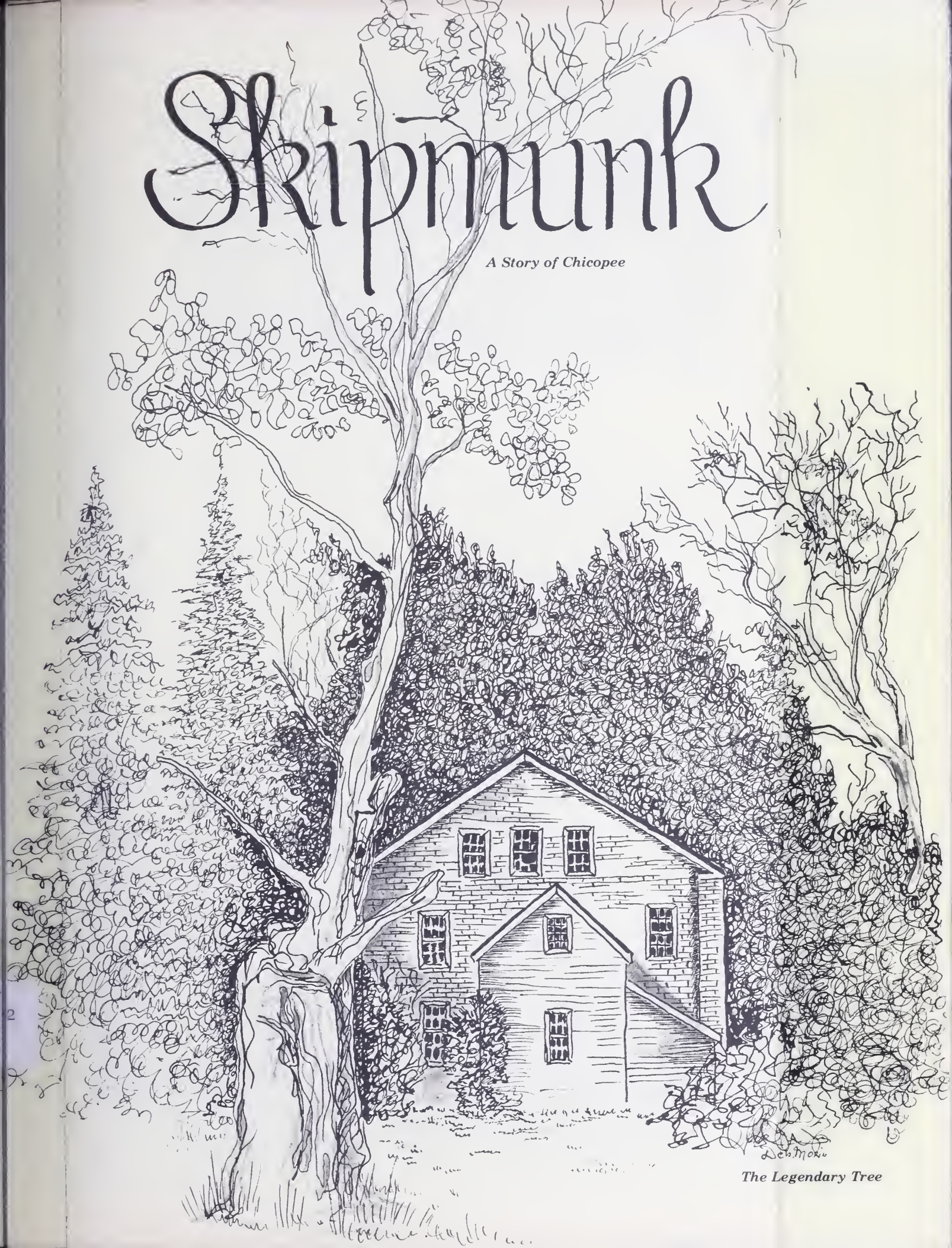


Skipmunk

A Story of Chicopee



The Legendary Tree



Photograph by Mark Rosendale

A sign above a doorway in Market Square, Chicopee Center

Well here it is, our second issue of SKIPMUNK. We didn't think we would ever get the first one out to you, and now, the third issue is well on its way.

Our main theme behind SKIPMUNK is to restore the lingering memories of yesterday, to see the things as they exist today, and be concerned with the future growth of the land, people, and the spirit of Chicopee.

After we distributed copies of our first SKIPMUNK MAGAZINE, we were not too sure of the response from the public. To our benefit, the reactions were great! We are grateful to those of you who have taken the time to send in your thoughts and comments; they have helped to make our magazine what it is.

The process of a magazine, especially of this kind, is relatively unknown to the public. We feel it takes more than just words and pictures to get our message across to you. It takes unity and a will. It takes a strong belief in the preservation of the past.

We hope you will enjoy your journey through the past . . .

SKIPMUNK MAGAZINE



This photo appeared in the Holyoke Transcript during February and was titled "Echoes From the Past". This home was built in 1600 by James O. Stone and was torn down for construction of a road to Westover Field. Pictured in the photo are Merton A. Stone, his sister Elsie; James Stone the builder; Ernest Warner; Marietta Stone and Mrs. Trenna Tilley.

INDIAN TRADITIONS AND PLACE NAMES

By Bessie Warner Kerr

The Indians of the Chicopee River region were not numerous, and were known as "Nipmucks," or "Fresh Water Indians," according to Barrows, historian of Springfield. Those who lived further south were Agawams, west were the Woronocos (Westfield), north the Nonotucks (Northampton), and all these small tribes belonged to the Algonquins. Wherever the white man settled, great precautions were taken to keep the Indians friendly; and for fifty years after the settlement at Plymouth, there were no serious outbreaks.

Then during King Philip's war, the city of Springfield was burned, Deerfield was sacked and the people massacred, and fear spread through the western part of Massachusetts. Chicopee suffered several raids, and in 1708, two soldiers and one child were killed, and the wife of a Lieut. Wright, (Chicopee Falls), was taken captive, and never heard from again. One authority says there was a Fort at old Skipmuck, where five people were killed.

William Pynchon in buying the land now occupied by the city of Chicopee from the Indians, signed a deed in April, 1641, which we will consider later. This was signed also by nine Indians, one a woman, who accepted her share of the odds and ends used for payment, then came back for more. One, the chief spokesman, was named "Nippumsuit of Naunetak," and the deed covered the "land from the Chickopy River up to another small Riveret called Wollomansak sepe (skape), which runs into the Quinnettecot River." From the first all brooks, ravines and dingles had their own descriptive Indian names, and most of them were used by the white men for many years.

There were signs of Indian occupation and burial places in many parts of Chicopee, especially in Chicopee Street, and on Sandy Hill. As late as 1916, excavations near the mouth of the Chicopee River brought forth several skeletons, one well preserved, which experts proved were Indian bones; and relics of a settlement were found near Marion Street, formerly Prospect.

Tradition says that at the end of the King Philip's war, a band of two hundred Narragansett Indians crossed the Connecticut River at Chicopee in rafts, going west, and disappeared beyond Westfield.

We have no record of any Chicopee settlers marrying among the Indians, but we have heard of one family of the 1760's where the mother of seven boys kept the farm going, with the help of the two youngest, while the older boys and the father were fighting in the French and Indian War. She was said to be the daughter of an Indian Chief. The story that has come down in the family is mostly concerned with the three left behind, who were obliged to fight bears in order to keep any of their crops.

As was said in the first chapter, the name "Chicopee" is from the Algonquin tongue, and means "Violent, or raging water." The Chicopee Post Office has reported more than fourteen spellings of the word.

"Pissak," mentioned in the 1641 deed, means swamp.

"Skanunganuck," is not quite certain, but separated into syllables, and studying the different roots, means

grassy meadows, suitable for planting corn, at the bend in a stream! (Chicopee Falls.)

"Skipmuck," a river fishing place. (Settlement above the Falls.)

"Wollamansak," seems to be confused with Wallamanumps, then Willimansett, meaning either a stronghold of red rock, or place of small berries. The red color of the river caused by iron deposits would account for the former meaning; the second, from "will" — good, and "minneash," small fruit.

"Birchen Bend" is probably the correct form of the name of the famous turn in the Chicopee River.

"Hogpen Dingle" was on the old maps of Springfield and Chicopee for years, and under the name of Bemis Brook flows from Bemis Pond into the River near the Electric Light Station.

"Poor Brook" bisected the land between Springfield and Skipmuck, and on the banks of this stream the earliest settlers of Chicopee Falls made their homes, Jeremy Horton, and James Warriner. The fort mentioned earlier in this chapter was in this section, also.

"Ferry Lane" was the road to Jone's Ferry. (Not long ago someone tried to verify "Fairy Lane" as the original name, but found no proof.)

Grape Street, named from the ancient "Ford at Grape Place," connected with the early road to Springfield.

No one has ever given an authentic explanation of the name "Johny Cake Hollow" where the second oldest house in Chicopee used to stand, and where our City Water Works and Filter are now. Tradition says the first Methodist meetings in Chicopee were held in the old Snow house in the Hollow, and that the name came from the poverty of the settlers in this section of Chicopee Falls.

In Hitchcock's Geology of Massachusetts, dated 1840, the name "Chicopee Shale" is given to a sort of slate-clay found in the Connecticut Valley.



"Portrayall of William Pynchon and the Agawam Indians displaying the agreement over the sale of land to the White settlers."

Reprinted from the HISTORICAL JOURNAL OF WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS Westfield State College

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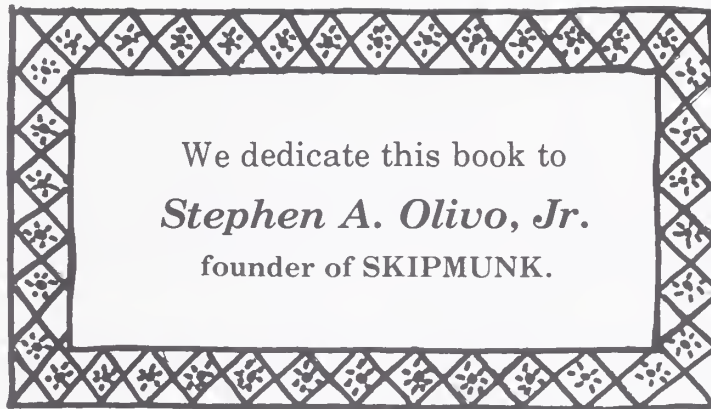
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“CHICOPEE”
Birch Bark Place and Raging Waters

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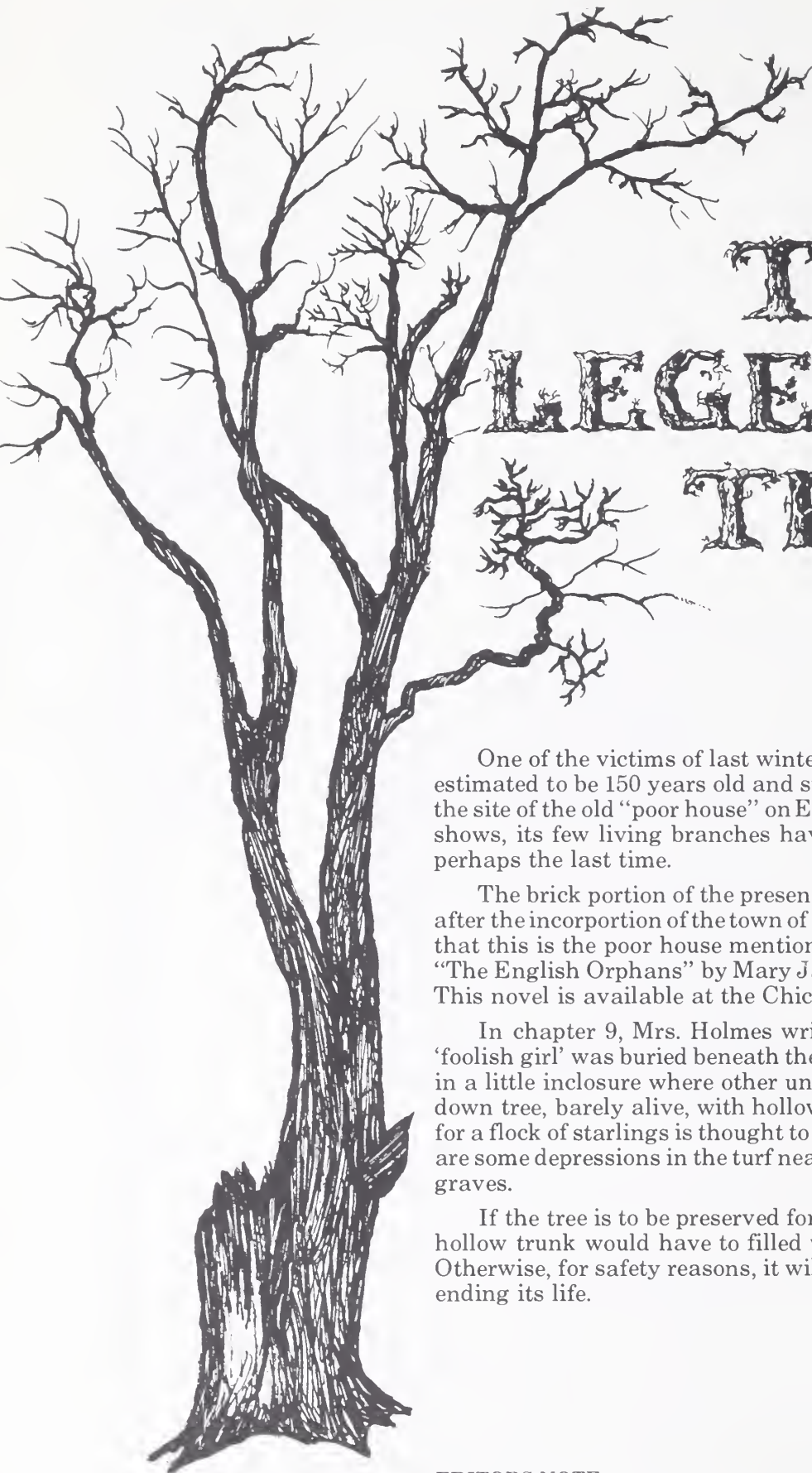
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Many of the articles appearing in this issue were accompanied by bibliographies and reference sources. Any questions on such matters should be sent to the editors, and they will be answered within ninety days of postmark. If sufficient requests occur, sources will be printed in subsequent issues. Send all correspondence to:

SKIPMUNK
SKIPMUNK, Volume 1, Number 2,
Spring 1977. A Historic Magazine
published quarterly. Single copies
are \$1.75. Contents copyright,
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Printed by MARCUS PRINTING Co.,
206 Appleton Street, Holyoke, MA

SKIPMUNK - Vol. 1, No. 2
P.O. Box 830
Chicopee, Mass. 01014

Spring Issue, 1977



THE LEGENDARY TREE

One of the victims of last winter's worst ice storm was the ancient tree estimated to be 150 years old and still standing, though much battered, on the site of the old "poor house" on East Street, Chicopee Falls. As the picture shows, its few living branches have unfolded their leaves this Spring for perhaps the last time.

The brick portion of the present structure seen behind it was built soon after the incorporation of the town of Chicopee in 1848. It is generally believed that this is the poor house mentioned in a novel based on Chicopee called "The English Orphans" by Mary James Hawes Holmes, published in 1855. This novel is available at the Chicopee Public Library.

In chapter 9, Mrs. Holmes writes that one of the orphans "Patsy" a 'foolish girl' was buried beneath the shadow of a wide spreading maple tree in a little inclosure where other unfortunates lay sleeping. The old broken down tree, barely alive, with hollow trunk, which provides a nesting place for a flock of starlings is thought to be the tree mentioned in the story. There are some depressions in the turf near the tree that could mark the sites of the graves.

If the tree is to be preserved for sentimental if not historical value, the hollow trunk would have to be filled with cement and limbs properly guyed. Otherwise, for safety reasons, it will have to feel the cruel blade of the saw ending its life.

EDITORS NOTE:

This article was written some years ago by the late Warren Chapin and is being reprinted with the permission of Mrs. W. Chapin. Unfortunately the tree was not preserved but did "Feel the cruel blade of the saw."



The Legendary Tree, Sketch by Debbie Morin

An Almshouse for the Poor

by Gary D. Keefe

This past October an important and generally overlooked part of Chicopee's past disappeared. Located at 329 East Street in Chicopee Falls, a large brick structure had been built in 1849 as Chicopee's first Almshouse. Also known as the Poor House, the Town Farm, or simply the Farm, the Almshouse had provided aid to those in need from 1849 to 1860. A brief overview of the social and economic growth of the Town will help one to understand the reasons which necessitated the creation of the Almshouse in Chicopee.

In the early eighteen hundreds, the population of Chicopee began to grow, as some small industries moved in. In spite of this, the village was still agricultural in 1820.

With the arrival of the cotton industry, this soon changed. By the mid 1830's, five mills were in operation in Chicopee. This created a need for many people to work the mills. Many of the village residents were long established in their work and therefore were not available to work in the mills.

The labor shortage was soon ended by the arrival of immigrants, who, new to the land, worked at whatever jobs were open. They were of the laboring class and worked long hours for little pay. Their living quarters were often poor, but an improvement as compared to what they left behind in Europe. They lived in sharp contrast to the native residents who were unaccustomed to the immigrants' way of life.

Through the 1830's and the 1840's the population of Chicopee grew as the local economy prospered.

As the town grew, new services were needed. A substantial amount of building was done. The 1840's saw the coming of Chicopee's first post office, bank, and railroad. The birth of a newspaper and the organization of a Lyceum, a society for public lectures and debates, reflected the Town's growing social concern. According to George S. Taylor "there was a spirit of improvement in town unequalled in this part of the state." This Spirit was to result in Chicopee's incorporation as a town in April, 1848. This would also influence the Almshouse.

With incorporation, Chicopee not only gained its rights as a town, but also responsibilities. One area of concern was in providing for the poor.

At the town meeting of May, 1848, Timothy Carter, stated in part: "that through strict economy we shall be enabled . . . to bestow upon the poor that assistance to which by their misfortunes they are entitled at our hands." As a part of Springfield, the poor of Chicopee had been provided for at the Springfield Almshouse without any cost to the town. After incorporation, however, the Springfield Almshouse was no longer available without costs to the town. Rather than to pay Springfield, it was thought in the best interests of the town to locate an Almshouse in Chicopee.

The Town soon purchased a farm from Theodore Williams, consisting of a small building and a parcel of land. A large brick structure was built onto the house by Joseph T. Bliss and hands. This created the first town debt of \$5,061.72. In June of 1849 it was completed and occupied. The cost of the Almshouse

offers some insight as to the spirit with which the town met its responsibilities to the poor.

Architecturally, the white wooden structure was the oldest of the two buildings. However, according to the Poor department records, the attached wooden structure was bought and moved in 1857. None of the building's architectural characteristics appear to be as recent as 1857. The method of braced framing, fitted and pegged, is an earlier technique. By 1840, the method of balloon framing was being used in New England. A bricked over window at the end of the wooden house wall, was found to date back earlier than the house itself. The brick building, of the Greek Revival style, was built onto the wooden house in 1848-49. Its porches were not part of the original structure. The Greek Revival characteristic most apparent are the brick pillisters, or column-like extensions protruding from the front wall of the building. Once the building was painted white, it took on the intended appearance of a Greek stone structure.



"The white wooden structure was the oldest of the two buildings."

Inside the Almshouse the Greek Revival was equally apparent. Although the interior work was very simple, it was classical in its line and form. The inside was made up of several large single room apartments, a large attic, living quarters for the Superintendent, and a kitchen and pantry. The numbers of those people who used the Almshouse, and the varying periods of time usually involved, made the size of the Almshouse adequate.

During its years of activity the Almshouse gave aid and comfort to many residents in need. It provided the poor with food, clothing, and shelter.

Medical and moral aid were given. Burials were also provided when necessary. The most active years of the Almshouse were from 1849 to 1854. In 1850 and 1851, the farming aspect of the House was developed to provide the poor with food. Farming continued until 1854 when a change occurred in the state welfare system, sharply curtailing activity in the Almshouse. As a result of the slow down, it was leased out with the care of the poor continuing there until 1860, when the building was then sold. After changing hands the property became the possession of the Ondrick family, which it remained until its demise.

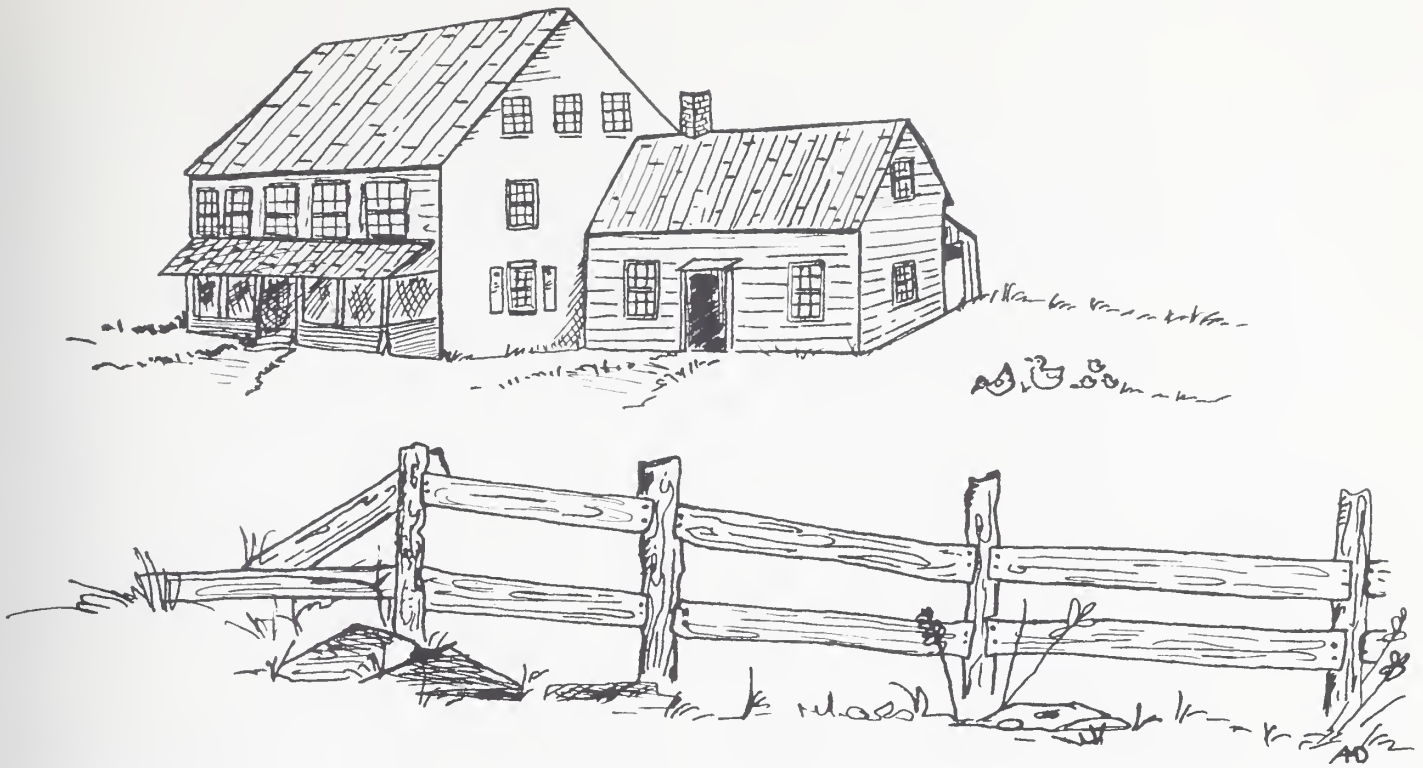
Maintaining the Poor House required funds. Money came from several sources, due for the most part, to the nature of the state welfare system. In Massachusetts it was necessary for the poor to register with the town from which they were receiving aid. The poor were then classified as either state paupers or as paupers having a legal settlement in a town in the Commonwealth. Necessary funding for state paupers was provided by the state. As time went on, the town had more and more problems getting the funding they qualified for. Major welfare system changes in 1854 further complicated gaining funds. Those paupers having legal settlement in a town in the state were funded by that town. The majority of paupers who stayed at the Almshouse were state paupers or of another town. Funding also came from licenses for circuses, theatres and menageries, from private individuals, companies, the estates of deceased paupers, and the farm.

The use of these funds were handled by the heads of the Almshouse. From 1848 to 1854 the Almshouse was under the control of a three man board elected by the town. These were the overseers of the Poor. The Almshouse itself was run by a Superintendent and Matron who lived there. After 1854 and the Almshouse slowdown, the Overseers positions were discontinued and a two man committee was appointed by the Town Selectmen. The Superintendent's and Matron's jobs were handled by the individuals leasing the farm.



"A bricked over window at the end of the wooden house wall, was found to date back earlier than the house itself."

Photographs by Gary D. Keefe



Sketch by Anne Dachowski

The extent to which services were offered was dependent on those in charge. In its early years life at the Almshouse was probably its most austere. Early Poor Department records refer to efforts being made to promote neatness and cleanliness. The moral character of the inmates also received due attention. As time went on and different people with different ideas ran the Almshouse, and improvements were made in the care of the poor.

The numbers of individuals aided at the Almshouse was dependent upon two factors: the weather and the economy. Hard winters brought as many people to the Almshouse as did periods of economic recession or depression. The weather also affected the number of travelers who stayed at the Almshouse. It was a common practice to put up passing travelers for a night. This aid was standard, as freezing to death was a very real issue.

In June, 1849, the Almshouse was completed and occupied. From that time to March, 1850, forty-five people were aided at the Almshouse. The total number of people aided increased the following year due to the depressed economy during the fall of 1850 and the winter of 1851, when the area mill operations were suspended. Sixty-two people were aided at the House. The following year saw that 108 people received aid at the Farm. According to the Overseers, this increase was the result of free-loading off the town, rather than an economic condition. The next year was the most quiet up to that point at the Almshouse. Despite a downward economic trend, only thirty-seven people stayed at the Almshouse. This slowdown and the construction of a State

Almshouse at Monson, prompted the first recommendation to sell or lease the Farm, a practice which as time went on became a tradition. The new Almshouse at Monson was to have a great impact on Chicopee's Almshouse.

With the completion of the State Almshouse in 1854, the number of people receiving aid in Chicopee dropped drastically as most of the paupers were state paupers. Only nineteen people stayed at the House during the year. In April, 1854, the new state system was put into effect whereby all state paupers were supported directly by the state at the Almshouse in Monson. Although the economic recession, high food prices, and a bad winter occurred that year, not one person stayed at the House more than one night. The next year saw a continuation of bad winter and high food prices and the number of immigrants gaining a legal settlement in Chicopee was growing. This meant a potential increase in the town's obligation to the Poor. The Overseers of the Poor had consistently seen the the immigrants, or "Foreigners" as a major drain on the town welfare system. Unfortunately records are not available of how many people stayed at the Almshouse. It is safe to say that it was used. If not, such a notation would have surely appeared in the annual report of the Poor Department. The following year was nearly as quiet as the one previous. With the exception of travelers who spent one night at the House, only one family stayed at the Almshouse.

As the Poor House provided less services to the town, it was recommended that it be sold, at a loss if necessary. In light of the fact that during the past two

years the Poor Department had overspent itself by a total of \$703.22, the recommendation made some sense.

After two years of heavy speculation, depression settled in. During 1857-58 one hundred and thirty-seven people stayed one night at the Almshouse; eight others spent a period of time there. Hard times continued. The next year saw four people supported at a time at the Farm with one hundred and sixty-five travelers passing through. In 1859-60 the economy improved somewhat. This is reflected in the decline in activity at the Farm. With the exception of travelers, only two paupers stayed at the Almshouse. In 1860 the Farm was sold.

The people who stayed at the Almshouse represented a cross-section of the population. People of all age groups and both sexes lived there, including immigrants. Whole families were also cared for. The amount of time an individual or family spent at the House depended upon their economic condition. Some stayed a day, some a month, and some a whole year.

The 1800's saw the rise of a feeling of strong nationalism in America. In some, this nationalism was intensified by obvious differences in the beliefs and customs and often lower socio-economic status of the immigrants. The result was a belief in Nativism, which favored those Native born. The very fact that the immigrants were not working, regardless of the condition of the economy, was the antithesis of a strong religious-based belief in the work ethic.

Besides shelter and warmth the Almshouse provided food for the inmates. Initially food stuffs were bought from local merchants, but this practice, for the most part, ended when the town farm was set up at the Almshouse in 1850 and 1851. Worked by those poor who were able and by local people hired as the need arose, the farm production included oats, corn, rye, potatoes, apples, cabbages, parsnips, squash, and onions. Cows and chickens were kept, providing the poor with milk, eggs, and occasionally beef and poultry. The production was adequate to feed those at the Almshouse. The Farm was in use only while the Almshouse was fairly active, from 1851 to 1854. Because fewer people relied on the Almshouse, due to the change in the welfare system, the Farm was leased out to private individuals, who used the facilities for their own benefits.

It appears that entertainment too was provided for the poor. The grounds were the scene of circuses. (menageries), theatres, and concerts. Children at the Poor House were given an education. They attended District School #5, located on the Boston Road, (East Street) a few rods east of the Almshouse. The moral condition of the poor was also provided for. The way up from pauperism was thought to be through a life of moral and physical cleanliness, and work. Most of the inmates' time was probably taken up, doing light work around the house and farm. Major work on the buildings and land was hired out.

Folklore abounds that all the paupers who died in the Almshouse were buried at the House. Between 1849 and 1859 a total of 15 persons died at the Almshouse. Of this total, eleven were buried at the Catholic Cemetery, one in Springfield, and three at the Almshouse. The first burial at the Almshouse was in 1851, a baby girl. The circumstances of this burial have been passed down through folklore. Legend has it that this infant was born out of wedlock and to hide the crime of illegitimacy the child was buried near the House, the site later marked by a hickory tree. Town records show the child as having parents, as having been months old, and passing from the whooping cough. Which of the two stories is more accurate, is a matter of conjecture. The second burial at the Almshouse took place in 1859. In both of these cases, burial at the Farm could be explained by the situation at the Almshouse during the times. Those private individuals who leased the House by agreement would care for the poor. Rather than go through a great deal of arrangements to bury these persons at a cemetery it was probably seen as simpler to bury them on the site.

The service provided by the Almshouse cannot be underscored. Without it some of those in need would have probably starved or frozen to death. It provided the poor with clothing, food and shelter. When necessary, medical care was given. Children at the House were given an education. The aid given by the town, though simple, was adequate. To people who had nothing it must have seemed like a great deal. Although one can explain the efforts of the Town as influenced by the times, the fact is, that regardless of the reasons, Chicopee extended its hand to those in need.



The Unfortunate

by: Donna Balthazard

To let a wounded bird out into the cold and empty world, only to be watched by predators of the dark, Would be thought of as inhuman and uncompassionate. Why then, do we let humans like ourselves suffer, if they too need the help and love some heart has to offer?

The closed minds, the selfish thoughts, the unkind gestures, should be banished, and forever more erased.



Border by Karen Wegrzyn

A Good Bread Recipe



Sketch by Anne Dachowski

*First, mix a luke warm quart,
my daughter,
One-half scalded milk, one-
half water;
To this please add two cakes
of yeast,
Or the liquid kind if preferred
in the least.*

*Next stir in a teaspoonful of
nice clear salt,
If this bread isn't good, it
won't be our fault,
Now add the sugar, teaspoon-
fuls three;
Mix well together, for dis-
solved they must be.*

*Pour the whole mixture into
an earthen bowl,
A pan's just as good, if it
hasn't a hole,
It's the cook and the flour,
not the bowl or the pan
That—"Makes the bread that
makes the man."*

*Now let the mixture stand a
minute or two.
You've other things of great
importance to do.
First sift the flour—use the
finest in the land.
Three quarts is the measure,
"GOLD MEDAL" the brand*

*Some people like a little
shortening power,
If this is your choice, just
add to the flour
Two tablespoonfuls of lard,
and jumble it about,
Till the flour and lard are
mixed without doubt.*

*Next stir the flour into the
mixture that's stood
Waiting to play its part, to
make the bread good.
Mix it up thoroughly, but not
too thick;
Some flours make bread that's
more like a brick.*

*Now grease well a bowl and
put the dough in,
Don't fill the bowl full, that
would be a sin;
For the dough is all right and
it's going to rise,
'Till you will declare that it's
twice the old size.*

*Brush the dough with melted
butter, as the recipes say;
Cover with a bread towel, set
in a warm place to stay
Two hours or more, to rise
until light,
When you see it grow, you'll
know it's all right.*

*As soon as it's light, place again
on the board;
Knead it well this time. Here
is knowledge to hoard.
Now back in the bowl once
more it must go.
And set again to rise for an
hour or so.*

*Form the dough gently into
loaves when light,
And place it in bread pans,
greased just right.
Shape each loaf you make to
half fill the pan,
This bread will be good
enough for any young man.*

*Next let it rise to the level
of pans—no more,
Have the temperature right—
don't set near a door.
Be very careful about draughts
—it isn't made to freeze
Keep the room good and warm
—say seventy-two degrees.*

*Now put in the oven; it's
ready to bake,—
Keep uniform fire, great
results are at stake
One hour more of waiting
and you'll be repaid,
By bread that is worthy
"A Well Bred Maid."*



The Buckland House, 71 Church Street

Built in the 1830's by George W. Buckland. Purchased from the Chicopee Manufacturing Company for \$250.00. It is a Greek Revival House supported by four Doric columns and a side porch done in the Ionic Mode.

Photographs by John Krupczak

The Davenport House, 99 Church Street

Greek Revival and local architectural style was expressed in the Davenport house built in the 1840's. The first owner was Guy Davenport, it currently houses the Chicopee Chapter of the American Red Cross.



An Historic District With a Story to Tell

by Stephen R. Jendrysik

The Church Street neighborhood where lived the men who ran the mills and controlled the town is in the initial stages of becoming Chicopee's first historic district.

The importance of preserving this significant area is being emphasized as the Chicopee Historic District Committee prepares a preliminary report for presentation to the Board of Alderman which will ultimately act on setting preservation guidelines.

In 1835, Chicopee Falls was called *Factory Village* the area surrounding the village, the heights, was yet to be developed. The land owned by the Chicopee Manufacturing Company was made available to local real estate interests. The plots along modern Church Street were sold to speculators who in turn tried to dispose of the property at a profit. Often the land was sold a number of times before buildings were constructed. The Chicopee Company's Board of Directors had placed the land for sale during a mild business downturn in 1835. The success of the real estate operation led to the sale of all the company's non-industrial properties in the Falls Area.

Church Street, a residential area in the heart of Factory Village, was located in a commanding position on top of a hill. Chicopee's first business and professional men built their homes there. It is the intention of the Historic District Committee to preserve the remaining residences of these early settlers. Secondly, it is the committee's intention to retain the village atmosphere of the 19th. Century World of Edward Bellamy. Bellamy who lived at 91-93 Church Street gained world wide attention in the 1880's with the publication of **Looking**



*The Alvord Homestead, 117-121 Church Street
Built by the Carpenter Bros. in the year 1838. The old homestead
reflects the Greek Revival Style.*

Backward. Today the Bellamy Homestead is a National Landmark; the home is being restored by Chicopee's Edward Bellamy Memorial Association. A third objective of the committee is the preservation of a bit of Chicopee's rich historic past. Unfortunately, a large portion of the neighborhood has already succumbed to urban renewal. The six remaining Greek Revival Homes on Church Street will be the nucleus of the Historic District. Each of the homes is architecturally significant; each was constructed in the 1830's and 1840's in the Classic American Greek Revival Style. The men who built these homes were the vanguard of a small effective middle class which owes its success to the mill complex located below Church Street.

The historic importance of Church Street is that it was the location for the Second Congregational Church and the first public school in the Chicopee Falls Area; the first hotel in the area was at the foot of Church Street and at the top of the street was the home of the chief agent of the Chicopee Manufacturing Company, Ezekiel Blake. For many years he served as the guiding force in the operation of the Falls Industrial Complex. His home and the home of his neighbor, successful Merchant T. W. Carter, are no more. Today their properties are the location of the giant Uni-Royal Rubber Plant in Chicopee. Chicopee's first mayor, George S. Taylor, had a homestead located at the midpoint of Church Street; that home too is gone. The six buildings

remaining do have a story to tell, each in its own right, for each has observed the changing nature of Factory Village. Most of the mills are gone, the tenements are gone, and the canal is now a roadway. Urban Renewal has taken the

Arthur McArthur Homestead and the Second Congregational Church along with the old High School. A giant police and fire complex is all that is left of the North side of Chicopee's most famous street. These remaining

homes with their spacious backyards, flower gardens and green grass harken back to a period when residential and industrial properties existed side by side in a factory setting.



The Bellamy Homestead and Carriage House, 91-93 Church Street

Built in the late 1880's, the Greek Revival House is the Homestead of the famous author Edward Bellamy.



The Chicopee Manufacturing Company built in 1823.

Today known as Facemate, Inc.

Photographs by John Krupczak



CHICOPEE

*Chicopee is our united land
Come on Audience give it a hand
Remember the young, remember the old
Remember ol' Edison and his lightbulb
Through strength and power we have fought
So come on people give it all ya got
Through Powers, thoughts and memories
That's our "great" city Chicopee!
To our beloved hometown
Nothing can ever bring us down
We are great, We are good
We are friends through brotherhood
Inventions have made our city true
And helped along our Red, White and Blue
Let us be homeward, let us be free
'Cause we have it made in Chicopee!*

*by Cheri Sullivan
an elementary student at Belcher School*

Border by Nancy LaRiviere

PORTRAIT OF THE PAST



Charles O'Connell

There is much more here than meets the eye in our fair city of Chicopee. Its ancient buildings and slumbering factories have successfully deluded its inhabitants into thinking that there is not much sophistication emanating from its boundaries. To the contrary, for I am certain there are many instances in which I can disprove this belief. My main interest of the present is Mr. Charles O'Connell, a native of Chicopee, and one of the most prominent music critics of our time.

Mr. O'Connell spent his childhood days here in Chicopee. As an organist he served the community by playing four years in the Holy Cross Parish of Springfield and began his undergraduate career as a music critic for the Springfield Daily News. According to one story, shortly after he graduated, O'Connell was given an assignment to criticize a concert in Springfield by Miss Mary Garden, the Queen of American Female Opera singers.

Regardless of how much other critics praised her, Mr. O'Connell gave his honest opinion of her performance; that every time she hit a high note it was absolutely flat. To his surprise, he received a telegram the very next day asking him to appear at the RCA Victor Corporation for an interview. At the early age of 22, he was offered and accepted a position as the company's music director.

Shortly afterwards, Mr. O'Connell embarked on a musical career with Victor and Columbia concerns, during which he became acquainted with an assortment of famous musicians. Still holding his regular position at RCA, he learned conduction of an orchestra under the guidance of Leopold Stokowski. In guest appearances he had the opportunity to exhibit his skill by directing many world-famous philharmonic orchestras. In a preface in **The Other Side of the Record**, one of his three books, O'Connell wrote of his job at RCA Victor: "I had been for nearly 20 years in the service of Victor and recorded music. First it was the old Victor Talking Machine Company, and then through the successive metamorphoses of this honorable institution-Audio-Vision Appliance Co., RCA Victor Co., RCA Manufacturing Co. Inc., and RCA Victor Division of Radio Corporation of America. The last thirteen of those years were occupied with duties of music director for Victor Red Seal records . . . I was solely responsible for virtually every Red Seal record made in America." In this particular book O'Connell commented honestly about a good number of famous musicians, telling of each of his experiences with them and what he thought of their music. He put it in these words, "I promise to tell, rather, 'nothing but the truth', Who rightfully may resent that?"

Of course, nothing good will last forever. Because O'Connell's first love is music, and not its criticism, he resigned his post at RCA, claiming to himself, "You are a musician and not a diplomat, lawyer, businessman, father-confessor, or professional hand holder. You play pipe organ well enough to have appeared in the most distinguished of musical companies. You play piano well enough to make the Victor Red Seal label. You have conducted successfully and repeatedly every first-class symphony orchestra on the American continent. You have two successful books to your credit. And you're nearly forty-three years old. . . Time you did some of the things you want to do. . ." Reportedly, Mr. O'Connell is now freelancing in Philadelphia.

For those of you who feel that life is boring in this little town of Chicopee, take a lesson from what Mr. O'Connell accomplished, which you could also do if motivated, And for those of you who are content in the knowledge that Chicopee is truly a city of opportunity, join the crowd.

Musical endeavors seem to be a common factor between many inhabitants of Chicopee. For example,

Situated in the basement shop of Mr. Ernest P. Brien, was undoubtedly one of our city's most unique industries. Located on Trilby Street, in Chicopee, was Mr. Brien's violin manufacturing and repair shop. Mr. Brien's profession spanned half a century. A large portion of his time was spent repairing but he was accredited with making fifty violins. The majority of his violins have been sold for over three hundred dollars each.

In 1902 he left his hometown of Waterloo, Canada, and moved to Holyoke. In the year 1911, he settled in Chicopee. During that year he began his studies on the violin along with Holyoke's Professor Cyril Carthei. He met Mr. Zotique Bacon, while he was employed in West Springfield. Bacon was nationally recognized as being a craftsman in violin making. After work, Ernest Brien assisted Bacon, where he learned the intricacies of violin making.

During the 1920's, Mr. Brien conducted his own sixteen piece orchestra, and for a short duration he was a violinist for the Ben Bernie Orchestra. During the Depression, Brien taught violin lessons and in 1941 established the repair shop on Tribly Street.

*by Linda Fabbri
and Anne Dachowski*



Shop sign in front of Mr. Brien's Trilby Street store



Mr. Brien demonstrates his technique in constructing a fine musical instrument, The Violin.

Photographs by Dick Boisvert, used with permission of the Chicopee Herald



The Spence Letter

Editor's Note:

We have borrowed a letter out of Chicopee's past. The Spence Letter, which was written in the 1940's, was taken from the files of the *Springfield Union*. It was written by the late David R. Spence, a noted local historian. The letter was written to Richard M. Bailey, deceased, who for many years served as the Chicopee Bureau Chief of the *Springfield Union*. Mr. Spence and Mr. Bailey were deeply interested in local history. The story is printed with the permission of Mr. Henry Filar, the current Chicopee Bureau Chief of the *Springfield Union*.

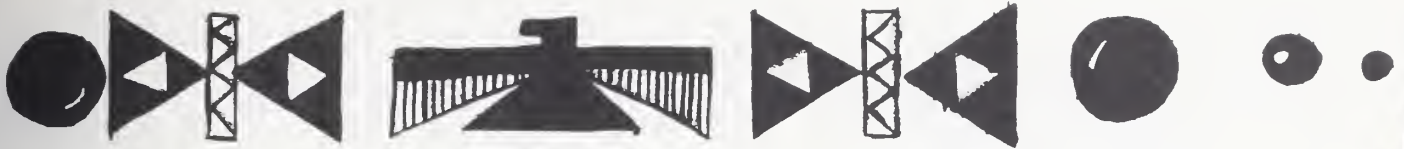
Continued from last issue.

Directly across the road from the Oxford Club, on the South East corner, was the old Cooley homestead, later called the Gassner House. Here lived Ariel Cooley, an engineering genius. Twice engineers before him had tried to build a dam that would hold, below the bridge in Chicopee Center and each time they had failed, then Mr. Cooley built one that zig-zagged its way across the river at this point and it held. When one company of those early days wanted a canal built to carry water to their factory for power and asked Mr. Cooley to build it, he inserted in the contract that if at any time the canal was not used for a year its ownership would revert to him. The time came when for some reason the company let the canal stay idle for a year and Mr. Cooley went up to Northampton, then the County Seat, to look up the recorded contract and found that the page on which it had been filed had been cut out of the book. At another time when freight was brought up the Connecticut River by boat from Hartford to Springfield and Holyoke, being poled up over the rapids near Windsor Locks, the Town of Northampton wished to be included in this service but was blocked by the rapids at South Hadley. When appealed to, Mr. Cooley was equal to the occasion and constructed a set of rollers, much the same as used today in unloading truck loads of goods into store basements. He made a cradle which was lowered into the water below his roller conveyor, the boat was pushed into the cradle and then drawn up on the rollers, and over the rapids by a winch. It was let down in the same manner.

This Cooley house was the only house in the town of Chicopee that was attacked by the Indians during King Philips War when Springfield was burned. It was occupied at that time by a Lieutenant Wright. Two soldiers had been sent to help guard Skipmuck and they were seated on a log just outside the house cleaning their guns when one of them said, "Now we are ready for them" when a young girl exclaimed, "Here they come." The girl ran into the house, pulling the latch string in after her so the soldiers could not get in. Both soldiers and one woman were killed. A child was scalped and her body thrown into the bushes beside the door, she however survived and wore a wig the rest of her life.

*The Cooley house was an old house,
a very old house,
so old that it knew of the wild,
romantic Indian days
of their night attacks and scheming ways.
It heard the sound of the signal gun
fired by the troops at Lexington.
In 1812 again it viewed
the useless struggle of war renewed.
If its walls could talk they could relate
of the Mexican War of '48.
In '61 as our elders knew
it watched the march of the "Boys in blue."
In '98 in the war with Spain
it heard the rumble of guns again.
Its memory gleams through the afterglow
a connecting link of the long ago.*

On the opposite corner of the street was the home of Gad Horton. Here, in this large house with the Salt-Box roof, the first recorded murder in Chicopee was committed. The young lady of this house had two boy friends and one evening they evidently got their dates mixed as both showed up on the same night and got into an argument which ended by one of them drawing a knife and in some manner stabbing the other in the back and killing him. At the trial, the young man on trial for committing the murder must have



had a good lawyer because this lawyer claimed that it was an accident, that as the victim started to run when he saw the other draw a knife, the man with the knife took a step after him just to frighten him and that the rug slipped on the floor under his feet, throwing him forward and the weight of his body caused the knife to enter the other man's back, accidentally killing him. As the young Lady was the only witness and agreed with this version, the young man was acquitted.

From this incident the house gained the reputation of being haunted and when we youngsters were passing the house we held our breath and ran past as fast as we could. An older girl had told us that if you held your breath when passing a haunted house the ghost would not touch you. There may have been something to this as this ghost never did.

There is a story on record of one time when Gad Horton, who lived here, was returning on horseback from a fishing trip, along towards evening, he was pursued by a pack of wolves, which were quite common in the vicinity. Gad galloped his horse as fast as possible but the wolves gained and as they

caught up with him he threw out one of his fish and the wolves stopped momentarily to fight over the fish and he galloped ahead. Several times this procedure was repeated until finally Gad arrived home, safely - but with no fish.

These early settlers were the ones who petitioned the General Assembly (now called the Legislature) in Boston for permission to blow up the Chicopee Falls Rapids (where the dam is now located) with gun powder so that the salmon could run up the river to spawn and so make for better fishing nearer home. The petition was denied.

In speaking of the Legislature it is interesting to note that the first Representative to the Legislature from Chicopee was Henry Chapin from Chicopee Street. He was given \$20.00 as compensation for attending the session and upon his return gave back \$11.50 to the Town. When told that the sum of \$20.00 had been voted as compensation he replied that \$8.50 was all he had spent and that was all he would accept. I believe today the salary is \$4500 with \$500 extra for expenses . . . times change.



*Some Day, if our dreams come true,
We'll wander back again to view
The old familiar scenes that rise
Like long lost friends before our eyes.*

*Back along the rivers shore,
The path of Indians trod of yore,
The path our childhood footsteps knew,
The woods we loved to wander through,
The Shaded paths beneath the trees,
The perfume of the evening breeze.*

*And then perhaps we'll wander through
The playgrounds that our childhood knew,
And let our fancies wander o'er
The long lost days of years before.
Through Poor Brooks woods our way we'll wend
Across Hog Hill to Birchen Bend,
Along old "Sandy's pebbled shore,*

*To Hemlock Hollow, famed of yore,
Then up to where the mayflowers grew
At "Johny Cake," and there we'll view*

*The quiet vale that peaceful lies
Beneath the sunny summer skies,
The country roads that winding go,*

*Across the hills old mem'rys know,
The school house up Clough District way,
Perhaps at church on "Old Folks' Day"*

*And see the ones we used to know
We'll see them all, the old, the new
And wander all the country through,
Forget we're women or grown men
And be just children once again.*

Some Day.

by David R, Spence, February 4, 1933



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL MEETING HOUSE

By Carol Mosher and Jolanta Klepacz



Chicopee's First Congregational Church.

Congregationalism was formed in 1583 by Puritans, who denounced the Church of England because of the Romanish traditions. In 1620 a group of Puritans, or Pilgrims landed in Plymouth and began the Congregational religion in this country. They combined the church and government into one but in 1820 they were separated.

In 1749 Chicopee became the 5th Parish of Springfield and the settlers of Chicopee had to travel to Court Square (Springfield) every Sunday to worship. The traveling caused great difficulties for

the settlers, so they petitioned to become a separated parish.

“As the 5th Parish contained at least forty voters and considered themselves a large enough group to form their own church, steps were taken to establish their own church. The qualifications for voting were ‘forty shillings income, or forty pounds estate.’ According to Massachusetts General Court records, the first plan for separation was dismissed in 1749 because of opposition of Springfield. Still persevering, the Chicopee people addressed another petition

to the court in 1750, in which they described in detail the difficulties under which they had been laboring.”

In 1750 Joseph Chapin proceeded to Boston with another petition. “But as soon as the petitioners were assured of a favorable answer, they set to work. On the evening of January 2, 1751, they met and ‘all with united voices, declared for cutting timber for a Meetinghouse’. The next day about forty men went into the woods, all of them volunteers, with weather ‘clear, cold and still.’ January 4, about twenty men finished the work of the day before ‘the cold somewhat abated.’ On the seventh a storm set in, but at the same time it furnished snow for ‘sledding the Meetinghouse timber.’ A thaw delayed the work, but in February, the timber was brought home very successfully.”

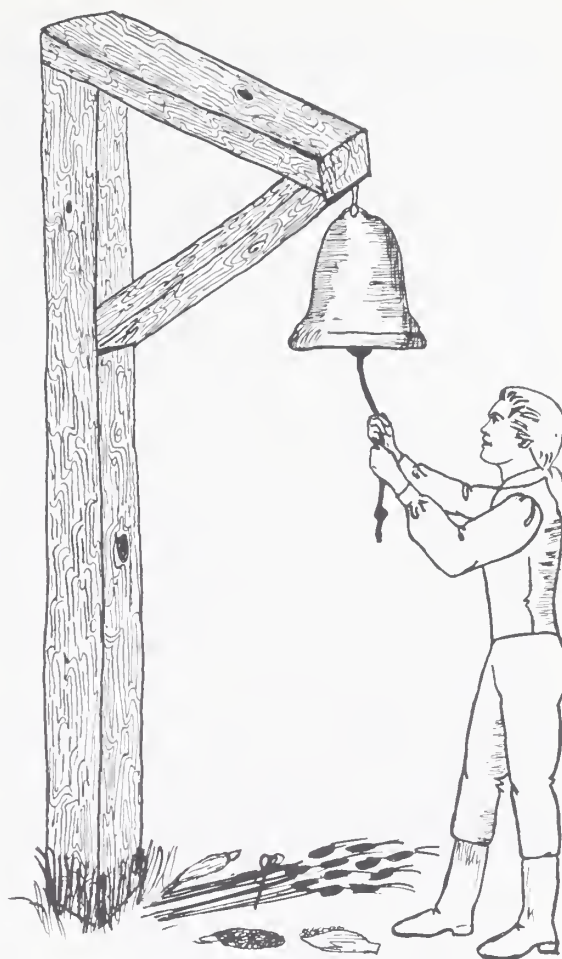
“Winds and storms followed and it was not until April that timber hewing began. They made brick and worked until June 5th when it was recorded that the meetinghouse was raised.” It stood in the middle of what was then called Broad Street. This description was taken from an article printed some years ago in Springfield Union:

“This meetinghouse, which stood until 1826, was a square building, with two entrances, one for men and the other for women. The edge, each piece about four feet long and three inches wide and fastened with high backs, with small rounds and railings at top, seats on their sides, fronting the center and door on side of the aisle. There were galleries on three sides, with singers fronting the pulpit. Over the pulpit was a sounding board of graceful conical form, and the pulpit, being reached by a flight of perhaps a dozen steps, was so high that the elastic sounding board was essential to keep the theological arguments from failing of their mission by being dissolved in air over the heads of the audience. The people came from miles around to attend the services.”

Instead of using a drum, the bell was utilized to gather the settlers.

The Parish was organized on July 30, 1751, and the church dedicated on September 24, 1752. John McKinstry a son of Rev. John McKinstry, was invited to minister and after three months was called to stay for life. His salary was paid half in provision; wheat, rye and Indian corn. The other part in silver. He married Eunice Smith (a great-granddaughter of Japhet Chapin) and they settled on McKinstry Avenue near the the corner of Chicopee Street. Eunice McKinstry planted a Button Ball tree in front of the parsonage. Today one of the descendants of the first minister has a vase made from two ounces of wood from this tree.

After the Rev. McKinstry’s service, the church carried on with no active minister until Rev. Alexander Phoenix decided to settle. But he demanded that the meetinghouse be repaired or a new one



Sketch by Randy Dumas

“Instead of using a drum, the bell was utilized to gather the settlers.”

built. A new one was built.

Alva Whitmarsh and Seba Shepherd began the construction in the spring of 1824. The cornerstone was laid on May 12 and the first service was held on January 4, 1826.

The final price of the church was \$4,400 and the money donated for it was mostly in the form of gifts.

A long box stove provided the first heat in the church. “The story is told that some woman opposed the innovation of the stove, fearing the heat would be too oppressive. The stove, however, was put up, but for some reason no fire was built in it the first Sabbath. This, however, was not known by the woman, who was overcome by imaginary heat, that she had to leave the church during the service.”

Another story claimed that, “‘Yankee stubbornness’ existed in the church. It was customary for the congregation to turn around in their pews to face the singers in the rear gallery. The pastor suggested that the congregation face him instead of the choir during the singing. This idea was not readily accepted and the result was that some faced one way and some another.”



Photographs by Jan Balicki

Some other changes and problems that the church faced were described by Miss Dete Chapin in a letter she wrote. This is a part of it:

“I am quite confident that it was in 1860 that the church auditorium was frescoed. I was eleven years old and I remember how some of the people felt to have that beautiful mahogany pulpit changed. They considered it a desecration, to me the pulpit seemed ‘sacred ground.’ I wonder that, as a child sitting in ‘slip 15,’ I did not take some time out from the sermon and count those steps. I am quite positive that there must have been at least seven before reaching the broad stair. There the minister turned at right angles and went up at least two more and not improbably three. I surmise that Mr. Clark’s head must have been on the same level as the choir members who occupied the gallery. The huge stove in the rear was removed together with the long pipe extending from the stove to chimney in the northwest corner of the church. I think this was also the time when the pew doors were removed . . . and when the pews where the pipe organ now stands were removed . . . the minister’s pew became the second one from the front in the body of the church. Behind the pastor’s pew sat Lawyer Moses Chapin’s family from Williamansette. I recall his widow entering the pew with her little troop of boys . . . in 1860 we lived in the Palmer house (next to the present parsonage) . . . the workmen brought milk to us and I used to take it to them at noon.”

During the years the building was changed to accommodate the needs of the active congregation but in 1945, the Church Beautiful program began. It was started by Rev. Asa Mellinger and his family. The purpose of the program was to return the church as much as possible to Issac Damon’s original design.

“Through a memorial campaign in 1970, eight new windows were installed with forty panes of glass in each, along with ten full sets of full shutters topped with fans for the large windows and three wets for the windows above the gallery. The two front windows still contain the glass installed in 1825. The church was named an official landmark in Chicopee on October 19, 1969. A large stone stands in front of it with a plaque whose contents were composed by Winthrop McKinstry.”

“The members of the Congregational Church today are very grateful for the leadership of the Rev. Asa W. Mellinger who served for thirty-five years. The Church is a very close-knit group with lots of love, loyalty, and respect for their church. Perhaps this is why they have worked so hard to keep the church alive through hardships and good times, too. They compiled and published a book called *The First Congregational Church of Chicopee, Massachusetts* and dedicated to Rev. Mellinger ‘our gentle friend and spiritual guide for thirty-five years.’ Probably the biggest heartbreak and heartship that they have had to face was the death of their minister in February, 1976, but they are pushing ahead and are striving to keep the church together. Perhaps this is a trait that they have acquired from their ancestors who helped to make the church the landmark it is today.”



A Memorial Plaque outside of the First Congregational Church in Chicopee Falls.

Life is Experience

*Life is experience throughout its whole span;
Experience is knowledge, of human man.
To listen is to learn, from they who were there;
Their lives are full, their past they share.
Fortunes of knowledge, traditions, and time
To be left unknown, would be a crime;
So opposed to leaving these people behind,
Let us learn and absorb from them all there is to find.*

by Marianne Gosselin



Photos taken by Russ H. Gilbert, Chicopee reporter for Springfield Union from April 18, 1917 until April 15, 1922. On left Lucia E. Coleman once a Principal at Valentine School with little Ely Ave from West Springfield. On right John Sullivan, watchman at A. G. Spalding with his brother.



First prize photograph, taken by Frank Bobowski in 1947. It won this distinction through the character captured by Mr. Bobowski.



Photograph by Jan Balicki

George Racine

"He enjoys walking, and greeting people on the street with a friendly smile and a tip of his hat."

His Name Is George Racine

*Interviewed by Deb LeBlanc
Written by Linda Fabbri, Leah Cabaniss,
Cindy Lamore and Joan Mamicki*

Only a rare individual can live every day in full awareness of his surroundings, and incorporate all his knowledge into one useful purpose. Such characteristics are easily identifiable in Mr. George Racine, a resident of Chicopee. He may appear to be an average man of 65 years, but his actions portray those of a cheerful youngster. I think his most striking facial features are his quiet eyes and endearing smile, which reflects a warm heart.

In the winter, George gets all bundled up and goes ice skating on Bemis Pond. The chilly New England weather doesn't bother him in the least because he loves the outdoors. Unlike many people, George would rather ride his bike than drive to nearby places, and walk for his visits to the library. He enjoys walking, and greeting people on the street with a friendly smile and a tip of his hat. In his spare time, he cuts out articles from the daily newspapers to be filed for historical preservation at the Chicopee Library. When I use these newspaper clippings in my research, I appreciate the efforts of the person who took the time to make them available to the public: Mr. George Racine.

George Racine is a long time resident of Chicopee. He was born in Canada and attended elementary school there, and later moved to Chicopee. "I continued my education at Assumption Grammar School. The parish school was right where the Chicopee Post Office is presently, and the church was located where the Old Colony Bank is."

When the first sign of spring appears, you can see George enjoying the warmer weather. When summer is in full swing, so is he. He rides his bicycle five



Grape Street Fire Station, circa 1890

Photograph used with the permission of Edward D. Nowak

miles to go swimming; and then peddles home five more miles on city streets. One can easily surmise that George enjoys life to the fullest, no matter what the season.

Dirt Roads

George remembers the way Chicopee used to be. "Chicopee had all dirt roads, and the sidewalks were made out of brick. There were not many cars here, only the wealthy people owned them. Instead of firetrucks, the fire department on Cabot Street had horses. I saw them many times with their horses and pumps. When I was a boy I used to go down and watch them battle a fire. They had a big tank,

probably 250 gallons of water on each side. It was a little wagon and they used to pump the water by hand and squirt it with water. You see, where the fire was, there probably wasn't a hydrant, so the volunteer fire department had emergency water ready for pumping. Down by Cabot Street, where the fire station is, was the Unitarian Church." At the center of Springfield Street and Grape Street there stood Fire Station #1. They transformed it into a boy's club later on. Now it is torn down and there is nothing but dirt.

Only 5¢

George Racine remembered other aspects of Chicopee's earlier life. "Remember the Market



Old Chicopee House, a popular hostelry on Front Street (left), and the Chicopee Center Railroad Station (right)

Square Hotel?" he asked. "In back, there were stables full of horses. They brought people for buggy rides. I remember the trolley, too. The electric trolley cars went right through the streets. They started at Market Square and then went up to Springfield. They came down from Springfield Street, down Grape Street, up Front Street, and then to Market Square on Exchange Street, just like the buses do. When I was a boy, my grandmother took me to Riverside for only 5¢ on the trolley car. You had to take a trolley first to Springfield, then from Springfield to Memorial Square, to Riverside. It was a thrill for me; the ferris wheel, the merry-go-round, and the whip."

"For entertainment we went to the movie house on Exchange Street, which was run by Mr. Page. The admission was only 5¢ and it was open only on Saturday afternoons. The silent movies were about two hours long, and ran with a serial continuing every week. The comedian at that time was Ben Turpin. Eddie Polo was his stuntman who rode the horses in all the dangerous scenes."



Chicopee Center merchant on horse-drawn wagon.



CHICOPEE, MASS., 1856.

Around Town

I told George that I remembered when a man would come by our neighborhood ringing a bell, selling his fruits and vegetables that were on the back of his truck. George added, "There also was a ragman who would come around yelling, 'Rags! Rags!' The ragman gave you a quarter or a dime depending on how many rags you gave him."

George also remembers another person who travelled around the neighborhood, the garbage man. "There used to be a man who came around collecting garbage in a wagon. The farmers used to come collecting swoo for food for their pigs."

Working Day

"We burned wood, after a while, we burned hard coal to heat our house. We walked down to the bottom of Grape Street to Mr. Haskins Coal Company, where we would buy our coal. During

those boyhood days, when I was sixteen, I worked at the Dwight Mills. I didn't make the cotton yarn or run the machines because I was just a boy. I cleaned the machines with airhoses. It was nice working there, except for the noise of the machines, 'Boom De Pitter Pat Pitter Pat'. After the Dwight Mills I worked in Springfield Brightwood Hand Grinding Wheel Company. I worked a hand-pulled elevator, therefore there weren't many people allowed in the elevator at one time." George also worked on construction for 35 years, and he loved it because it was outside.

Currently retired, Mr. Racine is still thoroughly enjoying the little things that every day has to offer. He considers his age a state of mind, and his thoughts display his youth. His optimism might be reflected by his favorite song, "Oh What a Beautiful Morning, Oh What a Beautiful Day!"



"George would rather ride his bike than drive to nearby places"

Editor's Note:

After the interview, George Racine submitted to our staff, a short essay that he wanted to share:

An Essay on Life

Youth is not a time of life; it is a state of mind; it is not a matter of rosy cheeks, red lips and supple knees; it is a matter of will, equality of the imagination, a vigor of the emotions; it is the freshness of the deep springs of life. Youth means a temperamental predominance of courage over timidity, of the appetite for adventure over the love of ease. This often exists in a man of sixty or more than a boy of twenty. Nobody grows old merely by living a number of years. We grow old by deserting our ideals. Years may wrinkle the skin, but to give up enthusiasm wrinkles the soul. Worry fear, self-doubt lows the heart and turns the spirit back to dust. Whether sixty, seventy, or sixteen, there is in every human being's heart the lure of wonder, the unfailing child-like curiosity of what's next, and the joy of the game of living. In the center of your heart and mine there is a wireless station; so long as receives messages of beauty, hope, cheer and courage, you are young. When the aerials are down, and your spirit is covered with snows of cynicism and the ice of pessimism, then you have grown old, even at twenty. But so long as your aerials are up, to catch the optimism, there is hope you may die as young at eighty or more.

Written by, Samuel Ullman.

Border by Betty Gwiazda

HISTORY OF JEFFERSON AVENUE

by Keith Roy, 8th grade student at Edward Bellamy School.

Jefferson Avenue received its name from Jefferson Alden, the father of Edward M. Alden, who originally owned all the land in Aldenville. The Aldens are direct ancestors of John Alden and Priscilla Mullins who came to America on the Mayflower and married in 1621.

The plots of land owned by Edward M. Alden were drawn up in 1895 and recorded in the Registry of Deeds in Springfield, Mass.

Joseph and Anna Roy purchased lot #63 on Jefferson Ave. on October 24, 1919. On June 6, 1922 Joseph and Anna purchased lot #32 on the corner of Jefferson and Trilby Ave. It was on this lot (32) that they built their home.

Their son Conrad and his wife Juliette Roy bought lot #64 from Percy Alden, the son of Edward M. Alden, on March 21, 1925. They were the first to erect a home on the street and also had the first baby to be born on the street. Conrad and Juliette had three children. Albert was born in December of 1925. Three years later in March of 1928 their second son Ronald

was born. The third son Richard was born in 1929, the only one of the three to be born in a hospital.

In 1939 a house was built by Conrad for his brother Magellan and wife Josephine on lot #72. In 1964, Conrad built a house for his youngest brother Rosario and his wife Juliette Roy on lot #58.

In 1942 the street received its first water pipes which were installed by the city of Chicopee. In 1933 the Chicopee Electric Light Department erected two lines which carried electricity for the first time to Conrad Roy's property. The first paved roads came through in the early 1950's.

Activities Enjoyed by the Roys

In 1935 the Roy brothers cleared lot #71 for a softball field and set up the Jefferson A.C.'s whose members mainly consisted of the Roys. Later the ballfield which was owned by Joseph and Emma Roy was turned into a stable for their son's horse Midnight. Joseph their son and his wife Elizabeth spent several hours riding through the woods of what is now Aldenville, Massachusetts.

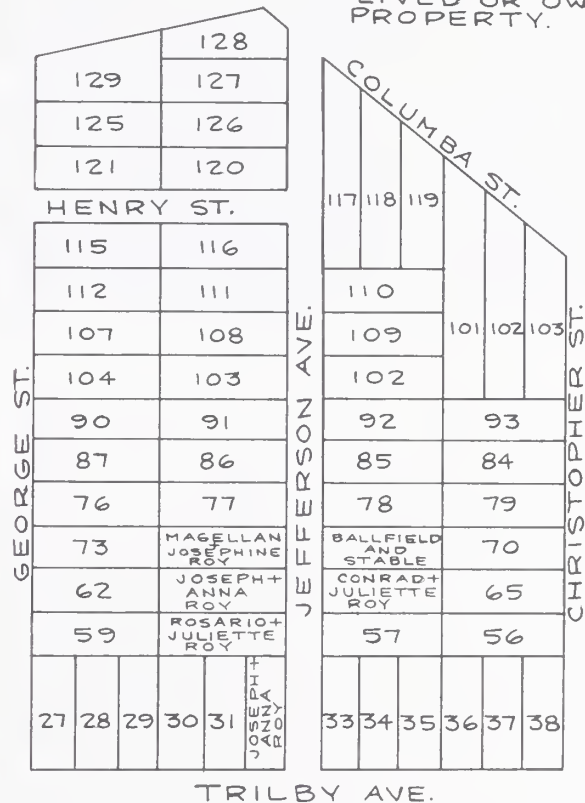


Jefferson Ave; Aldenville, Massachusettes taken from St. Rose Cemetary in 1941.



This picture of Joseph M. Roy and his horse Midnight, was taken on the property of his parents, Joseph and Emma Roy. In the background are the stables on Jefferson Avenue.

CHART OF WHERE EACH ROY LIVED OR OWNED PROPERTY.



DR. BY: DAVID BOUCHER



Marion Bellamy Earnshaw

"You've got to stand up for what you believe in."

Marion Bellamy Earnshaw Looks Backward

by Mary C. Fontaine

Note: Some of the material included in this article was secured from interviews with Marion Bellamy Earnshaw recorded by Mrs. Ruby Crane.

When invited to join the Edward Bellamy Lecture Series, author Isaac Asimov offered to cut his fee by fifty percent in exchange for a chance to chat with Bellamy's daughter. "I never realized I was worth fifteen hundred dollars," laughs Marion Bellamy Earnshaw. The mischievous grin she flashes makes it difficult to believe this woman is 89 years old.

For nearly half a century, Marion has been telling Bellamy fans like Asimov that the world famous social thinker lived in strict accord with his philosophy. "My father," she says, "was his book." She refers to **Looking Backward**, a novel published in 1888 depicting an American utopia.

Marion was only two years old when **Looking Backward** was published. Soon she was taking the energy and excitement that filled the Church Street home for granted. "I never realized that my father was anything particular," she says, "except the bell was always ringing with telegrams every few minutes."

The development of such an attitude may seem unlikely until Mrs. Earnshaw discusses her father's personality. "He shrank from notoriety as if from the plague." She adds, "Papa had the greatest contempt for anyone who thought they were above anybody else, and he showed it in every minute of his life."

Bellamy was equally at ease standing at the podium of a giant auditorium and leaning over a billiards table at the local pool hall. At home, Marion recalls, he would avidly question the gardener, the plumber, and various repairmen about their lives and beliefs. His coal supplier was the subject of this Bellamy masterpiece:

*What do you think of Henery Nelligan?
He got sick and he got well again.*

Mrs. Earnshaw remembers the lyric because it was so out of character with the writer's serious countenance. But the verse hints at a facet of Bellamy's personality that few scholars have chronicled. Marion smiles as she recounts how his dignity suffered some very human lapses. It was not uncommon, for example, to find him sitting on the riverbank, scribbling furiously on the back of an envelope or whatever scrap of paper had been handy. Perhaps the mills that fed on the Chicopee River's current provoked more anger about the factory worker's slave-like status in the young writer than all the social commentary ever printed.

Fair treatment for everyone was demanded in Bellamy's home as well as in his books. His children, however, rarely sat still long enough to absorb a comprehensive lecture on the subject. If he was to reason with them, he first had to catch up with them. Paul especially loved to tease his little sister. Imagine a distinguished visitor arriving at the Bellamy household to find the famed social philosopher chasing down the street after his two children as Marion howled and Paul waved her favorite doll over his head.



"My father," she says, "was his book."

Edward Bellamy advocated equality not only among social classes, but also between the sexes. Marion takes credit for that belief. "Papa was never the least bit concerned with a woman's place in the world until I was born." She continues, "He looked the situation square in the face and concluded that no matter how low on the economic ladder a man might be, the woman who depended on him was lower still." In **Looking Backward**, and in its sequel **Equality**, women are economically independent of men. They also wear pants instead of the long skirts that so interfered with Marion's tree climbing. Sexual equality believed Bellamy, belonged in the real present as well as the fictional future. He fought for women's suffrage, and strove to secure for Marion

every opportunity society provided for her brother. He even bought her a bicycle because Paul had one. "I was always let into every enterprise where it was possible for me to contribute," remembers Mrs. Earnshaw.

When his daughter was eleven, a note of anguish entered Bellamy's voice as he asked, "Marion, what is to become of you? All you care about is your dolls!" He promptly set her to reading **Plutarch's Lives**, and questioned her every day about those Greek biographies. Edward Bellamy was not destined to find out what would become of his daughter. A year later, the writer died of tuberculosis. He left behind a priceless legacy, however. "I inherited a great love for humankind," says Marion.

Her father had also given her a sense of self-reliance that few women of her generation shared. That trust in her own convictions enabled her to refuse when her minister suggested she join the church at the same time that her fourteen-year-old friends did. "I'm sorry," she told the minister, "I just don't believe a single thing you preach." Now Mrs. Earnshaw admits, "I don't know how I had the



Marion Earnshaw and Mrs. Ruby Crane



"You can't be afraid if you're going to get anything done."

courage to say it, but I had to!" Her tone becomes less serious as she adds, "The poor man died shortly afterwards."

Many years passed before Marion found a replacement for conventional religion. During those years, she graduated from "normal school," or a teacher's training program, and taught in Chicopee and Springfield. Later, she lived in Ohio where Paul edited the **Cleveland Plain Dealer**. There she cast her ballot in the first election allowing women the vote. She and her husband failed at a California trucking enterprise only to build a successful teakwood business in Burma.

It wasn't until 1928, when the oldest of her two sons was ready to attend college, that Mrs. Earnshaw returned with the boys to Massachusetts. One day soon after their arrival, her son was rummaging around in the cellar looking for stamps to add to his collection. He discovered a box of letters and notebooks that belonged to his grandfather. In that box was a tightly bound manuscript entitled **The Religion of Solidarity**. It sums up Edward Bellamy's philosophy by arguing that every person harbors a spark of the divine. Such a common denominator, Bellamy believed, makes all men natural brothers.

"There I found the religion I'd been wanting all my life," Marion earnestly explains. "It meant a great deal more to me because it came straight from my father." According to Mrs. Earnshaw, **The Religion of Solidarity** helps people recognize that the essence of Christianity and the principles of democracy are the same. Modern churches and governments, she fears, practice neither.

Marion Bellamy Earnshaw has lived her father's philosophy. Her discovery of a dusty manuscript and adoption of Bellamy's religion of solidarity sparked a campaign of civic involvement that spans nearly five decades. Marion's activities range from testifying in favor of the first social security bill before congressional committees to fighting for the election of college professors to the Springfield School board. She even worked on McGovern's presidential campaign. Next, Mrs. Earnshaw hopes to convince Springfield Officials that the city should generate its own electric power. Her father had been partly responsible for the institution of such a system in Chicopee.

The peace movement has long been one of Marion's concerns. Every Saturday for nearly three years, she picketed Springfield's Court Square to protest U.S. involvement in Vietnam. Mrs. Earnshaw has staged so many campaigns, in fact, that even she does not remember them all. Her memory, she points out, like her hearing, is not what it used to be. "After all," she declares, "I'm 89 years old. I've picketed, I've done everything on earth in my life. And I'm still here!" Her tone is part incredulous, part challenging.

Marion explains why she had adopted so many causes. "I'm not afraid. You can't be afraid if you're going to get anything done!" Her voice rings with urgency. "You've got to stand up for what you believe in!" she exclaims as she pounds her fist into the palm of her other hand. As evidence that most people, unlike herself, fear the consequences of public involvement, Mrs. Earnshaw cites the high number of anonymous letters printed in newspapers. Her letters continue to appear on the editorial page, and, as always, they are signed.

In 1973, Edward Bellamy's Church Street home was dedicated as a National Historic Landmark. It has earned, through the efforts of local businessmen and educators, the financial support it needs to create a literary and educational center where Bellamy memorabilia can be displayed. The Church Street home, in which Bellamy lived from the time he was two years old until he died, was easily recognized as an ideal site for such a center. In 1975, a Chicopee group purchased the home and immediately began plans to recreate its nineteenth century condition. First on the restoration schedule was the 1976 opening of a library featuring not only Bellamy's writings, but also those of his contemporaries. "Anyone who goes there," explains Mrs. Earnshaw, "will get the whole picture of the world he was living in."

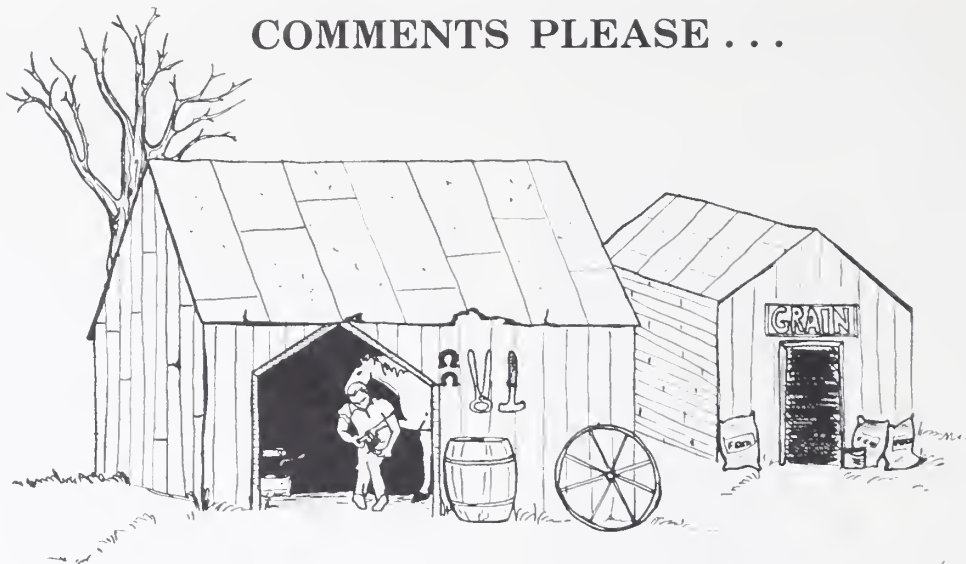
In her discussions with young people in Chicopee, Mrs. Earnshaw asks them to become "leaveners." Although she does not remember the name of the author who coined that term, his definition remains clear in her mind. Leaveners know the truth, and teach, by example, this truth to the people they contact. Those whose lives they touch become, in turn, leaveners themselves. Generations may pass before any change in society becomes evident. By that time, Mrs. Earnshaw believes, an understanding of man's responsibility to his fellows and a commitment to action will be firmly rooted in the hearts and minds of many individuals. This level of understanding must be reached, Marion suggests, before man can build the utopia of which Edward Bellamy dreamed. She is confident that her father's vision will someday become a reality. Her confidence seems justified. The term leavener suits few better than it does Marion Bellamy Earnshaw.



She is confident that her father's vision will someday become a reality.



COMMENTS PLEASE . . .



Sketch by Anne Dachowski

February 20, 1977

Gentlemen:

I enjoyed the first issue of *SKIPMUNK* very much. All articles had something to be of interest. Reading it made me think back to my childhood days in the Pleasantdale section of Willimansett, and the blacksmith shop.

The blacksmith shop, with horses to shoe, forge, anvil, and paraphernalia like we see in TV Westerns today, was housed in an open-front building on Montgomery Street next to the brook. The Village Grain Store, I believe, started their business in the original building before expanding onto Yelle Street. I can't recall if anyone used the building between the closing of the Blacksmith shop and the opening of the grain store.

Thank you for old time memories.

Estelle V. Menard

PETERBOROUGH TOWN LIBRARY

In response to an article appearing in our first issue, Mr. Richard Haslam commented on Doris Bresnaham's introduction to "Bessie Warner Kerr." The author stated that the Chicopee Library was the second oldest free library in New England, the first being the Copley Library in Boston.

However, Mr. Haslam claims that some time ago, "I drove by the Peterborough Town Library, where I saw a sign which said, 'The First Free Library in New England'."

Karen Mason, a member of our staff who was interested in settling the controversy, contacted the Peterborough Library. She requested information verifying that this was the first free library in the United States.

Librarian Kathleen Taylor soon responded to *SKIPMUNK*. She stated, "The Peterborough Town Library was the first free tax-supported library and therein is the difference." Earlier there had been a Peterborough Social Library between 1792 and 1795. When interest was lost and bindings worn, Dr. Abbot stimulated the incorporation of the Peterborough Library Company in January of 1833. Each share was \$2.00, yearly dues, 50¢ and life membership, \$6.00. According to present town records, the book selections and patronage were excellent.

We encourage such comments and thank our readers for stimulating more indepth research.

"The first tax-supported Free Public Library in the world."
Reprinted from *THE STORY OF THE PETERBOROUGH TOWN LIBRARY*.

. . . About the editors

Since the conception of **SKIPMUNK MAGAZINE** back in October, '76, many people have asked us how large our staff is, and who are the active members on it. To be quite frank, we do not know. To be sure, over two hundred people in Chicopee have contributed, in some way, to the publishing of our first two issues, but times have been too hectic to actually sit down and make a list of those members of our staff who are actually active. We realize that we are being unjust in delaying the creation of such a list, and we hope to make it up to all those people who have poured their talents and efforts into our magazine. It must suffice to say, that our four editors, Sarah Ogozalek, Deb LeBlanc, Karen Wegrzyn, and Kathryn Plifka, are a great credit to **SKIPMUNK MAGAZINE** and to The City of Chicopee.

Sarah Ogozalek has been with **SKIPMUNK** since the beginning. She has helped to make an idea become a reality. Although she began as a co-treasurer with Kathy Nowakowski, Sarah's intelligence, leadership, and integrity soon put her into the position of editor, leaving Kathy with a near full-time job on the financial aspects.

"What will happen when Deb leaves" to attend Greenfield Community College next year? Deb LeBlanc has not been "just an editor," she has been the chief thrust in getting the job done, the supplier of countless ideas, a teacher, and the person responsible for much of the creative design to our book. We believe she will be back to help us with future issues—Greenfield isn't that far away!

Karen Wegrzyn is new to the editorial staff, but not new to **SKIPMUNK**. Her article, "The Famous Bronzed Doors," which appeared in the first issue, was indicative of the job she is now doing as editor. She also offers to us her talents in art, which you will see more of in future issues.

Our newest editor, Kathryn Plifka, has accepted the fulltime duties of editor, and is performing superbly. She is currently researching the architecture of our City Hall and is interviewing former mayors for articles which will appear in subsequent issues.

The entire staff of **SKIPMUNK** expresses thanks to the people of Chicopee who have supported our efforts in so many ways. Your concern will make our future issues also a reality.



. . . Our contributors:

Debbie Morin sketched our front cover, the Almshouse. She is presently an art major at Holyoke Community College.

Jolanta Klepacz is an honor roll student at CHS who enjoys writing for **SKIPMUNK**.

Gary D. Keefe is a graduate of CHS who has a B.A. in History from Ricker College, Maine. He also has a position on the Chicopee Historical Commission.

Carol Mosher is studying at Plymouth State College for a major in music.

Keith Roy is an eighth grade student at the Edward Bellamy Middle School.

Stephen R. Jendrysik, a local historian, heads the Bellamy Association and teaches at Chicopee Comprehensive High School and STCC.

Anne Dachowski is a senior at CHS who contributed much of the art work for this issue and plans on attending STCC.

Marianne Gosselin is another enthusiastic senior who enjoys writing poetry as an amateur.

Linda Fabbri is involved in the bibliography and interviewing for **SKIPMUNK**. She plans to further her education at Fitchburg State College.

Cheri Sullivan is a student at Belcher Elementary School and enjoys writing poetry.

Stephen Olivo currently resides in North Chester. He has shown great concern and hope for restoration of the past by initiating **SKIPMUNK MAGAZINE** in our city. Without his optimism, ideas, strong support, and leadership, much of Chicopee's past might have very well remained unnoticed.

Randy Dumas is a trumpet player, enjoys art, and can be found quite often securing patrons for our Magazine.

Mark Rosendale enjoys photography and making things difficult.

Leah Cabaniss' talents in shorthand and typing have contributed greatly to our Magazine.

Cindy Lamore, a member of our correspondence staff, has spent a lot of time and effort responding to all letters of our concerned readers.

Joan Mamicki has aided our magazine with her varied talents and efforts, and has been a great asset to our publication.

Karen Mason has proven to be thorough in following up leads sent in to **SKIPMUNK MAGAZINE**.

Roland Lemay has contributed many of his creative talents to our Magazine.

John Krupczak, a "76" graduate of CHS, is now a freshman at Williams College. He is a photographer for the Bellamy Association.

Mary C. Fontaine, CCHS graduate, is completing her junior year at Syracuse University, majoring in American Studies.

Bessie Warner Kerr served as head librarian from 1939 to 1947, her articles on the "History of Chicopee" have appeared in the Chicopee Herald and **SKIPMUNK**.

Donna Balthazard is an amateur poet who helped make Downeyside's Beautification Day in Chicopee a success.

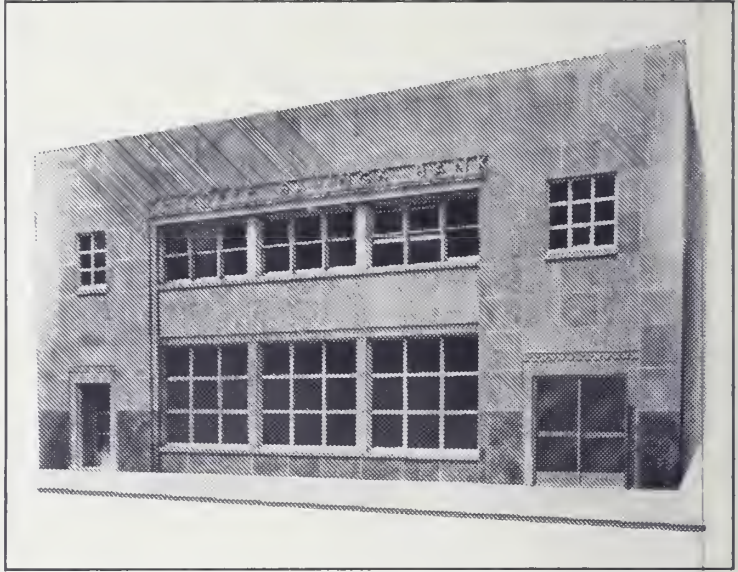
Betty Gwazda designed many of our borders for this issue, she plans on attending UMass.

Nancy LaRiviere is an art student at CHS.

David Boucher, CHS junior, is a talented draftsman in the engineering department.

Jan Balicki is the **SKIPMUNK** photographer who worked on our articles.

The Chicopee Center Public Library, particularly **Dolores Allen**, **Rita Thormeyer** and **Doris Bresnahan**, get our final and most sincere thanks for devoting time, patience, and many words of encouragement to the **SKIPMUNK** staff.



*We Believe
In Changing
With The Times*

we also believe in maintaining tradition-
especially, our desire to serve you well!
that's why, after 123 years, we really
haven't changed at all...

CHICOPEE SAVINGS

