

The South End Historical Society Newsletter

Spring 2013



"All the rooms of the house were equally dark and cluttered but filled with fascinating objects. Ralph claims dirt is good for you. Besides, if you dust, you can't tell if someone moved something."

Alison Barnet

Ralph's library at 9 Wellington Street.

Ralph Horne

By Alison Barnet

Photography courtesy of Shellburne Thurber

This story was hard for me to write. Politically and socially, Ralph Horne and I are often on opposite sides of South End issues. When he was a member of the "Balance Committee," calling for an immediate moratorium on all subsidized housing, I was wondering, in print, "What new committees do we have to look forward to? The Committee for Greed and Callousness?" While he was throwing vegetables at Mayor Flynn for proposing the "Tree of Life" for battered women, I was doing a satire on South End gentrification on cable TV. Nevertheless, I've gotten to know Ralph well and enjoy what we have in common: brains, a sense of humor, and a wee bit of eccentricity.

Ralph is a polymath, a person of encyclopedic learning. He can go from talking knowledgably about Coptic Christians to Emily Dickinson to forest fires in Oklahoma. One day he asked me, "Why can't I be like other people? I've been laying here all night thinking about Sir Isaac Newton."

While doing research in 2005 at the South End Historical Society—where, by the way, Ralph was instrumental in choosing the wallpaper—I noticed that Ralph had written a South End history. SEHS couldn't find it, so I sent him a note. He responded immediately and invited me to his house at 9 Wellington Street. I was greeted in the lobby by a male figure on the newel post wearing nothing but a necklace.

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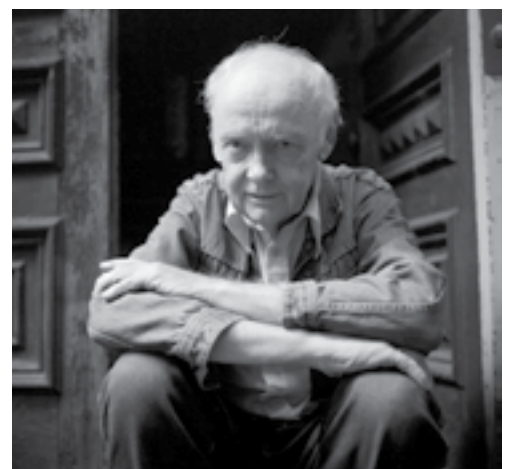


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Ralph on his stoop.

South End Historical Society

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The SEHS newsletter is a benefit of membership in the Society; a nonprofit organization dedicated to recognizing, preserving and recording the historical buildings, monuments, parks and artifacts of Boston's South End and through advocacy, documentation and education to preserve them for future generations.

Individual membership is \$25 per year, Family/Dual memberships are \$40, and opportunities to support the Society at the Supporting (\$100), Patron (\$150) and Benefactor (\$250) levels are also available.

The opinions expressed by the contributors to the newsletter are not necessarily those of the SEHS. Ideas for stories and manuscripts are welcome. Unsolicited manuscripts submitted for possible publication and not used will be returned if they are accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Those interested in reprinting articles must obtain written permission from the editor.

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Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Members,

Happy spring! I hope that this newsletter finds you enjoying warmer weather. I am excited to share this issue of the SEHS newsletter with you. In addition to our regular items, this issue contains a new community memories section, an idea that stems from comments left by South Enders on our Facebook page. Each week, we post images from our 1972 South End Streets Survey on our Facebook page (facebook.com/southendhistory) and South Enders often leave comments when images contain people or places that they recognize. The comments are rich with memories and, reading through them one day, I found myself thinking of ways to share them with South Enders who do not use Facebook. I asked our Facebook followers if I might share their memories in our newsletter and, thankfully, they agreed. Thank you to everyone who contributed comments!

This issue also contains an article by South Ender and local historian Alison Barnet. Alison's article highlights the life of Ralph Horne, a long-time resident of Wellington Street, and the work of noted photographer Shellburne Thurber. In addition, my assistant at the SEHS, Stacen Goldman, and I both contributed articles to this newsletter that spotlight items in our collections.

Lastly, I have big news to share. This August, after four years of serving you, I will leave my position as your Executive Director. Shortly after I leave the SEHS, my fiancé Dave and I will be married in Lake Placid, NY—my hometown. We will enjoy a short honeymoon and then move to Chicago where, at the end of August, I will begin a PhD program in Public History at Loyola University. Thank you for allowing me to work with you and for sharing your stories with me. It has been an extremely fulfilling experience and I am sad to leave. Let's make the next few months memorable!



Hope Shannon,
Executive Director



Hope and fiancé Dave at Spectacle Island, July 2012

The SEHS Executive Committee, comprised of Michael Leabman, President, Maryellen Hassell, First Vice President, and Susan Park, Treasurer, is in the process of hiring Ms. Shannon's replacement. Please email admin@southendhistoricalsociety.org or call 617-536-4445 with any questions.

(continued from page 1)

Ralph had written two unpublished South End histories, one for SEHS—rejected, he believed, because there were too many references to Malcolm X. The other was “A Frank Look at the South End and Its Future,” a “rosy” picture written for developer Mario Nicosia.

He took me up to the top floor where his South End files were kept and generously allowed me to look through them and make copies. The room was dark because tree branches covered the window, and some had broken right

The neighbors probably already figured out that Ralph was gay—or “Uranian,” the term he prefers. He was a founder of the Boston chapter of Black & White Men Together, a member of Prime Timers (headquartered at the Harriet Tubman House), Gay and Lesbian Scientists and Engineers, and the Lambda Car Club, a/k/a the “grease queens.” His experiences as a gay man have been different from most—he says he’s never been discriminated against.

through. All the rooms of the house were equally dark and cluttered but filled with fascinating objects. Ralph claims dirt is good for you. Besides, if you dust, you can't tell if someone moved something.

Ralph had just published *I Was There: The Autobiography of John the Beloved Disciple*, which he autographed for me under the name Blaise Bulot, his pen name for two pornographic novels, *Dark Waters*, a “gothic tale of sex, violence, death, depravity and Voodoo” and *Starr Lyte*, both set in New Orleans, where Ralph once lived.

Downstairs, he sat in his study at a desk with a mantel that reached the ceiling. *Country Life* magazines were stacked on the floor, a large ornate chair was piled high with loose papers, and a Royal typewriter sat on an ottoman. There was a Bible open on a book stand, a ceramic lion holding its mouth open for the mail, and a silk throw draped carelessly on an antique couch. A small bust of Dante, a skull (skulls are beautiful objects in Ralph's estimation), an old cash register, and an antique doll in a cradle were a few of the other items. On the shelves were some of Ralph's 5000 books wrapped in plain blue or brown paper and a collection of space toys. Bordering the ceiling in gold were the names of great men: SOCRATES HORNE MICHELANGELO.



Ralph's desk at 9 Wellington Street.

By now, photographer Shellburne Thurber had discovered Ralph's quirky house museum and become a close friend. Her photos, capturing the color, the dust, and the uniqueness, were exhibited at the Barbara Krakow gallery in spring 2011.

Ralph is a polymath, a person of encyclopedic learning. He can go from talking knowledgeably about Coptic Christians to Emily Dickinson to forest fires in Oklahoma. One day he asked me, “Why can't I be like other people? I've been laying here all night thinking about Sir Isaac Newton.” He's a scientist, a writer, an artist, and a lawyer. He built an elaborate doll house and a sports car he calls the Ralphmobile. And he loves to shock people by saying he's a pornographer. One of his favorite stories involves Dwight Strong, a West Springfield Street neighbor whom he knew quite well, although neither had ever talked about

Bordering the ceiling in gold were the names of great men: SOCRATES HORNE MICHELANGELO.

what the other one did. It wasn't until Ralph read the obituary that he learned Strong had been head of the Watch & Ward Society, and there was Ralph—the self-described “prince of pornography!”

Born in Haverhill in 1929, Ralph is proud of his Yankee heritage. He received a degree in chemistry from MIT, class of 1950; a Masters at the University of Vermont; and a PhD. at Columbia, where, he claims he was arrested for leading a panty raid on Barnard, Columbia's women's

college. After returning to MIT for post-doc research in chemistry and nuclear science, he worked at labs, including Arthur D. Little and the Brookhaven Labs.

Despite his science background, there he was at the San Francisco Art Institute in 1969 studying sculpture and living in Haight-Ashbury, where he became a Universal Church of Life minister for \$5, qualified to marry people.



Ralph's garden at 9 Wellington Street.

It was “the hippie thing to do,” he says, but he was 40 at the time and insists he was never a hippie. The hippies, meanwhile, believed he was high on celery salt. One of his many unpublished tomes, “The Death of the Last Love Experiment” tells all.

Ralph, friends agree, is contrary and an enigma, sometimes coming down on two sides of an issue.

He also studied at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, and his paintings, which he calls “colored drawings,” are in several important collections. They are complicated affairs, often based on Greek mythology. Many people don't like them, he says, and someone actually fell down in prayer in front of a painting, convinced the Devil was in it. A little less complicated is “The Fountain of Youth.” In the center, a fountain spouts blood, the symbol of youth. On one side is what the old cherish, including the blind leading the blind and Greed chained to his money, and on the other what the young cherish: beauty, nakedness. There are several skulls and a monkey. The monkey had nothing to do with it, says Ralph, but he's happy with the way he drew him.

When real estate broker Bob Bennett took Ralph to see 9 Wellington Street in 1971 (Ralph likes to think “the Union Park crowd” didn't know where Wellington Street was at the time), it was such a bad neighborhood that, according to Ralph, Bennett felt it necessary to leave his money and his keys back at the office. The house, he says, was “in unspeakable condition, a flophouse but amazingly intact in terms of architecture features. Incredibly filthy, we had to shovel it out. We fired a couple of shots to get everyone out.”

Other South End-as-Urban-Jungle tales involve Ralph chasing criminals, invariably black, an ax in one hand and a Smith & Wesson in the other. He'd pin them down on, say, the Columbus Avenue center strip, but when the cops came they'd try to arrest *Ralph*.

Once after “running the gauntlet” at Mass. and Columbus—“Going out, honey? Going out, honey?”—he told a policeman how he could tell a woman was a prostitute: “She's not selling poppies for the Veterans of Foreign Wars.”

Then there was the “dead of night” “rescue” of the cupola that was once atop the House of the Angel Guardian in



Ralph's orange chair at 9 Wellington Street.

Roxbury. Royal Cloyd and Alex Cassie were in on it too. After Ralph's redesign, it became the kiosk in front of the Boston Center for the Arts.

A much more risqué story involves the late realtor Betty Gibson, whose transformation of the South End Ralph greatly admired. She once asked him to crawl under her huge wooden bed to look for the manufacturer's label. “Betty,” said Ralph, “what will the neighbors think?”

The neighbors probably already figured out that Ralph was gay—or “Uranian,” the term he prefers. He was a founder of the Boston chapter of Black & White Men Together, a

Says Ralph, not without perverse pride, “My house used to be the best house on the street and now it's the worst.”

member of Prime Timers (headquartered at the Harriet Tubman House), Gay and Lesbian Scientists and Engineers, and the Lambda Car Club, a/k/a the “grease queens.” His experiences as a gay man have been different from most— he says he's never been discriminated against.

One day, Ralph was waiting for me at the top of the stairs wearing a “The Dumping Ground is Full!” button, a Tree



Ralph's dollhouse at 9 Wellington Street.

of Life relic. “We lost some battles, but we won the war,” he always says. According to Ralph, one of the lost battles involved Tenants Development Corporation. In the mid-'80s when TDC wanted to build 400 Mass. Ave., which backed on Wellington Street, Ralph and others sued in federal court, charging that no environmental impact study had been done and that TDC was racist—they claimed there were no white people on its board. To better fight such projects, Ralph obtained a law degree at Suffolk in July 1979.

Yet, when you came right down to it, Ralph liked the old neighbors better. “I'm the only one who sits on the stoop. The new people don't like it that I'm out there with bare feet.” One day, he looked out the window and saw a real

estate agent and a potential buyer across the street. They didn't see him but he could hear what they said. The potential buyer looked over at Ralph's building and asked, “Doesn't that hurt property values?” And the agent replied, “He can't live forever.”

Says Ralph, not without perverse pride, “My house used to be the best house on the street and now it's the worst.”

He doesn't drink and doesn't even care much about eating. If you ask, “Do you go to South End restaurants?” he answers, “Oh, good Heavens, no! They're too expensive. I'm not a food person anyway, I don't like eating.” He once got upset with a live-in cook who served fresh asparagus when Ralph preferred canned.

In 2008, after a drop in blood pressure, Ralph was taken to Mass. General and then to Spaulding Rehab, where an attempt was made to declare him mentally incompetent. To question Ralph's sanity and competence was the worst thing anyone could do, and to Ralph the hearing was an “*auto de fe*.” Luckily, friends worked hard to free him. Not as lucky was the diagnosis of a rare degenerative disease for which Ralph would need 24-hour care. He sold 9 Wellington, donating much of his art and possessions to Brown University's gay archives, and moved into the Susan Bailis House. He now lives in a private apartment with live-in attendants.

Now 84, Ralph is not about to throw in the sponge yet. “I think I'll take the sponge with me.” ❀



Photographer Shellburne Thurber and Ralph. 2009.

Alison Barnet has lived in the South End since 1964. She is the author of Extravaganza King: Robert Barnet and Boston Musical Theater.

Photograph courtesy of Alison Barnet.

Spotlight on Collections: What can we learn from “Lynn’s Most Perfect Baby”?

By Stacen Goldman, Assistant to the Executive Director



“Lynn’s Most Perfect Baby” article, 1916, SEHS Aertsen-Blair Collection.

Recently, a pair of newspaper articles from 1912-1913 have been making the rounds of pop culture blogging websites *Jezebel*, *Gothamist*, and *The Huffington Post*. In December of 1912, *The New York Times* published that Elsie Scheel, a 24 year-old co-ed at Cornell University’s College of Horticulture, was “The Perfect Girl.” Two months later, in February of 1913, a similar article was published about Elsie in *The Sunday Morning Star*, explaining that Elsie’s perfection was rooted in her uncanny resemblance to the Venus de Milo, brought on by “sane living.” It’s easy to see why Elsie’s story is so compelling to today’s blogs. It’s fun and quirky and all three sites highlight the articles’ more humorous aspects, including Elsie’s love of beefsteak (evidenced by the byline “Beefsteak her Mainstay”) and her claim that she “doesn’t know what fear is.” Elsie’s story also puts the ideals of the

early twentieth century in stark contrast with our own modern ones, specifically regarding women’s bodies.

While these are legitimately interesting aspects of Elsie’s story, what I found to be most striking about the articles was that we had something just like them in the collections at the South End Historical Society (SEHS). We have an article, published in 1916 by an unknown

Edith’s mother claimed that “lots of sleep and fresh air have made Edith the prize morsel of humanity she is,” ...

paper in Lynn, MA, which declares that Edith M. O’Shea is “Lynn’s most perfect baby physically.” This article came to us as a part of the Aertsen-Blair collection, a box of old photographs (and this newspaper article) found in the rowhouse at 175 West Brookline Street and donated to the SEHS by the current residents. Through some research, we determined that these photos belonged to a former resident of the house, Beatrice Gallivan (the SEHS held a program about the house, the collection, and our journey researching it in December 2012). Edith O’Shea, Lynn’s most perfect baby, was Beatrice Gallivan’s niece. Nineteen month-old Edith was determined to be 99% physically perfect for a girl of her age (she missed that last 1% because “her tongue was coated at the time of the examination and she suffered from discoloration”), and was declared the most physically perfect of all 500 babies entered in what was then called a “Baby Show.”

Now, of course, Edith’s story taken alone seems like just another quirky and compelling artifact of times past, but that would be missing the bigger picture. What’s really interesting is that when taken in conjunction with the articles about Elsie Scheel, it becomes clear that studies of physical perfection were a trend in the early twentieth century, and that such studies were important enough to the popular culture of the time to make the newspapers. In fact, a search of Pro-Quest Historical Newspapers for an article between 1900 and 1920 with the word “perfect” in their titles yields a multitude of such articles: “How Vivian Vaughn Became ‘The Perfect Woman’” (*The Chicago Daily Tribune*, 1905), “Perfect Baby is Challenged: Denver’s Champion Infant Throws Down Gauntlet” (*Los Angeles Times*, 1913), “The Perfect Man: Ralph

Rose Compared with the Apollo Belvedere” (*The Atlanta Constitution*, 1905). The similarities between the Edith and Elsie stories are obviously more than just a coincidence, so what is this article about Edith really telling us about American culture in the early twentieth century?

The first thing we can learn from Edith’s story is that attitudes towards women’s and girls’ health were changing drastically in the early 1900s. Edith’s mother claimed that “lots of sleep and fresh air have made Edith the prize morsel of humanity she is,” and the article insists that all of the prize-winners in the Lynn contest were “fresh air babies, accorded the best of food and care” and that none “look[ed] petted or coddled.” This is evidence of the new understanding that moderation, fresh air, and especially athleticism were important for the well-being of women and girls. This is reflected in another article from *The Chicago Tribune* published in 1907 titled “Chicago Producing MOST PERFECT RACE OF WOMEN in the World.” The article is about the city’s new athletic facilities for women, which were “giving to Chicago a new generation, a generation of perfect women, free from ills, strong, self-reliant, and beautiful.” The city of Chicago likewise declared that as a result of their increased numbers of playgrounds and gymnasiums for girls, “the rising generation of Chicago girls will be more beautiful, healthful, and normal than the one preceding it.” At the time this was written, it had not

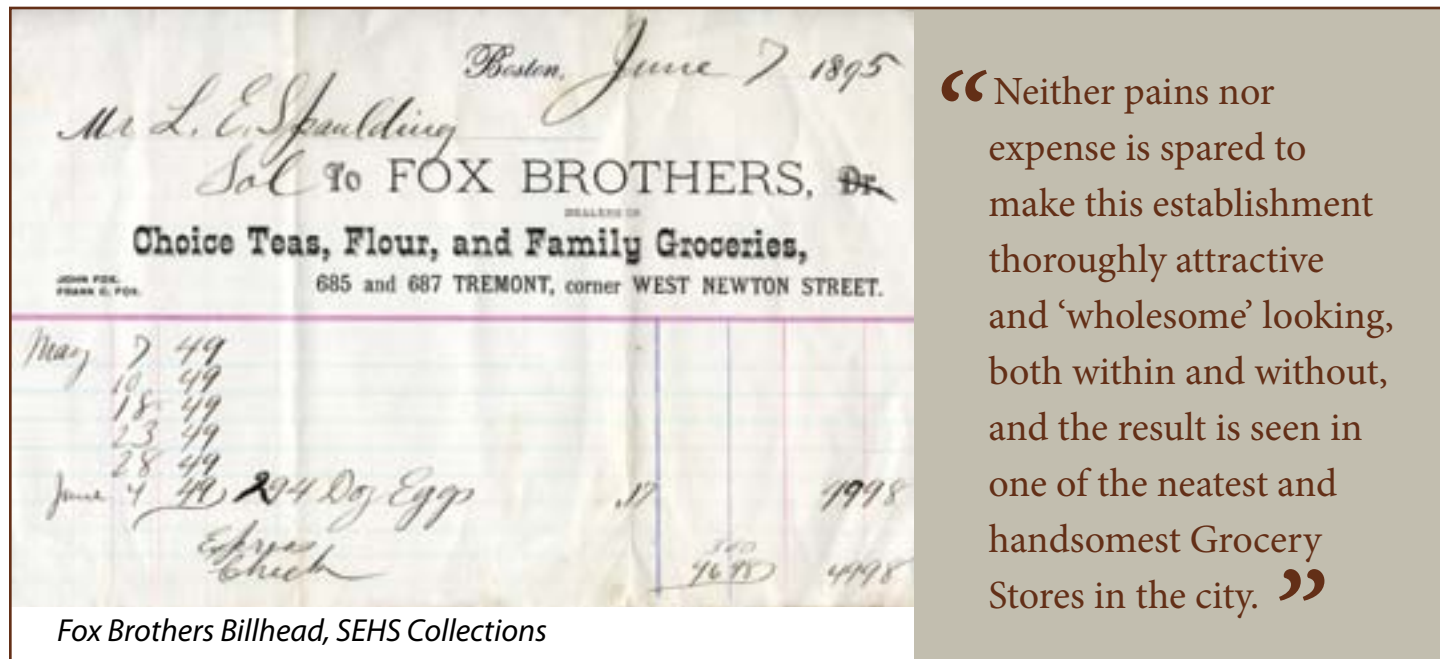
The cultural obsession with physical perfection that we see in our article about little Edith is also linked to another, darker aspect of United States history... Eugenics was very popular in the United States at the turn of the twentieth century.

been long since the ideal woman would have never had the strength to take up physical tasks for their own health, let alone play basketball, as the young girls of Chicago were encouraged to do. Still, as the twentieth century got underway and the movement for women’s suffrage (which, incidentally, was a favorite cause of Elsie Scheel’s) gained traction, women were increasingly seen as strong, independent, and athletic individuals. This is seen in the two articles about Elsie, both of which emphasize her athleticism and discuss her propensity for physical labor

and her “tramps” through the wilderness. Edith and Elsie are both proof that in the early-twentieth century, frail women were out and strong women were in.

The cultural obsession with physical perfection that we see in our article about little Edith is also linked to another, darker aspect of United States history at the turn of the century. Lynn’s “Baby Show,” as well as Cornell’s study of co-eds, were undertaken at the height of the American Eugenics Movement. Although most people associate it with the policies of Nazi Germany, Eugenics was very popular in the United States at the turn of the twentieth century. The Eugenics Movement encouraged American racism and xenophobia while influencing state health policies, which led to the forced sterilization of tens of thousands of American citizens because of race, class, or mental disability. One key aspect of the American Eugenics Movement was the process of selective breeding, which involved identifying genetically perfect specimens to breed with each other. Although there is no mention of “breeding” the babies, Lynn’s contest to find the most physically perfect children is undoubtedly connected to the goal of identifying the “fittest” specimens in the city. This connection becomes all the more clear when taken in conjunction with yet another article about “perfect” babies, “Perfect Babies to Mate for the Good of the Race: Remarkable Pact Between the Mothers of Hundred-Point Infants” (*Los Angeles Times*, 1915). This article, which includes the byline “Parents Plan Future Union in Eugenics’ Name,” tells the story of two children whose mothers arranged their marriage soon after they both scored 100% in a “Baby Show” almost identical to the one held in Lynn. Both children were the winners of multiple “Eugenic trophies” at the time of the betrothal.

Whether Edith’s parents were consciously thinking about selective breeding when entering their children into the Lynn contest is impossible to say but probably unlikely. Likewise, based on the articles about Elsie Scheel, it’s doubtful that she was a fervent Eugenicist looking for her “perfect” mate. Still it’s important to remember that historical artifacts like these ones don’t stand alone. When one makes it onto our modern pop-culture radar, it shouldn’t just be something we giggle at and move on. Yes, the byline “Beefsteak Her Mainstay” seems funny to us now — and there’s nothing wrong with having a laugh at history — but we should also feel encouraged to think about the things we read historically. Edith and Elsie were the results of a complex culture that has since faded, and it’s that complexity that really makes them so compelling. ✨



Spotlight on Collections: Fox Brothers, South End Grocers

By Hope Shannon, SEHS Executive Director

About six months ago, a SEHS member donated a billhead from Fox Brothers, Grocers that dates to June 7, 1895. It indicates that Mr. L. E. Spaulding sold 294 dozen eggs to Fox Brothers between May 7th and June 4th, 1895. At \$0.17 cents per dozen, Fox Brothers owed Mr. Spaulding \$49.48.

Why did Fox Brothers need 294 dozen eggs in one month? They sold them at the grocery that they operated at 685 and 687 Tremont Street, on the corner of Tremont and West Newton Streets.

In 1888, the publication *Leading Business men of Back Bay, South End, Boston Highlands, Jamaica Plain and Dorchester* described the store:

“Fox Brothers, Grocers...one of the very best examples of what a Metropolitan Grocery Store should be, with which we are familiar, is that afforded by the establishment of Messrs. Fox Brothers... we believe that it would be difficult for the most critical to suggest a needed improvement in the fitting up and management of the store under existing conditions. Neither pains nor expense is spared to make this establishment thoroughly attractive and ‘wholesome’ looking, both within and without, and the result is seen in one of the neatest and handsomest Grocery Stores in the city. Fox Brothers...having had very nearly a quarter of a century’s experience... it is only natural that they should be perfectly conversant with their business in every detail. The [store] comprise[s] one floor and a basement, their dimensions being 40 x 70 feet, and employment is afforded thirteen efficient assistants, who may be depended on to strive their utmost to show customers prompt and civil attention. The stock on hand is so large and varied that it would be idle to even attempt a full description of it, but it may be said to

include all kinds of Groceries, both Staple and Fancy, and to be as remarkable for uniform merit as it is for variety. The very finest flavored Teas, Coffees and Spices are handled by this house, and those who are able to appreciate a good article in this line will find that their tastes may be fully suited here, as all grades, from the mildest to the strongest, are supplied at the lowest attainable rates. Canned Goods are also given particular attention, and some delicious relishes and condiments are also on hand.”

Now this site is home to the eastern portion of the South End Branch of the Boston Public Library but the Fox Brothers occupied this location from sometime before 1870 until at least 1915. They may have been there longer—these are just the earliest and latest dates that I found evidence for. The excerpt above indicates that, in 1888, Fox Brothers had “very nearly a quarter of a century’s experience,” indicating that they had been in business since sometime in the 1860s.

The 1870 directory tells us that Charles E. Fox and Co. operated a grocery here and lived at 114 West Newton Street. By 1885 however, brothers John and Frank are listed as owning the grocery store and one or both may have lived at 114 West Newton Street. 114 West Newton Street was the same building as 685 Tremont Street, but the upstairs living quarters at 114 would have been accessed from a door on the West Newton Street side and the store accessed from the Tremont Street side. In 1905, John Fox was living at 126 Berkeley Street.

If you lived in the South End around the turn of the last century and wanted to contact them, all you had to do was call them on the telephone. The number? Trem. 230. Or you might hop on the Tremont Street streetcar. ☘

Thank you to our supporters!

Annual Appeal Supporters

Thank you to those who have donated to our 2013 Annual Appeal drive!

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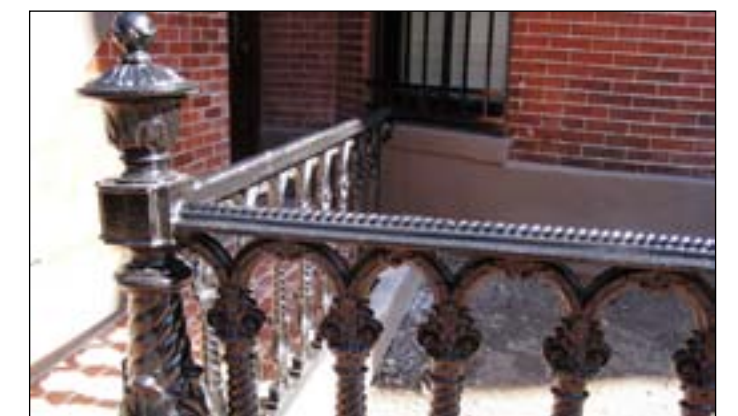
Pictures from the South End Historical Society’s collections are available for reproduction. Fees vary depending on the photograph and the intended use.

Most reproduction requests ask for images from our popular 1972 South End Streets Survey. The Streets Survey includes approximately 3,000 images taken by the Historical Society in 1972 documenting every extant South End building. These images were used in the Historical Society’s application to place the South End on the National Register of Historic Places, which was successful. Image reproductions from the South End Streets Survey carry a fee of \$30 each for a 300 dpi digital copy.

If you are interested in reproducing a SEHS image for personal, commercial, or research purposes, please contact us at 617-536-4445 or admin@southendhistoricalsociety.org for more information about our image collection, fees, and policies.



Image from the 1972 South End Streets Survey



Cast Iron Questions?

Need help restoring, repairing, or replacing your cast iron fence? The South End Historical Society can help! Call or email us at 617-536-4445 or admin@southendhistoricalsociety.org for more information.

Announcement: SEHS Executive Director to Publish Book About Notable South Enders

SEHS Executive Director Hope Shannon has signed with Arcadia Publishing to author a book entitled *Legendary Locals of Boston's South End*. Part of Arcadia's *Legendary Locals* series, which has profiled residents of neighborhoods, towns and cities across the country, the book focuses on both former and current South Enders that have had a lasting impact on the community.

Ms. Shannon plans to include people that represent the entire history of the South End, from the mid-nineteenth century to the present. She aims to feature the well-known and the unknown, the infamous and the benevolent, because all of these people contributed to the South End that we know today.

Questions? You can contact Ms. Shannon via email at hope.shannon@southendhistoricalsociety.org or by phone at 617-536-4445. *Legendary Locals of Boston's South End* is scheduled to be released in early 2014.

Special Thanks

We would like to extend a special thank you to Shabani Kuziwa and Shambalai Plantscapes LLC for donating landscaping services to us.

Shabani landscaped our front garden to help us look our best for major events. Thank you for supporting us Shabani!

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Thanks to Shabani, our front garden looked beautiful for guests at our South End Jazz Open House event. Early May, 2013.

South End Soirée a Smashing Success: Crowds Flocked to our May 11th Cyclorama Speakeasy!

Thank you to those who helped to make our annual spring fundraiser so wonderful!

Gibson Sotheby's International Realty, Above and Beyond Catering, Setting the Space, Monika Bach Photography, The Boston Center for the Arts, William Raveis Real Estate, Gilmartin Magence LLP, Yale Appliance & Lighting, Payne Bouchier, Brendan Ciecko, Carrig Kitchens LLC, Charlesgate Property Management, Brookline Bank, Grassides, Aquitaine Group, LaCasse Law LLC, The Druker Company Ltd., and New School Swing!

And a special thank you to all of the individual sponsors and patrons who supported this event!

We hope to see all of you again next year.



Volunteer Opportunities

Want to be more involved with the SEHS?

We always need new volunteers! We have opportunities for volunteers in: the SEHS newsletter, fundraisers (Spring Ball and/or House Tour), collections, office tasks, preservation, history related projects, programs and events

Interested or have questions? Call Stacen Goldman at 617-536-4445 or email her at admin@southendhistoricalsociety.org.

MEMBERSHIP REMINDER

Our membership year runs from January 1 to December 31. If you have not yet renewed for 2013, please do so soon. Individual memberships are \$25 and family/dual memberships are \$40. Additional opportunities to support the Society include the supporting membership at \$100 (\$60 tax-deductible), the patron membership at \$150 (\$110 tax-deductible), and the benefactor membership at \$250 (\$210 tax-deductible). Checks for membership payments can be made out to South End Historical Society and sent to the same at 532 Massachusetts Avenue, Boston, MA 02118. Or you may visit our website at southendhistoricalsociety.org/membership and renew online with a credit card.



South Enders Remember

Our Facebook (facebook.com/southendhistory) followers often leave remarks and reminiscences about locations and people visible in photographs that we post from our 1972 South End Streets Survey. Here's what they say:



◀◀ 74 Appleton Street on left, corner of Clarendon and Appleton Streets, looking south on Clarendon Street towards Warren Avenue. 74 Appleton Street was the home of the South End Country Store Emporium.

Roy Allen-Webber: This is one of my favorites--you brought back lots of great memories posting this pic. The SE Country Store Emporium at the corner of Clarendon and Appleton was only open for a couple years or so back in the early 1970s, but they were true to their name. Pickles in a barrel; homemade fudge; fresh breads; sawdust on the floor... Thanks for posting!

Jacques Elmaleh: Remember when either Mark Coccia or one of our other friends took a bottle rocket and shot it into the Country Store? I loved that store.

Linda Pedi: ...You can almost see Glick's Florist just past Gray Street. They were there forever.

Block of 67 to 11 Appleton Street, ▶▶ looking east, 1972. The building on the far left is Lasker's Variety.

Greg Chandler: If this is '67, that could be our family's VW bus. I worked at Lasker's for years, mostly putting together Sunday papers, and helping out during the blizzard of '78, when we helped neighbors shop by flashlight. Our house is towards the far end, 21.

Roy Allen-Webber: And the Webber's lived atop from Lasker's from 1960-82. Our living room was where that fire escape adjoins the Adams' house next door. Old man Lasker was still alive in '72, later passing on the store to his daughter and her husband, Bob Jones. I believe Lasker opened that corner variety store in the '30s. Thanks for posting!

Roy Allen-Webber: I recall those empty milk crates outside the store making for good seating for the local gentry. That old codger with the white beard and cane sure looks mighty comfortable.

Lorne Lynch: Lived on 19 Appleton until 1969. Great pictures, remember hearing the music from the Boston Tea Party Club blaring late into the night.

Linda Pedi: Our living room windows above Lasker's Variety Store and I can almost picture Roy & Ronnie tossing something out on some poor passerby's noggin!



◀◀ Corner of Pembroke and Tremont Street, 1972.

Robert G. Mallory: Loui Sewey In the background. I love it.

Daniel Azzariti: The food wasn't very good and I'm certain it wouldn't pass today's health codes, but it was the go to Chinese restaurant for many of us. They were one of the last Chinese restaurants to serve french bread and butter with meals. Also, note Eddie Cain's in the background.

Jennifer Watkins: Eddie Cain's used to have these deep fried mashed potato balls, stuffed with meat and peppers and served in red sauce. I think they called them "rellenos." My first 'junk' food as a child. Mmmm... Oh, and french fries from Freddy Parker's with hot sauce, of course.

Ken Atkinson: Eddie Cain's had better fries but Freddie Parkers had better clams and chicken wings. And when Danny Azzariti worked at Freddie parkers he never gave us a free wing!!!

Daniel Azzariti: Kenny, I'm pretty sure I threw in an extra onion ring every now and then....



◀◀ The block of 592 to 608 Tremont Street, between Upton and West Dedham Street. Upton Spa on the left, corner of Tremont and Upton Streets.

Jason Yee: Where I bought all my comics books.

Peggy Higgins: Used to walk by there all the time with my friend Rose to check out all the good-looking older guys ...haha

Kathy Rowland Preston: Pickle barrels to the right as you walked in the door, coke chest on the left. Go all the way to the back to the Phone booth...

ChiChi Yvonne Obed: And the deli counter on the right, he made some good sandwiches back there, I remember stacking shelves for Jimmy and he'd give us a coke. We did have fun back then...Nothing like that now a days. I'm glad my kids had the pleasure of knowing Jimmy, he was the best. Remember putting things on the bill and paying at the end of the week, by the time you got your check you owed it all to Jimmy.

Gina Perry: I remember going to Jimmy's and getting the small glass bottles of coke.

South Bay Union on Harrison Avenue. Next to the fire ▶▶ station on Harrison Avenue across from Cathedral Housing, near the intersection with Malden Street.

Ed J Pirelli: Spent a lot of happy times here on many special occasions. I remember the Halloween parties and the pool next to it in the summer. Thank you for bringing back great memories and the effort to make people dream again.

June Sawaya Manning: I had dance lessons here and my grandmother, Jennie Sheehan, worked there in the kitchen for many years.

June Sawaya Manning: Mrs. Kenny and Mrs. Kennedy were the preschool teachers. Mrs. Sheehan was the milk and cookies lady for pre-school snacks.

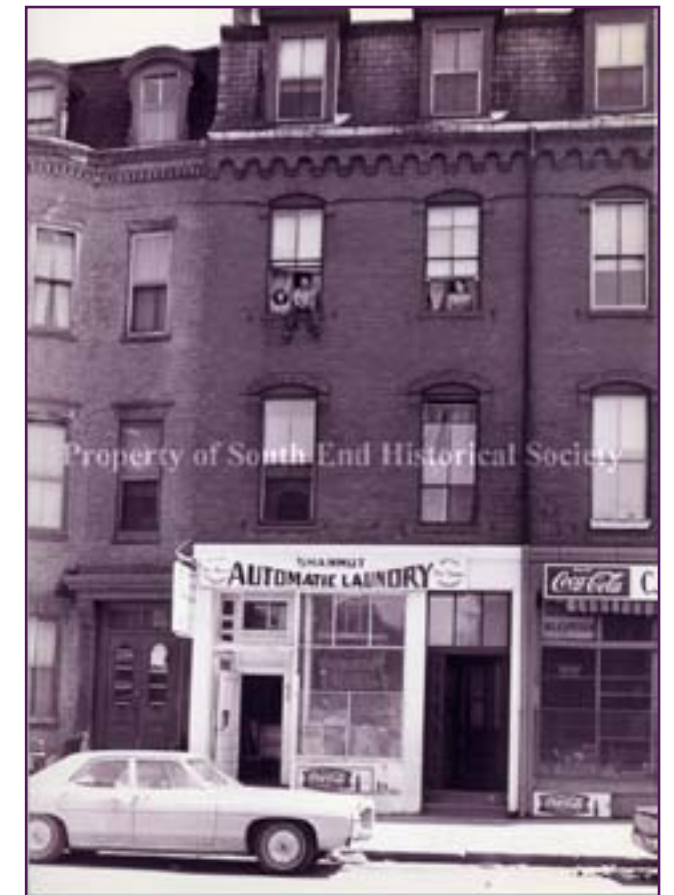


▲ The old D4 police station, corner of Warren Avenue and Berkeley Street, before it moved over to Harrison Avenue.

Kathy Rowland Preston: I believe the men waiting on the side of the building are waiting for meal tickets. They were given to the homeless and they could take them to the Capital Restaurant which was at the other end of this block or the Central Lunch on Union Park and Tremont for a hot meal.

342 Shawmut Avenue ▶▶

Peggy Higgins: What a great memory, I remember my mother sitting at the window, pillow under her arms, talking to other moms in their windows in other buildings. They watched all the neighborhood kids, making sure they behaved themselves and yelled at them when they didn't. Some kids were foolish enough to actually sit on the window ledge 3 stories up...





◀◀ 112 West Concord Street.

Annabelle Blake: I remember there was a guy named Mr. Christmas who lived in one of those houses. I believe he upped and moved to Jamaica.

Lorraine C. Green: Wow, my old Street. West Concord Street - where I began my newborn life. My parents (the Johnsons) owned 135 since 1949 and sold it in 1997...I remember Mr. Xmas with his snow white hair. He was a very humble, sweet and quiet man who was one of the icons on W. Concord St., as were the sisters who owned the variety and candy store where the W. Concord St housing and park is located now.



South west corner of Dartmouth and Tremont Streets, ▶▶ looking south on Dartmouth, 1972.

Kathy Rowland Preston: Tom Coiley's Drug Store, what memories!!!

I had my very first Ice Cream Sundae at that counter, had to eat it as fast as I could before Mom found out I spent 50 cents for it. The adults kept asking me if I was getting a brain freeze. I was too young to know what that meant.

On Sundays Tom would sell pints of whiskey to the mothers of the neighborhood that were drinkers. Wouldn't have looked nice to be sitting at a bar on a Sunday if you were a Mom. A kid would bring a note to the pharmacy counter and Tom would put the bottle in the bag to take home. It was back in the late 50's. A different time and place!!

Bobby Daly: Best Lime Rickys ever!



◀◀ Freddie Parker's, Tremont St.

John Cecon: One day, I was coming back from Freddie Parker's with some chicken wings. I was walking down Union Park St. when I was approached by two kids who told me to give them my money. When they realized I didn't have any, they took my chicken wings. Freddie Parker's chicken wings - better than money.

Robert Cecon: Fried clams, fried fish, fried scallops, fried chicken wings, and french fries. Freddie Parker's -- the cornerstone of a healthy meal.

Lilian Gee: How could one ever forget Freddie Parker's the best fried clams and chicken and sour pickles! My cousin Christine (from NY) and Artie would walk down there with a Chinese butcher knife in the wee hours of the morning to get clams, chicken and sour pickles! Thanks for the flashback!

The South End Jazz Open House

It was "Symphony Sid" Torin, a DJ who broadcast nightly from the Hi-Hat, who first dubbed the intersection of Mass. Ave. and Columbus "The Jazz Corner of Boston." Indeed, it was the most important intersection for Boston jazz in the mid-twentieth century. Between 1937 and 1962, over ten jazz clubs were located on or near the Jazz Corner, with no less than two operating at any given time. World-famous musicians like Count Basie and Thelonius Monk played in the Savoy, the Hi-Hat, and other South End clubs. Other aspects of jazz culture likewise developed around these clubs, with musician-friendly rooming houses and businesses providing living and social spaces for local performers.

To highlight this rich history, we hep cats at the SEHS staged the inaugural event in our Richard O. Card History Series: The South End Jazz Open House. Held on Saturday, May 4th from 12 PM to 5 PM, the Open House was held in conjunction with Jazz Week, an annual city-wide event hosted by Jazz Boston. Modeled after our much-beloved South End House tour, the Open House featured

live music and history presentations at five different sites near the Mass. Ave. and Columbus intersection and noted several points of interest along the tour route.

Highlights of the event included an exhibit on the history of South End jazz mounted at the Harriet Tubman House (the former site of the Hi-Hat), performances by local saxophonist Arni Cheatham, and conversations with South Enders who witnessed the neighborhood's jazz history. Richard Vacca, author of *The Boston Jazz Chronicles*, gave lectures interspersed with video presentations throughout the afternoon. The event closed with music and an after party at Wally's Café, the last of the South End jazz clubs from the neighborhood's mid-twentieth century jazz heyday.

Thanks to the enthusiasm of our participants and the beautiful weather, the Open House was met with an overwhelmingly positive response. We couldn't be more pleased with the result and we hope that South Enders continue to be interested in the neighborhood's rich and exciting jazz history!



Ed Henderson, President of the Boston Jazz Society, and Eric Jackson, host of "Eric in the Evening" on WGBH, speak at the South End Jazz Open House.



2013 South End Wall Calendar

The 2013 South End History calendar is now 50% off! Now only \$10 each! The calendar makes a great gift for friends, family, new neighbors, co-workers, and clients! Each month features an image depicting something from the South End's past. From an image of Union Park and a horse and carriage in the 1850s to Tremont Street in the 1890s to Washington Street in the 1970s, the calendar depicts scenes from the South End's long and rich social and architectural history.

All proceeds benefit the South End Historical Society.

Calendars are ~~\$20~~ \$10 each.
Order ~~10~~ 5 calendars and
receive one **FREE!**

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Please tear off this form and mail it with a check for the amount due to:

South End Historical Society, attn: Calendar, 532 Massachusetts Avenue, Boston, MA 02118.

If you would prefer to pay by credit card, please visit our website at www.southendhistoricalsociety.org and order your calendar(s) there.

Know somebody who would enjoy this newsletter?

Forward it today and invite them to become a member of the South End Historical Society.

Name: _____

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Would you prefer that we correspond with you through regular mail or e-mail?

Please circle one: Regular Mail E-mail

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___ Newsletter ___ Collections ___ House Tour Sitting ___ House Tour Committee

New members can also join and pay online by visiting:

www.southendhistoricalsociety.org/membership.htm