

Towpath Topics

Middlesex Canal Association P.O. Box 333 Billerica, MA 01821
www.middlesexcanal.org

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MCA ACTIVITIES

Please mark your calendars. The **Winter Meeting** will be held at the museum on Sunday, February 13th, beginning at 2:00 PM. Professor Chad Montrie, from the History Department, University of Massachusetts Lowell will describe Industry and Environment on the Lower Concord River, 1790-1890.

Also, the **MCA-AMC Spring Walk** will take place on Sunday, April 17th, in Woburn.

And, the **MCA Annual Meeting** will take place on May 1st, in the museum, at 2:30 PM. The program is yet to be developed but we will elect new officers at that time.

See the Calendar, beginning on page 4, following, for more information on our activities. Also included in the calendar are meetings and tours, sponsored by other organizations, in which you may want to participate. Please also check our web site periodically, at the URL noted above, which often lists canal-related events and topics of potential interest.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Bill Gerber, President
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Among the articles in this issue of Towpath Topics, you will find: a detailed description of the source of granite used in construction of Quincy Market, and how it was transported to the building site; a short article that establishes context for two papers published in past issues; good biographies of James

Sullivan and Loammi Baldwin; and a short story (a murder mystery by Tom Dahill) with the canal as its setting.

In mid- September, thanks to the efforts of **J. J. Breen, Russ Silva, Dorothea Filistowicz** and **Michael Breen**, the MCA entered a float in Billerica's Yankee Doodle homecoming parade. A key event of the weekend, the parade takes an hour to pass the reviewing stand. (The central event is the re-enactment of Yankee Doodle's tarring and feathering. For the story, see <http://www.billericalibrary.org/localhistory/genealogy/yankee.htm>.) Our float was the museum's packet boat model *Celerity* mounted on a furniture dolly. Mike, the talking tow horse, repeatedly advised the Captain to pay attention and steer straight. (How do you "steer" anything mounted on a furniture dolly? Ed.). Dressed as colonials, Russ and Dottie handed out MCA brochures at the edge of the crowd.



To update you on **Nolan Jones**, our longest serving MCA President - a note from his wife, Joan, in late November, stated: Nolan was back in Mercy Hospital for a week, Nov. 16-23, for a return of pneumonia, he is supposed to be free of pneumonia now and back to Skilled Nursing to recover balance and strength lost from the TIA and a week in bed. The OT and PT who have evaluated him are very optimistic he will recover sufficient mobility to return to Assisted Living. He is off oxygen now, so I can bring him down to 218 for the afternoons, especially today to watch the NFL! Sue and David are pitching in wonderfully, as usual. My son, Owen, popped over from Colorado on Friday and will be here until Monday evening. He's a very upbeat guy and is a good spirit for Nolan. --- And within the month, from Joan - Nolan's Physical Therapist is working with Nolan, his daughter Sue and me on getting him able

to get into and out of our car. She just started this week and thinks one more week of training will do it. We are so hopeful. He hasn't been able to go out except by the PH wheelchair van or the local wheelchair cab service and just to medical appointments. He will really be liberated!

In the early summer, **Traci Jansen** organized a day-long auto tour of the M'sex Canal, in which a number of Board members participated. Roger Hagopian planned the route and guided us along. The tour was quite informative and we are considering adding it to the "set" of joint AMC-MCA walking tours that we lead in the spring and fall each year.

In past years, our past President, Nolan Jones, was usually called on to present requested talks about the canal. In early October, with Nolan no longer able to respond, I gave a new, much revised Middlesex Canal presentation to the Burlington Historical Society. Bracketed by an introduction and a long Q&A session at the end, the "core" of the presentation featured Roger and Linda Hagopian's excellent video "Journey Along the Middlesex Canal" (a low resolution version of which can be viewed at <http://middlesexcanal.org/media/journey.wmv>). The new presentation seemed to go over well; it can be made available if and when requested, and can be given by any Board member.

During Massachusetts' Archeology Month, representatives from the Public Archeology Lab (PAL) presented the results of their June and July 2009 monitoring of a gas transmission pipe line construction across the former location of the canal and the Temple Street Bridge in Somerville. During the excavation, both the canal prism and the base of one bridge abutment were clearly visible.

In mid-November, **Tom Raphael**, Chairman of the Middlesex Canal Commission, received notice from MassDOT that his 'Segment 5', a Middlesex Canal Park from Alfred Street to School Street in Woburn, had been approved for Federal Aid Enhancement Funding. That was the good news. The bad news is that we have to compete for standing in the line-up for funds with as many as 100 other projects. Funding for projects is not awarded chronologically. The determining factors are somewhat arbitrary; i.e., it is done on the basis of need, desirability and the amount of money required per project. We have to make our case. Also, a request for a sign to the Museum on Rt 495 was deferred pending a major reconstruction of the highway in that area.

An online newspaper recently carried an article about geocaching. Thinking it might be an interesting way to introduce the canal to the public, I sent a copy to the MCA Board for their consideration. **Robert Winters**, web master and co-editor of this newsletter, quickly noted that such activities have been going on for years along the canal and cited two web sites <http://www.google.com/search?q=geocache+%22Middlesex+Canal%22> and <http://www>

geocaching.com/bookmarks/view.aspx?guid=5ee031db-2368-4f19-82df-79d2f4de1176. (And there are days when I actually think I know what's going on with the canal; silly me!!) If you do participate, please let us know what you did and how it went. Enjoy!

We have openings on our Board of Directors for a few members or proprietors who would like to participate in managing our association and influencing its activities and direction.

We also have an urgent need to recruit volunteers to help staff the museum for one or more of the two four-hour periods that the museum is open each weekend. Can you help? If so, please contact Betty Bigwood., 978-657-7870, gbchwilm@comcast.com. She will initially match you up with another volunteer with good knowledge of the canal and its role in the growth and development of Boston and the towns along its route.

An equally serious need is to raise money to pay the rent to sustain our museum. All suggestions and assistance will be gratefully accepted.

And that's about it for this issue.

Bill Gerber

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Middlesex Canal Association (MCA) and related organizations

First Wednesday - MCA Board of Directors' Meetings - The Board meets at the Museum, from 3:30pm to 5:30pm, the first Wednesday of each month, except July and August. Members are always welcome to attend.

Sun, Feb 13, 2011, 2 PM - MCA Winter Meeting: Professor Chad Montrie, from the History Department, University of Massachusetts Lowell will describe Industry and Environment on the Lower Concord River, 1790-1890

The Lower Concord River, a winding two-mile stretch of waterway that courses through Lowell and has long been neglected in academic histories as well as national park programming. Yet this short section has a profoundly interesting and important story, one that complicates the way we think about the origins and expansion of industrial manufacturing. During the nineteenth century, it not only hosted woolen and cotton textile mills but also an iron works, gunpowder mills, a cartridge factory, and tanneries, all of which used the river for power and waste disposal, and for a short time, transportation. At the same time, the banks of the Lower Concord were (and are) the site for one of the nation's first garden cemeteries and two parks landscaped in the romantic tradition, drawing Lowell residents for escape to nature. This presentation will examine both uses, seemingly at odds, and discuss how they were and were not reconciled.

Directions to the Museum/Visitors Center: Telephone: 978-670-2740. By Car: From Rt. 128/95, take Route 3 toward Nashua, to Exit 28 "Treble Cove Road, North Billerica, Carlisle". At the end of the ramp, turn left onto Treble Cove Road toward North Billerica. At about ¾ mile, bear left at a fork. After another ¾ mile, at a traffic light, cross straight over Route 3A. Go about ¼ mile to a 3-way fork; take the middle road, Talbot Street, which will put St. Andrew's Church on your left. Go about ¼ mile and bear right onto Old Elm Street. Go about ¼ mile to the falls, where Old Elm becomes Faulkner Street; the Museum is on your left and you can park across the street on your right, just beyond the falls. From I-495, take exit 37, N. Billerica, south to the road's end at a "T" intersection, turn right, then bear right at the Y, go 700' and turn left into the parking lot. The Museum is across the street. By Train: The Lowell Commuter Line runs between Boston's North Station and Lowell's Gallagher Terminal. Get off at the North Billerica station, which is one stop south of Lowell. From the station side of the tracks, the Museum is a 3-minute walk down Station and Faulkner Streets on the right side.

March 5, 2011 – Canal Society of New York State Winter Symposium and Annual Meeting, Monroe Community College, Rochester, New York. www.newyorkcanals.org.

Apr 1-3, 2011 – "Conquering the Swamp" - The canal societies of Indiana and Ohio will sponsor this tour that covers the Miami & Erie Canal; the Wabash & Erie at Junction, Ohio; and Paulding County, Ohio. Learn the trials and tribulations of digging through a big swamp. www.indcanal.org; indcanal@aol.com. HQ: Holiday Inn, Van Wert, Ohio.

Apr 2, 2011 – Annual Meeting of the American Canal Society will be held in concert with this CSO/CSI meeting; at 8:30 PM. See above.

April 15-16, 2011 – Virginia Canals & Navigations Society annual meeting

in Buchanan, the western terminus of the James River & Kanawha Canal, with a catered canoe/kayak voyage on the canal's Unfinished Division. Details: Phil de Vos, phipfox@yahoo.com.

Sun, Apr 17, 2011 – Middlesex Canal Association Spring Walk, Woburn.

Level 3-mi. joint w/Appalachian Mountain Club. along 2 sections of historic canal, 1:30pm. From Rte. 95/128 exit 35 in Woburn, take Rte. 38 S 0.1 mi., R onto Middlesex Canal Dr. past Ramada Inn to SE corner of parking. lot behind Woburn Cinemas. Info: www.middlesexcanal.org. Ls Roger Hago- pian (781-861-7868) and Robert Winters (Robert@rwinters.com).

April 28, 2011 – Lock 16 Dinner & Lecture: Morton Salt and Other Com- panies in Relation to the I&M Canal; Jim Ballowe. Lock 16 Center, 754

First St., LaSalle, Illinois; \$27 members, \$30 non-members. 815-223-1851; www.lasallecanalboat.org.

April 29-May 1, 2011 – Pennsylvania Canal Society tour of the Lower Divi- sion of the Lehigh Navigation. Contact: Bill Lampert, indnbll@yahoo.com.

May 1, 2011 – MCA Annual Meeting -- in the museum, at 2:30 PM. The program is yet to be developed but we will elect new officers at that time.

May 20-22, 2011 – The Canal Society of New York State Spring Field Trip:

Champlain Canal and the PCB cleanup project at Fort Edward. Headquar- ters: Queensbury Hotel, Glens Falls, NY. For updates, www.newyorkcanals. org.

June 18-25, 2011 – The Virginia Canals & Navigations Society's Annual

James River Batteau Festival. A fleet of replica whitewater freighters navi- gates the James for a week, from Lynchburg to (almost) Richmond. Camp- ing is available at all the stops. Details will be on www.batteau.org.

Sept 19-24, 2011 – World Canals Conference in the Nether- lands:

provinces of Gronigen, Friesland, Drenthe, and Overijssel. www.worldcanalsconference.org.

THE CANAL AND QUINCY MARKET

by Alan Seaburg

It is not “news” that, in 1825, the granite used for the columns and pedes- tals of Boston's New Faneuil Hall Market, (aka Quincy Market) was brought from Westford to Boston on the Middlesex Canal.¹ Yet the full descriptive details of how this was done was never fully available until 2003 when John Quincy, Jr. published his book “Quincy's Market: A Boston Landmark”. As a direct descendent of Josiah Quincy (Boston's second mayor whose vision the market was) John had access to sources not readily available to others. As a

¹ Lewis M. Lawrence, “The Middlesex Canal”, manuscript, Boston, 1942, pp-53, 66 & 125; published by the Middlesex Canal Association

result he produced an absorbing and lavishly illustrated book about one of the centerpieces of Boston's commercial history.²



Quincy Market, from the Harbor Side, as Originally Built

The white granite came from a quarry located in Westford. It was called, however, “Chelmsford” granite because up to 1792 Westford was actually a part of that town. It was to be used for the new market house, which had been designed by Alexander Parris, a local architect. His plans called for four solid granite columns at both ends of the structure each of which were to weigh about fifteen tons. The granite was cut from boulders at the quarry run by the Tuck and Reed Company. “I have heard,” wrote Herbert E. Fletcher in 1912, “from eyewitnesses the story of the teaming of these columns, eight in number, from the northeasterly part of Westford to Boston by teams drawn by twenty [sic] yoke of oxen.”

Local contemporary citizens testified to this fact. But as John Quincy, Jr. pointed out, the oxen teams did not go to Boston but instead they brought the “white granite” to the Middlesex Canal where it was loaded onto canal boats under the direction of quarryman Charles Hollis who also supervised its deliv- ery to the building site of the new market house in Boston. This was in the spring of 1825.

The source for the book's account of what happened to the granite once it reached the Charlestown mill pond is a pamphlet written by George E. McKay entitled “Faneuil Hall Market”, which was published in 1910 by the Bostonian

² See in Alan Seaburg, *Life on the Middlesex Canal*, Boston: Anne Miniver Press, 2009 the essay entitled “The Canal, the Master-Builder, and the Bulfinch Building of the Massa- chusetts General Hospital”, pp. 47-55 which presents an overview of the canal's role in shipping granite to Charlestown, then to the Stone Department of the State Prison there to be worked upon, and finally to be used in the construction of the Bulfinch Building of the MGH as well as other prominent Boston buildings.

Society.

From the mill pond, writes John Quincy, Jr., quoting from McKay's pamphlet, the boats with the granite were "guided from a nearby causeway across the open waters of the Charles River and Boston Harbor into Boston itself (near where the Charlestown Bridge connects Boston into Charlestown today). They were then guided into a second canal that began where North Station stands today. This canal paralleled today's Canal Street and ended in Mill pond, not far west of Faneuil Hall. There, stone wagons and drag skids [the wagons and skids were pulled by oxen or mules aided with convict labor that] would meet the shipment and haul the stone to the construction site. As Boston's Mill Pond was filled in during marketplace development, the length of the overland haul from the Canal Street canal became longer. Finally, the packet boats were floated from the end of the Middlesex Canal in Charlestown, around the waterfront of Boston's peninsula, to wharfs at the construction site. Then the stone was dragged up ramps, which sometimes could barely support the weight of the heavy granite block." It is important to remember that in 1825 the end of the new market house was only a few yards from Boston Harbor.



Cover from a recent
Fletcher Quarry brochure

Two final comments to this story are appropriate. First, details about the canal and Quincy Market are placed in their proper broader perspective by reading again David Dettinger's 2000 Bicentennial lecture "The Canal That Bisected Boston" in the March 2008 issue of Towpath Topics. Second, in the early 1970s when Kevin White was mayor of Boston, the old Quincy Market was renovated and turned into the marketplace we are familiar with today. When replacement white granite was needed it was obtained from the same Westford quarry, now Fletcher's Quarry, from which the original granite was cut. Quincy's fine book contains a photograph of that quarry as it appeared in the 1970s.

HISTORIC TAVERN GRAFFITI

By Bill Gerber; initiated by Dick Bentz

One never knows when their past will catch up with them. A few months ago I received an inquiry from Dick Bentz, a gent with whom I once canoed some of New England's white-water rivers. Dick's question - Had I ever seen or heard of Loammi Baldwin's given name being spelled Lamie or Lomie?

Ironically, Dick owns and lives in the Richardson Tavern in N Billerica, a tavern that served the builders of the Middlesex Canal and many who traveled on it. The tavern, his home, is located near the corner of today's Salem and Pollard Streets, about a quarter mile from the canal's Concord River crossing. It shows up in Lasher's map of that era (see the convergence of arrows in the map segment shown on the following page).

Loammi Baldwin lodged there at various times during construction of the canal. Scratched in the plaster of an upstairs room is:

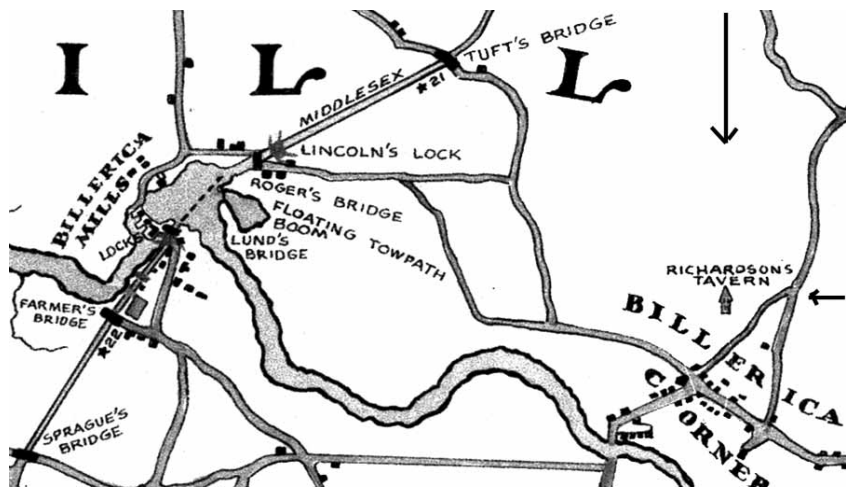


Transcribed, it reads:

Lomie (or Lamie) Baldwin
1801
Apr

Consider the "a" in "Baldwin", and the second letter in the given name.

Dick cites the oral tradition as stating that Baldwin had had a beer or two that evening and scratched this in the wet plaster work that had been done that day in his lodging room.



Location of Richardson's Tavern

By 1801, the northern branch of the canal (between the Concord and the Merrimack Rivers) had been open for several years (probably since late 1798), and by then most of the work was focused on the southern branch, from summit level at the Concord River leading toward Charlestown; so it's slightly surprising to think that Loammi, the elder, might have been there and done that at that time. I'm inclined to think that this was more likely done by Loammi "Jr.". (N.B. I've never seen him officially referred to as Jr.). Born in 1780, he would have been 20 years old and may have been studying law in Groton at this time. In contrast, this is not a likely action for his father, who would have been 57 years old, had served as a colonel in the Revolutionary War and by this time had spent six-plus years as the chief engineer of the canal. But who knows; after a few beers, perhaps it was the "kid in him" that emerged that night!

THE NEW YORK CANAL COMMISSIONER'S 1816 VISIT

by Bill Gerber

One belief that I've long accepted on faith is - before they began work on the Erie Canal, New York State Canal Commissioners visited the Middlesex Canal and "picked the brains" of people charged with its operation and management. Recently I had an opportunity to look for evidence of this belief and, essentially, I found it to be true.

In September (2010), I went looking for the personal notes recorded by the NYS commissioners who came to visit. I was not successful in finding these, or even determining the names of those who came. But there is a document in the state library in Albany, prepared by the NYS Canal Commissioners and

published in early 1817, that details the findings of their May 1816 visit. In fact, among the contents are two reports that derived from their Massachusetts visit. And now that I've found them, I realize that earlier M'sex Canal researchers had already found and published both of them in earlier TT issues.

The document contains a collection of reports on various subjects relating to the impending start of construction of what would become the Erie Canal, the most famous canal in America. The first is the actual formal report of their visit by the canal commissioners. It is the document entitled "Report of the New York Canal Commissioners on the Middlesex Canal (1816)". This document was republished in the April 1964 issue of Canal News (the last MCA publication by that name, before the name was changed to Towpath Topics) which can be found at <http://middlesexcanal.org/towpath/canalnewsApr1964.htm>.

This report is quite interesting to read. Apparently, by May, 1816, the Middlesex Canal was in a pretty rickety state. If you haven't read it yet, I encourage you to do so. It is one of the good 'first person' accounts of the canal that we have.

The second report is a reprint of a letter written by John Langdon Sullivan (then both "Agent" (effectively CEO) of the Middlesex Canal and owner and "Agent" of the Merrimack Boating Company) to DeWitt Clinton, the principal promoter of the Erie Canal. (Clinton's role being much the same as James Sullivan's had been for the M'sex Canal.)

In this letter, entitled "Letter from J. L. Sullivan to New York Canal Commissioners Advising Concerning the Cost of Proposed Erie Canal, 1817", Sullivan provided summary descriptions of the work that had been done at each of the bypass canals along the Merrimack River (which by that time had opened the river for transportation all the way to Concord NH) and the costs incurred in each of these constructions. This letter has also been reprinted Towpath Topics, in the September 1965 issue, which can now be found at <http://middlesexcanal.org/towpath/towpathtopicsSept1965.htm>.

It is helpful, and something of a relief, to be able to pin down the origins of at least one of our long held beliefs.

BIOGRAPHIES OF JAMES SULLIVAN AND LOAMMI BALDWIN

Transcribed by Howard Winkler

Short biographies of James Sullivan and Loammi Baldwin were printed in the October 2006 issue of Towpath Topics, from the Dictionary of American Biography, 1999. Since then I found short biographies of Sullivan and Baldwin in the National Cyclopaedia of American Biography from the turn of the 20th century, which offers additional information, and thus is worthy of publication.



James Sullivan

SULLIVAN, James, fifth governor of Massachusetts, fourth son of John and Margery (Brown) Sullivan was born at Berwick, Me, April 22, 1744.³ His grandfather Maj. Philip Sullivan of Ardea, an officer in the Catholic army against William of Orange, was of the fourth generation in descent from Daniel O'Sullivan, chief of Beare and Bantry. After the surrender of Limerick, preferring exile to apostasy, he went to France, in company with Sarsfield, and that shortly after the birth of his son, John, was killed in a duel.

The family is an ancient one in Ireland, of so distinguished a lineage that in the words of Jeremy Bentham, "in point on antiquity and early pre-eminence, they

can vie with the most distinguished in Europe." The glorious exploits of the clan O'Sullivan in battle were frequently set forth in the ancient chronicles of the south of Ireland, and it is well-established that previous to the English conquest in 1170, they were the free rulers of the Kingdom of Munster.

After the death of William of Orange, John Sullivan returned to Ireland, only to face the distress and poverty which had fallen to the lot of most of his Catholic countrymen. He, accordingly, determined to seek his fortune in America, and in 1723 set sail from Limerick. On this voyage he made the acquaintance of his future wife, then a child of nine years. After several romantic episodes, he was married to her in about 1732, and settled on a farm of some seventy-seven acres, near Berwick, Me. Although it is stated that he never relinquished his ancestral faith, it seems that he had few opportunities to live up to its requirements in his later years, and as a consequence, his children were reared under Protestant influences.

In his old age he was singularly imposing and venerable in appearance,

³ National Cyclopaedia of American Biography, Vol. I, p.110, 1898.

and, although he lived to the extraordinary age of 105, retained his faculties to the last. James Sullivan was educated as well as the facilities of the time and conditions would warrant, but his strong mental abilities enabled him to make much more of small advantages and became cultured before his store of knowledge had passed through beyond the rudiments.

Throughout youth he worked at agriculture devoting all of his spare moments to reading; but the severe fracture of one of his limbs, sustained while felling a tree, resulted in permanent lameness, and precluded entrance upon the life of a soldier, as his parents had intended. He, therefore, commenced the study of law, under his brother, John, later distinguished as Gen. Sullivan of the revolutionary army, and as judge of the U. S. district court of New Hampshire.

Sullivan's prominence in after-life is all the more creditable when we consider that again, in the reading of law, he was faced with limited facilities, in inadequate text-books and absence of all regular instruction. His natural talents were equal to every difficulty, and before his thirty-second year he was recognized as one of the foremost men at the bar. After his admission he settled at Georgetown, Me., but soon returned to Biddeford, where he was for some time king's attorney for York County.

Through his inherited love of liberty and strong sympathy with the colonies in their grievances against England, he became a leader in the events that led up to the revolution. He was a member of the provincial congress of Massachusetts in 1775, and was by that body appointed one of the committee of three for a secret mission to Ticonderoga, which, largely through his tact and diplomacy, was brought to a successful issue. In January, 1776, he was made one of the judges of the superior court, then the highest judicial tribunal in the colony, where he was a colleague of John Adams and William Cushing, and served until February, 1782. In that year the legislature was obliged by the general poverty to reduce his salary to £300, which necessitated his resignation, since, even when receiving a higher rate of compensation, he had been unable to more than meet his traveling expenses while on circuit. Meanwhile, in 1779, he was a delegate to the state constitutional convention; in 1784 and 1785 a delegate to the state constitutional congress, and was several times elected a member of the state legislature from Boston.

In 1784 he was appointed on a committee, with John Lovell and Theophilus Parsons, to meet a similar commission from New York regarding the dispute that had arisen between the two states over the boundary question. Again, in 1796, by appointment of Pres. Washington, he served as commissioner under the fifth article of the treaty with Great Britain, to fix the boundary line between the United States and Canada, a delicate task, which he discharge

with his usual tact and ability. The lines then determined on have since continued practically the same.

In 1787 Sullivan was chosen a member of the executive council of the state and judge of probate for Suffolk county, and in 1790 became attorney-general, an office held by him until 1807. It was in his office that he won particular distinction from the start. He insisted, upon his appointment, that a regular salary should be fixed for his services, instead of the system of fees, hitherto in vogue, although this was greatly to his pecuniary disadvantage. His skill as a lawyer and pleader was frequently brought to the test in this connection, especially in the famous Fairbanks and Selfridge, murder trials, where the best legal talent in the state was arrayed against him. He secured a conviction in the former case on a chain of circumstantial evidence, despite the strenuous efforts of the opposing council, who was evidently convinced of his client's complete innocence.

In his practice Sullivan was a great exemplar of precision in the use of legal forms and a keen power of logical analysis; and yet, by his impassioned oratory and vigorous appeals to the sympathies, he was one of the most noted jury lawyers of the time. He enjoyed almost universal popularity until his strong opposition to certain points of the Federal constitution and statutes, notably the national bank system, and his outspoken support of the French republic – matters on which feeling ran high in those times – gradually alienated some of his closest friends and associates. In these matters, however, he sacrificed much of his feeling for the sake of peace and moderation.

Among his most notable public services was the planning and successful carrying out of the Middlesex Canal, constructed to connect the Merrimack with the Charles river at Charlestown. He was president of the company from its incorporation in 1793, until his death. The first surveys were made by an English engineer, named Weston, a pupil of James Brindley, and it is stated that the first leveling instrument ever used in the United States was there employed by him. The work of the construction was superintended by Col. Loammi Baldwin of Woburn, Mass., one of the foremost contractors of the day.

In 1807, and again in 1808, he was chosen governor of Massachusetts on the Republican ticket, but died soon after his election to his second term. His published writings are numerous, and include: "Observations on Government of the United States" (1791); "Dissertation on Banks" (1792); "History of Maine" (1795); "The French Nation Defended" (1795); "Causes of the French Revolution" (1798); "History of Land Titles in the United States" (1801); "Constitutional Liberty of the Press" (1801); "Correspondence with Col. Pickering" (1808); and a "History of the Penobscot Indians," published in the Massachusetts historical collections. He also projected a history of criminal law

in Massachusetts, but the manuscript is said to have been left in an unfinished condition, and no part of it has been printed.

Gov. Sullivan was one of the ten original members, and long president, of the Massachusetts Historical Society, and a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. In 1780 Harvard conferred upon him the degree of L.L.D. He was an earnest Christian throughout life and a generous contributor to all religious and beneficent objects. He was married, Feb. 22, 1768, to Hetty Odiorne of Durham, Me.

His son, John Langdon (1777-1865), was a noted engineer and inventor, and another son, William (1774-1839) gained eminence at the bar (see, also, "Life of James Sullivan" by Thomas C. Amory, published in Boston, Mass., in 1859.) Gov. Sullivan died in Boston, Mass., Dec. 10, 1808.

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BALDWIN, Loammi, civil engineer and soldier, was born at North Woburn, Middlesex co., Mass., Jan. 21, 1745, third child of James and Ruth (Richardson) Baldwin. He was a descendant of Deacon Henry Baldwin, who emigrated to Massachusetts in 1630, probably with Winthrop's colony, lived at Charlestown, which he represented in the general court, was one of the first settlers of Woburn and was a subscriber to the "town orders" drawn up at Charlestown for the regulation of the projected new settlement, in December, 1641.



Loammi Baldwin

Loammi Baldwin was educated at Woburn, but supplemented his studies by attending the lectures of Prof. John Winthrop, instructor in mathematics and natural philosophy at Harvard. During a part of his course he frequently walked to Cambridge and back, sixteen miles in all, the same day. His fellow student and companion, though there was nine years' difference in their ages, was Benjamin Thompson, afterward known to fame as Count Rumford, and on their return home they were accustomed to make rude instruments to illustrate principles they had heard expounded.

Loammi Baldwin was engaged in civil engineering when the revolution began, and long before war was declared had shown his sympathy with the opposition to British rule, having been a member of the Middlesex convention

of August, 1774. At the commencement of the revolutionary war he enlisted in the regiment of foot commanded by Col. Samuel Gerrish; was rapidly advanced to be lieutenant-colonel, and on the retirement of Col. Gerrish, in August, 1775, was put at the head of the regiment and not long after was commissioned colonel. This regiment, which was originally known as the 38th, and consisted of eight companies, was stationed at the Boston lines. On the reorganization of the army, at the close of 1775, it included ten companies and was known as the 26th. In April, 1776, Col. Baldwin followed Washington to New York city, and in June was in command of the main guard at the grand battery. When Washington retreated from New York to the western side of the Delaware, Col. Baldwin and his men followed and accompanied the commander-in-chief in the expedition which resulted in the capture of the Hessians at Trenton. He was honorably discharged from the Continental army about 1777, on account of ill-health.

In 1780 he was high sheriff of Middlesex county; in 1778-79 and 1800-04 represented Woburn in the general assembly, being the first to hold that office in the county after the adoption of the state constitution. He was one of thirty-seven who protested against the action of the town in declining to aid in suppressing Shays' rebellion.

In 1794 - 1804 he was engineer of the Middlesex canal, authorized in 1793, to extend from the Merrimac to the Charles, and was one of its principal owners. He was a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and received the honorary degree of M.A. from Harvard in 1785. While surveying one day on a tract of land now in the town of Wilmington, he noticed some woodpeckers flying repeatedly to an apple tree, and going thither to discover what attracted them, picked up some fallen fruit. The tree was a seedling, but the apples had so fine a flavor that he returned at another season to cut some scions, and these being grafted onto his own trees, produced an abundant crop. This was the origin of the now well-known Baldwin apple.

Col. Baldwin collected a valuable library of works on civil engineering, which was enlarged by his sons, Loammi and George R., until it comprised about 4,000 volumes. Part of it was destroyed by fire in 1899; the remainder, 2,011 volumes, was given by his granddaughter, Mrs. Griffith, to the Woburn Public Library.

Col. Baldwin was twice married: first, to Mary, daughter of James Fowle, of Woburn. She bore him four sons and a daughter. He was married the second time to Margaret, daughter of Josiah Fowle, of Woburn. She bore him a daughter, Clarissa, who became the wife of Thomas B. Coolidge, and a son, George Rumford. Col. Baldwin died at New Bridge, North Woburn, Oct. 20, 1807.

“THE REVEREND WOOLEY’S FETISH” A MIDDLESEX CANAL MYSTERY

by Tom Dahill

The room was small and dark. A substantial leather traveling bag, with two smaller ones, were ready by the door. A man sat at a table by the window with a leather bound book opened to about the middle of the leaves. He dipped the pen to continue his journal:

The Journal

I had just returned from a long voyage and from places and things not many would wish to experience. I was tired. Vestiges of illness nagged, illnesses suffered in environments one might call idyllic, and so would I if it were not for the ravages of insects, torrid heat and dampness unrelenting, moisture dripping from walls, trees, sopping clothing but never soothing as rain. I was tired and I wanted to rest, rest in a way that my mind could re-establish the dignity of my fellow creatures, people I was born amidst, people of intellect not compromised by ideologies and ethics, or mores disguised by sycophantic friendships and hidden unholy alliances.

That the world is peopled by souls fetid on earth before their descent into their most probable destination, replete with deeds which hold any other than themselves unfit and unworthy of treatment better than that given to cowering beasts, I have no doubt. Individuals of questionable worth ruling over and treating souls as if they were no more than a weight of flesh, worse yet, stripping them of even animal dignity and usually without a thought. How I shudder that I sat and ate and drank with such.

But here the air is clean and pleasant. Children move to adulthood learning that which sets them in a special level according to their talents. The fair port of Boston has grown since I left and the evidence is all about that my fellow citizens have built well upon their heritage. The fairness of their treatment of those here and the newly arrived from depressed circumstances elsewhere in the world gives credence to their judgement and ingenuity.

My home in Charlestown is now flanked by houses where once there were fields producing food. There is an increase in merchandizing. On one side of this peninsula tall masts ride toward the sea on the Mystic River and on the other, the Mill-Pond holds vessels I have never seen before in this place. They are long and slender and laden with materials not from the neighborhood. And beyond, Cambridge is developing the swampy area along the Charles River.

I have made few friends since returning. The taverns of this town are still the best and the Ale and Rum is to be favoured over much of the drink available in the rest of the world. The names of the citizens are now shifted from



View of Charlestown from Boston's West End, circa 1800, Dahill 1994

an English predomination to almost entirely Irish. And the robust somewhat argumentative atmosphere has usurped the former restraint. It took me a short time to learn of the canal which was carved from the Concord River down to Charlestown and beyond to the Merrimack River. It is the reason for the rafts of lumber and other materials, which are not available in quantity near Boston, to be plying the Mill-Pond and making their mysterious way across the Charles River to Boston. It is also the reason for the influx of Celtic faces which were employed in large numbers for the construction of this Incredible Ditch.

I was indeed beginning to feel that there was a redemption for me. My shadowed soul might just yet be cleansed by the actions of humanity and I may yet address an acquaintance in the course of my duties without first making ready a weapon.

At the Mill-Pond was a dock at which a brightly colored packet boat was moored on occasion. The gaiety on the dock and about the boat before it departed infected the surrounding shacks and business workers and took on the appearance of a delightful party. This sort of thing had become foreign to me in the past few years but something stirred within me from the past; when I watched and heard the voices in animation, the sounds of another time, a more accepting time, a time of affection and trust, tugged within my memory. I vowed to join a group on the dock as soon as I felt a little more at ease and if my duty so directed.

Now my clothes were not acceptable in that coterie of satins, and laces,

brocaded vests, felt and ribboned hats. Indeed my clothes were nothing but drab, clean and tough. I had to imagine that I could become outfitted as a gentleman from Boston or Cambridge or Dorchester.

It was some weeks before my business directed me to take a trip on the canal and on a gaily painted packet boat named the General Sullivan. I had by this time made acquaintance with a few well-placed persons in Boston society, primarily conservative businessmen; for all my travel that was my spoken profession. Among my friends were engineers, an architect, and some of the legislature. I was even entertaining purchasing some stock in the company of that new canal which at the time was making a fair return.

I also found that the Irish names were not restricted to ignorant pick and shovellers of the canal, who by this time were even moving off that identifying plateau, but included James Sullivan, the present Governor of the Commonwealth. The people I met were well educated and most erudite, knowledgeable in matters of commerce, politics, and surprisingly, philosophy and science.

Before I go any further I must proclaim that my knowledge is by and large from the world and an intimate experience with it. I am an avid reader but I cannot claim to have attended a college of the sort that these gentlemen have at least in part attended. I am able to recognize a nimble and well-informed mind and when I am in the presence of such, I enjoy a good conversation.

Because my company has been more universal than most, I also find that I am able to converse comfortably with those with a less impressive intellectual training.

I have also been made aware that one's station in one's society doesn't automatically coincide with an intellectual content. I have heard as cogent a philosophy through the haze of Grog as through that of Cognac.

I suppose I consider myself a philosopher of sorts (as many do) and true to my times I am obsessed with right and wrong, and good and evil. I wish to believe in the intrinsic good in all individuals but have a great difficulty in this matter. And that brings me to the trip on the Middlesex Canal.

The weeks after my return home, I found, were indeed a tonic of sorts, a balm on the sores of ill contacts, a bandage of the hurt from exotic contradictions, and a mask over actions of the malfeasants of too many corners of the world.

A mask, a blind-fold, allowed me to turn toward the dock at which the General Sullivan was tied and see a world without worry; happy individuals thinking of their own pleasure in the company of their friends, bantering with pleasant thoughts and good wishes, brightly looking forward to an idyllic passage along a waterway, silent except for songs of birds, an occasional lowing

of cattle and the soft clop of the hooves of the draft horse which seemed to haul the boat with little effort.

The promise was of meadows and fields, farm-land and stretches of forests, groves of poplars which line the canal like an avenue from a French country road. Occasionally there would be an Inn and refreshments, docks with barges elongated to a size three times longer than the packet boat waiting in a holding pond to exchange their cargo, and, on the side of the canal, a child fishing or a farmer tending animals or working in a field: they would wave and shout greetings.

As I mingled with the packet boat passengers I became infected with their enthusiasm and chatted with several, speaking words without any meaning other than wishing them well. The odours of mixtures of perfumes, powders, of the ladies became the fresh air of the area, their prints and frills, jewelry, were the ornament of the architecture, which was the trousers and jackets of the men and their plaids and brocade vests. All voices were contained in a lubricating, musical ambience. Reality was transformed in plein-air to a panoply of pleasure, in vivid contrast to the commerce all about.

My business in Boston was all but finished and I had a berth on the morning tide. But at that moment I was imbedded in the mood and activity and a world away from that of my arrival and my first glimpse of the packet boat. I had left behind the pressing insistence of every form of predation possible which had inhabited my waking and sleeping hours for years. I now looked at, and spoke to, people I liked and trusted. I smiled. Security and fair-mindedness abounded. I thought of the weapons in the small bag I carried and smiled again.

Among the passengers were three I knew, one by name, acquaintances from the business world. Most of the rest were younger than I; the men and women seemed of college age, and in that euphoric phase of life which allowed no intervention of harshness. Death and tragedy were Romantic concepts treated in conversations and poetry or drama or happened far away in another world. They smiled, laughed and sparkled with cautious intimacy.

One young lady stood out as the most beautiful. Gloria was given deference by others as if there were some understood court in session. Young men were more reserved when they approached her as in contrast with another beauty, Salinas, a red-head with a dress of white and scarlet, a large flowered print, who seemed to evoke the most animated responses to her comments.

A single middle-aged man sat apart from the rest, at least before the boat was fully boarded. His dress was quiet, and undecorated by lace and his vest matched his jacket in reserve. He chewed, clenching his jaw muscles constantly. It made his moustache see-saw slightly in a manner he was unaware

of I would believe. He also carried an unusual, highly decorated, cane. He glanced away, avoiding my eyes, when I stared at him. A small bag by his side made of fine leather bulged with content. I knew him as Enoch.

He was joined by a young man, shortly, who sat by his side. He was of dark complexion and appeared to be of South-East Asian origin. Their conversation was brief for in a few minutes the young man rose and approached "Elaine" who had just arrived. With considerable grace he greeted her and was rewarded by an invitation to join her in the companion seat. It was then I registered that the bag by the side of the mustachioed man had disappeared.

The group gathered into the boat occupying the plush seats as they would. With this group it was not a simple affair. Swapping seats to sit with a friend became the activity for a while amid good-natured bargaining and insinuated threats of a group who knew each other very well. Small bags were placed under seats when possible then the larger ones were delivered over or around seats to be placed on the roof of the boat where a bay was designated for luggage and other cargo.

The total number of passengers was forty-five, the majority being the young people. The girls out-numbered the boys by two although that seemed to make no difference in their intercourse. Apparently only one pair were committed, at least at the beginning, Joel and Melissa, who left the cabin immediately to ride on top in chairs provided for the superior view. Soon we were all aboard and under way.

We went through the first lock shortly after leaving the dock and the Mill-Pond. The "Captain" of the boat informed us of the activities as we were drawn through the first gate and elevated by the water and preceded through the second gate into a long stretch parallel to a highway which was quite busy with buggies and other vehicles. As we passed below the Ursuline Nunnery high on its manicured escarpment I glanced about the cabin.

There were four couples from a Beacon Hill Neighborhood who had planned the trip for some time. They spoke freely informing the other travelers of details of their plans for the day. My feeling was that they knew each other but had done nothing of a social nature as a group before this with the exception perhaps of meeting at church. Ladies were festively dressed in the latest fashion from London (so they proclaimed) and each carried a bag to match, the gentlemen in suits of the strong colours of the time, Green, Brown, Deep Red and Sky Blue. They wore appropriate vests over their substantial chests and ruffles at wrists and throat embellished them further.

Noises from above drew our attention to the windows. The canal was very close to the road and now we were close enough to the Mystic River to yell to

sailors on ships heading out to the harbour. The students were doing the yelling. By this time there were several more of them on the roof and we could hear the commotion through the ceiling as they shuffled about.

Others were seated as couples inside the cabin. Two middle aged ladies with similar brown dresses, perhaps sisters, spoke in a vigorous and authoritative manner towards each other with one giving little to the other. Two young men very quietly sat behind them, seldom speaking, seldom moving. One held a small bag of simple crude fabric in his lap, when one checked the contents the other disapproved.

Two others were a librarian and her friend a secretary or teller in a bank, which I found out later. They knew each other only casually so this was an outing of convenience. Were they assured that in a large and proper group as this was they would be comfortable? They appeared not so. By this time we were passing by a dock which lead to the pastures and gardens of the Royall House, the former home of the governor of the Bay Colony a hundred years before. We could see the house which held the slaves of the Governor who brought them up from Jamaica so we were told by our captain. And then we passed another canal called a branch canal which went toward the Mystic River, now a half-mile from us, which led canal boats to the boat-building areas on the banks of the river. We could see the hulls of incomplete ships in the distance.

Boisterous sounds from above drew more students to the roof and I scanned the few remaining persons on board. Another couple sat behind the four couples from Beacon Hill, she, a youngish lady, pert and actively glancing at the young men, but unspeaking, and her companion much older than she and quite self-absorbed, quietly watching her or his hands without much interest about the cabin.

A man in a dark suit of very fine fabric but quiet of color, responded quietly and briefly when spoken to and with a smile and a trace of an accent, British perhaps, but perhaps also from further east. He sat beside a robust florid-faced, heavy set man who had given up conversation with his seat-mate and dozed with his head flopped toward a window. I couldn't see the mustachioed man. His former seat companion, the South-East Asian, was deeply involved in conversation with his lady friend and the leather packet separated them on the seat.

The path of the canal turned slowly toward the west and north again where we crossed over the Mystic River by an aqueduct. Here we disembarked to take advantage of an Inn for refreshments while the boat went through another lock. The break was good for all of us for when the boat was filled again everyone regained the festive demeanor which was flagging a moment back. The

nature of the refreshments may have been responsible.

The young girl with the older man was now pink cheeked and more attentive to him than before and he all smiles. I will read nothing into this. But I am reminded vaguely of an encounter in London years ago.

The students separated into two groups, those for the roof and those inside. The lovers, Joel and Melissa, were even more engrossed with each other. There is something wrong here. The two young men were at the Inn momentarily and now they are back in their seats as quiet as before and are far less ebullient than the others. They remind me of that tragic situation in Vienna years ago which ended so oddly.

We set off again with the broad pastures and herds of cows on either side. At one point we passed beneath a lovely bridge. The quiet landscape became more forested. As we approached a body of water, which we ran along for some time, the parties become agitated watching the changing scene awaiting the signal for our next stop. The student called Gloria with the entourage of adoring men held court inside now and preparations were being made for some exceptional activity for her benefit.

We rounded a bend at the lake's end and stopped at a sandy beach area. The horse took a break and was led to a green patch of grass, the young men cavorted along the water's edge gathering pond lilies for their favorite of the young ladies. I felt a tension between two of the men who were vying for Gloria's favour. One of them was the fellow who went off with Elaine earlier. It bears watching. Most of the passengers were out at the beach enjoying the sparkling day: they seemed not to have noticed any problem. The two young men remained in the cabin, as had the older man and his young lady friend. In Calcutta, that awful incident those many years ago, but I must not let those thoughts spoil this day.

The two sisters sat together pleasantly watching the proceedings. Now the boys offered flowers to their queen who was poised on a make-believe throne. The lady in the red and white flowered dress, Salinas, was approached with a bower of blossoms. The sisters followed her movements with extraordinary intensity: their mouths drawn and brows somewhat screwed. What is it they see? From my vantage my view was somewhat blocked. Who or what else is near her?

The students were now all involved with the ceremony contributing songs and poetic phrases with lots of good natured laughing and some-what dancing. This is their fulfillment of the promise of the morning. A day of cheer and beneficial feelings all around. "Why am I apprehensive? All things are under control. It is my nature to be aware and on guard. That's it. This has been a

successful day and promises to continue.”

Now we boarded. Beyond the next bend we came upon a great aqueduct. And beyond that another lock. The older and perhaps more sedate passengers on board smiled and enjoyed the activities of the students who trailed on board still performing. “Do we have every one on board?” The captain spoke with no interest in a head count and tended the rudder oar paying proper attention to the clay walls of the canal and his vessel. The boat drifted across the aqueduct with the Symmes River flowing twenty-four feet below creating a somewhat eerie feeling. And then he navigated the lock.

The feeling that something is wrong increased. I am not one to panic but I have been known to act in time to avoid or rectify an impending impropriety. A few minutes later a shrill voice on the edge of panic asks, “Where is Salinas?” “Up Stairs” comes from several voices. And then the usual babble followed. I looked about checking behind those seated plainly visible and, not surprising to me, could not see the mustachioed man, Enoch. Then, “She’s not here” from up above. And then panic did hit.

I am usually calm in such situations, and here in the middle of the day, with all in plain view, there must be a simple answer. But search as they might, Salinas was not on board. She must have been left back at the beach. Two boys were sent back on a barge going to Charlestown with the instructions to return to Horn Pond on the next vessel available from the beach.

I stared at the two sisters for a sign of understanding. They were stoic. The red-faced man was still asleep. The South-East Asian man with the leather package was there charming his female companion, one hand draped over the package in ineffectual protection. The elegant fellow with an accent was no longer in his seat and one of the young men was missing, the other was asleep. Images of the French pirates at Reunion years ago swept through my mind as I fingered a weapon absent-mindedly. My duty told me that the idyllic passage was at an end.

At Horn Pond: The Customs Official’s Register

At Horn Pond the Customs Official registered the details of arrival: The General Sullivan packet boat arrived a few minutes behind the scheduled time. There had been some disturbance among the young people and perhaps one had been left behind at Mystic Lake. Travelers disembarked. A most attractive group of students were joined by the Beacon Hill residents: they were identified on the “passport” as a group. The list on the passport was complete with the exception one missing young lady and two men. The captain seemed only modestly concerned, and he was there. “Why should I worry?”

The group spread across the grassy slope leading toward a refreshment

pavilion and the pond and the many small crafts waiting to take them sailing or to the island for bowling. The children of the local farmers made some small amounts of money on these occasions by escorting the visitors about the shores of the small pond and transporting them to and from the island. Canoes and small sailed vessels were scattered over the surface of Horn Pond flitting about like slow moving Darning Needles over a swamp.

Other “tourists”, as we call them, were migrating to the stables to choose horses for wandering about paths on the low hill above the inn and pond. Of the group there were those who wished to interrupt their trip and stay overnight. Their luggage was being transported to the Inn. The others would return to Charlestown after lunch on another packet and then to Boston.

At the Inn

The former passengers scattered over the grassy field leading to the Inn, and occupied the boats moving off for individual excursions. Horses were being led out of the stables for their immediate use and the doors of the Inn were open wide. The clerk behind the desk at the entrance recorded names and reservations for the beds available for the night and for the meal in the evening and the next morning. Men would occupy the dormitory on the top floor and the women and children would be in the double-bedded rooms on the second floor.

The dining room on the first floor was immediately connected to the bar and could support a marvelous banquet. Already the odors of meats and other savories were filling the air from the kitchen in the back. Two other packets were docked in a holding pond between the two lower locks and the travelers from the Middlesex Village and beyond mingled noisily with the group from Charlestown.

A serious faced farmer leaned on the counter and was in an intense conversation with the Innkeeper. The missing Girl? And now this possible theft? The few words penetrated the mélange of voices of the visitors.

“Enoch was to meet me here with the package” bellowed a resonant voice from a tall, darkly clothed man with the unmistakable presence of a preacher. “It is rare and of considerable value.” He imperiously continued and began to occupy most of the space in front of the desk. His hands moved about in space illustrating the package expected. The more he spoke the taller he got swelling his breast and skimpy neck lace to increase the importance of his predicament.

The Reverend Wooley was a preacher of some importance, well known for his rather formidable sermons which continued some European practices in the use of incense, Icons, and talismen and the calling of spirits from above. He abided and ranted in Wilmington the next town over. It was said that he was

not welcomed in Boston.

The serious faced farmer was the Sheriff of Middlesex County and had been informed of the missing young lady; the theft was a different and entirely new incident but one which fell within his purview.

A list of the passengers of the General Sullivan packet was produced by the captain of the vessel. Enoch and the Asiatic man who was his seat companion were remembered as quiet and with a package about the size registered by the preacher's hands wrapped in soft leather and of an irregular shape. Enoch Limpton was a man of variable reputation who traded in rare and old objects primarily from Europe but also from the many places in the world the ships of Boston would frequent.

His shop near the North End of Boston sported a fancy sign limned in gold. It was not clear that he was the merchant involved with the purchase of the object but certainly he was to deliver it to the preacher. His seat companion had a name of many syllables, Andrianmorasata, the length of which is consistent with many names from South East Asia but he had registered France as his homeland. Those who had met him called him a gentleman, charming, with elegant manners. It was he who guarded the package throughout the passage from Charlestown.

The afternoon produced a solution to the growing concern of the missing Salinas. The two men who went back to search for her showed up as passengers of a freight boat riding on top of barrels much to the elation of their companions. They were of good spirits and it was obvious that their news was positive. They ran down to the pavilion and explained the mystery.

The young lady hopped off the packet before the lock after the sandy beach and was met by her cousin. From there they went to his father's house, who was a Doctor in Menotomy, for a birthday celebration and was to be picked up the following day on a packet's return trip to Charlestown. The captain recalled later in the day that he was informed of this but had somehow forgotten.

The news was a wonderful excuse for exuberant celebration into the evening. The sheriff was much relieved.

The gathering in the dining room produced a revelry of high energy and abundant good will as well as abundant food and drink for the revelers. Most of the students had enlisted to stay overnight as well as the Beacon Hill group. In this ambience other characters of the trip blended into the warmth and companionship escaping from personal inhibitions, enjoying themselves.

The sheriff, sitting next to the captain, observed, between mouthfuls of the succulent roasts and draughts of beverage, that not all the passengers had enlisted in the feasting and, the persons of note in absence, were the two men

of the package episode and the other stranger who had been conspicuously aloof on the voyage and seldom spoke. A message from Enoch at the desk brought his explanation for a precipitous departure for the North. He had given another person, Andrianmorasata, the responsibility of delivering the package to the preacher who he said he knew well, and left for urgent business in New Hampshire.

The preacher accepted the reason given for Enoch not to have been there to deliver the package, but appeared somewhat irritated. The package would show up in the morning when all were accounted for, although he certainly did not know the stranger with the long name. Then, almost with abandon he entered into the spirit of the festivities, and was fully involved with the guests, seeming far more interested in increasing his girth than to dwell on his missing package. He would be more concerned and forthcoming to the sheriff in the cold light of the following day.

This left the two most strange persons of the General Sullivan passengers missing from the evening meal and also from the registry at the entry desk. In the morning it was confirmed that the missing passengers were not at the Inn. A rumour had it that a carriage met the packet and picked up one passenger, shortly after docking.

At breakfast in the sober morning light, the preacher, the captain, and the sheriff met together with the sheriff the most talkative of the three. A sealed letter from Enoch to the reverend was delivered to the table. It had arrived on the last boat the evening before and held over night. The reverend was quiet and almost unresponsive after his loquacious activity of the evening before.

The captain quietly ate and listened. "How would you like to proceed in this matter? Shall I draw up a warrant for the arrest of the culprit? He is heading for Boston, no doubt, and is registered on this trip with his home address."

The minister stared at the sheriff dourly while he spoke, silently reading the letter, and then surprised him with, "The item stolen is of great value to me and to others but it has no value on any market. It would be difficult to identify it as a 'precious' object such as one of gold or silver, even as one of special craftsmanship: as a work of art."

He drew silent again. "The fellow cannot be prosecuted. And he will be on a ship heading to the other side of the world by the time we could catch up to him." He fell into silence once again.

The captain and the sheriff sat patiently without a word. Then, "You see, the object which I wish and which I have worked hard to capture belongs to no one. It is made of wood, and glass, and strips of cloth, and worth not a penny. It is crudely fashioned and no one would call it pretty or attractive. However

it is of great importance to some people who believe it can control the future, and influence events as they unfold. Only certain people can use it in that fashion and I believed that I could have been one of those. But alas, I have lost the momentum of fate and the powers who are assured of its use have it now in their hands.”

The sheriff looked at the minister not questioning his sanity but at least searching for reason. In an attempt to steer away from the fantasy and lend credence to the story, he volunteered, “Where did it come from? And how did it get here?”

The minister took a long breath as if to stop speaking all together and then glancing at the letter, “The object’s form is of no importance. It is roughly a male figure crudely carved of wood with an insert of glass in its abdomen and small shells for eyes in its head. It is in a crouched position. It is swathed in a loosely woven cloth and wrapped with another most ragged piece of cloth. This description comes from Enoch.”

“I have never seen it. But all of that only impresses how unimportant its material substance is. Made of base materials, it has acquired an immense spiritual life of its own by the makers and users of it over many years. In my ceremonies I enjoy indicating the universality of religious beliefs and this object would have been an illustration of intense faith and prayer. I cannot expect you to believe in the object but there is a valid history of its efficacy and that is why it has been taken from me and is heading back to its original home. I dealt with the agent Enoch to obtain for me a voodoo doll or African fetish from Haiti, which I understood they would part company with, if it had fallen ineffective.” “This object, I was led to believe, was one of those. It was an innocent trade with no damage to any involved with the object.

In the letter Enoch explains that the dark man, Adrianmorasata, said he knew me well. (I had never met him.) He was an ambassador to Boston from the First King of all Madagascar, Radama I, and in response to the incident in the bay of Tripoli with Old Ironsides, he wished to enlist aid against the French Pirates plying their Eastern shores and the African coast of Mozambique. He was on a pleasure outing on the General Sullivan and would be happy to bring the package to its owner. What I don’t understand is that Enoch said he was making this trip just for me. Instead he gives my object into the hands of a thief.”

The captain broke his silence, “It appears that your friend Enoch is not giving you the whole truth. How much of his story can you accept?”

Looking at the letter, the minister continued, “I know that there has been considerable piracy in the Indian Ocean from English and French ships so that

appears credible. Adrianmorasata could be a friend of Radama I, the present king of the island of Madagascar. And those on the trip who spoke with the man said he was a gentleman with fine manners, and possibly an ambassador, and had only recently arrived from abroad.

Which means that he could not have known about my idol for I had been negotiating with Enoch for three weeks. It would make more sense that he is here for some reason other than to find a repulse force for pirates.”

“It is well known that fetishes are widely used on the island of Madagascar and some of them have acquired reputations of enormous proportions. So effective are they that a trail of grisly corpses is in their wakes when they are removed from their rightful home. Some say that there are individuals whose lives are dedicated to follow, protect and deliver them. If the object from Haiti was not native to Haiti or Africa and was a precious image from Madagascar then it may be one of those most deadly objects. Did Andrianmorasata know that an object from his home was here in Boston? And why did Enoch not deliver the package as promised?”

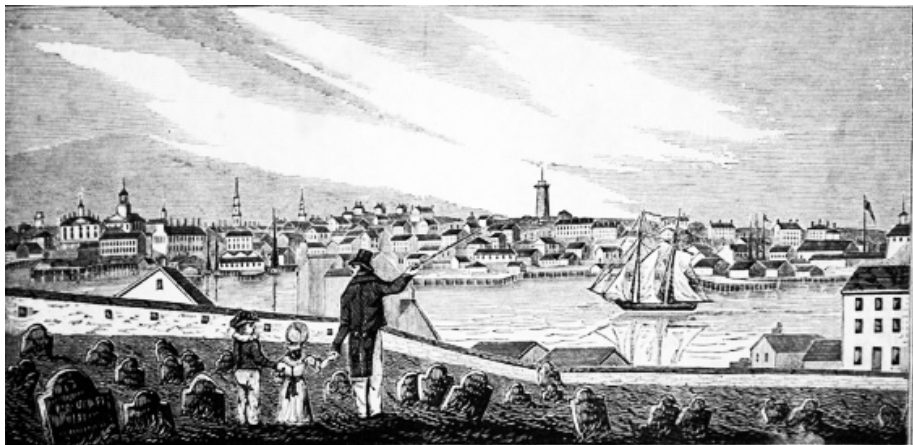
The sheriff looked down as if the table would have the answer. The minister gave a shudder and said, “There was more in the letter. Enoch admitted that the idol was foreign to Haiti and that when there, it had a history of tragic events for owners, indeed deadly results, and hardships rather than the good fortune which connected it to its homeland. It was that reason that it left Haiti. It was as if a spirit, a wraith, something, or someone was following it to assure any improper owner’s tragedy.”

Enoch finished with, “I apologize for not delivering the object in person. The Ambassador seems a reliable fellow and might enlighten you. It has been impressed upon me that my health is at risk as an agent in this matter. In Faith, Enoch.”

Silence followed this last explanation. It was now more reasonable but would take time to digest. There were still questions. But that “theft” was not going to be acted upon, nor a tracking of the culprit if that is what we should call him. The sheriff got up to leave thanking the minister while still looking a little warily at him.

In the quiet morning hours others gathered for breakfast and the air and sunshine promised to repeat the pleasantness of the previous day. And then the serenity was shattered. There was a commotion outside. A young man stepped into the Inn in great excitement, found the eye of the sheriff and with words bursting from his mouth in great rapidity, “A body has been found under the General Sullivan. It’s dead!”

A flurry of excitement gripped the patrons and residents of the Inn to



**View of Charlestown from the North End.
Drawn by Barber and engraved by Brown. Circa 1810**

abate only partially as the day advanced. By late morning the subject still commanded all conversations. The weather continued to be balmy when the passengers boarded the *General Sullivan*. It was to be an idyllic passage to Charlestown and the Charles River. There was no evidence of the unpleasant incident of the morning for the sheriff had meticulously and efficiently arranged for the proper disposal of the victim.

The Sheriff of Middlesex County habitually entered into his diary (as he called it) details of situations along the canal which challenged the rules in place, and of ingressions of the law in towns of his area of duty. From these reports he would glean data for use in court. Most of the lines were never re-read.

Diary of the Sheriff of Middlesex County

In the days following the grim canal incident, investigations revealed that Adrianmorasata (the victim found under the *General Sullivan*) was a recent arrival from France where his education in Paris was being supported by his wealthy family in Madagascar, he was not an Ambassador. The flamboyant student adopted the title of Ambassador to impress young women of his acquaintance.

On the packet trip he agreeably accepted the task of delivery of the package, ignorant of its content, and promised to give it to the Minister of whom he had heard but had never met. He was a victim of a series of coincidences and, except for some white lies, completely innocent of complicity.

The other man missing from the Inn was known to a few in Boston but was as mysterious to them as he proved to be to all of us. He had vanished and was

never seen again after the incident.

It was many months later that news from a variety of maritime sources reported that King Radama I of all Madagascar had consolidated his reign over pockets of resistance with an almost miraculous rapidity to secure for him an extended and prosperous dominion long into the future.

Enoch Limpton excluded from the inventory in his North End shop any religious objects. The Reverend Wooley conducted his services without the aid of a fetish and slept soundly.

MISCELLANY

Masthead - Excerpt from a watercolor painted by Jabez Ward Barton, ca. 1825, entitled *View from William Rogers House*. Shown, looking west, may be the packet boat *George Washington* being towed across the Concord River from the Floating Towpath at North Billerica.

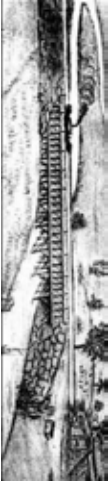
Back Page - Excerpt from an August 1818, drawing of the Steam Towboat *Merrimack* crossing the original Medford Aqueduct (artist unknown).

Web Site - As you may have noted from the masthead, the URL for the Middlesex Canal Association's web site is <http://www.middlesexcanal.org>. Our web master, Robert Winters, keeps the site up to date, thus events and sometimes articles and other information will often appear there before we can get it to you through Towpath Topics. Please do check the site from time to time for new entries.

Museum & Reardon Room Rental - The facility is available at very reasonable rates for private affairs, and for non-profit organizations' meetings. The conference room holds up to 60 people and includes access to a kitchen and rest rooms. For details and additional information please contact the museum at 978-670-2740.

Canal Game and Puzzle - The National Canal Museum has made a canal related game and a puzzle available on their web site <<http://www.canals.org/funandgames/>>. These include: a Boat Captain's Game - Can you run a canal shipping business successfully? And a Canal Lock Puzzle - would you know how to construct a canal lock and make it work? Give them a try.

Towpath Topics is edited by **Bill Gerber** and **Robert Winters**.
Corrections, contributions, and ideas for future issues are always welcome.



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