

# The South End Historical Society NEWSLETTER

532 Massachusetts Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts 02118-1402 — Vol. 39 No.2, Spring 2011

## Lorin Deland Renaissance Man

BY ALISON BARNET

*Actor, advertising pioneer, football coach, factory director, theater manager, champion of unwed mothers and the unemployed, author, house renovator, and chess master*

LORIN FULLER DELAND was, by nature, “a ‘Cit,’ and gloried in it,” or so Margaret Deland, novelist and short story writer, described her husband’s urban temperament. “There were elms on some of Lorin’s South End streets, in Boston,” she wrote in her autobiography, *Golden Yesterdays*, “but he doesn’t seem to have been personally acquainted with them... He preferred brick pavements... As for what he called ‘country,’ he never really understood how people could deliberately choose to live away from bricks and mortar!” Early on, Lorin saw the entire city as his own and roamed it freely.<sup>1</sup>

Born in 1855, Lorin spent his youth in the South End, mostly at 35 West Dedham Street (now demolished). In 1870, when he was fifteen, the family moved to 11 Rutland Street at the corner of Haven



*Margaret Deland, from her biography by Diana Reep*

(now a garden). Children’s Hospital, which started at 9 Rutland Street in 1869, had just moved to a handsome five-story building at the corner of Washington Street. Nearby was the Penitent Females’ Refuge and the Children’s Friend Society. Lorin attended the Dwight School on Springfield Street and English High School, then downtown on Bedford Street, graduating in 1872.

As a young man, Lorin caused his family much distress when he decided not to go to Harvard but to become an actor. He was offered a position in the stock company of the



*Lorin F. Deland. Maggie’s aunt once said, “He looks as if he could say ‘No.’”*

Boston Museum, the theater that proper Bostonians of the past deemed a “museum.” His father, Washington L. Deland, the owner of a Congress Street printing firm, frowned on acting and let Lorin know that “an occupation which labeled itself ‘playing’ was no way for a serious man to make a living.”<sup>2</sup> A compromise was struck: Lorin would work at his father’s firm by day without a salary if his father agreed to Lorin’s performing at the museum at night, taking roles such as Captain Puffleros in *Belphegor*, *the Mountebank*. No doubt his

*continued page 2* ➤

↳continued from page 1

## Lorin Deland, Renaissance Man

father was relieved that Lorin's tenure in the theater didn't last longer than the fall of 1877. By that time, however, Lorin and another South End man had started the Park Dramatic Club, which put on plays at Kennedy Hall in Roxbury. "Many of the leading amateurs of the day" were involved, including Robert Barnet, my great-grandfather, another young South Ender, making his first appearance in a minor part.<sup>3</sup>

Lorin met Margaret Campbell in Vermont in 1878, and they were married two years later. They lived for a year or two on Rutland Street with Lorin's recently widowed mother and his sister Emily, a teacher of mathematics at Girls' High on West Newton Street. The Delands were of old Yankee stock, Unitarians, and homeopaths. They were "excruciatingly neat" and "had great faith in the teaspoonfuls of tasteless water," wrote Margaret, or Maggie, as she was always called. In contrast to Maggie's own personality, Lorin had "an exact memory," "tolerance," "strenuous energy," "swift intuitions and fiery certainties." He was "as precise as a pair of compasses." One of her aunts, upon seeing his photo, remarked, "He looks as if he could say 'No.'"<sup>4</sup>

The small Rutland Street house had a three-story ell in back. From its flat roof, Maggie watched Julia, the family's one domestic, hoist up the weekly wash with the assistance of a block and tackle in the back yard. Using that method, Maggie once tried to haul up wood for the fireplace on a Sunday, shocking her mother-in-law and the neighbors.<sup>5</sup>

In 1882, the couple bought an old house on Clapp Place in Dorchester. There they lived a quiet country life on half an acre with a pear orchard, until they began taking in "frightened



### Lorin F. Deland

Lorin F. Deland (1855-1917), was a military historian who never played football, or even attended a game, until he was in his mid-thirties. Within two years he was Harvard's head coach and recognized as a football genius. Deland analyzed the American sport as if it were a battlefield and devised plays based on military tactics, including the fabled "flying wedge," which he unveiled in a game against Walter Camp in 1892. The two rival coaches united in 1896 to write their comprehensive study of the sport. The diagrammed players were drawn by Deland's wife, the novelist Margaret Deland.

and forlorn" pregnant girls. The Delands, who would never have children of their own, shared their house with unwed mothers, many in their teens, and minded their babies while they looked for work. Maggie later claimed that only six or seven out of sixty "failed to build respectable lives" after leaving the Delands.<sup>6</sup> It was also on Clapp Place that Maggie began to write: first, Christmas card verses for Louis Prang; then a collection of poems; and a series of novels, including *John Ward, Preacher*, an attack on religious fundamentalism. Controversy sells, and she and Lorin were able to buy a summer home in Kennebunkport, Maine, with the book's proceeds.

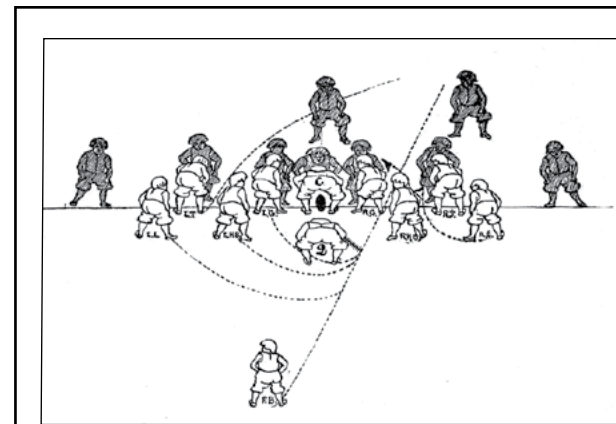
Around this time, Lorin shocked everyone by breaking from Unitarianism and joining Trinity Church; he had great admiration for minister Phillips Brooks, who had become a close friend.

Lorin sold his father's printing business in 1886 and went into, with apparent great success, the advertising field. Posters began to appear in the horse cars:

You may live without sisters,  
or cousins, or aunts,  
But civilized men  
cannot live without pants!

continued page 3 ↳

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PLAY XXVI  
SMALL WEDGES: OUTLET NO. 1

Ball to full-back.

Opposing rush-line half is the dangerous man to this play. Right end or right tackle should take him instantly, whichever one is free first. This is imperative. As rush-line back can only meet runner, however, at or behind the line, the pushers behind runner are valuable. Left half-back must be careful not to obstruct the pass. If opposing left end interferes with runner, let the left half-back cross ahead of the pass and take this end.

The ads were considered mildly witty, observed Maggie, although — "well, just a little vulgar, my dear!"<sup>7</sup> But did Maggie recall the lines exactly? In Boston, aunts and pants don't rhyme.

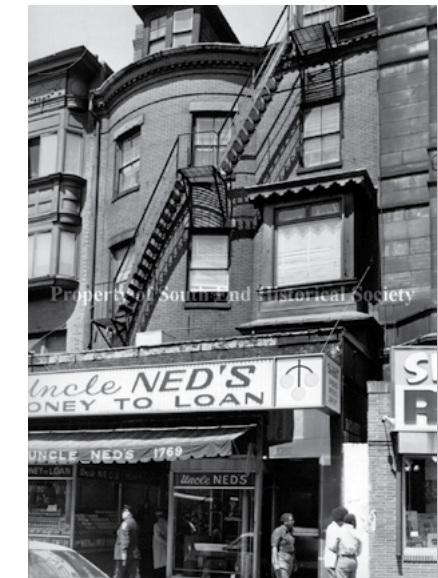
In the fall of 1890, Lorin accompanied the assistant minister of Trinity Church to a Harvard football game — oddly enough, Lorin's first. Although he had no ties to Harvard, Lorin came up with the idea of the "flying wedge" (a wedge of men that moves before the ball is put in play), which was first used against Yale in 1892 (outlawed a year later). He became Harvard's head football coach for a year or two and co-authored a book on football with Walter Camp, Yale's coach. Maggie drew the diagrams.<sup>8</sup>

Having moved to Mt. Vernon Street on Beacon Hill, the Delands were, according to Diana

continued page 6 ↳

## Update: Ivory Bean House Faces Its Final Days

AFTER RECEIVING AN ORDER TO DEMOLISH from the City of Boston's Inspectional Services Department (ISD), the Church of Scientology will tear down the Ivory Bean House in the coming months. This 1853 row house sits next to the Hotel Alexandra on the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Washington Street. Both buildings were recently purchased by the Church of Scientology to serve as their Boston headquarters, pending extensive rehabilitation. The Hotel Alexandra, an



Ivory Bean House, 1972 SEHS Photograph Survey

1875 residential hotel, currently houses a business and is structurally sound. The Ivory Bean house has not fared as well during its last 20-30 years of abandonment. After an incident in early February in which several bricks fell from the Ivory Bean House's façade to the sidewalk below, ISD ordered the building torn down.

The Church of Scientology has vowed to try and reuse salvageable materials from the façade of the Ivory Bean House for whatever structure that they replace it with as a tribute to the 158-year-old row house. The Hotel Alexandra and the Ivory Bean House have shared that corner since 1875, more than 25 years before the tracks for the Washington Street elevated train went up, when residences lined Washington Street. ❧

## Calendar of Events

### The 45th Annual Spring Ball

JOIN US ON SATURDAY, APRIL 30 FROM 8 P.M. TO MIDNIGHT for our 45th Annual Spring Ball. The Ball will be held in the Dome Room of The Lenox Hotel, 61 Exeter Street and the music will be provided by the White Heat Swing Quintet. General tickets are \$125 each and Patron tickets are \$175 each. Questions? Call (617) 536-4445 or email [admin@southendhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:admin@southendhistoricalsociety.org). To purchase tickets, please send a check to The South End Historical Society, 532 Massachusetts Avenue, Boston, MA 02118 or visit our website at [www.southendhistoricalsociety.org/programs.htm](http://www.southendhistoricalsociety.org/programs.htm) to pay via PayPal.

### The 43rd Annual House Tour

#### Save the Date!

OUR 43RD ANNUAL SOUTH END HOUSE TOUR IS SATURDAY, October 15, from 10 A.M. to 5 P.M.

### SEHS By-law Revisions Available Now

THE SOUTH END HISTORICAL SOCIETY BY-LAWS ARE being updated. The last revision was in 1997. If you would like a copy of the proposed revisions, please email [admin@southendhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:admin@southendhistoricalsociety.org) to have an electronic copy emailed to you or call (617) 536-4445 to have a hard copy mailed to you. The by-law revisions will be voted on at the Annual Meeting in June.

### South End Historical Society Officers And Board of Directors

Michael Leabman, President  
Maryellen Hassell, First Vice President  
Rob Kilgore, Second Vice President  
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Harvey Wolkoff, Counsel

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The SEHS Newsletter is just one 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, outreach, documentation, and education to preserving them for future generations.

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

The South End Historical Society  
532 Massachusetts Avenue, Boston, MA  
02118; (617) 536-4445  
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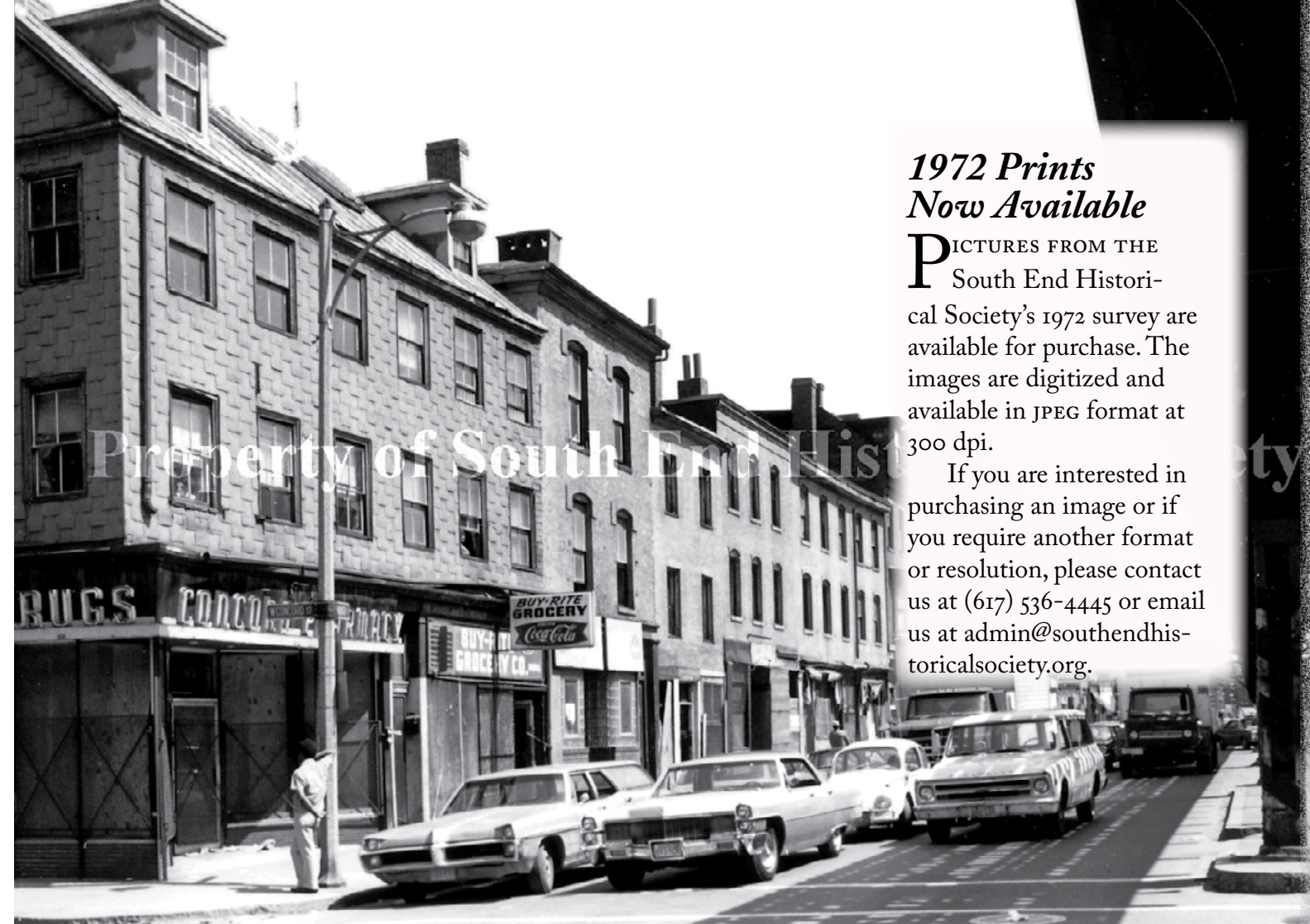
Executive Director:  
Hope Shannon

Design & Production:  
Emily Domurad and Paul L. Seier

Contributor: Alison Barnet

### Welcome to our New Members

Stephen Alves  
Samuel Bickett  
Jean Gibran  
Brianna Jakubik and Christopher Busch  
Dan Krockmalnic and Tamar Dor-ner  
Barbara McLean  
Peter Otlans  
Alexandra Rossi



Block of 1631 to 1595 Washington Street, 1972

### 1972 Prints Now Available

PICTURES FROM THE South End Historical Society's 1972 survey are available for purchase. The images are digitized and available in JPEG format at 300 dpi.

If you are interested in purchasing an image or if you require another format or resolution, please contact us at (617) 536-4445 or email us at [admin@southendhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:admin@southendhistoricalsociety.org).

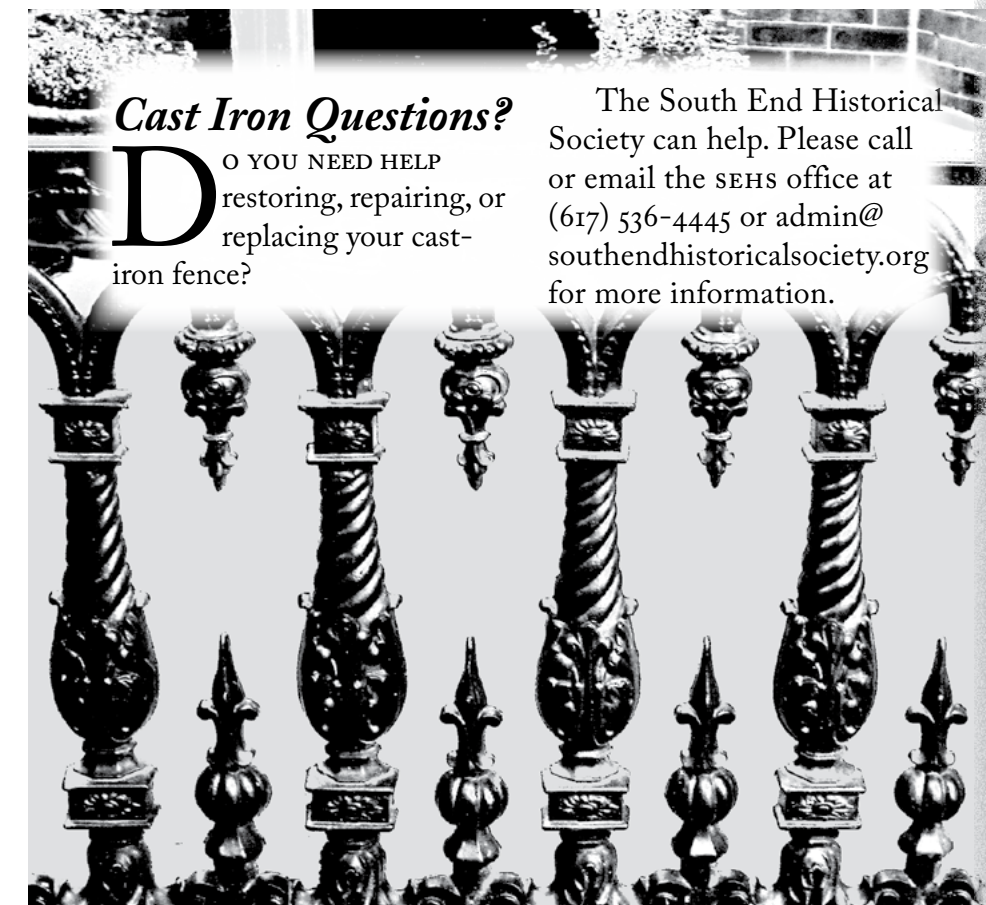
### Membership Renewal

IF YOU HAVE NOT ALREADY done so, please send your membership renewals for the year January 1, 2011 — December 31, 2011. Yearly single memberships are \$25, and family/dual memberships are \$40. Additional opportunities to support the society are also available at the \$100 Supporting, \$150 Patron, and \$250 Benefactor levels. Please send a check to The South End Historical Society, 532 Massachusetts Avenue, Boston, MA 02118.

### Cast Iron Questions?

DO YOU NEED HELP restoring, repairing, or replacing your cast-iron fence?

The South End Historical Society can help. Please call or email the SEHS office at (617) 536-4445 or [admin@southendhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:admin@southendhistoricalsociety.org) for more information.



Renaissance revival style

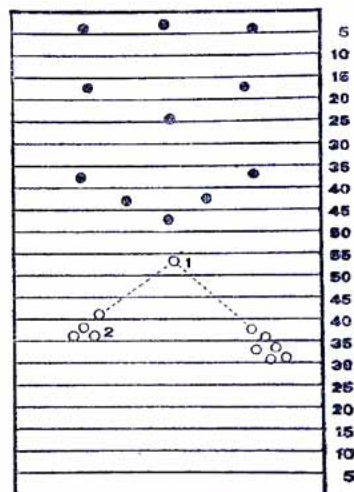
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Reep, Margaret's biographer, "in the center of Boston's social circles, active in the church, in politics, in charity work."<sup>9</sup> Lorin joined the St. Botolph and Tavern clubs and was soon stage managing Tavern Club theatricals. Fellow Taverner Henry L. Higginson, banker, philanthropist, and founder of Symphony Hall, proposed that Lorin manage a theater where plays of "high quality at a low price" could be produced. He was familiar with Lorin's distaste for the "cheap and nasty" plays shown at certain theaters, as well as Lorin's firm belief that, if a theater offered, say, *Romeo and Juliet*, charging only twenty-five cents in the second balcony, it could pack the house and put "cheap and nasty" out of business. Lorin enlisted Winthrop Ames, a younger Taverner, whom he felt had more knowledge of theater doings, and the two independently wealthy men took on management of the South End's Castle Square Theatre from 1904 to 1907. "Its reputation was respectable enough," wrote Maggie, "but it was in a dubious neighborhood."<sup>10</sup> When Ames left, soon to acquire considerable fame in New York, Lorin indulged other ideas, of which he always had many.

While Maggie was writing short stories, including her popular Old Chester (Pennsylvania) tales, Lorin published *Imagination in Business*. "Reduce your fur-lined overcoats from \$100 to \$60, and your liberal

#### DELAND'S FLYING INTERFERENCE AS USED BY HARVARD

When this play was introduced, there was no rule providing that the kick-off should be an actual kick; but a man might touch the ball with his foot, and then pick it up and pass it. The quarter-back (1 in the diagram) stood with the ball in the center of the field, ready for the kick-off. On the right, diagonally back, was grouped a squad composed of the center, guards, and tackles, and the one other heavy man. On the left, not so far back or so far distant from the ball, was another group containing four lighter men, including the one who was to receive the ball from the quarter. Before the ball was put in play these squads got in motion, the larger (right) squad starting at full speed, and the smaller (left) squad starting slowly, so that they would converge on the ball at approximately the same time. The quarter-back did not put the ball in play until the squads were virtually upon him, and then at the moment that they struck the lighter squad executed a quarter turn to the left, joining the heavy squad, and the quarter-back handed the ball to the runner (2, in the diagram). Thus protected, he and the mass moved at full speed very nearly in the direction already indicated by the squad of heavy men. The play could be turned to the other side, though rather less advantageously.



discount attracts little attention. Why? Because there is no reasonable explanation for the reduction...Mark this fact! It was not the price. It never is. It was the reason for the price...."<sup>11</sup> I think about Lorin Deland every time the oil company gives me a reason to pay early: one percent off my \$600 bill.

"If I were asked to name the qualities that enter into good advertising," he wrote in *At the*

*Sign of the Dollar*, a collection of essays published in 1917, "I should say first, imagination; second, knowledge of human nature; and third, a little more knowledge of human nature."<sup>12</sup> A diagnosis of cancer in 1911 slowed Lorin down but not much. That year he established the Wage-earners Theater League, which allowed women working in factories and the

continued page 7

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garment industry to attend theater at half price, another attempt to keep them away from the "cheap and nasty." He persuaded managers of high-class theaters to participate and opened a ticket office in Park Square. Next, he set up the Belgian Relief Sewing Room at the North Bennet Street School, where unemployed women, mostly garment workers, sewed clothes to send to Belgium, which was in need prior to World War I. Unemployment was still heavy on his mind when he opened a vacation camp in Maine for unemployed women, fattening them up with good country food.<sup>13</sup> Merriland Camp ran for three summers until Lorin's death in 1917 at age 62.

All was not over when Lorin died. Maggie had become interested in spiritualism. She and friends held Ouija board sessions, recording "spellings" believed to come from Lorin. She wrote articles with titles such as, "The Doors of Silence: Are They Closed Forever When Those We Love Have Died?"<sup>14</sup>

Lorin and Maggie (who lived until 1945) are memorialized at Forest Hills Cemetery by a simple stone seat surrounded by hedges.

<sup>1</sup>Margaret Deland, *Golden Yesterdays*, New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1941, p. 3-4.

<sup>2</sup>Margaret Deland, *Golden Yesterdays*, p. 38.

<sup>3</sup>*Boston Evening Transcript*, March 16, 1895.

<sup>4</sup>Margaret Deland, *Golden Yesterdays*, p. 5, 80, 95.

<sup>5</sup>Margaret Deland, *Golden Yesterdays*, p. 102.

### Correction

IN OUR VOLUME 39, NO. 1 NEWSLETTER, WE STATED THAT the framed mirror donated to us came from the Warren Avenue Baptist Church. The church suffered a fire in 1967, at which point Paul Hayes and Curt Fishman salvaged the frame from the building. However, when the fire occurred, the building housed the Our Lady of the Annunciation Melkite Greek Catholic Church, not the Warren Avenue Baptist Church. The building originally served Warren Avenue Baptist Church but became the home of Our Lady of the Annunciation in 1942.

Hayes frame



Castle Square, early twentieth century

<sup>6</sup>Diana C. Reep, *Margaret Deland*, Boston: Twayne Publishers (G. K. Hall & Company), 1985, p. 6.

<sup>7</sup>Margaret Deland, *Golden Yesterdays*, p. 229.

<sup>8</sup>Walter Camp and Lorin F. Deland, *Football*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1896.

<sup>9</sup>Diana C. Reep, *Margaret Deland*, p. 11.

<sup>10</sup>Margaret Deland, *Golden Yesterdays*, p. 306.

<sup>11</sup>Lorin F. Deland, *Imagination in Business*, revised and enlarged, New York and London: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1909.

<sup>12</sup>Lorin F. Deland, *At the Sign of the Dollar* and other essays, New York and London: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1917, p. 5.

<sup>13</sup>Margaret Deland, *Golden Yesterdays*, p. 341-346.

<sup>14</sup>*Women's Home Companion*, December 1919; Reep, p. 17-18, 126.





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532 Massachusetts Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts 02118-1402

*Address Correction Requested*

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