Town meeting of October 24, 1712 spell out this timeless message.

Like the peak of a huge iceberg, the record of that meeting gives only an indication of what was below the surface. Tracing the beginnings of the beliefs that were expressed at that time would lead back to Reformation. Following the line of thought that was vigorously endorsed at that meeting would lead to the Constitution of the United States and even to the contemporary Ecumenical Movement.

That it was an important meeting is indicated by the minutes describing it as "being a very full town meeting". It took place "at ye meeting house by John Thomas'is house".

The purpose of the meeting was to act upon a petition presented to the General Court, May 28, 1712, "signifing the desire of sum of the inhabitants of the west end of town to have the town devided or one hundred pounds should be gathered into the town for the support of the ministry".

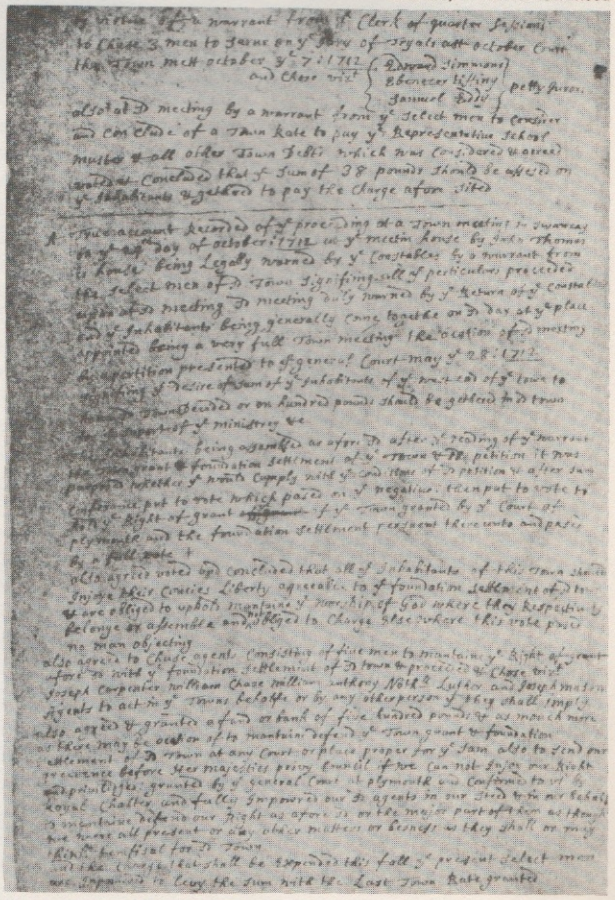
Throughout the colony at that time, it was the custom to support a Puritan Minister by taxation. Repeated efforts failed to induce or compel Swansea to conform to that custom. The inhabitants, except for the western part of town, (Barrington), disliked the exclusive spirit of Puritanism and the system of taxation for the support of religious institutions.

Here is what happened!

"The inhabitants being assembled as afore to, after ye reading of ye warrant, the town grant and foundation settlement of the town, and the petition, it was proposed whether they would cumply with the conditions of the petition." During the meeting, the townspeople refused to comply with the wishes of the people of the west end of town. Unlike most other inhabitants of the Colony, they did not feel that it was either necessary or desirable to pay a minister by taxation. They agreed and granted a fund or bank of 500 pounds and as much more as may be needed to defend the town grant and foundation settlement of the town, at any court, or place proper.

Unwilling to vote 100 pounds to pay the salary of a Puritan minister by taxation, Swansea townsmen freely taxed themselves five times that amount to defend their right to worship as, and where, they chose.

Courtesy Town of Swansea



From Town Meeting Record Book

SPECTATOR PRESS
780 County Street
Somerset, Mass.

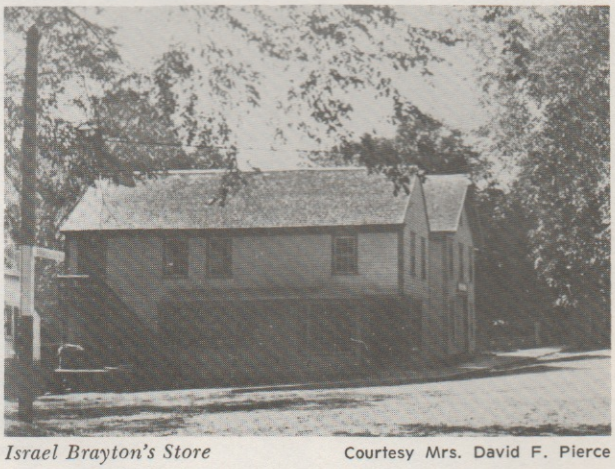
JOHN E. COX CO., INC.
753 Davol Street
Fall River, Mass.

Swansea Village – Scrabbletown

The Eddys certainly owned most of Swansea Village soon after the lands of the town were opened for purchase. Zachariah, the patriarch, set aside the family burial ground at the foot of Ledge Road where today you may see the earliest legible mark on a stone – M. E. ye W of S. E. 1700. When Ebenezer, one of the sons, sold his hundred-acre farm to Jonathan Hill in 1720, there were surely no other dwellings on that side of the road running between Mattapoiset and Showamet. The Hill house is still standing at One Main Street. When the Revolutionary War was over and the terrible scourge of smallpox was past, this farm was broken up and several substantial houses were built quite close together along the street. Captain Northam, Dr. Winslow, Richard Chace, shoemaker, John Gray, innkeeper, and several others made their homes there.

After the War of 1812, trade began to develop. In 1815 Israel Brayton built his house on Elm Street and his store at the corner of Main and Elm. Here he gathered the products of the countryside and shipped them far and wide, by cart to Boston and Albany, by ship to the southern states. He traded shoes from the village shoemakers, cotton cloth woven in the homes from yarn spun at the Swansea Union Cotton Manufacturing Co. in the Village, and the Swansea Cotton Manufacturing Co. in what is now Hortonville, for rum and molasses, china, spices and countless wares not available at home. The mill in the Village was converted to the manufacture of paper, and ladies began sewing straw bonnets at home, so two new products were added for trade. Mr. Brayton used the name Scrabbletown on his correspondence. Perhaps it had been used before that time and it certainly persisted long afterwards, although no one knows the origin.

Swansea Village was now a busy place. The post office had been moved there in 1814. The Union Meeting House was built in 1830 where the Town Hall now stands. Methodists, Baptists, Swedenborgians and Universalists participated in the service of dedication and subsequently met there for worship. In 1832, Israel Brayton sold his house to Philip Baker, shoemaker, and his store to Joseph F. Chace and John A. Wood, traders. The Stebbins brothers were making daguerreotypes; the inn was filled with shoemakers as well as travellers; there were several shops. Three doctors were practicing at the same time. They were the grandfather Ebenezer Winslow, who died in 1832; the son John Winslow, who died in 1838; and the grandson John W. Winslow, who died in 1836. It is said that these men never used a wheeled vehicle, but made their calls on horseback with instruments and



Israel Brayton's Store Courtesy Mrs. David F. Pierce

medicines in their saddlebags. Thus the three were gone in one decade. Dr. A. T. Brown came in 1836 to practice for sixteen years, and he was followed in 1842 by his brother-in-law, Dr. James Lloyd Wellington, who lived and practiced here until his death in 1916 at the age of ninety-nine.

It was in the Meeting House that the Swansea Social Library was organized in 1841. This group purchased books to be passed from member to member. The same procedure was followed when Christ Church Book Circle was started in 1882. Soon the name was changed to Swansea Public Library Association, the forerunner of the Free Public Library, housed in the Town Hall until the present building was constructed.

SWANSEA CONSTRUCTION CO., INC.
397 Locust Street
Swansea, Mass.



Stevens Property Courtesy Stevens Home for Boys, Inc.

Courtesy Stevens Home for Boys, Inc.



Mr. Frank S. Stevens



Mrs. Frank S. Stevens



Case's Hotel Courtesy Eliza Gray Case Home

After ten or fifteen years, the founders of the Union Meeting House began to have trouble with shifting loyalties among the supporting groups and, although the building was used for social and civic meetings for many years, services of worship became less frequent. The Episcopalians in town had been going to Warren for the services there; but in 1845, the Reverend Amos D. McCoy of the Church of the Ascension in Fall River began to preach in the Meeting House. Many in the village became interested in the establishment of an Episcopal Church and, consequently, Christ Church was organized in 1846. An attractive edifice was soon erected and dedicated in December, 1847.

With the discovery of gold, several from the village journeyed to California, some to stay, others to return. Jeremiah Gray came home from Sacramento, where he had been in newspaper work, to manage the "Swansea Record". James Birch, an unknown young man, probably from South Carolina, departed from Providence to seek his fortune. In the same party travelling west was Frank S. Stevens, a native of Vermont. These men, with others, engaged in the stage coach business and were very successful. James Birch returned in 1852 to marry Julia Chace in Swansea Village. Here they built the mansion on the village street, but had not long together, because Mr. Birch was lost at sea in 1857 at the age of twenty-nine. Mrs. Birch married his business partner, Mr. Stevens, and they made their home here. Mr. Stevens became very active in the life of the community, the mill business in Fall River, the distilleries in Kentucky and many other enterprises. After the death of his wife Julia, he married Elizabeth Case in 1873 whose family owned the hotel. The Stevens fortune changed the face of Swansea Village. In 1891 Mr. Stevens presented the Town Hall and at his death in 1898, it was found that he had left money for the erection of a Public Library and a new building for Christ Church. His widow carried out his wishes and later gave the Frank S. Stevens School, the Diocesan Guest House, and the Joseph Case High School. The Frank S. Stevens Home for Boys was established with funds from the residual estate of Elizabeth R. Stevens. Her sister, Miss Mary A. Case provided for the remodelling of Case's Hotel to establish the Eliza Gray Case Home.

TOWNE HEATING CO., INC.
1162 Grand Army Highway
Swansea, Mass.

THE CITIZENS SAVINGS BANK
4 South Main Street
Fall River, Mass.

PEERLESS LIQUOR MART
200 Macomber Avenue
Swansea, Mass.

Courtesy Miss Mary B. Wood



Mail Wagon - Lewis H. Gray, Carrier

Courtesy Miss Mary B. Wood



Gray's Corner

Courtesy Mrs. Edith Adam



Gray's Blacksmith Shop

Home of Mr. Willard F. Dixon



Jonathan Hill House owned by Christ Church

Much of the day to day business of the town has been carried on in the village since the day in 1880 when Joseph Luther retired as town clerk and Henry O. Wood was elected in his place. Even before this time the Honorable John Mason, who lived at 21 Main Street, was elected Town Clerk fifty times between 1808 and 1865. It was not uncommon at the time for one man to fill many town offices; and, since Mr. Wood was town treasurer and tax collector, people came to his home to pay bills, to collect wages, to obtain licenses and even to get married. When the Town Hall was built, the most ancient and precious records were transferred to the vault there; but, even when Albert Almy succeeded Mr. Wood as town clerk in 1925, business was carried on at the Almy home until the remodelling of the Town Hall in 1950.

As often happens in New England towns, much of the history is recorded in the cemeteries. There are three in Swansea Village, the Eddy Burial Ground at the end of Ledge Road, and those in the rear of Christ Church and the Town Hall. There are many early markers worth studying. The sea captains, the soldiers, the lawyers and the clergy have headstones there. The names of the baker, the wheelwright, the blacksmith and the shoemaker are there, but their shops have disappeared.

Swansea Village is no longer self-sufficient. It is a street of charming old homes and handsome public buildings, but no shops. Julia Chace Birch Stevens, who was born in the house at 160 Elm Street and died in the mansion at 21 Main Street, could go to the corner and buy a spool of thread, a bolt of cloth or a pair of shoes. Now, the only business is the Swan Printing Company with a history of more than one hundred and fifty years of various manufacturing enterprises at that spot.

B.M.C. DURFEE TRUST CO.
80 North Main Street
Fall River, Mass.

The Martin House

To quietly enter the Martin House, built in 1728, is to leave behind the rhythms of today and return to an age of more leisurely living. As one walks to the door of the shingled, gambrel-roofed farmhouse, it would not seem surprising to be greeted by the lady of the house in sweeping skirts with a candleholder in her hand.

A tour of the house discloses spinning wheels, brick bake ovens, numerous fireplaces and a fine collection of lighting fixtures. The visitor soon realizes that the lady who ruled in this eleven-room house worked at her role. However, she did have most of the appointments of gracious living of her day.

Perhaps the most appealing room is the dining room, with its large Welsh dresser filled with a fine collection of pewter pieces, including a full set of measuring tankards. Part of the dining room fireplace contains a two-section brick oven. It is easy to imagine the bell-skirted lady of the house placing cooking pots on a long handled flat shovel, called a "peel", and sliding them into the upper oven which had been previously warmed by the lightwood stored in the bottom section.

The spacious pantry holds glassware, a fine silver service, Ashburton goblets, Staffordshire china and an unidentified set of chocolate or demi-tasse cups and saucers with pierced rims. No visitor yet has been able to identify the latter which is snow white with a glaze reminiscent of Irish Belleek.

Walls in the kitchen are buff and cream. Here are kept a spinning wheel and a smaller flax wheel on which were made the fabrics for the household. Walls in the rest of the house are white plaster and floors are made of wide boards, covered with a colorful collection of old handmade rugs, many dyed with root and berry dyes which still remain vivid.

One wonders about the significance of the fact that a collection of armor is now stored in a small room called the "borning" room which was just that. Presumably it is because the armor did



Martin House

Courtesy Colonial Dames of America

R. B. NEGUS LUMBER CO., INC.
538 Wilbur Avenue
Swansea, Mass.

ANDERSON-LITTLE CO., INC.
Fall River, Mass.

not suit the decor of any other room. Bookshelves contain Indian relics found on the property and a commemorative pitcher from the sailing ship, George Washington, built in the Mason Barney shipyard in Swansea. Simeon Martin was captain of the ship and his sea chest is found at the foot of one of the beds upstairs.

Quilts of long ago cover the beds and one has hand-netted curtains. Any little girl would love the cradles or the small tiger-maple night table or chest. These were not toys, but cabinet-maker's samples from which furniture was ordered. There are footwarmers, bedwarmers, sewing boxes and in a closet milady's hoopskirt frame.

John Martin the second, built the farmhouse in 1728 on the site of a previous house, presumably burned by the Indians at the start of King Philip's War. The first John Martin who came to Swansea in 1665, was a road surveyor and constable for the Plymouth Bay Colony. He died in 1713 at the age of eighty. Over the years his 100 acre farm was divided until 100 years after his death, only 70 acres remained in the original grant where the house is located.

Mrs. Frederick Allien, nee Martin, further divided the land in acquiring full title to the 38 acres where the house now stands. She retained many original pieces in the house and was able to reacquire many others. For her work in restoring the property, she was made a life member in 1914 of the Society of Mayflower Descendants of New York. At her death in 1930, the property was bequeathed to the Massachusetts Society of Colonial Dames which maintains it as a museum. It is open to the public from May 1 to November 1, seven days a week, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

If you wish to feel the breath of history, see sets of copper lustre, or a beaded bag dated 1798 — or just step back in time for a pleasant afternoon — then visit the Martin House on Route Six, North Swansea, where Mr. and Mrs. Wilfred Hunt, the caretakers, will be glad to welcome you.

The Mason Barney Ship Yard

The old highway through Swansea to Providence still crosses the Palmer River at Myles Bridge as it has for over 300 years. Standing on this bridge today, in the section of town variously known as North Swansea, Barneyville or Bungtown, it is difficult to imagine that here next to this bridge on the southwest bank of the river, once flourished a shipyard of such a size and importance that it created a village complete with a hotel, stores, churches, a dance hall, post office, and of course many homes. It was known to shipping people around the world.

The Barney Ship Yard was started in the late 1700's by Jonathan Barney whose great-grandfather had moved to this area in 1690 from Salem. For the most part Jonathan confined himself to small boats for local farmers and fishermen. An exception may have been the 40-ton schooner "Anna" which was built in Swansea in 1787, although some say the "Anna" came from a yard on Lee's River. In any event, it wasn't until 1802, when Jonathan's son Mason Barney took over the business, that its era of greatness really began. No account of the Barney Shipbuilding Company could be written without a few words about Mason Barney himself, for Mason Barney was the ship yard. He was an extraordinary man indeed. With high piercing voice and limitless nervous energy, he dominated not only his shipyard, but all the country around it with almost feudal control and autocratic power. He owned the store, sold the rum, was postmaster, banker, and, at one time, even minted his own coins known as "Bungtown Coppers". But, in spite of his power, he was respected and admired, for he brought a stability and a prosperity to the area that it had never known before — or has seen since.

FALL RIVER ELECTRIC LIGHT CO.
"Serving Swansea with power for progress and better living electrically since 1911."



Mason Barney Shipyard

Courtesy Town of Swansea

The first ship that Mason Barney built was a three-master of over 200 ton burden for Colonel Wardwell of Bristol. Mr. Barney was only twenty years old when it was launched in 1803. The old Squire related in later years when his hundredth ship was long rigged and sailing, that he told Colonel Wardwell at first that he could not build the craft. This is the extraordinary part of Barney's ship building. Although he had become acquainted with the nature of the business through his father, who had now moved to New York, he himself never knew how to use tools. He told of finally accepting the Colonel's contract and how impossible at times the job appeared to him. He discovered on this job that his genius truly lay in his ability to organize and direct the skill of others. From that brave beginning until 1859 when his last vessel was launched, he had built a total of at least 137 ships of various sizes: gun boats for the government's use in the Mexican War, whalers, merchant ships for the China trade, barges for the Blackstone Canal, slave ships. Whatever ships mariners of the time required, Mason Barney built them. Some of these reached a size of over 1000 ton capacity, and how they were ever brought from the yard in Barneyville to Warren or Bristol for rigging, is hard to understand. Anyone with a boat who has tried to follow the serpentine course of the Palmer River channel from Myles Bridge to Warren can appreciate the difficulties that had to be overcome. The channel is very narrow and twists and turns through barely submerged mud flats and tidal marsh to the bridge at Warren, where more than once Barney's ships stuck fast in the drawbridge there paralyzing traffic for days.

UNION SAVINGS BANK
20 South Main Street
Fall River, Mass.

RICHARD K. GUNTHER INSURANCE AGENCY
8 Picard Court
Swansea, Mass.

NAUTICAL LOUNGE
Grand Army Highway
Swansea, Mass.

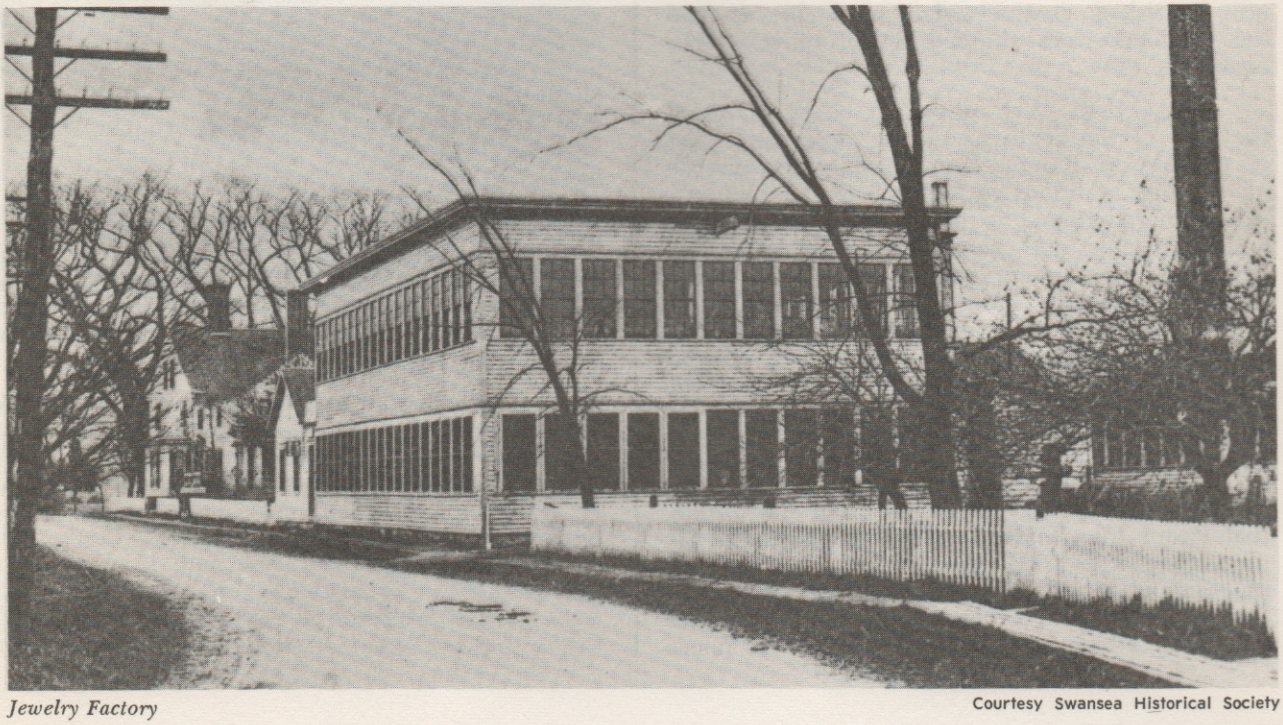
Mason Barney's ships were built of native timber from the surrounding forest. He would search over Rehoboth and Dighton for trees of the right size and have them hauled to the ship yard where they were hewn to the proper shape. There was no saw mill, so planking was bought at mills in Attleboro and Seekonk. As many as 175 men were employed at one time and one can visualize the picture of bustling activity it must have presented on the banks of the Palmer.

The coming of iron ships and the financial panic of 1858 brought it all to an abrupt end. Mason Barney's mansion still stands on the southwestern corner where Barneyville Road meets Old Providence Road, but there is little evidence the shipyard ever existed. Only a few pieces of wharf are visible at low tide as they slowly rot away in the Palmer River.

North Swansea

By the beginning of the Civil War, shipbuilding in this vicinity had begun to suffer from the general financial situation. Before the war was over, the industry had practically disappeared from the tributaries of Narragansett Bay. Mason Barney's yard closed in 1861 and there were hard times for the people of North Swansea.

However, Daniel R. Child, one of the ship carpenters, went to Providence and tried his hand at the jewelry business. He was successful. About 1878, he came back to establish his factory, first on the ship yard lot and then down the Providence road beyond the Mason Barney house. Here he constructed a two story building for the manu-



Jewelry Factory

Courtesy Swansea Historical Society

SWANSEA AMBULANCE AUXILIARY
Swansea, Mass.



Maker Homestead — Built by Hugh Cole Family Circa. 1664

facture of collar buttons and cuff links. The business flourished; greater variety was achieved, and the products were shipped to all parts of the country.

As the years went on owners changed. About the turn of the century, one of these men lived in the Mason Barney house and, unfortunately, made some additions to this substantial building. The plant continued to expand for several years and both men and women from Swansea and adjoining towns, were able to ride to work on the cars of the Providence and Fall River Street Railway. The tracks crossed the marsh some distance from the highway, so passengers were obliged to use a walkway to the factory. Shortly after the first World War, the trolley line went out of business and the jewelry factory did not last much longer.

It was in this area, not far from the bridge, that Pastor John Myles built his garrisoned house some time after 1663. As may be seen from the photograph, it was a sturdy house quite suitable for the shelter and protection of nearby families in case of attack. It seems strange that his house and his church were so far apart. The church was more than two miles away at a place now over the Barrington town line. A marker there has the following inscription: "The first Baptist Church in Massachusetts was founded near this spot A. D. 1663. Rev. John Myles, James Brown, Nicholas Tanner, Joseph Carpenter, Eldad Kingsley, Benjamin Alby, John Butterworth, founders."

Probably Pastor Myles sheltered people in his home on many occasions, but during King Philip's War, the lives of many were saved in this house. It was also the rallying place for the troops sent from Boston and Plymouth to aid in the defence against the Indians.

It is regrettable that the house was burned in 1909. Funds were granted by the Massachusetts legislature for the erection of a monument. Since land at the actual site was not available, Algernon H. Barney presented a plot adjoining where the monument now stands.

SWANSEA COUNTRY CLUB & LOUNGE
299 Market Street
North Swansea, Mass.

J. B. TRAVERS LUMBER CO.
2452 G.A.R. Highway
North Swansea, Mass.

Touisset

"Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale
Her infinite variety;"

Although these lines pay tribute to a woman, they could just as well pay tribute to Touisset, a neck of land stretching into Mount Hope Bay. For, even in 1967, "infinite variety" best describes this part of town: variety of architecture, variety in terrain, and variety in the ever-changing river that runs right up to so many backyards.

The river is, perhaps, the reason that Touisset has a quality that is unlike other parts of town. Here there is not the uniformly quiet charm of Swansea Village, nor the crisp, attractive post-war suburban look of Luther Park. Here, instead, fragments of many eras exist quite comfortably, side by side. For here, since the town's beginnings, men have staked out their claim along the shore.

Home of Mr. and Mrs. Normand Gendron



Riverby

The river is named after Hugh Cole, one of the fifty-five original founders of the town. He was a surveyor and in 1669 he and others purchased from King Philip, "five hundred acres of land on Toweset Neck on the west side of the river to which his name is given". He was a friend of Philip and accounts of the King Philip War, based on records of the times, often repeat the story of the Wampanoag king's kindness to his white friend. Just before the outbreak of hostilities he sent word to Cole to "remove lest it should be out of his power to prevent harm befalling him, and extended protection to two small children because, 'their father sometimes showed me kindness'". It is a matter of record that Hugh Cole's house was burned on June 19, 1675, a few days before the real beginning of that savage war.

The account in the 1917 History of the Town of Swansea tells the story in this manner:
"His house stood on an old Indian cemetery, and the Indians had become very much incensed about it. Hugh Cole, the owner, was a friend of King Philip, who had held them back from injuring him. Finally, he told Mr. Cole that he could hold them back no longer, and advised him to flee. Mr. Cole and his family started down Cole's River on a raft." Before he had left the river, his house was in flames. Having spent the war in Rhode Island, he returned in 1677 and lived on the west side of Touisset Neck on the Kickemuit River in Warren.

The river that bears his name gave Hugh Cole a path to safety in 1675. Since that time it has given many things to many people. Food, industry and pleasure have probably been its greatest gifts. And here, too, variety. From earliest times, quahogs and clams have been taken from the Cole's River. In 1967, Touisset residents and the commercial digger alike, still manage to take shellfish from the sandbar and rocky shore. Though residents now confine most of their digging to the summer months, all winter long the commercial quahogger is out in the river working his long wooden tongs in his sturdy, "no-nonsense" kind of boat.

Fishing, an early Swansea industry, is still enjoyed with great gusto by present residents of what was once "Toweset Neck". "The Old Stone Pier" now stands as a relic of what was once a thriving business. Between 1880 and 1890 fish fertilizers, by-products of the menhaden oil industry, were manufactured here. At the turn of the century, oysters, too, provided a livelihood for Swansea families. Edward G. Morse, who carried on the business of E. K. Morse & Sons, had his establishment on the east side of the river

FALL RIVER SAVINGS BANK
The Old Red Bank
141 North Main Street
Fall River, Mass.

Home of Mr. and Mrs. Delbert J. Hayden



Smuggler's House

Courtesy Swansea Historical Society



Pearse Homestead

Home of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Bowen



Seth Brown House

Courtesy Mr. Louis O. Manchester



Touisset Park

and William I. Wilber dealt in "Touisset Oysters" on the west side. After the William J. Brightman Fish Works and the Church and Hathaway Oil Works went out of business, a pleasure park was located at the pier. During this era, steamboats from Fall River and Providence brought pleasure-seeking passengers to Touisset Park.

Today, the John Place Landing of the Coles River Club, a few hundred yards south of the old stone pier, provides the focal point for waterfront activity. From here, during the summer months, the next generation of salt-water sailors are given the signals that start the bi-weekly races. From here, too, an annual Coles River Regatta, attracting sailboats from all over Narragansett Bay, is held.

Sailing, and racing, and tennis, and swimming, now long established facets of life in Touisset, developed during the era when Touisset was a summer colony. In 1902 Jacob Fash, developer, purchased from Mary Todd and laid out most of the land that is now Seaview and Touisset Ave. This part of the neck, as it exists today, had its beginnings at that time. The automobile put Touisset within easy commuting distance of Fall River and Providence, summer houses were winterized and, in 1967, the majority of Touisset's residents live there, by the water, the whole year round.

Today it is in the quiet and lonely places, and in the everlasting rocks, that the real history of Touisset is written. Stone walls cross second-growth woodlands where the land rises to the ridge of the neck. (A 1776 chart of Narragansett Bay commissioned by Lord Howe, shows fields cleared by some long ago farmer in that same area.) Three stone-walled cemeteries, (Brown, Mason, and Sisson) bring to mind other people in other times who lived and died along the

LEO'S PHARMACY
88 Brightman Street
Fall River, Mass.

GEORGE B. LOCKHART INS. AGENCY, INC.
1168 County Street
Somerset, Mass.

LeCOMTE'S DAIRY
160 Leonard Street
Fall River, Mass.

shore. Carriage steps, still in place in the wall around Ingleside, (one of Swansea's original farmhouses), teach of other customs, other ways. Cracked chunks of puddingstone show what gales and hurricanes and beating sun have done since glaciers dumped them here centuries and centuries ago.

But time has been kind. Much of Toweset Neck has changed since Hugh Cole made his purchase nearly three hundred years ago. Changing with the times, the people of Touisset have used the land and the river in their way, in their time. And through all these changes, the tides have come and gone along this stretch of Swansea, reminding people now, as they must have always, that some things go on forever.

Hortonville – Swansea Factory

Courtesy Swansea Historical Society



Cummings Store and Chapel

Between the north and west forks of the ancient Mattapoisett River, lies a section of Swansea known as Swansea Factory or Hortonville. As English settlement progressed here in the Colonies, Indian names were replaced with English names to honor settlers who had been prominent in leadership. One such person was Hugh Cole. Consequently the name of the town's main drainage system was changed from Mattapoisett to Cole's River.

This stream furnished water power for seven mills along its course, – four of them grist, one yarn. The remaining two alternated between yarn, carding, grist and waste, thus giving support to the industry section of our town seal. In fact Hortonville Road was once called Mill Road. The Nathan Montgomery Wood mill was farther downstream where Wood Street crosses. The next mill downstream was the Ebenezer Cole Carding Mill. The Isaac Mason-Benjamin Martin-John Sherman house and grist mill stood up the lane to the right of the Hortonville Road bridge. It has been gone for years and the water rights have been sold to Montaup Electric Company. In 1937 the bricks from its huge fallen chimney were used in repair work on the Luther Store, because they were of the right type and size. Jesse K. Chace, who lived at 1015 Hortonville Road, was the last miller in the area.

The water power of the river was harnessed in its upper reaches, and, in 1806, a mill was built carrying between two and three hundred spindles. It was known as the Swansea Cotton Manufacturing Company and was one of the oldest cotton mills in the country. Thus the name Factory Lane was given to the rural and attractive right of way, a quarter circle connecting Hortonville Road and Locust Street. Along this lane several old houses still stand, two built by Mr. Davis and one by the Wannings who had an interest in the cotton factory. Miss Flora Dutton, who lives in the house built by Edwin Davis, has taken advantage of the mill stream in the landscaping of the old home. Much of the Wanning estate now remains the property of Mrs. Arthur Ormsbee, a direct descendant of the family. This factory was destroyed by fire in 1836 and never rebuilt. Two mill stones of James Lawton's grist mill nearby have been disposed of, but the iron shaft is still in the water.

R. A. McWHIRR CO., INC.
169 North Main Street
Fall River, Mass.

Townspeople carried their flax to the mill and the yarn was distributed around town and in such trading places as the Luther Store in Swansea Center and the Israel Brayton store in Scrabbletown, now Swansea Village. The yarn after being spun into cloth, was returned to its distribution points.

From the corner of Hortonville Road to the north and then along Locust Street to Oak Street, according to the Watling Survey of 1851, there were such names of house owners as Cowing, Chace, Mason, Martin, Sherman, Eddy, Marvel, Rounds, Horton, Hale and Bullock. Benanuel Marvel lived in the house now standing just over the bridge at 990 Hortonville Road. His daughter, Keziah, married George Easterbrooks, who carried on Benanuel's store downstairs. The town treasurer's record shows that Benanuel Marvel was a one-man "credit union" to the Town of Swansea in the days when it would appear that the town could not get credit for advanced funds from a city bank in "anticipation of taxation".

Next to the Marvel house was Horton's blacksmith shop. Miss Agnes Best lives in Mr. Horton's house. The Sherman house, occupied by Mrs. John Dutton, still stands across Locust Street. When Nathaniel Baker Horton purchased a large area west of the Sherman property, his influence began to be felt. Although a resident of Rehoboth, he was very active in this area. He and James Eddy were prime movers in the organization of the Second Universalist Society which held meetings in Liberty Hall from 1855 until 1870 when the chapel was built. Liberty Hall was the original District No. VI school. After the new school was built, the Hall was used for public assembly purposes until Mr. Horton built Horton's Hall in 1873 to replace it. The new hall was the center of the social life of the community. Town Meetings were held here as well until the present Town Hall was built in 1891.

There were three stores in operation at this time, George Easterbrooks', Delmar Cummings' and Henry F. Lawton's. Mr. Leonard Cummings was appointed postmaster, and the office was named Hortonville out of compliment to Mr. Horton, who had been instrumental in its establishment. This civic-spirited and zealous man was not only active in Swansea and Rehoboth, but was on the board of trustees of several banks and mills in Fall River. His portrait was presented to the Swansea Historical Society by his daughter Arabella who married Delmar Cummings. They carried on the Cummings' store, until her death in 1951.

Home of Mrs. John Dutton



Sherman House

Courtesy Mrs. Marion D. Reilly



Miller Jesse Chace

Today there are no Hortons in Hortonville. The church, stores, post office and Liberty Hall are all gone. Horton's Hall was made into the house at 33 Locust Street. The school is the headquarters of the Portuguese American Civic League.

At 397 Locust Street, standing like an old soldier in all its rugged individualism, is one of the oldest houses in Swansea – the Carr-Martin House, built in 1736 and still owned by John Douglass, a Martin descendant. The old farm is the headquarters of the thriving Swansea Construction Company, an asset to the town. Across the street is the Hale Farm. Records show that the two families, Hale and Martin descendants, have been neighbors since Robert Carr married Hannah Hale in 1708. The Hale farm is unique in

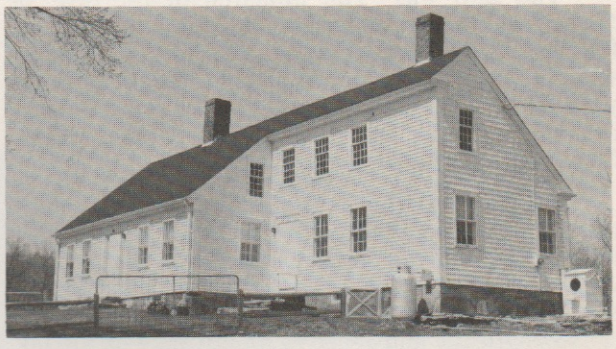
ROBINSON'S HOME APPLIANCES, INC.
453 Stafford Road
Fall River, Mass.

WEBB OIL CO.
10 Durfee Street
Fall River, Mass.

that it is believed to be the only remaining farm in Swansea that has been continuously owned and operated as a farm by the family to which it was given as a grant. It was granted to John Hale who was admitted to the Town of Swansea a free man in 1709. It is presently owned by Daniel Hale. Mr. Hale is restoring and maintaining the old house down the lane which belonged to his grandfather, Daniel Hale, built about 1845.

There are five private cemeteries in this old section of Swansea where are buried the men and their families who established these farms, assisted in supporting the town, carrying on its industry and voting its government. In the spendidly maintained Hale Cemetery, are buried two brothers, Capt. Daniel Hale and Lt. John Hale, soldiers of the American Revolution.

Thus the history of Hortonville may be divided into two periods, the Factory period and the Hortonville period. In the beginning, it was agricultural with farms and grist mills. It then became a thriving community with comfortable well-kept homes, prosperous businesses and an active close-knit social life with the influence of its people felt not only in Swansea, but in the nearby cities as well.



Daniel Hale Home

A Swansea Boy Goes To Sea

Aaron Wood spent his boyhood on a farm in Swansea. His parents, John and Lydia Wood, must have missed him sorely when he left home at the age of sixteen to earn his living. He begins to keep a Journal in August 1853 and notes on the 29th that he went to Providence and engaged a room in a boarding house for $52.00 for the year. He finds employment in a counting house. For many months Aaron is busy as a messenger and delivery boy. He studies bookkeeping but his heart isn't in it. He is happiest when his errands take him to the wharves where he can talk with the sailors. On one occasion, he asks a captain to take him on his ship; but he learns he is not old enough to meet the regulations. On May 9th he writes, "Nothing under the heavens occurred today". Surely the counting house is not the place for Aaron. Just before his year is up, he approaches his employer. "Asked Mr. Burroughs about how much he calculated to give me next year. said 104 dollars. Shan't stay". He figures his expenses are $250. for a year, so he couldn't afford to stay even if he wanted to do so. We wonder what Aaron will do now and the answer is not long in coming.

"Wed. Aug. 30th (1854) Pleasant. Nothing in Particular occurred today except that I received word that Capt. Gardner wants me to go to sea with him". It did not take long for Aaron to make up his mind.

"Sunday Sept. 3. After dinner took a walk over to the west to hunt woodchucks. Elisha Buffinton came over and found us. Had a talk with him about going to sea. He is going with Capt. Gardner guess I shall go with him."

For a month, Aaron stays at home and works around the farm. He digs a well, clears brush and goes clamming. He leaves home at three in the morning to take a load of apples to the market in Providence. We wonder if he has given up the idea of being a sailor. But, in early October, he goes to Warren and buys some cloth for pants and a "Bowditch's Navigator". He begins work on a sea chest and has a daguerreotype taken. He is getting ready. His grandmother gives him a blanket and a dollar. Finally, on November 1, he makes his farewells and leaves Fall River on the steamboat for New York with Elisha and two other friends. His adventure begins.

AMERICAN LEGION
Swansea Post No. 303
Swansea, Mass.

"Friday Nov. 3 Pleasant arrived in New York about 7 o'clock. Got some breakfast at Almy's eating saloon. Got my chest carried around to our ship and went aboard ourselves. Found William (Gardner, son of the Captain) and Frank (Cole) on board at work."

The ship was "The Monarch of the Sea" of New York. Aaron describes it in his Journal as follows: "1976 tons register. 240 feet in length. 42½ in width. 33 ft. depth of hold. length of main yard 85 ft. 2356 tons measure per Liverpool measurement." It was the pride of the United States Merchant fleet.

For the next three weeks, Aaron is busy with rigging the ship and getting in stores. "Devilish hard work", writes Aaron. There is time for a walk about the harbor to see "The Flying Cloud". Aaron signs articles for the first leg of the voyage to New Orleans and receives an advance of $15.00. And the sea voyage begins.

"Thursday, Nov. 29th. Crew came on board in forenoon. Hove up anchor and was taken in tow by Steamer Titan was towed as far as Sandy Hook. Set topsails and top-gallant sails. Was not seasick at all.

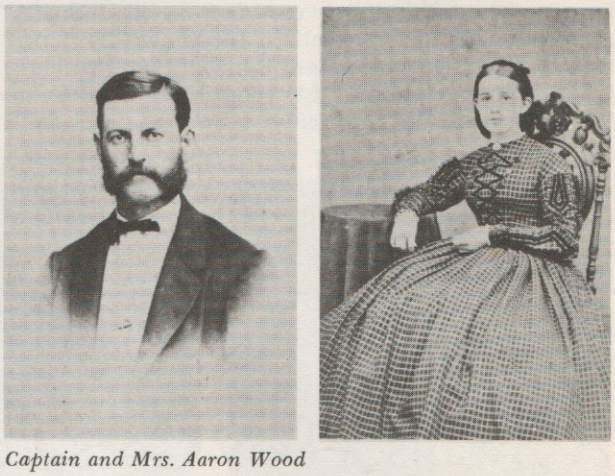
Friday, Nov. 30th Set skysails in morning. Hauled them with royals at night. It was my first job aloft."

Aaron seems to have been a born sailor. He is as much at home aloft as on deck. He helps the Captain at the helm and the engineer with the pumps. Everything about the ship interests him. He enjoys the winds, the sea and all the new experiences. Some of the other boys are not so happy. Aaron reports, "boys all talk of leaving ship at N. O." (New Orleans), but not Aaron.

Just before Christmas they sight the shore of Florida and anchor at the Navy Yard. Christmas Day is rainy but Aaron, never without resources of his own, works on his fish lines. After rowing the Captain ashore, Aaron digs bait and goes fishing as if he were back home by the Cole's River. The day after Christmas, Aaron, with three others of the crew, row Captain Gardner from their anchorage to Pensacola, a distance of seven miles, in one hour and a quarter. Pensacola has undergone great changes since Aaron visited it and describes it as follows: "Pensacola is a most godforsaken looking place of about 2000 inhabitants, although from appearances one would not suppose that there were 20. Everything in the eating and drinking line is exorbitantly high. We took a short stroll through the town, bought some things and went aboard of boat to lunch. Had hardly commenced when the Captain came on board and put us in tow of steamboat for Navy Yard of which I have not yet given a description. It is on the west side of the bay and surrounded by a high wall. The yard contains the workshops and residences of the officers and a floating dry dock and marine railway onto which we are going."

A number of days go by as work is done on the ship. Some of the boys get into fights and Aaron drops a quarter of beef onto the dock, but we are relieved to read that he gets it back.

Courtesy Miss Mary B. Wood and Mr. Abbott E. Wood



Captain and Mrs. Aaron Wood

Aaron is fast becoming an old hand. He buys some cigars and mentions seeing some pretty girls on board a coastal steamer. The Captain seems to like Aaron and almost every day has him row him ashore or take him fishing. It is about a month before the ship sets sail for New Orleans, where she arrives on January 24th and moors at Levee #44.

Each port means an overhaul for the ship. The boys scrub the decks, scour the brass and work on the rigging, but they have time to "loaf" and see the sights. Bales of cotton are brought to the dock to be loaded on board. The first mate arranges for four of the boys to watch the cotton on the levee for $1.50 a night. "Very well satisfied," writes Aaron. It comes time for them to sign articles for the next leg of the voyage to Liverpool. Elisha decides to leave the ship. "Elisha packed his chest today and last night wrote letter home." Aaron is going to miss Elisha, his friend. On March 4th, the crew comes aboard and the trip to Liverpool begins.

The Atlantic brings fair days and foul with squalls and gales. "Monday, April 2 At 8½ o'clock

SWANSEA INSURANCE BROKERS ASSOCIATION
George Bedard — John A. Burke, Jr.
Russell B. Cochrane — Ernest T. Collins

a squall struck us while under royals. We clewed up royals fore and aft Sam and me had a very hard time furling main royal. Soon after Scotta was sent up to loose it but the wind freshening was ordered to furl it again. I went up to help him and got up there just in time to catch him as he fell off the yard." Aaron is factual and composed even when he relives such a dramatic episode. Many brigs are sighted, some from Massachusetts. One pleasant afternoon in March, with a stiff breeze blowing, Aaron reports, "two men



Monarch of the Sea

Courtesy Miss Rachel L. Gardner

in the other watch were ordered to go aloft and slush down in their watch below which they refused to do. They were then ordered to shoulder handspicks and march and one did so but the other (Dutch Harry) refused and the third mate knocked him down with a belaying pin He went into a fit and for a time it was supposed he was dead but he finally come to and is getting better." We draw a sigh of relief, although Aaron has no comment. Thirty-four days out of New Orleans, "The Monarch of the Sea" anchors in the harbor of Liverpool.

Again the ship goes into drydock. The boys work for part of each day and enjoy exploring the bustling port, having a glass of ale and making some purchases in their free time. Aaron gets $5.00 from the Captain and buys "1 pair of dungarees, 1 knife, journal book, 1 dozen pipes, some thread." He is very thrifty and gets good value for his money. He learns the next trip is to be to the Mediterranean with supplies for the Crimean War. Excitement mounts.

On the way to Gibraltar, Aaron sights three whales when he is on the lookout. He is studying navigation and begins to record latitude and longitude. He notes his first observation is 6 miles out of the way as are several more until he gets the hang of it. The ship anchors near the Rock. "Sat. June 1st. Got ready and carried Captain ashore in morning and took a stroll through town. Came aboard, brought off lots of oranges, and some figs and apricots." Passing Majorca, Aaron reports "went to the wheel for the first time". There is more fighting amongst the crew and the third mate "pounded Joe's head pretty badly with a serving mallet". Aaron nurses Joe and suffers himself from very painful boils. The Captain is interested in Aaron's education as a seaman and goes ashore with him and an interpreter at Marseilles. Aaron buys "a new quadrant for $12.50, parellel rule for $2.00 dividers and box and scale for $1.00 a magnifying glass belonging

SWANSEA INSURANCE BROKERS ASSOCIATION
Charles McL. Hadley — John E. Scanlon
Franklin P. Smith

equally to L. Cole and myself for 2 francs. Total amount $15.90."

For more than a month the ship stays in the harbor of Marseilles. Here the crew takes on shells, shot, mortars, and gun carriages for the war. They load hay, casks of water, and provender for the horses which are brought on board by the soldiers. The weather is fine and the boys go swimming each day, stroll through the French countryside, and eat too much fresh fruit. On July 26th, they set sail for a pleasant voyage through the Mediterranean, sighting the islands of Greece and finally the coast of Asia. Sloops of war are numerous. They anchor in the harbor of Constantinople but go on the next day to Bekos Bay for water. For several days the boys work hard towing the water boats and carrying the soldiers ashore and back. There is also the task of towing and dumping the dung barges and now and again the duty of throwing a dead horse overboard. They are given liberty to go to Constantinople. "We hired a "caicque" for which paid $1.60 or $.32 cents apiece We were about two hours going down We landed on the bridge hired an Interpreter and started for the Bazaar. The streets are very narrow with the gutter in the middle. The Bazaar is an immense building with stores of every discription under it but all of very small size. Had a feast of melons and pears and apples lemonade, ice cream and sweet water and bread. – Saw the Castle of Europe on the Europe side which was the first place the Turks took in Europe and the Castle of Asia on the Asia side. Jim was sick all the way up." We marvel that he is the only one.

On August 12th, they proceed through the Bosporus, passing the French sloop of war "Belle Poole" which carried the remains of Napoleon from St. Helena to Paris. They reach their berth in Sevastopol and find themselves in the midst of a flotilla of French, English and American ships. There is much visiting back and forth. Aaron rows the Captain and "his lady" to nearby ships and many parties. This must be a welcome diversion for Mrs. Gardner. Now begins the unloading of all the supplies and all the horses destined for the war front. Guns can be heard at night and loud explosions. Aaron carries his Captain and others ashore so they can go up to the battlefield. Once they stay overnight to see the attack on Malakoff. Russian prisoners are seen and the boys yearn to own a Russian musket. It is their turn to view the war and they go to Sevastopol.

"Aug. 25th Started on foot 8 of us in an Easterly direction Alf carrying the basket containing the dinner, which was put up in the cabin by Mrs. Gardner and was very good there being one bottle of Cognac. About one mile from the bay we met a mule train with wounded soldiers from the trenches, saw the trench and breastwork thrown up by the French for their defence in case of retreat. It extends the whole length of the English and French lines. The country was very hilly and the hills are of great height. Before the war there were many vineyards, but they were all burned for firewood by the French. When about 3 miles from the bay we came within shot of the Russian batteries which was evident by the shot and shell scattered about. There were some thousand acres over which the shot and shell were thickly strewn. We passed between the Headquarters of the French and English commanders in chief and soon came in sight of the batteries of the allied army. On the way we passed several lime kilns and several wells one of which the water was white like milk and very good. The lime burned in these Kilns is used for the walls of houses and for purifying the air in the camps. After getting in a place where a view of the harbor of Sevastopol could be seen concluded to dine. The Harbor of Sevastopol runs nearly East and west and we being to the Eastward of it could see the east end of town. and forts Constantine and "Alexandre" which are on the opposite side of the harbor from the City. Constantine is a round fort with three tier of guns. In the rear of fort Alexandre the tents of the Russian Cossacks were to be seen. A part of the Russian army were encamped near the battlefield of Alma which is on the point of land just below Constantine. The Russian sloops of war in the Harbor were in sight with their topmast struck. Around the City of Sevastopol on the side next the French there are three fortified walls. Outside of the walls are the Russian trenches and Batteries. While were taking our dinner a shot was fired which struck about 20 rods from us, and several came as near. After dinner started in search of water. after going about 2 miles came to the spring where we found multitudes of people from the camps but before we got there saw some English soldiers from their camp. they belonged with the 9th Regiment. We came through the French camps on our way back in search of Russian muskets but found none. picked up some pieces of bombshell and some rifle bullets. Came on board about 6 o'clock. The firing was very heavy at night." They learned that half of Sevastopol has fallen. It is not long before Aaron falls very ill and we are not supprised when a doctor from the "Manchester" diagnosis his illness as typhoid fever. A few days later, on Sept. 29th 1855, Aaron closes this Journal with the words

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187 Plymouth Avenue
Fall River, Mass.

PAUL H. PELLETIER ELECTRICIAN
9 Pocasset Avenue
Tiverton, R. I.

JACKSON COMPANY, INC.
119 Cove Street
Fall River, Mass.

"Getting better tolerably fast now I hope." He makes some notations which show that the ship continued to carry war supplies in the Mediterranean for another year.

Our readers may like to know that Aaron continued to climb his ladder until he reached the top and became the Captain of the "Monarch of the Sea". On Feb. 18, 1864, the Swansea Town Records show that Aaron H. Wood, seaman, married Isabell F. Pearse, schoolteacher. She grew up on the Pearse farm which was just down the road a piece from the Wood's home which is known now as "The Smuggler's House". Aaron and Isabell had one son, Oscar. The family moved to California and Aaron died there. One of the last entries in this Journal, written when Aaron was 18 years of age, is the following: "Assiduity in youth makes old age comfortable." We hope this proved to be true for Aaron, from whom we reluctantly take our leave.

FOOTNOTE: Aaron Wood was the great-uncle of Miss Mary B. Wood and Mr. Abbott E. Wood of Milford Road, Swansea. Aaron's Journal belongs to them and parts of it are appearing here with their permission.

Swansea's Churches



From its beginning, even by the very nature of its founding, the Town of Swansea has, over the years, known the influence of the churches in its life and growth. The several Christian bodies within the town have had a great, quiet effect upon the lives of the townspeople, generation after generation.

There are, at present, nine church groups within the town, whose histories are here recorded. Actually, no history of any church or parish could be fully told without a lengthy record of the influence that church has had upon each individual life within its flock. However, since time and space do not permit, we have here only the briefest histories.

These short sketches have been compiled from articles written by pastors, parishioners, or official church historians. Among the latter are Mrs. Edythe Wilde of the South Swansea Union Church, Miss Mary W. Arnold of the First Christian Congregational Church, and Miss Mary E. Nottingham of Christ Church.

THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Swansea's oldest church, The First Baptist Church, stands on a little rise of land on Route 6 in North Swansea, near the junction of the Warren road. Because this church is so closely bound to the early history of the town, it merits a longer mention and is discussed at greater length in the article written by the present pastor, Rev. Robert Carlson.

VENUS DeMILO DINING ROOM
75 Grand Army Highway
Swansea, Mass.

THE FIRST CHRISTIAN CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

This church, familiarly known as "The White Church" can establish its claim of being one of the oldest churches in New England. Services were first held in the year 1680, but for a period of thirteen years, there was neither pastor nor meeting house. In 1693 a church organization was formed called the "Church of Christ in Swansea". Thomas Barnes was ordained pastor in the same year.

Worthy of special note is the fact that this was an ecclesiastically independent church whose members were not required to subscribe to any set creed or doctrine. It is believed that this is the first church in New England which admitted to membership all Christians irrespective of their theological beliefs. Also this is probably the first church in Massachusetts which did not adopt the system of support by taxation. In 1719, Joseph Mason, the pastor, publicly declared himself satisfied with the voluntary contributions of his parishioners. Another interesting fact is that during the entire eighteenth century and a few years following, the pastors of the church were all members of the Mason family, descendants of Samson Mason, who came to America in the latter part of the 17th century.

The present church was dedicated in April 1833. In 1873, extensive changes were made and the pews were turned to the North to face the new organ. In 1952 and in 1958 further additions and renovations were made. In May, 1965, plans were approved for a new Christian Education wing of two stories designed to accommodate the rapidly growing church school and to provide for a day school for pre-primary children.

The present pastor is the Rev. Rene J. Dawe who came to the church in 1964.



SWANSEA MEETING OF FRIENDS

The Swansea Friends Meeting House is lo cated on Prospect Street in the Town of Somerset. Some parts of it have been there since 1701 and the site has not changed, but town boundaries have. There was no town of Somerset when the Quakers built their meeting house on what was then one of the main roads of the eastern part of Swansea. In 1790, when Somerset split off from Swansea, the place of worship was just over the new town line.



The church is simple and unadorned by elaborate fixtures. Although the meeting maintains its association with the Society of Friends, it no longer holds the silent form of worship of years ago. Today a conventional programmed service, presided over by a pastor, is held. But it is easy to look back over two hundred years to the days when, on separate sides of the church, the men and women sat in silence until occasionally a member would feel "led by the spirit" to rise, make his testimony and sit down. There was no singing and almost no talking.

Many ministers have served the church over the years, some with exceptionally long pastorates. At one time the minister was a moman, Patience Brayton, who journeyed to England to seek the King's support in stopping the slave trade. At present, Sunday morning worship is conducted by the Rev. Mr. McAfee who has been the pastor since 1961.

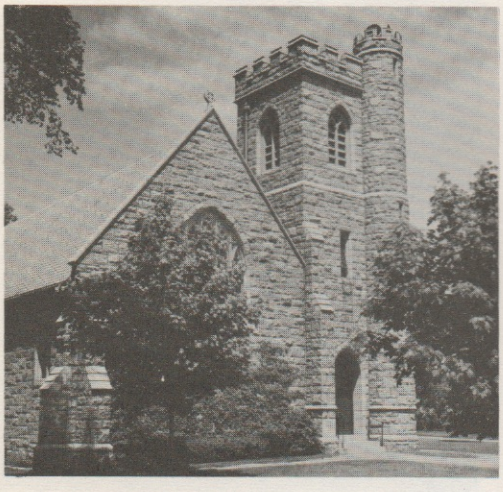
CHERRY & WEBB CO.
139 South Main Street
Fall River, Mass.

EVERETT MOTORS, INC.
880 South Main Street
Fall River, Mass.

CHRIST CHURCH

Christ Church (Episcopal) on Main Street in Swansea Village was incorporated as a Parish on January 7, 1846. The names of the first vestrymen, inscribed on a plaque in the Vestry, are names that appear again and again in the history of the town: William Pearse, John Mason, Esq., John A. Wood, Joseph D. Nichols, Preserved L. Gardner, Benjamin H. Chase, and John E. Gray.

The Rev. Amos McCoy, Rector of the Church of the Ascension, Fall River, was chiefly responsible for the beginning of this parish. The first little wooden church building was consecrated in 1847, and in 1848 the Rev. John Richmond of Providence became the first rector. In its first fifty years, the church was served by fourteen rectors, and many faithful and devoted wardens and vestrymen whose names and deeds are recorded in the old Vestry Book, a priceless document.



The present gray stone church was built with the legacy of Frank Shaw Stevens, plus a gift by his widow, Elizabeth Stevens. It was consecrated on June 6, 1900, by the Rt. Rev. William A. Lawrence. From the old church the original bell was removed to the new tower, and some other of the original appointments are still in use on the altar.

The Rectory, the Parish House, and the Winslow House have been added to the church property through the years. A Parish Day School is a vital part of the church work. The parish draws its membership from a large geographical area. The present rector, the Rev. Allen Webster Joslin, came to Christ Church in 1958.

SOUTH SWANSEA UNION CHURCH

The history of this church is unusual in that there was a flourishing Sunday School, a Ladies Aid Society, and a Corporation before there was either a Church building or organized Church.

On Oct. 25, 1914, a Sunday School was formed with 16 members, with Mr. A. L. Burdick as superintendent. The classes met at the home of Mr. Chester Gardner. A year later, when the enrollment was 96, a Sunday School Corporation was formed and plans were made to erect a building for religious purposes. The cornerstone of the South Swansea Union Chapel was laid in May 1916 and the building was dedicated in September of that year. Church officers were appointed in 1923. The congregation has been served by eighteen pastors. The Rev. Frank Falco presently is the pastor.



During recent years large steps forward have been taken in the material as well as the spiritual growth of the church. In 1963 new buildings, formerly the property of the Church of Our Saviour in Somerset, were acquired and transported to land adjacent to the Church, to be used for Christian education. Many fine memorials have been added to the church building. In June 1964 the 50th anniversary was observed with a happy and gratifying celebration of fifty years of service to God, to this community, and to the world, through missionary support of teachers and preachers in far-flung lands.

RENYX FIELD & CO., INC.
Investment Advisers
19 Purchase Street
Fall River, Mass.

SAINT DOMINIC'S CHURCH

Founded in 1911, the parish of St. Dominic's in Swansea Center was the first Roman Catholic Church in the town and thus can rightfully be called the mother parish, with the three other parishes – St. Michael's, St. Louis deFrance and Our Lady of Fatima – being outgrowths or divisions of this now 56 year-old parish. It was under the aegis of Bishop Feehan of Fall River that the desires and hopes of the Catholic residents of Swansea for a church near their homes were realized. The first Mass was celebrated at the Brook Side farm of Norbert P. Berard in North Swansea, but work on the church progressed so rapidly that in February 1912, the new St. Dominic's was blessed with appropriate ceremonies.



The first pastor was the Rev. Bernard Percot, O.P., a beloved leader whose contribution to the parish during his 16 years here was inestimable, due in large measure to his ability to speak English, French, Portuguese, and Italian. Six pastors have served the parish in the ensuing years. The present pastor is the Rev. William R. Jordan. The church property on G.A.R. Highway has been added to and beautified and a rectory built. In 1961 the parish celebrated its Golden Jubilee Anniversary.

ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH

In 1922 St. Michael the Archangel was chosen to be the patron of a new Catholic church to be built in Ocean Grove to serve about one hundred families, some of whom were summer residents. Previous to this time the people had to journey either to Fall River, to Warren, or to St. Dominic's in Swansea Center. The first pastor was the Rev. Osias Boucher, just back from the Army as a Chaplain.

Under successive pastors the parish grew and prospered, ministering to the spiritual welfare of a rapidly growing section of Swansea. An elementary school was built and taught by the Sisters of St. Joseph. The rectory was enlarged and the church remodeled and enlarged so that it



now seats 650. The remodeled St. Michael's has beautiful carillon chimes, and very fine stained glass windows, original creations of a young German artist portraying the Good News of Salvation. There are now over 900 families in the parish under the guidance of the Rev. Msgr. Joseph A. Cournoyer, pastor, and the Revs. Maurice E. Parent and Richard P. Demers, assistants.

Many organizations for all ages meet regularly to further the social, physical and spiritual growth of the parish.

JOSEPH BORGE & SONS, INC.
G.A.R. Highway
Swansea, Mass.

HATHAWAY FUNERAL SERVICE, INC.
1813 Robeson Street
Fall River, Mass.

TINY TOT DAY NURSERY
52 Touisset Avenue
Swansea, Mass.

SAINT LOUIS de FRANCE

In 1928, the Rev. Louis E. Prevost left St. Dominic's Parish and went to the eastern section of Swansea where eight Catholic families of French descent became the nucleus of a new parish, St. Louis de France. Situated on Buffington Street, on the Swansea-Somerset line, where formerly there was nothing but a swamp, today there are a church, rectory, parish hall and convent school.

Father Prevost was pastor for twenty-six years and completed plans for the first church which was dedicated in 1929. He also was responsible for the purchasing of a school bus to bring the parishioners to Sunday Mass, since the parish was so spread out and no public transportation was available. The convent-school was built in 1929 and has an enrollment of over 200 children.

In June of 1951, the present beautiful colonial edifice was completed and was dedicated to house the five hundred and fifty families of the parish. Since then all the property has been renovated and the grounds landscaped. The present pastor is the Rev. Arthur G. Dupuis, with the Rev. Ernest Blais, assistant. On Sundays there are five Masses, four in the morning and one in the late afternoon.

Many spiritual and social activities are held during the year so that parishioners and friends may have the opportunity to know each other better.

OUR LADY OF FATIMA CHURCH

The newest of the Roman Catholic parishes established in our town is that of Our Lady of Fatima, with its church and rectory located on Gardners Neck Road between Routes 6 and 103. The parish was established in 1958 with the Rev. James F. McDermott serving as Administrator. The present pastor is the Very Rev. William A. Galvin and the parish contains about 600 families.

Religious instruction for the many children of grammar school age is provided by the Sisters of Mercy who conduct classes weekly in the Church Hall. Societies for men, women and teenagers cooperate to promote parish spirit and to help provide needed support in all parish and diocesan activities. The growth in all sections of the parish demonstrates the wisdom and timeliness of the establishment of this church to provide for the spiritual needs of its members in this rapidly expanding section of the town of Swansea.





STERLING BEVERAGES, INC.
53 Old Bedford Road
North Westport, Mass.

BETHANY GOSPEL CHAPEL

Bethany Gospel Chapel is located on Lindsey Lane in Swansea near the intersection of Gardners Neck Road and Wilbur Avenue. It is the meeting place of the Swansea Assembly of Christians, a group who believe in the New Testament principles of Church government. The group has met at this location only fourteen years, having moved here from Fall River where meetings had been held some 55 years. Each Christian Brethren group, of which this church is one, is completely autonomous in spiritual government, having no central board or council to whom the churches report.

Church services at the Bethany Gospel Chapel each Lord's Day are held at 9:30 and 11:15 a.m., a Good News Hour at 7:00 p.m., and a Wednesday evening Bible Discussion and Prayer Hour. Missionary works are supported and a house to house visitation program has been maintained in the town in order to establish its identity in the eyes of the town folk, all of whom are cordially welcomed at the services of the Bethany Gospel Chapel.



Swansea and The Revolutionary War

Prior to the Revolutionary War, Swansea was a quiet farming community. Interest centered around the home and the family. The inhabitants shared a form of living which permitted them to worship as they pleased. And dear to their hearts was Town Meeting, where they enjoyed freedom of speech and participation in local government.

After the enactment of the Intolerable Acts, designed as a form of punishment because of the Boston Tea Party, all this changed. Rights formerly granted by the King were revoked. People faced taxation, almost a complete loss of representation, and curtailment of voting privileges. Townspeople involved in whaling, ship building, and manufacturing, felt the pinch economically. All this, along with reports from Lexington and Concord, contributed to the formation of a Committee of Safety; and, as early as April 21, 1775, to the call for the enlistment of fifty men, "To be ready at a moment's warning".

Swansea boasted no strategic spots, but it was evident that one of the greatest dangers could come from enemy marauders who had easy access to the necks of land from the waters of the bay. Thus, it was necessary to keep a constant vigil in this area.

Also, Slade's Ferry, the connecting link with neighboring Freetown, (Fall River) was of vital importance. Honorable John S. Brayton, in a speech on the history of the Ferry, said, "During the Revolutionary War many detachments of soldiers from Providence and Connecticut passed over the ferry on the way to a general rendezvous in Rhode Island where 10,000 troops were mobilized". Accounts state that many men served their enlistment "On guard at Slade's Ferry".

The Revolutionary records of town activities are proof enough that Swansea was loyal to the cause. From them one learns how citizens, guided

JOHN P. SLADE & SON
Insurance Agency, Inc.
40 Rock Street
Fall River, Mass.

FRITO-LAY, INC.
Dallas, Texas

by their appointed committees, met and kept aware of current situations both locally and in distant areas. They contributed money for ammunition, and aided needy soldiers' families. They were ever mindful of the fact, that, due to the close proximity of the enemy, a surprise attack could always result.

One may count 441 names on the Muster Roll. Also it has been found that many men who aided locally, failed to enlist. Individuals served from two days to the full enlistment period of three years. It was common practice to enlist, serve through an alarm, return home, and to re-enlist as the need arose.

Men from Swansea served at Tiverton, Bristol, Warwick, Pawtuxet, and Providence. Others went to Springfield, White Plains, New York, and West Point. Regardless of the distance and the size of the battle, they contributed to a cause they believed in. It was a cause which eventually returned to them their freedom of speech and representation through democratic action. Because of their efforts, a new country was born.

Swansea Center

Much of the activity in Swansea Center in early years occurred in the vicinity of Luther's Corners. This, no doubt, could be attributed to the Great Road, the main route through this area travelled by the colonists, then by the stage and still later by the Providence and Fall River Street Railway. One of the stage stops was at the tavern operated by James Luther on the northeast corner of Luthers Four Corners. On the southwest corner, Henry Luther, a shoemaker, had his shop.

In 1818, John Brown Luther built a store on the southeast corner of the crossroads diagonally across from his home. After his death, five years later, his brother, Joseph Gardner Luther, an agent for the Swansea Cotton Manufacturing Company, continued to operate the merchandise establishment. The Luther store became one of the principal trading places in the town. Here the townspeople gathered to discuss town government and vital statistics.

After his father's death, his son Joseph Gardner Luther, a careful business man and able financier, with high ideals of citizenship, continued to operate the store. He was, as well, town clerk, town treasurer, collector of taxes and Justice of the Peace. However, in an interview in 1924, Mr. Luther stated that during his fifty-six years as Justice of the Peace, he did not once perform a marriage ceremony. The store closed in 1903 although Mr. Luther's housekeeper often unlocked the doors for a neighbor to make a purchase from the stock available. The building now stands as a museum and meeting place of the Swansea Historical Society, Incorporated.

Courtesy Swansea Historical Society



Luther Store

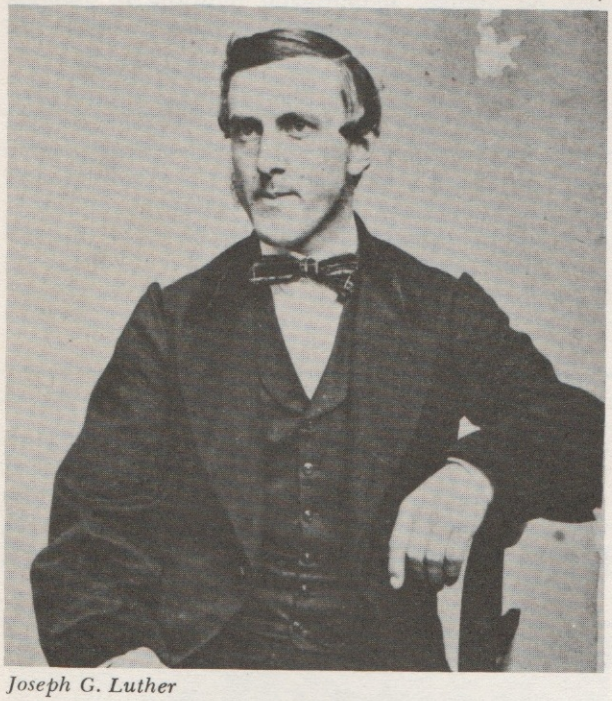
Besides the mercantile business there could be found blacksmiths, a shoemaker, and a cooper in the nearby area, but many of the landowners were interested in farming. Most farmers had one or two horses, some cows, and a few chickens, and there was a large piggery in the neighborhood. This agricultural interest led to the organization

LADIES GARMENT WORKERS' UNION
Garment Workers Square
Fall River, Mass.

of the Swansea Agricultural Library Association which established and maintained its own agricultural library. A meeting place was built on the south side of Milford Road on land of James Easterbrooks, one of its active members. This organization disbanded in 1902 and donated its books to the Free Public Library. Many of these volumes are now at the Swansea Historical Society.

The Swansea Pound was necessary to confine and care for stray animals until they could be

Courtesy Swansea Historical Society



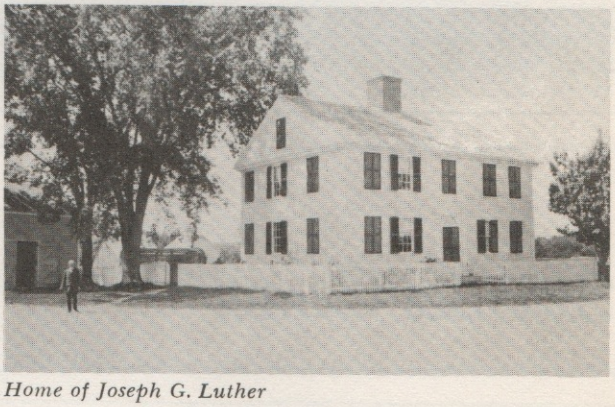
Joseph G. Luther

claimed by their owners. The pound-keeper collected a small fee for the number of days that the animal was kept in the pound. The walls and gate of the pound stood until a few years ago at the end of Cedar Avenue on the north side of Milford Road.

In 1871 Seth Wilbur Eddy built a combination residence and store on land purchased from Andrew Borden on the southwest corner where Henry Luther had made shoes. His son, John Baker Eddy, besides helping with the store, repaired watches and clocks in an ell of the store and was the agent for Briggs and Jewett Pianos. He was also in charge of the box of library books sent each week from the Swansea Free Public Library. Patrons came there to exchange their books.

In 1889 a newspaper column congratulated the people living in this vicinity on the fact that there would be a post office established in the area soon to fill the need of an "intelligent, reading community", that the postoffice would be christened "Swansea Center", and that Seth W. Eddy would preside over its affairs. Seth was Postmaster from February 1, 1889 to August 31, 1907 when the post office was discontinued. Until this time mail had been dumped into a box at Luther's Store by "Old Perry", driver of the mail from Fall River to Providence.

Courtesy Swansea Historical Society



Home of Joseph G. Luther

Located in Seth's store beside the doorway of the postoffice entrance was a wall telephone used by only a few people. In the main entrance room were the pot-bellied iron stove and the spittoon around which the neighbors gathered to swap news and tell their tales of adventure on land and sea. Besides the usual array of groceries and provisions, the store also had a grain room. The grain was carted up Pearse Road from Cole's Station in Touisset. A huge tiger cat, a good mouser, was the guardian of the grain room and found many a good meal there. As each cat reached the end of his days, another was found to take his place. There was always a tiger cat at the store.

Among the articles that could be purchased were nails, saw-horses, and tools; horsewhips, halters, and blankets; clam baskets, clam hoes, and rubber boots; hay hats, scythes, baskets; rat traps, mouse traps, brooms, and rope.

Among the folks who visited the store were many of the leaders in the life of the community. The Reverend Dr. Joseph W. Osborn, the unassuming pastor of the White Church for more than twenty years, was at the same time President of the American Christian Convention and the Rhode Island - Massachusetts Christian Conference. Besides this he was superintendent of Schools in Swansea for eleven years. The Buffingtons and Kingsleys, Philip Manchester and

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Fall River, Mass.

NEW ENGLAND APPAREL MFG. ASSOC., INC.
56 North Main Street
Fall River, Mass.

COUGHLIN FUNERAL HOME
308 Locust Street
Fall River, Mass.

many others were active in town government. In addition to their other accomplishments, Nathan M. Wood and James Easterbrooks planted the trees on Maple Street. The Davises, William Henry Pearse, the Hunts and Elder Miller, a memorable figure with his flowing white hair and handsome features, all came to the store. Many more interesting people came to buy and some in the evening to dance or sing with a congenial group.

Seth operated his store for 40 years and, following his death in 1916, the store was dismantled and the building was converted to a residence.

Courtesy Swansea Historical Society



Seth Eddy's Store

Business continued in the area however, as William Cole and his sons had established a grocery store around 1903 to the north and on the west side of Maple Avenue and had added a line of meats. This store became the deposit station for the books from the Free Public Library. Cole Bros. store was sold to the Bliss family in 1951 and has had several proprietors since, but a variety store continues to be operated in the building on Maple Avenue.

About 1901, tracks of the Warren Branch of the Snake Line were laid from the White Church around Luther's Corner and into Warren. There is still evidence of one of the turnouts on the north side of Old Warren Road. Cars ran about every ten minutes between Swansea Center and Warren. About this time, it was the custom of the Swansea Brass Band to give concerts on summer evenings in various parts of the town. The building of the car line spoiled the green where they had performed in Swansea Center.

Courtesy Swansea Historical Society



Home of James Luther

Many of the old residences are still in existence; some have had a few alterations. If some of the people buried in the small family cemeteries could ride through Swansea Center today, they would surely find quite a change in Luthers' Four Corners.

FOOTNOTE: The author is the great-granddaughter of Seth Wilbur Eddy.

East Swansea

Travelling east from Swansea Village, it is the intent of the writer to point out some points of interest regarding the section of the town known as East Swansea.

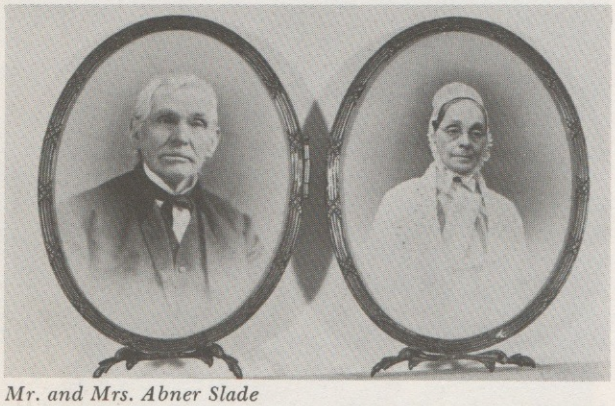
On the south side of Stevens Road, about a mile from the Village, is a spring from which Lewin's Brook has its source. The Brook goes under the road northward and finally empties into Swansea Dam. Undoubtedly Lewin's Brook obtained its name from a Lewin family who lived in the area, for there is an old family burying ground – the earliest date 1815 – on the property owned by Lionel Paquette.

NEW ENGLAND POWER CO.
Brayton Point Road
Somerset, Mass.

Off Sharps Lot Road, opposite the water tower, there used to be a bog iron mine, from which deposits may have been worked in early days.

Going further east on Stevens Road, one comes to Hot and Cold Lane, which name was changed a few years back to Swanson Road. It is too bad that a town so rich in lore, could not have clung to the old name. Hot and Cold Lane received its name from the succession of drafts which passed through. The highest point in Swansea is located on this road.

Courtesy Mr. Russell S. Chace



Mr. and Mrs. Abner Slade

Prior to 1906, Bark Street ran only northward from Stevens Road and there was merely a foot path running south. Around 1926 Stevens Road was straightened in order to take out the two right angle turns which one had to make in continuing on to Somerset.

Bark Street was named because of the bark laid out on it from the tannery which was established some time prior to 1816 by Benjamin Slade. There is a recorded deed from Benjamin Slade to his son, Abner Slade, of the property "with a bark house and tanyard there on standing" registered in the Book of Land Records on September 19th, 1816. Little can be found regarding Benjamin Slade other than he ran a farm and tannery, the latter situated on the east side of Bark Street about a half mile north of the intersection of Bark Street, Stevens Road and Buffington Street. Abner was brought up a farmer and tanner, travelling throughout the countryside on horseback purchasing hides which were tanned and sold largely on credit as shown in his ledger. From this primitive type of business, Abner Slade built up a large and renumerative business. He was most industrious and systematic, attending to the minutest of details. After retirement, about 1856, "with a handsome competency", he devoted his time to looking after his business interests. He was a director in the Fall River National Bank, was interested in the Old Colony Railroad and the Providence and Worcester Railroad. In 1829 he married Sarah Sherman. There were no children by this marriage, but they adopted Sarah Bowers who died in her twentieth year. After her death, Mr. and Mrs. Slade adopted Adeline Cole at the age of seven. Her father went west in the gold rush of 1849 and never returned.

Adeline married Charles Chace, the son of Obadiah Chace who was a resident minister in the Swansea Society of Friends for over sixty years. Obadiah was born and brought up in Warren where he was an active farmer, but devoted a great deal of time to the Society of Friends, travelling far afield in its interests. In 1894 he retired from active work and moved his residence to

Courtesy Mr. Russell S. Chace



Charles Chace House

Buffington Street, Swansea. After Mrs. Chace's death in 1905, he moved to South Swansea living with his son Charles until his death in 1907, aged ninety.

Charles Chace lived on the Abner Slade farm until 1900 when he built a home on Gardner's Neck Road known as "Wannamoisett" the name used in the original grant made to Captain Willett and his neighbors. From that time, the farm was carried on by Mr. Chace's son, Benjamin. Benjamin cleared a good deal more of the property, planting it to fruit trees, and the farm became a landmark for its large variety of fruit. In 1946, the orchard was taken over by Benjamin's sons and became known as Chace Orchards, Inc. Due to the ravages of Mother Nature's hurricanes, rising taxes, and the encroachment of urban development, the orchard was sold in 1959.

SWANSEA AUTO SALES
328 Wilbur Avenue
Swansea, Mass.

FALL RIVER FIVE CENTS SAVINGS BANK
79 North Main Street
Fall River, Mass.

RUDY'S COUNTRY STORE
395 Wilbur Avenue
Swansea, Mass.

James Birch

The old Birch-Stevens Mansion, at 24 Main Street in Swansea, is now better known as the main building of the Frank S. Stevens Home for Boys. The main part of this edifice was built about the year 1852 by James E. Birch and he and his wife and son were its first occupants.

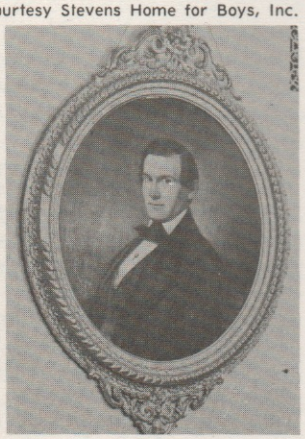
Not as many as two consecutive pages of biography have been devoted to Mr. Birch, but he died as the emperor of the whole West American stagecoach institution. It has been said of him fairly that he put an empire on wheels.

The origins of James E. Birch are clouded in obscurity. The Directory of Providence, R. I. 1847-1848 lists Birch, James, Franklin House. It is known that he had a job at the livery stable of Otis Kelton & Co. on Benefit Street and while there, he met Mr. Kelton's half-sister, Julia A. B. Chace of Swansea. It is not definitely known where and when he met the Vermont native Frank Shaw Stevens who was to become his closest friend, but they left Providence in the same party in the spring of 1849 bound for Sacramento, California. They went by water to Chicago and by canal and river to St. Louis where they bought their outfits and went by boat up the Missouri River to Omaha. They left Omaha early in May, going over the Rocky Mountains by teams and arrived in Sacramento the last of August 1849 (after a trip of four months).

Courtesy Stevens Home for Boys, Inc.



Mrs. James E. Birch



Mr. James E. Birch

Birch had the astute sense of the business man and, when he reached the coast, he turned not to the miner's pick and shovel, but to furnishing one of the vital needs of the new country, transportation. He appeared one morning with an old ranch wagon. He had already organized relay stations and bought stock. Although the first route was only thirty miles in extent, the investments and responsibilities were considerable.

On September 14, 1852, James E. Birch, twenty-five, of San Francisco, California, married Julia A. B. Chace, twenty-four, of Swansea. She was the daughter of David and Mary (Kelton) Chace who lived in the house still standing at 160 Elm Street.

Courtesy Stevens Home for Boys, Inc.



James Birch House

The California Stage Company was incorporated on January 1, 1854, merging at least five-sixths of all lines in California. Eighteen months later it was carrying passengers daily over a distance of about fifteen hundred miles – all within the boundaries of California. The first President of the Company was J. Birch and the first Vice-President, F. S. Stevens. This was only four years after that morning in 1849 when Jim Birch had started "driving stage". Birch had contributed seventy-five thousand dollars in animals and vehicles alone of the company's original million dollar stock valuation. He had earned all this within four years and had put aside enough money to establish himself with his bride in the mansion in Swansea.

MERIT DRESS DELIVERY, INC.
42 Ninth Street
Fall River, Mass.

A daughter, born to the Birches in Swansea in 1855, died in infancy. A son, Frank Stevens Birch, was born a year and a half later and he lived to be nearly forty years of age. He married, but left no surviving children.

By 1856, Birch had resigned as President of the California Stage Company and withdrawn from all but his affairs at the national capitol to Swansea. He was now devoting his entire time to the promotion of transcontinental coach mail. He had already received several contracts to carry the mail on a smaller scale, but now planned greater things.

On August 20, 1857, after one last trip to the coast, Mr. Birch embarked from San Francisco aboard a steamer for Panama; journeyed across the Isthmus over the Panama Railroad; and sailed from Aspinwall (former name of Colon) on the ship Central America. They touched at Havana on the way to New York City. There were 626 persons and a consignment of over a million dollars in gold on board. On September 12th, the vessel foundered and Birch was able to cling for awhile to a crowded mass of wreckage, but finally he was washed into the sea. Before his departure from California, an agent of the California Stage Company, one John Andrews, had given Mr. Birch a large silver cup as a present for his baby. It was fittingly marked "From John to Frank". This cup Mr. Birch had carried with him from the ship. Before he lost his hold, he entrusted the cup to George Dawson, a fellow passenger, with instructions to give it to Mrs. Birch. Mr. Dawson was rescued after nine days at sea and was finally able to deliver the cup, which was later inscribed "Saved from the Central America lost September 12, 1857".

In 1858, Mrs. Birch married, probably in California, Frank Shaw Stevens, her first husband's friend. They returned to Swansea to live in the mansion until her death in 1871. In 1873 Mr. Stevens married Elizabeth Richmond Case. He was extremely active in the life of the community until his death in 1898.

Elizabeth Richmond Stevens survived until 1930 and a significant item in her will was the bequest of "twenty-five pieces of the silver service formerly belonging to the late James Birch and marked with his name or initials — on many of the above pieces are engraved scenes depicting mining in California — to the University of California". The silver cup, marked "From John to Frank", together with a clipping from an old newspaper relating its history, was also bequeathed to the University.

It certainly may be said of James Birch that he was a fabulous character. Although he died before he was thirty, he had amassed a fortune and had become the father of the stage coach lines of the West. Nothing whatever is known of the first twenty years of his life. Nothing is known of his birthplace or parents. He came from nowhere, so to speak, became a man of importance and disappeared into the sea.

The Hiding Rock

(Extracts from compositions written in or before 1859, by Sarah E. Wilber while at the Warren Ladies Seminary).

"About a half mile from the old family home is a large high rock several rods in length called the Hiding Rock. It is cleft about midway so that a person can walk through from one end to the other. As the rock is not split straight you are hidden when about half way through from sight of any one outside, and over the top of the chasm is placed another rock which completely shuts out the sunlight. It was here that timid men secreted themselves in the Revolutionary War (whose names are still familiar in the neighborhood) and this circumstance gives the rock its name".

"If the historian of Massachusetts had visited this locality he would have found much to increase the interest of his History of Swansea. A little to the southwest of this hiding rock are two ridges or ledges of rocks mostly covered with a variety of wood such as oak, walnut, maple and others.

SLADE LAUNDRY, INC.
1068 Slade Street
Fall River. Mass.

ECONOMY BODY & RADIATOR WORKS
38 Corneau Street
Fall River, Mass.

ASSONET STAR MARKET
South Main Street, Assonet, Mass.
"Free Delivery"

On one of these ledges you may walk up a natural flight of steps to the top and look down on the other side which is nearly perpendicular, some forty feet or more".

(When Wilbur Avenue was extended from Pearse Road to the Warren Line, this section of the ledge was destroyed).

"There is one natural arrangement of rocks by the name of the Indian Fireplace doubtless executed by some violent shock of nature. When we consider the unmoveable position which these rocks have retained for ages we wonder what will be their future destiny when the present contemplated railroad shall pass through their midst".

Swansea – The Civil War Period 1861-1865

At the beginning of this important period, many were the politicians who waxed warm and eloquent and in flaming oratory spoke loud and long against slavery and its evils. Swansea had had some small interest in slaves many years before. Slaves were purchased from neighbors who were sea captains engaged in the slave trade. Nearby Bristol, Rhode Island, was home port for many slave traders. There exists today the remains of a slave graveyard on what was the Job Gardner farm on Gardner's Neck Road. At the time of the Civil War, however, no slaves were held in Swansea and there was not much interest in the question.

So, we are compelled to believe that slavery was not the principal issue to the people of Swansea. They were angered by the decision of the Southern Confederate States to withdraw from the Union. Swansea called it the War of the Rebellion. Along with most northerners, Swansea believed in the supreme political power of the Federal Government, and when, on April 12, 1861, Ft. Sumter was fired upon, a number of Swansea sons volunteered for the war to preserve the Union.

Swansea entered into the war effort with vigor, raising funds and aiding in any way possible to end a war which was to last for four long and dreadful years. The women of the town, both young and old, did whatever task was necessary to help further the cause for which their men were fighting. They rolled bandages, tied up and sent off packages of food, clothing and medical supplies and did whatever they could to make life more tolerable for their loved ones at the front. Some of the women volunteered for nursing duty although history does not record their names. Everyone was committed.

They raised a home town militia of about 130 men who served for the duration to protect their town from a possible attack by the enemy. These men were all Swansea volunteers and were between 18 and 45 years of age.

In 1863, with enlistments slackening, President Lincoln issued his Executive Order #33 which instituted a quota system to fill the Army rolls. Men who volunteered to fill these quotas were paid a bounty which the town had to raise. Also, some men who were chosen by the draft, were given the choice of paying someone else to take their place. These bounties ranged from $150 to $500 and were for periods of between one and three years. The Swansea town meeting of Sept. 12, 1863 voted "to pay State assessments for bounties for volunteers raised by the Commonwealth to fill quotas". Swansea's quota that year was 17 men and it was also voted to borrow money to pay these State assessments. At this meeting, two men were elected as agents to represent the town at Boston when the quotas were filled. These men were Mr. Allen Mason and Mr. Mason Brown and they were voted $2.50 per day to attend to this duty. At the close of the war, Swansea was credited with raising twelve men more than the

RONDO FINE FASHION OUTLET
240 Hartwell Street
Fall River, Mass.

State required. At this moment, there is a discharge paper in the files of the Town Clerk's office for one who is listed as a deserter. He was not from Swansea.

The Town Navy Book shows 16 men in the Navy. The Town Enlistment Book lists about 130 men in the Army, of this number about 40 were strictly volunteers and received no bonus. The ages of the 146 men ranged from 18 to 32 and most were in their early twenties. Their birthplaces are recorded and about half were not born in Swansea. They showed birthplaces such as England, Scotland, Ireland, France, Cuba and Germany. Many came from Boston and surrounding towns. They were of many occupations, although most were farmers or sailors. Harness makers, cooks, machinists and musicians were among them. The rolls were about evenly divided between married and single men. It may be noted that this war was not different from those wars that followed. Sailors went into the Army and farmers were assigned to the Navy.

These men fought on every battle front. They saw action at Chancellorsville, Antietam and Gettysburg. They marched with McClellan to Richmond, with Grant in the Wilderness and to Appomattox. They died in Southern prisons and hospitals throughout the nation — men with names of Collins, Tompkins, Chace, Hamlin, Miller, Eddy, Peck, Whalon and Sherman. Andrew S. Lawton lost his life at Williamsburg; Joseph T. Bosworth was killed by a shell at Antietam; Oliver R. Walton was killed late in the war at Winchester in the Shenandoah; Edward G. West, a member of the Bristol County regiment, died in the Wilderness, as well as Alfred G. Gardner, a member of Battery B. Rhode Island which was an early command of Bristol's General Burnside, died at Gettysburg, July 3, 1863. They were a brave lot, these men from Swansea.

It is interesting to note that in 1865, Swansea's population was 1336 and by 1870, it had decreased to 1294. Even in 1765 the population was 1840 souls. No explanation is given for this decline in population. So you can see that with only about 1300 people in town, it must have been difficult to raise 146 men for the Army and Navy, plus those in the militia. It becomes understandable why so many men came from outside our borders.

Courtesy Miss Mary B. Wood and Mr. Abbott E. Wood



Benjamin Wood

ORMEROD'S DAIRY
134 Stevens Road
Swansea, Mass.

JOHN F. STAFFORD INSURANCE AGENCY, INC.
205 Cherry Street
Fall River, Mass.

PAUL'S PACKAGE STORE
G.A.R. Highway
Swansea, Mass.

During this period, regular and special Town Meetings were held. The regular Town Meeting of 1862, and indeed those of most of this period, was held in the vestry of the Christian Baptist Church near Luther's Corner. This church still stands and is known as the First Christian Congregational Church. The regular Town Meeting of 1862 recorded a vote for all State, County and local officers. About 190 people voted. At the March 2, 1863 Town Meeting, the fishing privileges in the Palmer River were auctioned off to Mr. David B. Gardner for $39.00. It was also voted to appropriate $6,000 to pay current expenses which included State and County taxes and all incidental Town expenses. Taxes for the Free School Districts were part of these expenses. It was voted to allow each School District to choose its own teachers. The Town also voted to pay the Tax Collector the sum of $30.00 plus his fees. One vote was to gather the eel grass and seaweed on the Town Landings and spread them on the land at the Town Farm for fertilizer.

Finally, this was a bleak period. Prices were high, commodities were few. Fortunately Swansea was a farming community and no one was hungry, but the long, wearying war went on. Sons, brothers and husbands died in far-off parts of the country. Widows and orphans wept. The Town voted them assistance and friends helped them in their trials. And at last it was over. People started to come home. In 1875, the wounded and the sick were still a part of the town scene. Then a period of quiet and growth began which lasted for many years.

On the wall of the Swansea Town Hall is a marble slab on which are inscribed the names of those who made the supreme sacrifice "that this nation or any other nation so conceived or so dedicated might long endure".

Capt. Edward K. Sherman
Co. K 2nd R. I. Vol. Inf.
Died. Hospital N. Y. C. July 15, 1862

Sgt. Edward G. West
Co. B 7th Mass. Vol. Inf.
Killed at Wilderness, Va. May 6, 1864

Richard I. Altham
Co. G. 26th Mass. Vol. Inf.
Died Hospital New Orleans, La. Aug. 27, 1864

Joseph T. Bosworth
Co. A. 1st R. I. Vol. L. A.
Killed at Antietam. Sept. 17, 1862

Charles D. Chase
Co. A. 3rd. R. I. Vol. Cav.
Died. Hospital New Orleans, La. Nov. 11, 1864

Francis R. Chase
Co. E. 5th R. I. Vol. H. A.
Died Hospital New Bern, N. C. Aug. 23, 1863

Stephen Collins
Co. G. 26th Mass. Vol. Inf.
Died Hospital New Orleans, La. Aug. 1, 1862

Alfred G. Gardner
Batt. B. 1st R. I. Vol. L. A.
Killed at Gettysburg. July 3, 1863

Henry J. Gardner
Co. A. 14th R. I. Vol. H. A.
Died Fort Jackson, La. Sept. 24, 1864

Joseph C. Gardner
Co. A. 14th R. I. Vol. H. A.
Died Hospital Brashear, La. June 24, 1865

William H. Hamlin
Co. G. 26th Mass. Vol. Inf.
Died Hospital New Orleans, La. Oct. 7, 1862

Andrew S. Lawton
Co. A. 7th Mass. Vol. Inf.
Killed at Williamsburg, Va. May 5, 1862

Ira M. Luther
Died Hospital Nashville, Tenn. April 1865

Joseph H. Luther
Co. A. 3rd R. I. Vol. H. A.
Captured Gainesville, Fla. Aug. 17, 1864
Date of death unknown.

Martin L. Miller
Co. A. 32nd Mass. Vol. Inf.
Died Hospital Washington, D. C. Nov. 25, 1862

Joseph F. Peck
Co. G. 1st R. I. Vol. Cav.
Died Hospital Washington, D. C. July 17, 1862

Philip J. Rounds
Co. G. 1st R. I. Vol. Cav.
Died Hospital N. Y. C. Aug. 12, 1864

Daniel Tompkins
Co. K. 4th R. I. Vol. Inf.
Died Fall River, Mass. Sept. 19, 1863

Joseph Whalon
Co. B. 18th Mass. Vol. Inf.
Died Yorktown, Va. May 6, 1862

John Earle
Died in camp at New Haven, Conn. March 1863

William H. Lewin
Co. F. 58th Mass. Vol. Inf.
Died at Salisbury, N. C. Jan. 10, 1863

MONTAUP SAND & GRAVEL CONST. CORP.
718 Grand Army Highway
Swansea, Mass.

The Swansea Schools from Past to Present

On December 19, 1673, only six years after the founding of the town it was "Voted and ordered, that a school be forthwith set up in this town for the teaching of grammar, rhetoric, and arithmetic, and the tongues of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew; also to read English and to write, and that a salary of 40 pounds in current country pay which passeth from man to man be duly paid from time to time, and that John Myles the present pastor of the church here assembling, be the schoolmaster". The "church here assembling" was the Baptist Church.

This first school was held in various parts of the town in successive months to suit the convenience of the pupils. Thus we see that at the very outset of the town, the people were school-minded.

An interesting commentary on the caliber of both the teacher and the pupil is the fact that Samuel Myles, son of the Reverend John Myles, went from the grammar school in Swansea to Harvard College. There he received an A. M. degree, evidently having no difficulty in keeping up with his classmates. He was minister of King's Chapel in Boston for 40 years from 1689 until his death in 1729.

When Rev. Mr. Myles' residence was turned into a garrison, at the outbreak of King Philip's War, with the Plymouth troops camping nearby, we may well imagine that school in Swansea was indefinitely suspended.

It was 1698 before families and fortunes had recovered sufficiently from the ravages of King Philip's War for the people of Swansea to think again of a school.

The old (and precious) town records make no mention of another schoolmaster after the death of the Rev. Mr. Myles in 1683 until the town meeting in 1699. In the faded ink and spider script is the following: "Also then was voted and confirmed the agreement the selectmen made with Jonathan Bosworth for schoolmaster this present year & to begin teaching school ye first second day of the week next begin ye 9 of April next ensuing and to begin teaching school ye first month on Wanamoset neck, ye 2nd month on New Meadow Neck, ye 3rd month at Kickamuit, ye 4th month at Cole neighborhood, ye 5th at Mattapoisett, & so successively and to have 18 pounds per annum, one fourth part in money the other 3 parts in provision at money prices". Thus the whole town was covered, with the schoolmaster doing the traveling instead of the pupils. Most of the classes were conducted in homes in each neighborhood, and it is pleasant to visualize the little groups of varying ages and abilities.

Three years later, in 1702, we read that it was "voted and agreed ye selectmen should endeavour to procure a grammar schoolmaster for ye town with all convenient speed". The selectmen met with success for on the next page we read that "the selectmen have agreed with Mr. John Devotion, schoolmaster, for ye present year to give him 12 pounds current money of New England to be paid quarterly and ye town to pay for his diet, and agreed that he shall in ye year remove in four quarters of the town where he is ordered, and his time begin on ye 10th November 1702."

Mr. John Devotion must have applied himself to his task in a manner befitting his name, for we find that in 1709 he was engaged for six years, and in 1715 for 20 years, or until 1735. The wording of this letter of contract deserves our attention.



Bark Street School

NORMAND GENDRON ADVERTISING
793 Pearse Road
Swansea, Mass.

LION'S
84 Bedford Street
Fall River, Mass.

FRANCIS W. HARRINGTON INSURANCE
130 South Main Street
Fall River, Mass.



Gardner School

The town clerk writes, "the selectmen being present agreed with said schoolmaster, John Devotion, to serve ye town of Swansey ye term of 20 years ensuing if he lives and remains capable to perform said service to teach our youth to read Inglish & Lattin and wright & sifer as there may be occasion". Greek and Hebrew were no longer to be taught.

"to dilligently & steadily to keep a school five months yearly & every year from October through February. (So planned as not to interfere with the growing and harvesting seasons.) . . .

"to have the sum of seventeen pounds & ten shillings yearly . . .

"to have the use of a specified lot of land for wood (for which he was to pay three of his seventeen pounds). The wood was for "ye maintaining of a fire for ye school." and he was required to put a fence around "ye lot".

"agreed that if Devotion decease before ye term be expired, said lot shall return to ye proprietors and the fence to be paid for to his heirs or assigns."

Thus for nearly 60 years the youth of the town had access to free education under three masters, albeit for only a few weeks of each year. The records continue to refer to the school lands, and in 1743 we find a vote to sell the school lands of the town of Swansey and the money to be laid out in land again in "sum convenianter place" for the use of a school.

A committee composed of Mr. Bradford, esq., Hezekiah Luther, and Esick Brown was appointed to act in said matter. This is probably the beginning of the present day schoolhouse, as opposed to the home meeting place. The town was growing and the educational facilities had to keep pace with the growth, even as now. This committee may have been the forerunner of the present school committee, and we find that term first used in the record of the town meeting of 1755.

There are various items relating to the salary of the schoolmaster, and, in 1790, it was voted to draw out of the Town Treasury four shillings for every house for the use of a school in that neighborhood. So, through the 1600's and 1700's, the young people of "ye town of Swansey" could, if they would, avail themselves of the opportunity to acquire an education. We herewith pay tribute to those early teachers whose tasks must indeed have been arduous, but, hopefully, rewarding.

By 1807 the school teachers no longer needed to go from section to section of the town. On April 28 there was this entry in the Town Clerk's Book: "We the subscribers being chosen by the Town of Swansea as a committee to divide or district said town in regular school districts have done the same in the following manner, annexing the land belonging to the person or persons owning the following houses as the law directs". There



Frank S. Stevens School

followed lists of home owners in each of the twelve districts set up by the committee, James Trott, Isaac Mason, and Weston Earl. Later in the year it was "voted that the following persons stand as heads of the foregoing districts to draw the school money". In 1838 the number of districts was reduced to ten and this division was maintained well into the 1900's.

District No. 1 was on Gardner's Neck. This schoolhouse is shown on both the "Church" map and the map of 1851. There is a deed recorded on April 26, 1839 from the grantor, Saunders Sherman, to the Town of Swansea for a lot of land for

SWAN FINISHING CO., INC.
11 Ledge Street
Swansea, Mass.

School District #1. The Town paid $20. for a lot on the westerly side of Gardner's Neck Road by Gardner's land. (Anthony Gardner lived at 903 Gardner's Neck Road). A condition in the deed provided that a fence be maintained around the lot "forever". When Mr. Charles W. Anthony bought the property opposite the school, he bought the schoolhouse and had it moved back of his house. The Reagan family bought the Anthony property and the old schoolhouse was used as a shelter for sheep. It burned in the 1950's.



Joseph G. Luther School

Other district schools were built in the following order: the Village, Bark Street, Bryant's Corner, Two-Mile Purchase, Factory (Hortonville), Borden's Grove (Swansea Center), Bushee Corner, North Swansea, and Barneyville. These locations are shown on the "Map of the Three Churches" (believed to be about 1850) not in every case on the exact site of the terminal locations but practically in sight of them.

In the beginning, the agent of each district controlled the school, collecting money from the town treasurer and from the individual families to meet the expenses. However, by the middle of the century, a school committee was formed to supervise all of the districts and sometimes to teach as well.

The report of this committee for 1860-61 is interesting and typical of many others. These gentlemen spoke plainly "A public school has been maintained in each district six months, with the exception of District No. 3. The length of the summer schools was two and one-half months." The amount of money spent was $1,491.28. Most of the teachers received $40. for the summer term and about $100. in the winter. Fuel for each school averaged about $10., and the committee was paid $48. They sold $74. worth of books and had on hand at the end of the year books valued at $61.79. Out of a total of 302 scholars there were 50 over 15 years of age and 21 under 5. The performance of each teacher was reported carefully. There were comments of "acceptable, competent, did well for a beginner, gave evidence of ability to teach and to govern" and one "did not fail her school in any particular." At No. 9 the teacher "had the ability to waken interest and adapt instruction to the capacities of her pupils." At No. 10, "more attention should be paid to ventilation." The report closed with the following statement:

"We have fine school houses, competent teachers, faultless textbooks, yet very indifferent scholars. We need the cooperation of the parents. If at home children have learned the lessons of obedience, if they have been taught the value of education, and if they have been encouraged to study, their relation to the teacher in the school will be pleasant and their progress in study positive. If, however, children at their fireside are permitted to sit in judgement over the faults of the teacher and to discuss his lack of ability to maintain order, if they are encouraged in acts of disobedience and irregular attendance, the teacher's task will be a laborious one and the school nearly worthless. Let parents cooperate with teacher in his well-meant, well-directed efforts. Let them show their interest in the school of their district by frequent visits, let them see that the school is not wanting in those appliances necessary to the success of imparting instruction

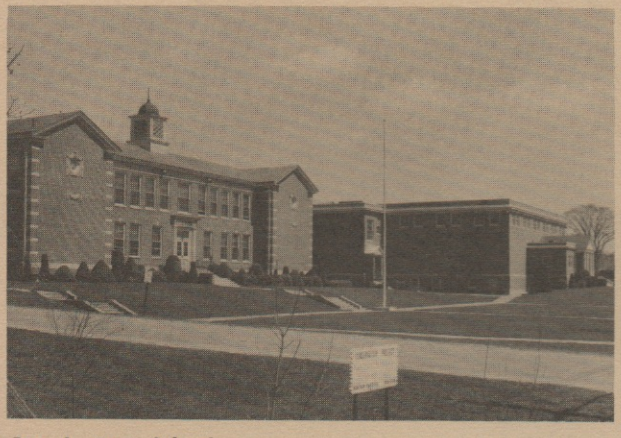


Mason Barney School

EDWARD'S MOTORS
396 Wilbur Avenue
Swansea, Mass.

COTTRELL PAPER COMPANY, INC.
10 Purchase Street
Fall River, Mass.

and to the progress of the scholar in study and the schools will assume a more elevated and efficient position." (Job Gardner, Jr., Seth Brown, Edward F. Gardner).



Joseph Case School

Some interesting comparisons were in the report of 1866. The average cost per scholar was $7.80 in the state and $5.61 in the county. Swansea's expenditures were 49th in the state and 3rd in the county. They spent 28 mills per dollar of valuation and received $57.07 from the state. School was in session 24 weeks.

A law was enacted in 1869 abolishing school districts. It became the "duty of the town to provide, maintain, and properly furnish and determine the location of a sufficient number of school houses required by the statutes, to keep and raise money for the support of said schools for the time defined, that is for teachers' salaries, fuel, care of offices and school rooms and to choose a school committee consisting of any number divisible by three." This change in the law made very little difference to the administration in Swansea. A school committee was already taking charge of the school system and schools continued to be known by the same district numbers, but the control was centralized. The state required a general superintendent but the committee apparently managed that by naming one of their own number superintendent. Job Gardner is listed at one time, the Rev. Mr. Osborn, and Elder Miller, as well as other familiar names. As far as we can tell, a trained superintendent was not employed until about 1900, although, from time to time, in their reports, the committee exhorted those who wished to teach to attend the normal schools which the state maintained. It was about this time that the name of a supervisor of drawing and music appears in the records, although singing teachers had been hired occasionally.

By 1886 the school year had been extended to 36 weeks, and in 1889 school savings banks were suggested. It was also stated that year that scholars should be "neat in person and tidily clad and that use of tobacco in any form in the school house or upon premises is forbidden."

The original District Schools were replaced by the more familiar "one-room" building of which nostalgic memories could be recalled by many today. According to Mrs. Edward G. Morse, the second schoolhouse on Gardner's Neck opened in 1889 after some difficulty in finding enough pupils. This school had the first American Flag. Mrs. Morse sold coupons for the "Youth's Companion" to get the flag. This building is now occupied by the American Legion. The Village School was located in the vicinity of the present Junior High School and was moved to the site of the Frank S. Stevens School. Bryant's Corner became 380 Marvel Street and is occupied by Mr. & Mrs. George Coffey. Two Mille Purchase is at 420 Baker Road and is the home of Mrs. Chris Geary. Factory (Hortonville) is used by the PACL. Grove (Swansea Center) moved to 230 Old Warren Road and is the home of Robert Norman. Bushee Corner is at 1 Old Fall Road and became a Riding Stable belonging to Mr. Rio Richard. North Swansea was converted to a house which is occupied by James Trombly at the corner of Stoney Hill Road. Barneyville in North Swansea was occupied by the late Homer Martin.



Elizabeth Stevens Brown School

FEITELBERG AGENCY, INC.
29 North Main Street
Fall River, Mass.

By 1900 transportation was improving and more students were going to high school, some in Warren and some in Fall River. The town paid $25. tuition for each student attending in Fall River and, by 1904, they paid $1350. for 27 students there. People grumbled about the cost and the



St. Louise de France School

increasing numbers but, finally, the town paid for transportation as well as tuition. As time passed, talk of building a high school was heard more and more. After the World War I the subject really became an issue. In 1927 the town accepted from Mrs. Frank S. Stevens the gift of the Joseph Case High School. Mr. Frank C. Chace became the first principal and Miss Helen A. Reagan the teacher of English. In 1929 Miss Reagan was made assistant principal and in 1930 Mr. Chace became superintendent of schools, as well as high school principal, thus devoting himself to the whole school system until 1945. His successor, Mr. Greenman, served in the same capacity only until December when Miss Reagan became principal of the high school and Mr. Greenman superintendent of schools.

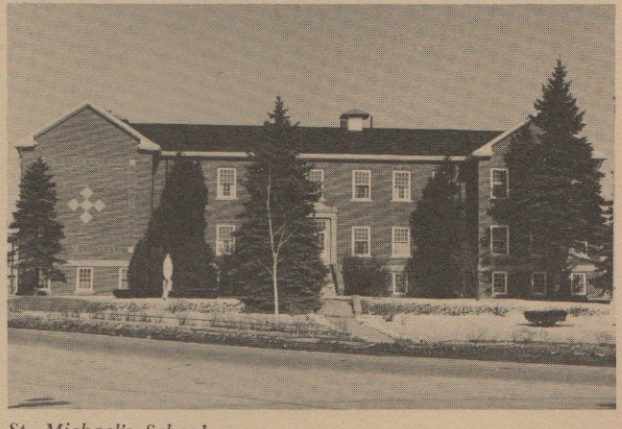
Much earlier the trend toward larger schools had started. In 1905 the Bark Street School was built and later more rooms were added. The Frank S. Stevens School was built in 1908. These schools had central heating but no inside plumbing.

As early as 1879, thought had been given to conveyance of students as a means of dispensing with some of the smaller schools. This was done sporadically over the years but the present organized system of transportation developed with the construction of more modern, commodious buildings; the Gardner School in 1924, the High School in 1927, the Joseph G. Luther School in 1931, and the Mason Barney School in 1936. For several years there was no more major construction until the Junior High School and the Boyd gymnasium were built in 1952-53. This was soon followed by the Elizabeth S. Brown School in 1957 and the recent additions to the Gardner and Luther Schools in 1963.

Devoted and dedicated leadership has been given throughout the years by persons too numerous to be recounted. Future progress is in the able hands of Supt. Donald F. McCaffrey. It is a noble and tremendous job of the day.

There are two parochial schools in town, both conducted by the Sisters of St. Joseph. St. Louis de France School was opened in 1929 with eight grades and four classrooms. It now has six grades with an enrollment of 220 students from Swansea and Somerset. In 1931, St. Michael's School was organized. At present there are a preprimary class and eight elementary grades with 338 students. There are seven sister teachers and two lay teachers with a sister principal. Both of these schools are under the direction of the Superintendent of Diocesan Schools.

The quality and diversification, to say nothing of the quantity of education offered our youth, is taken for granted without thought of the development of the system over the years. Almost from the day of incorporation the education of young men and women has had primary consideration in the conduct of town affairs.



St. Michael's School

THOMAS WALSH MOVING AND STORAGE
102 Mulberry Street
Fall River, Mass.

POIRIER RAMBLER
1533 South Main Street
Fall River, Mass.

In Praise of Clambakes

Clambakes! The very word brings joy to residents of southeastern New England and conjures up tantalizing tastes, smells and mouth-watering memories. And no account of Swansea's past (and present) social life would be complete without some mention of these events. For while a clambake usually is a money-raising venture, it is also a place where old friends gather, where new acquaintances are made, where politicians shake the hands of their would-be constituents, and where gourmands realize their fondest dreams of luscious food.

Swansea has for years been famous for its clambakes. Our 17th century settlers probably learned their ways of cooking clams from the Wampanoag Indians. Thomas Bicknell, in his "History of Barrington, Rhode Island" says, "the luxury of a Rhode Island clambake (and this would apply to Swansea) was first enjoyed by our Indian predecessors. It was the good fortune of the writer (Bicknell) in excavating for a cellar – to exhume an oven, used for baking clams, about eighteen inches below the surface of the soil. The coals and shells on the saucer-shaped oven of round stones were evidence of aboriginal use and customs". There appears to be an unbroken history of clam-baking from then to now.



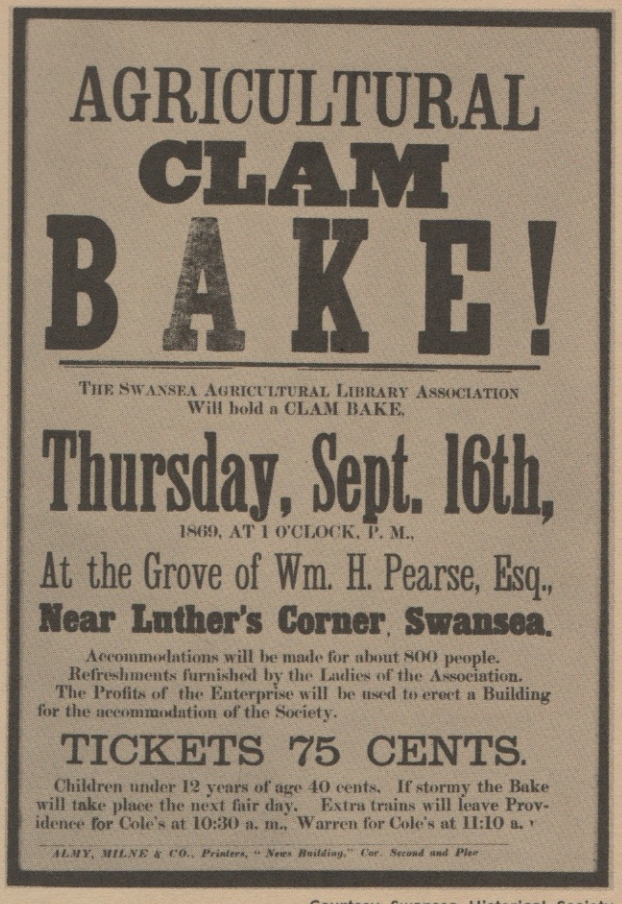
Courtesy Mrs. Albert A. Almy

A. PINEAU AND SONS
Registered Master Plumber
117 Pinehurst Avenue
Swansea, Mass.

The secret of a real clambake, according to Mr. Edwin Gardner, a present-day bakemaster who carries on the old tradition handed down through his family, lies in the seaweed used in the baking pit. Of course the whole process must be authentic, beginning with the alternating layers of wood and stones being placed in the big pit and burned until the stones retain enough heat to cook the dinner. When all is ready, the shiny, rubbery seaweed is put in place and then the clams! Nowadays these are obtained from more distant points, but in the old days nothing but the small sweet bivalves from Coles River would be tolerated. Next are placed the pans of dressing, a tasty concoction of bread crumbs and spices; white potatoes and sweet potatoes; little bags of white fish; small onions; sweet corn in season. In our modern times additional items, such as sausage and lobster are added, but these were not part of the original menu. Then more seaweed is placed on the top and finally a canvas cover that is held down tightly by stones around the edge. The cooking requires from one to one and a half hours until the glorious moment when the bake is opened.

The waiting diners have consumed their quahaug chowder, the pitchers of melted butter are in place, and the clams are brought hot and steamy. Each person opens the shell with his fingers, dips the clam into the melted butter and proceeds to eat. No methods are prescribed, no holds barred, and no appetites unappeased. One's prowess was measured by the height of his pile of clam shells! One man was renowned for regularly eating five quarts of clams plus all the trimmings. And at the turn of the century, the price of all this was seventy-five cents.

Clambakes in Swansea in the good old days were sponsored by the churches, the lodges and organizations such as the Swansea Band. They were held in open lots with spaces for parking the horse-drawn vehicles, and in such far-apart places as Abram's Rock and a pavilion in South Swansea where Thurston's private bakes were served to "fashionable" groups who came across the bay from Fall River by steamboat. Some of the more famous bakes were those given by the First Christian Church which were held annually for over



AGRICULTURAL
CLAM
BAKE!

THE SWANSEA AGRICULTURAL LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
Will hold a CLAM BAKE,

Thursday, Sept. 16th,

1869, AT 1 O'CLOCK, P. M.,

At the Grove of Wm. H. Pearse, Esq.,

Near Luther's Corner, Swansea.

Accommodations will be made for about 800 people.
Refreshments furnished by the Ladies of the Association.
The Profits of the Enterprise will be used to erect a Building for the accommodation of the Society.

TICKETS 75 CENTS.

Children under 12 years of age 40 cents. If stormy the Bake will take place the next fair day. Extra trains will leave Providence for Cole's at 10:30 a. m., Warren for Cole's at 11:10 a. m.

ALMY, MILNE & CO., Printers, "News Building," Cor. Second and Plec

Courtesy Swansea Historical Society

one hundred years without a break; the Dorothy Brown Rebekah Lodge Bake, Christ Church Bake, the Swansea Agricultural Library Association Bake, and the one given by the Swansea Band. The roster of noted bakemasters must include the names of William Henry Pierce, Silas Pierce, Arnold Gardner and George Sadler.

Today, in spite of newer and perhaps more sophisticated entertainments, clambakes are still held regularly in our town, and people gather around the long tables to enjoy the traditional feast and fellowship.

BAKER TRACTOR CORP.
190 Grand Army Highway
Swansea, Mass.

BUILDING MATERIALS, INC.
Ready-Mix Concrete - Masons' Supplies
139 Front Street, Fall River, Mass.

The Town Hall

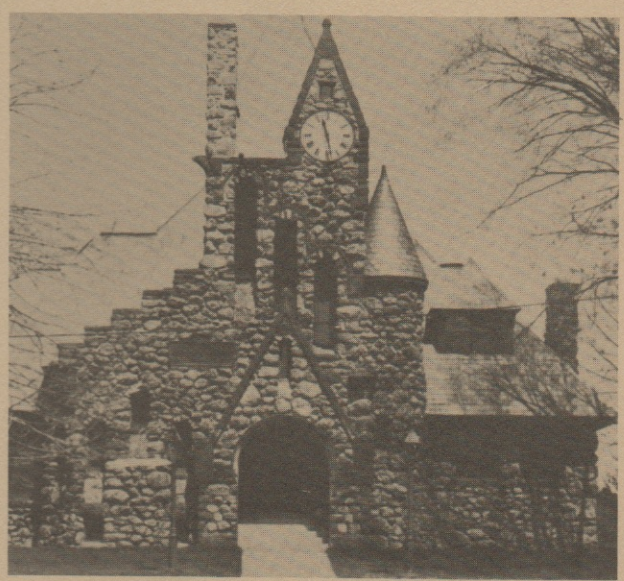
For well over two centuries town meetings in Swansea were held in various churches or meeting houses. This custom was not strange since the primary organization in Swansea, as in almost all New England communities, was the church. After the church, in the order of importance, came the town and its affairs. That every citizen's voice be heard in the making of public decisions was, in the early days, not only a privilege but a sacred duty. Every man was expected to attend every meeting.

In 1830 the Union Meeting House was built and dedicated to the services of several denominations. This building also accommodated the various uses of town government until it fell into disuse and was finally demolished.

Whispers of discontent that town government was carried on in meeting houses or churches began to be heard and finally the Christian Society declared that there should be a separation of church and state. About this time Mr. Frank S. Stevens made the generous offer to erect on the site of the Union Meeting House a public building suited to the needs of the people.

The Town Hall was dedicated on September 9, 1891. This edifice, made from the natural boulders that had lain in Swansea soil or had marked the boundary lines of the earliest citizens, was indeed a fitting place in which to carry on the activities of government, of education and of recreation. For many years it was the scene of town meetings, the place for public elections and the common ground for social activities of varied kinds. The Swansea Grange was organized and here for a period of ten years carried out its functions. From its stage the Wood Players, a group of aspirant Thespians, delighted the drama lovers with their art. Its walls echoed to the happy laughter of young people enjoying their first school prom or to the stately measures of the processional as another generation of young people took their places to receive the coveted award for diligent study – their diploma. Tempting suppers and gay bazaars, the work of dedicated church women, here bore fruit.

"The old order changeth –" for today the population has outgrown the hall. Meetings are now assigned to the Boyd Gymnasium. Four precincts accommodate the voters from the different sections of the community. The old field-stone, ivy covered building that for so many years witnessed the joys, the triumphs, and the progress of a distant past, is a busy modern office building where the needs and the business of eleven thousand citizens are met and transacted in the course of the day. Few are those who enter the building today who can envisage the daisy-decked stage set for graduation, the expectant hush of an audience moments before curtain time, or the thunderous eloquence of a patriarch long since gone to his reward.



MAILLOUX'S RED & WHITE MARKET
334 Ocean Grove Avenue
Swansea, Mass.

SMITH LUMBER CO.
30 President Avenue
Fall River, Mass.

ASSONET SAND & GRAVEL CO., INC.
South Main Street
Assonet, Mass.

The Snake Line

In 1901 The Providence and Fall River Street Railway Company began the operation of electric trolley cars over a tortuous path from City Hall in Fall River to Market Square in Providence. This route was promptly named the Snake Line. It was a boon to the populace. Although an electric train was in operation from Bowenville in Fall River across South Somerset, South Swansea and Warren to Providence, the residents in the rest of town had no public transportation.

to Bushee's Corner. Here again they cut across the fields – the same path that Route 6 takes again. The road was rejoined at the Martin House, but in North Swansea the tracks had their own bridge over the Palmer River avoiding the Bungtown Bridge and finally rejoining the road in Seekonk and on to Providence.

The impact on the town was tremendous. It became possible to live in Swansea and work

Courtesy Miss Mary B. Wood



Snake Line

Courtesy Mrs. Elizabeth S. Frost



Freight Car at Swasey's Corner

In good weather and bad, the cars hurtled over the tracks, some carrying passengers, others freight. Although one set of tracks was used, there were switches at various points where cars could pass. The route was over Slade's Ferry Bridge to Read's Corner in Somerset, up by the Methodist Church and down Gypsy Hill to Gray's Corner in Swansea, then up around Swasey's Corner by Milford Pond to Gardner's Crossing. Route 6 was not there, but the tracks were laid across the fields to the Car Barn and office of the company where Lewis S. Gray Sons Company now has an automobile business. At the White Church, the tracks were once more on the roadside all the way

in Providence or Fall River. Since there was no high school in town, the students were transported mainly to Fall River for that phase of their education. Friendships were made and broken enroute. Shoppers avoided the "school cars". They were not only crowded, but the youth were an exuberant lot.

The social life changed. Dances, church suppers and lawn parties were attended by people coming on the cars from town. No one would think of setting the time for a play in the Town Hall without consulting the car schedule, and many a time it was announced from the stage that a car would be held until the performance was over.

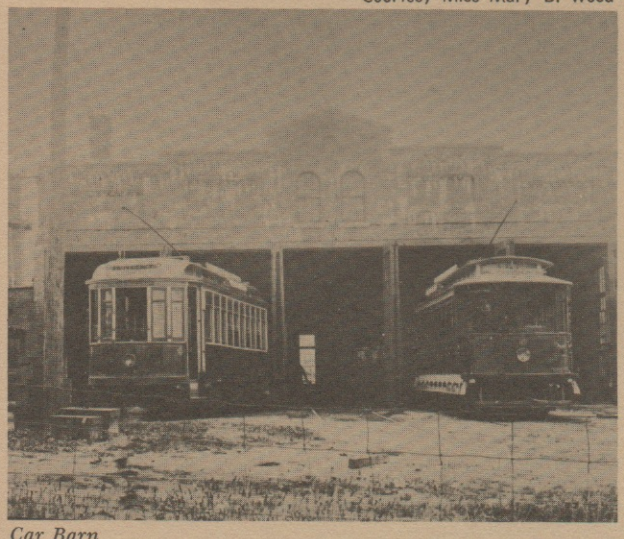
NADEAU'S HARDWARE STORE
232 Ocean Grove Avenue
Swansea, Mass.

FERNANDES SUPER MARKET, INC.
Grand Army Highway
Somerset, Mass.

MOTOR TRUCK SALES, INC.
33 Fourteenth Street
Fall River, Mass.

People came to skate at the Swansea Dam and Milford Pond. For a few years the Company lighted the Swansea Dam in midwinter. There was no electric utility in town.

Courtesy Miss Mary B. Wood



Car Barn

Thus the line continued to serve the town until automobiles became so widely owned that there were fewer and fewer passengers. The Company went into bankruptcy, but a group of citizens banded together to run the cars until the early twenties when the line could no longer be operated at a profit.

There was one wild ride before the demise. The brakes failed on a car just starting down Gypsy Hill in Somerset. Although someone disengaged the trolley, the car careened on down the hill around the sharp curve, took the switch at the Swansea-Somerset line, continued on up the hill to the Village and as far as the Stevens School. There were no collisions; and no one was more than shaken up. It was almost like a last wild fling of the lusty, lurching line we had grown to take for granted.

Sesquicentennial Celebration

The celebration of the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the town of Swansea was held on August 21, 1919. The town history had been published in 1917, the anniversary year, but the celebration was postponed until after the end of the first World War.

Fortunately the day was fine. In the morning the Town Hall was filled for the commemorative program. The welcome was extended by Orrin Gardner and then his brother, the Reverend Frank H. Gardner, spoke of the Spirit of Swansea. The Reverend Percy Stickney Grant, D.D., at that time rector of the Church of the Ascension in New York City and once rector of Christ Church, Swansea, spoke on true religious freedom. From the earliest days, Swansea sheltered a great variety of religious bodies, more than any other town in Massachusetts. The last speaker was Major General Nelson A. Miles of Fitchburg, hero of two wars and direct descendant of the Reverend John Myles, one of the founders of the town of Swansea.

Courtesy Miss Rachel L. Gardner



William Jordan, Francis L. Gardner, Dr. John D. Hilton

BRISTOL KNITTING MILLS, INC.
951 Broadway
Fall River, Mass.

ATTORNEY MILTON SILVA
and Staff of Silva Funeral Home
Fall River, Mass.

WORDELL'S SERVICE STATION
246 Durfee Street
Fall River, Mass.

In the afternoon an historical pageant was held at the Phoebe Pond on Milford Road. People were seated on the unpopulated slope to look down at the scenes on and around the pond. A few very simple structures were erected and the action on the water, with the natural background of trees and shrubs, was very effective. Many, many families were represented in the cast, in some cases by three generations. The pageant was written and produced by Harry J. Butler of the faculty of B.M.C. Durfee High School.

In one episode after another the exploration, settlement, and development of Swansea were faithfully depicted. From the coming of the Norsemen, through the Indian period, the War of the Revolution, the Civil War, the pageant continued on to show vignettes from the life of the townspeople, the contribution of the people of Europe settling in our midst and finally our participation in the war so recently concluded. Swansea had the day before welcomed her veterans of World War I with a gala celebration and nearly all of them were present to lead the participants in the pageant in review before the assemblage.

The Swansea Historical Society

The Swansea Historical Society was organized and incorporated January 18, 1941. The purpose of the organization, as stated in the application for the certificate of incorporation, was: "To procure, hold and maintain documents, records, data, historical landmarks and monuments and other evidences relating to the history of Swansea and its vicinity and the people thereof."

Due to the generous donation of the Joseph G. Luther heirs, the Society was fortunate in obtaining a permanent home. On May 3, 1941, after the building had been moved and repaired as a Public Works Administration Project, a meeting place and museum was established at the Luther Store.

Under the guidance of Mrs. Marion D. Reilly, organizer and first president, the history of the town was brought to life. For twenty-one years she worked to accumulate documentary facts and interesting items, and to establish a strong organization which would be cherished and maintained by future generations.

In 1962 Mr. Davis Crittenden became the second president. As a result of his able leadership, membership was greatly increased, and an extensive program of restoration was undertaken at the museum.

In the summer of 1965, the Museum was open to the public, and in 1966 there were six exhibitions, including Farm and Home Implements and Utensils; Handicraft; Early Glassware; Dolls and Toys; Art Glass; Paintings, Prints and Photographs.



Luther Store and Museum - 1967

During 1966, through the kindness of the Park Commission, a room at the Covel Estate was made available on a yearly basis for use as an office and research center.

It is the aim of the society during the winter months to present a program of instructive and stimulating topics to its membership. Now, under the capable direction of the third president, Mr. Harry Owens, the Swansea Historical Society is continuing to grow.

THE LAFAYETTE CO-OPERATIVE BANK
60 Bedford Street
Fall River, Mass.

SWANSEA OIL CO.
686 Wilbur Avenue
Swansea, Mass.

THOMAS J. ASHTON & SON, INC.
466 North Main Street
Fall River, Mass.

Swansea from 1900

The history of Swansea from 1900 to 1966 is the history of the development of a simple New England Village from an agricultural center into a substantial residential community. The population of Swansea from 1765 (the time of the first State Census) had never varied greatly. At that time it was 1,840 and even at the turn of the present century it was still under 2,000. However, the next sixty years were to see a phenomenal growth. According to the latest census the population is 11,767.

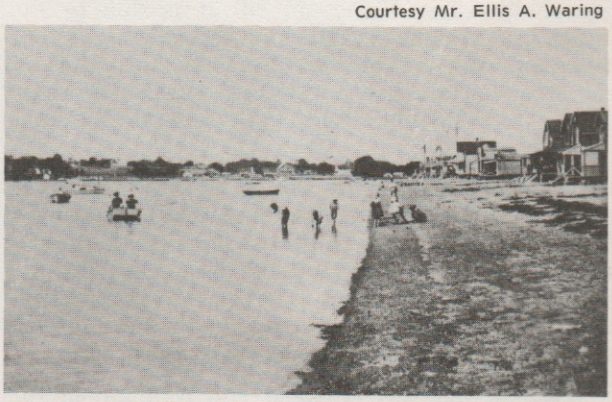
The wilderness of tall trees and dense undergrowth that characterized the early terrain of the town gave place, first of all, to the large tracts of cleared land on which the lineal descendants of the first proprietors tilled their ancestral acres well into the present century. These broad lands are now divided and on them are built the multitude of attractive homes that house the exploding population of the past two or three decades.

Spiritual, cultural and utilitarian opportunities and accommodations expanded within the town to meet the demands of an urban-minded and more sophisticated populace than Swansea had hither-to known. The free public library, handsomely and substantially built of granite, the gift of Mr. and Mrs. Frank S. Stevens, was dedicated September 12, 1900. This fine building possessed at the time 2,451 volumes and had a circulation of 8,686. During the next twenty years a branch library was opened in the south end of the town and today there are approximately 30,000 volumes in the main and branch libraries and they enjoy a circulation of 53,000.

The ten district one-room schools under town management in 1900 have been replaced over the years by modern brick buildings (all except the Bark Street School). From a total school enrollment of 325, the figures climbed in 1966 to 2,342. It was in 1927 that the Joseph Case Memorial High School was completed and thus rounded out the school system in Swansea and insured a secondary school education to the youth of the town.

Police and fire protection developed apace. The one man police force grew during these years to a department of eleven regular men and twenty special officers. At present police headquarters shares a building on Gardner's Neck Road with the public works department. A small courageous group of volunteer firemen who tirelessly worked for the protection of the community set the pace for a later group. Today Swansea has four fire stations with five fire trucks and one rescue boat

Courtesy Mr. Ellis A. Waring



Beach at Ocean Grove

– all modern equipment. A fine central station, located on Main Street, is in the process of construction and when completed will enhance the excellent service already offered. Many are the citizens in town who owe a debt of gratitude to these two departments for their prompt and efficient actions.

The spiritual needs of an expanded population have been served over the past half century by the establishment of five additional churches – The South Swansea Union Chapel, St. Michael's Church, St. Louis de France Church, The Bethany Chapel and Our Lady of Fatima Church. These churches, together with those of a much earlier date, testify to a God-fearing and forthright citizenry.

LOWENSTEIN DRESS CORP.
425 Pleasant Street
Fall River, Mass.

FALL RIVER MOTOR SALES, INC.
Your Volkswagen Dealer
"Think Small"

WALTER'S SUPER SERVICE
WALTER'S RESTAURANT, INC.
495 Pleasant Street, Fall River, Mass.

Country by-ways and lanes, deep with dust during the summer months and treacherous with ruts in early spring, gradually gave place to a system of fine macadamized roads. There are today approximately 80 miles of such travel ways throughout the town. In due succession public utilities – electricity, telephone and gas – became a part of everyday living. The kerosene lamp, the candle, and the old iron coal stove became obsolete, objects to be stored for a time and later brought forth from loft and garret as precious beyond their utilitarian value.

The much talked of and woefully needed public water system became a reality in 1950. At that time most of the private wells in a given water district were abandoned. Today there are three water fields with a total of six wells, one elevated tank and one standpipe. A total of 3,100 householders are being served. It is due to the judicious foresight of the water commissioners that Swansea was one of the few towns or cities in the area that did not suffer from a water shortage during the drought of the past several years.

As all fair things of earth bear a blemish, the fruitful years of the town's development were marred by two World Wars and two serious military conflicts and the youth of Swansea answered the call to arms. In each of these combats the young men of the town marched forth and there were those among them who made the supreme sacrifice – "Not for conquest but for Country."

Much that was personal and intimate in the life of the town passed during these years. No one will deny the convenience of the privately owned automobile or the public bus as a means of transportation, but the memory of the 7:40 train to Fall River that carried businessmen to their offices, teachers to their schools, and students to their classes will always recall the lively and happy scene of friendly greetings, the reporting of local news and the exchanging of political ideas. The South Swansea depot, unknown to late comers and to a younger generation, witnessed the coming and going of many town personalities. Among them, Mr. Francis L. Gardner, town leader and patriarch, Miss Genevieve Bliss, commanding and austere, the principal of the Highland School in Fall River, Miss Annie Bird, Superior Court Secretary, gentle and gracious at all times. These and many others become very real in this setting.

It is not uncommon on a warm summer evening when the day is fading in the west for one to have a nostalgic longing for a quiet walk to the point. One sees in retrospect the stately form of the "Priscilla" or the "Commonwealth", relics of the Old Fall River Line, twinkling with lights, glide gently down the bay. Suddenly the calm of the evening is broken by the salute fired to honor Captain Elijah G. Davis, living in retirement at his home, The Anchorage, in South Swansea.

Courtesy Mr. Ellis A. Waring



Great Island, Ocean Grove

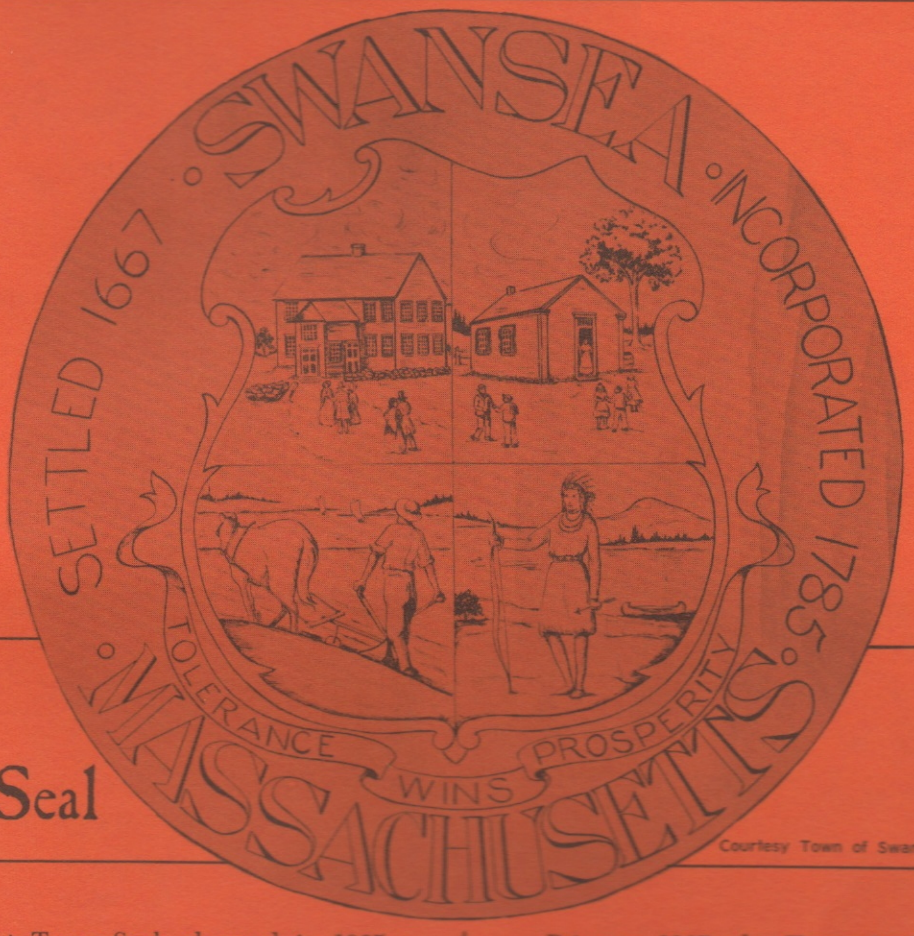
Swansea celebrates another birthday, a most significant one in the record of her development. Perhaps it is true to say that greater and more far-reaching changes took place in the past fifty or sixty years than in all her previous history. The future alone will reveal the development and growth of *Old Swansea By the Bays.*

LEWIS S. GRAY SONS' CO.
1049 Grand Army Highway
Swansea, Mass.

CHARLES F. KINNANE REAL ESTATE
60 Maple Avenue
Swansea, Mass.

ELMER C. SLATER OPTICIAN
144 North Main Street
Fall River, Mass.

The Town Seal



Courtesy Town of Swansea

The present Town Seal, changed in 1965 to conform with Colony and State records at Plymouth, depicts a thumbnail sketch of Swansea's heritage.

Four drawings, rendered by Elizabeth S. Frost after research by Marion D. Reilly, appear on the shield in the center of the seal. They illustrate four aspects of town history.

In the upper left-hand corner is a picture, based on records, of the North Swansea Baptist Church. The first church was destroyed by fire during the King Philip War in 1675.

Drawn from a photograph, the picture in the upper right-hand corner is that of the first Bushee Corner school. Because organized religion preceded formal education in Swansea's development, the church is in the upper left-hand corner, the school in the upper right-hand corner.

The plowman in the lower left-hand corner represents an early Swansea industry, farming. The Indian in the lower right-hand corner recalls our aboriginal history.

Prior to 1965, the Town Seal read, "Settled 1623; Incorporated 1668". Today's Town Seal reads, "Settled 1667; Incorporated 1785".

After much research, Marion D. Reilly, chairman of the Town Seal Committe, set forth these reasons for changing the dates on the old Town Seal:

"Grant of township land was made by Plymouth Court to 'Capt. Thomas Willet and his associates', 1667, March 5, and the settlers were given the right to call that land, 'New Swansea', October 30, 1667, later shortened to Swansea, and previously called by the Indians, Wannamoisett."

"Swansea was never incorporated by a special act of the Court, but by Chapter 75 of the Acts of 1785, it was caused to be a 'body politic'."

That Act reads – "The inhabitants of every Town within this government are hereby declared to be a body politic and corporate with passage of this act."

The Motto, "Tolerance Wins Prosperity", has as contemporary a ring in 1967 as it must have had when it was chosen.

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Mr. & Mrs. Abbott L. Wood
Mr. & Mrs. Herbert D. Woodruff
Mr. & Mrs. Donald C. Worthen
Mr. & Mrs. Edward F. Wright
Mr. & Mrs. Carlton H. Yates
Young Old Timers Square Dance Club
Mr. & Mrs. Richard W. Young

In Memory of:

Ada M. (Goff) & Myron H. Baker
Mr. & Mrs. William L. S. Brayton
Mr. Harold R. Connell
Mr. & Mrs. Manuel B. Faria, Sr.
Chester R. & Alice C. Gardner
Mr. & Mrs. John J. Griffin
Thomas F. & Clara M. Knight
Mr. Aime J. Mailloux, Sr.
Mr. John D. M. McAuley
Maxium J. Piette
SP4. Richard Rapoza
Sergeant Randall E. Shea
James M. A. Reynolds

APRIL 18	Costume Ball – Venus De Milo, Swansea, Mass.
MAY 3	Brothers of the Brush Kick Off
MAY 17	Celebration Belles Kick Off
MAY 28	Memorial Day Parade
JUNE 5	Celebration Headquarters Grand Opening
JUNE 24	Rededication of the Myles Garrison House
JULY 15	Square Dance Jamboree at St. Michael's Memorial Club (outside). (Rain date 7/22/67)
JULY 15	Sailboat Regatta - Coles River - 15 Participating Yacht Clubs – 200 Boats
JULY 23	Fireman's Muster
JULY 24	Three Days – Swansea Tercentenary Open Golf Tournament – 24th, 25th and 26th.
AUG. 11	Old Fashioned Bargain Days Kick Off – Queen's Coronation Ball
AUG. 12	Official Opening Ceremonies – Brown School
	Demonstration of the Loomis Lancers – Square Dance Club
	Official Kangaroo Kourt
AUG. 13	*HERITAGE DAY*
	300th Anniversary Observance In All Churches
	Parade – Prizes
	Official Opening of the Tercentenary Carnival
AUG. 14	*SENIOR CITIZENS HOMECOMING DAY*
	Registration of Senior Citizens, Former Residents and Guests
	Buffet for Those 65 and Over – Honoring Senior Families – Former Swansea Officials – Awards and Fun
	Introduction of Winners of Queen's Coronation Ceremony
	Introduction of Governor and Other Dignitaries
	First Night of Spectacular
AUG. 15	*SPORTS – RECREATION DAY*
	Various Sports and Playoffs
	Second Performance of Spectacular
AUG. 16	*ARTS-CRAFTS DAY*
	Judging and Awards of Displays
	Demonstrations of Arts and Crafts
	Band Concert
	Third Performance of Spectacular
AUG. 17	*LADIES DAY*
	Cooking School – Pioneer Style Show – Flower Show – Cake Decorating Contests
	Fourth Performance of Spectacular
AUG. 18	*YOUNG AMERICA DAY*
	Final of all School Contests – Selection of Junior Tercentenary Queen
	Kids Costume Float – Pets and Hobby Parade – Awards
	Fifth Performance of Spectacular
AUG. 19	*GOOD NEIGHBOR DAY*
	Various Events of Community Interest
	Little League Playoff Game
	Time Capsule Ceremony followed by Barbecue Dinner honoring Mayors and Official Families of the area.
	Sixth Performance of Spectacular
AUG. 14 thru 19	Every Spectacular to be followed by a huge Fireworks Finale