QUARTERLY NEWS

MARY BAKER EDDY MUSEUM

and Historic Sites

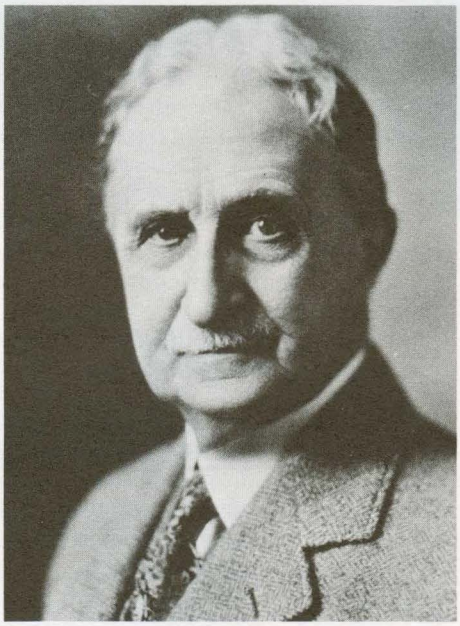
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WILLIAM AND ELLA RATHVON

William Roedel Rathvon was a lad living in Lancaster, Pennsylvania when the Civil War began. He was fortunate at that time to see President Abraham Lincoln and hear him deliver the famous Gettysburg Address on November 19, 1863. The day before he had traveled with his family to Gettysburg to hear President Lincoln speak.

Mr. Lincoln arrived in Gettysburg from Washington on November 18 and was entertained that evening at the home of Judge David Wills, a neighbor of young William's grandparents. William was a part of the crowd in front of Judge Wills' house but could only catch glimpses of the President's tall figure. The crowd had to console itself by singing songs made popular by the war.

The next morning the President led an entourage from the center of the town to Cemetery Hill where the governors of seventeen Union states had contributed seventeen acres as a burying ground for soldiers in blue and gray alike. "Old Abe," as William and his young friends affectionately called him, rode a gray horse of normal size which only accentuated his height "with long legs reaching too near the ground either for grace or good horsemanship." He was escorted by a military band and distinguished personages including representatives of foreign governments. Edward Everett of Massachusetts, considered the most polished orator of the day, gave a long address to the crowd of about 20,000. Lincoln spoke briefly—quite seriously, almost sadly. William, with one or two other boys, wiggled through the crowd and crawled under the speakers' platform to within fifteen feet of the President. The boys joined in the applause that followed, which was not as great as that given Edward Everett whose speech seemed so eloquent and appealing at the time. Everett, however, knew the President's address was imperishable and told him so afterward. Although William listened carefully he could not later recall Lincoln's speech, but that fact had no effect on his great loyalty to Abe.





Mr. and Mrs. Rathvon turned to Christian Science in 1893. Mr. Rathvon later became a member of The Christian Science Board of Directors.

William Rathvon's forebears were French Huguenots on his mother's side and were from southwest Germany on his father's side. His ancestors came to this country in 1720, and many generations afterward embraced the Lutheran faith. His mother was born, raised and eventually married in Gettysburg. She met William's father while he was a student at Pennsylvania College.

William attended the public schools of Lancaster and later studied at Franklin and Marshall College. In 1877 he traveled to Kansas and then to Colorado. In 1883 he and Ella Stauffer, also from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, were married. She was from a large family and was reared as a Presbyterian.

At the time of his marriage, Mr. Rathvon had already established himself in business in Denver. His partnership with two others was concerned with the production of silver, and later, oil. While in Chicago on an extended trip with Mrs. Rathvon, the financial panic of 1893 broke upon them. With Mr. Rathvon's successful business gone, they became stranded in Chicago with no funds to return to Denver.

While in this situation they learned of Christian Science, and shortly afterward had instruction from Mrs. Mary W. Adams.[1] A year later they

1. See *Quarterly News*, Vol. 9, No. 3, Autumn 1972.

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moved to Florence, Colorado to begin pioneer work in Christian Science in this town. Eight years later they continued their practice in the university town of Boulder, Colorado.

In 1903 they had Primary class in Boston with Edward A. Kimball and in 1907 Mr. Rathvon attended the Normal class taught by Judge Septimus J. Hanna and became a teacher of Christian Science.

In November 1908 Mr. Rathvon was called by Mrs. Eddy to serve at her Chestnut Hill home and he became one of her secretaries. Mrs. Rathvon was asked in September of the following year to assume the duties of Ella W. Hoag, as Mrs. Hoag was to return to her home in Cleveland. While at Chestnut Hill, Ella Rathvon assisted Laura Sargent with her work. She had the opportunity to accompany Mrs. Eddy on her drives, and also played and sang for Mrs. Eddy.

Mr. and Mrs. Rathvon returned to Boulder after Mrs. Eddy passed on, and Mr. Rathvon resumed his teaching and his practice. In February 1911 he was appointed a Christian Science lecturer and made several trips to foreign countries, including Europe, the Far East, and Australia, his wife frequently accompanying him.

He became Treasurer of The Mother Church in June 1918 and a few months later was elected to The Christian Science Board of Directors, serving in this position for twenty years.

In 1938 Mr. Rathvon gave a radio talk entitled, "I Heard Lincoln That Day." He recounted his boyhood days in Pennsylvania, and the events recorded in the first part of this article are from this talk.

One incident, however, not mentioned in his radio talk, occurred while he and some other boys were roaming over the Gettysburg battlefield looking for mementos. He picked up a mushroom-shaped object, formed from two musket balls striking head-on in mid-air. While both balls were sent with lethal intent, striking each other, they had fallen harmlessly to the ground. Mr. Rathvon years afterward saw that this event exemplified how the North and South would be welded into one great nation, not impelled by hatred but by brotherly love.

Richard C. Molloy

* * * * *

The idea for the following story, called "The Devil's Auction," came to Mr. Rathvon about the year 1911. It was copyrighted in 1912 and printed in Guideposts Magazine in 1952. Since many of our readers may not be familiar with the story, it is reprinted here with the magazine's permission.

The Devil's Auction

It was once announced that the devil was going out of business and would offer his tools for sale to whoever would pay his price. On the night of the sale they were all attractively displayed, and a bad looking lot they were. Malice, envy, hatred, jealousy, sensuality, deceit, and all the other implements of evil were spread out, each marked with its price. Apart from the rest lay a harmless looking wedge-shaped tool, much worn and priced higher than any of the others.

Someone asked the devil what it was. "That's discouragement," was the reply.

"Well, why do you have it priced so high?"

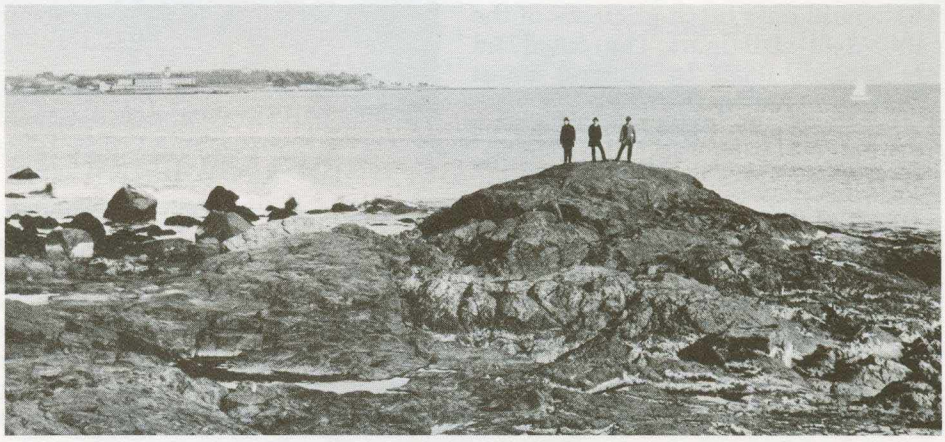
"Because," replied the devil, "it is more useful to me than any of the others. I can pry open and get inside a man's consciousness with that when I couldn't get near him with any of the others, and when once inside I can use him in whatever way suits me best. It is so much worn because I use it with nearly everybody, as very few people yet know that it belongs to me."

"You say you use this wedge of discouragement with nearly everybody—with whom can't you use it?"

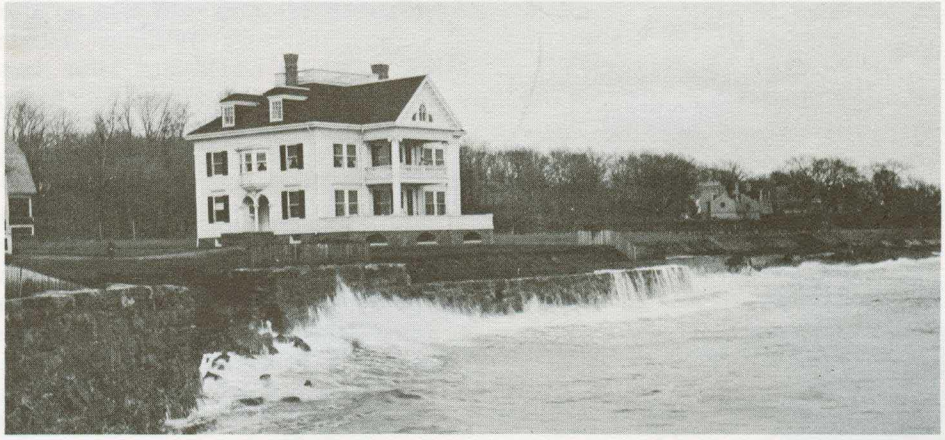
The devil hesitated a long time and finally said in a low voice, "I can't use it in getting into the consciousness of a grateful man."

It hardly need be added that the devil's price for discouragement was so high that it was never sold. He still owns it and he is still using it.

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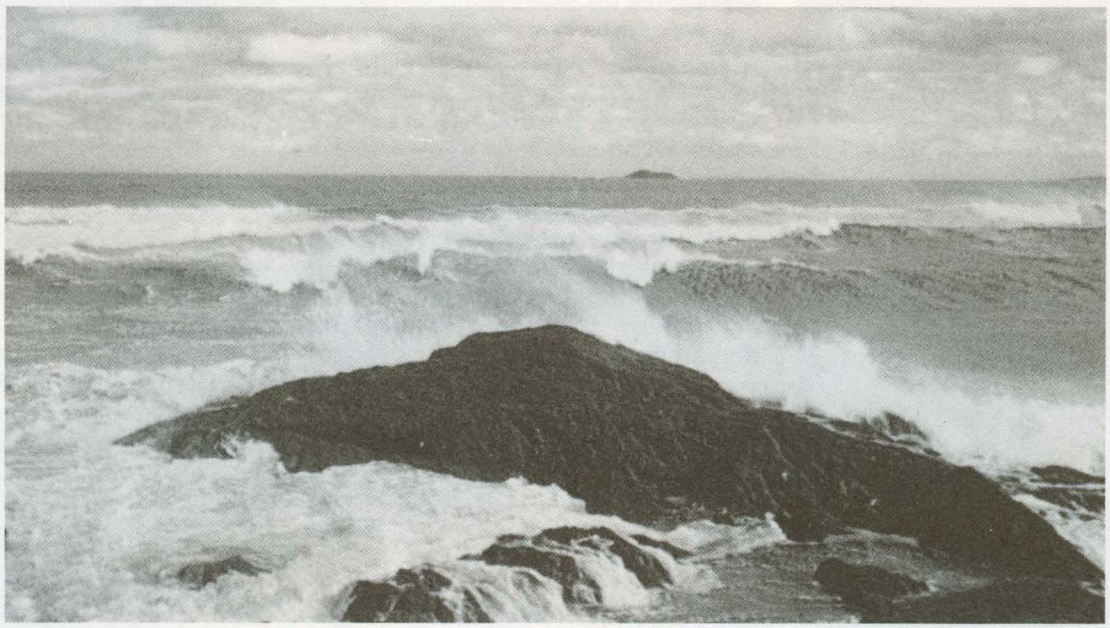


Photographs Courtesy Alice Harvey



Early photographs show Red Rock at low tide (above), and the coastline before Lynn Shore Drive and the present seawall were built (below).

RED ROCK



Alice Harvey

Mention of the name Red Rock, a red-hued rock formation which forms part of the shoreline at Lynn Beach in Lynn, Massachusetts, calls forth pleasant associations with Christian Science. There is a tradition that in the early 1870's Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science, was often seen walking to and from Red Rock during the time she was at work on the first edition of the Christian Science textbook. Red Rock itself and the prospect from it were perhaps a source of inspiration for Mrs. Eddy. Homes where she lived on Paradise Road in Swampscott and Broad Street in Lynn are not far from Red Rock.

How appropriate it is that First Church of Christ, Scientist, Lynn-Swampscott, is located across Lynn Shore Drive from Red Rock. From the entrance to the church, a portion of the rock formation can be seen, as well as a panorama of beach and ocean extending from Black Wills Cliff in Swampscott to the north, to Red Rock Park itself in Lynn.

Residents of Lynn generally do not view Red Rock as something special; to them it is just a part of the coastline. Similar smaller outcroppings of this same rock can be seen along the shore. Other landmarks also draw their attention. There is Egg Rock, a small island visible offshore from Red Rock, which once had a lighthouse on it. There is also High Rock, a part of Sagamore Hill, described by Alonzo Lewis and James R. Newhall in their 1890 publication *History of Lynn, Essex County, Massachusetts* as "a very pleasant eminence at the northern end of Long Beach, 66 feet in height . . . which slopes to the harbour on one side and to the ocean on the other and has the town lying in the background." High Rock Tower, made of fieldstone, was dedicated in 1905 and is to this day one of the landmarks of the area. On this coast is also Dungeon Rock, where years ago Hiram Marble dug for twelve years in a fruitless search for pirates' treasure.

Many of these interesting rock formations comprise part of a crescent-shaped range of hills curving toward the northwest across the town. Red Rock, High Rock, Dungeon Rock, and other ledges and outcrops bearing such names as Lovers' Leap and Sadler's Rock are also composed of the same type of rock: porphyritic rhyolite. Rhyolite is a fine-grained igneous rock with the composition of granite. "Porphyritic" indicates the presence of larger crystals, called phenocrysts, in the rock. The Red Rock porphyritic rhyolite has phenocrysts of quartz and potassic feldspar embedded in a fine-grained reddish-purple groundmass. This type of rock takes a fine polish, and was often used by the ancients for statuary and building material.

The citizens of Lynn and Swampscott enjoy activities in the park at Red Rock and along the seashore. Easter sunrise services and Navy memorial services are often held at this site. However, the Red Rock area of today is not just as it was in Mrs. Eddy's day. If it had not been for one major change that encompassed the entire Lynn shoreline, Red Rock might not be as accessible for recreation as it is today.

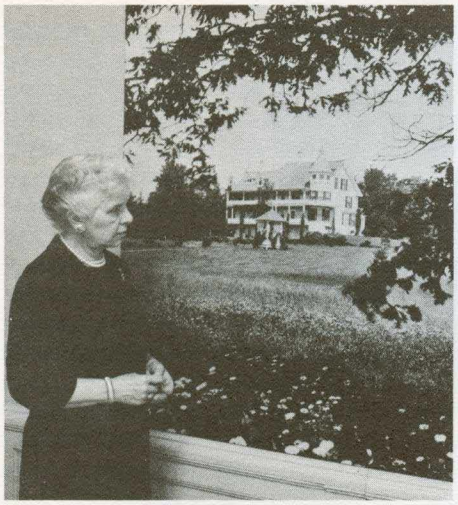
In the nineteenth century the entire coastline was privately owned. Private ownership of land located between the high and low watermarks was established in the 1640's by an ordinance of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Thus, before Lynn Shore Drive came into existence, landowners along the shore held property down to the water's edge. Many owners built their own seawalls. A writer commenting on that period states that "The difficult path around Red Rock could be attempted only at low tide and by the most agile climbers."

The house located directly inland from Red Rock on the nearest stretch of usable land was owned by William H. Prescott, the internationally known historian. In the middle of the nineteenth century Prescott wrote multi-volumed works on Ferdinand and Isabella, Philip II of Spain, and the conquests of Mexico and Peru. On the site of the historian's home a hotel was later built. "The Prescott" existed as a summer hotel from 1890 to 1904. An old advertisement for the

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IRENE KAHLER RETIRES

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Mrs. Irene C. Kahler

Longyear Historical Society announces the retirement of its Curator, Mrs. Irene C. Kahler, as of November 30, 1977.

Irene joined the Longyear staff in 1967 and was largely responsible for the reorganization of the Museum's collections and records. Her recognition of the importance of accuracy, as well as her general knowledge, diligence and patience have been a constant inspiration to the Museum staff. Her contributions have included not only those associated directly with accessioning, cataloging and research, but with exhibit preparation, editing and searching out historical data for special inquiries.

Irene Kahler lived for many years in Bronxville, New York and was an active member of the Christian Science Church there, serving as Second Reader and Chairman of the Board of Trustees.

We are indebted to her for her willingness to take on a second career and for her unselfed sharing of her talents in that career. Her ten years of devoted service are a lasting contribution to the ideals and objectives of Longyear.

She is succeeded by Alan K. Lester, formerly Assistant Curator. Mr. Lester is a graduate of the University of Arizona, and his prior museum experience includes the Arizona State Museum, Tubac (Arizona) Presidio State Historic Park and the Jacksonville Museum, Southern Oregon Historical Society. He is a member of First Church of Christ, Scientist, Newtonville, Massachusetts.

hotel sums up its location in the following words: "In front is Red rock, well known to the people of Lynn, while Egg rock and Nahant are in the near distance. Beyond opens a broad sea view. Many points of interest are easily accessible by carriage or on foot."

Late in the nineteenth century it was proposed that the state should acquire ownership of the shore front. Particularly prominent in working for public ownership of the beaches was Philip A. Chase of Lynn, later named "the father of the Metropolitan Park Commission." In the early 1890's, as chairman of the Lynn Park Commission, he succeeded in having the city purchase a small strip of land on Lynn Beach a distance to the south of Red Rock. This became known as Oceanside Park. Mr. Chase petitioned the state legislature to purchase private lands in order that a public shore might be created extending from Oceanside Park to King's Beach, north of Red Rock. However the plan never became a reality until the state began planning a system of shoreline highways.

Beginning in 1904 the first section of a seawall was built from Swampscott to Red Rock. Then in 1907 the second section was extended from Red Rock southward to Nahant Parkway.

A park was then constructed at Red Rock. The seawall was built so as to enclose a portion of the Red Rock formation, and fill was added to make the land level with the top of the seawall. Old photographs taken before the seawall was constructed show how close some of the old houses were to the water, and how far the spray would carry as the waves crashed against the shore.

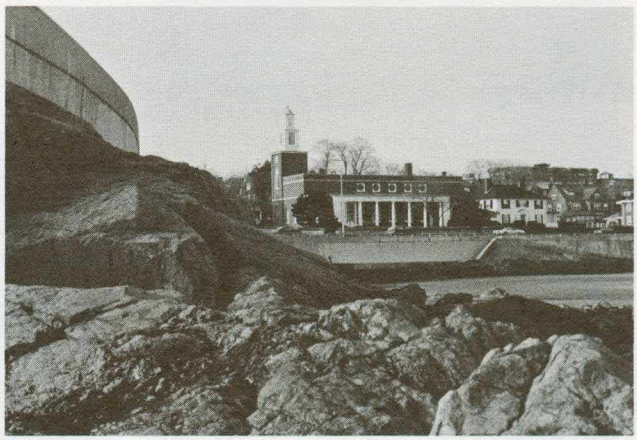
One of the houses built before the seawall project, the Pevear home at the corner of King's Beach Road and Lynn Shore Drive, was purchased by First Church of Christ, Scientist, Lynn in February 1955. The building was razed, and a church edifice was completed during the following year. Dedication of the new church as First Church of Christ, Scientist, Lynn-Swampscott took place in December 1966.

This, then, is the story of Red Rock. Many people have contributed to what we have of Red Rock and its vicinity, the houses in Lynn and Swampscott where Mrs. Eddy once lived and the Lynn-Swampscott church. These are places which we can still visit in our time and receive inspiration from past events.

Charles D. Gordon

Acknowledgment

The author wishes to thank the many persons in the Lynn-Swampscott area he consulted for historical information, including staff members of local libraries, historical societies and museums.



First Church of Christ, Scientist, Lynn-Swampscott from Red Rock

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