

OUR STREETS: *How we got them,*
and their NAMES
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Winthrop, August, 1950

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Here is our Street nomenclature — about 175 in number—leaving out a few little private ways.

We will find it surprisingly interesting and, although we are a small town and some have thought not great historically, we will see much history of value indicated in our street names — and we may be very suspicious that someone sometimes displayed considerable effort and knowledge in naming our street children.

Shall we commence at Point Shirley and proceed geographically. Pt. Shirley and our two mile Shirley St. was of course named for our Royal Governor, Wm. Shirley who, in 1753, came down the Harbor with a number of Boston's leading citizens to establish here a fishing plant — which was the practical beginning of the interesting history of this interesting peninsula — the farthest of Boston's extensions into the sea (but since 1739 having been set off as Chelsea).

Otis St., while applied much later, is named for James Otis of due fame as one of the fathers of the Revolution who greatly assisted at the "birth of the child Independence" as John Adams said. Along about the 1760's Otis is said to have summered here as did the Hancock's, the Quincy's,

et al. Pratt St. is for the Pratt family (of Chelsea) who conveyed Pt. Shirley to the Fisheries Co. in 1753. Mugford St. is, of course, for famed Capt. James Mugford who fought a good and valuable fight but lost his life in the famous fight in nearby Shirley Gut, May 19, 1776 (see marker recording same at the Beacon St. Circle at Winthrop Beach). Andrew St. is for Andrew Tewksbury of the Tewksbury's of Pt. Shirley and Deer Island. They were famous as life savers and citizens. (See Edw. Rowe Snow's well known book.) Wyman St. is for the well known Wyman family coming to Pt. Shirley in early days, marrying our Winthrop girls and so, happily with us for many years — and now. Adams St. is for Priscilla Adams, great grand-daughter of the first owner of Pt. Shirley and the whole of our Beach section, Gov. Winthrop. (There is another Adams St. at Winthrop Centre — perhaps the only duplication of street names in Town.) Tafts Ave. is, of course, for the famous Taft's Hotel and its landlord for many years, Ora A. Taft. Brewster Ave., Townsend St. and Maryland Ave. were in due time attached to those newer ways and have no special local application.

Now we come to the modern "lotting up" of Pt. Shirley into streets and house lots in 1884 when modern street names began to be applied as above and as follows. Here we have every obligation to recall the once well known name (now almost forgotten) of Alpheus P. Blake and his extensively unexcelled enterprises of building the Boston, Revere Beach and Lynn narrow gauge railroad in 1875, his buying as a great land company all of what is now called Orient Heights,

all of Beachmont and the great marshes surrounding, his buying Pt. Shirley — in 1884 — and his building the Eastern Junction, Broad Sound Pier and Pt. Shirley broad gauge railroad in 1884 and his operating a steamboat line in that connection from Pt. Shirley to Boston. He induced Ex. Gov. Hale of N. H. and Ex. Gov. Bodwell of Maine to become interested and laid out the area with streets (mostly as we now know them), using his fertile mind to give them interesting names. So we have mythological, classical and more common names as we now know them — Hale St. for Gov. Hale, Undine Ave., Siren St. (originally Fish Lane), Triton Ave., Pontos St., Petrel St., Nerious St., Bay View Ave., Pebble St., Billows St. and what is now Grand View Ave. — but he named it Vue de L'ieu Ave.

At a later date Whittier St. and Elliot St. were named for our well known townsman Eugene P. Whittier and his partner, as they later became interested in the development of the Point Shirley property.

And so we come "up along" to Great Head or Cottage Hill which was bought and laid out into streets and lots by Wm. B. Rice, H. T. Whitman, et al, in the year 1883. The streets here were given convenient names as we know them, Terrace Ave., Harbor View Ave., Prospect Ave., Cottage Ave., Crystal Cove Ave., Park Ave., Beacon St., Faun Bar Ave. and Green Hill Path.

Then we come to Tewksbury beach land, (now commonly called Winthrop Beach) laid out in streets and lots as early as 1876. First we have Charles St. named for Charles S. Tewksbury,

(Capt. Charles), who, with his father John W. Tewksbury (one of our first three Selectmen) had the only two houses in the vicinity until about 1880. Then we come to Tewksbury St., then we have Moore St., Perkins St. and Underhill St. named after good men who were among the first summer residents here. Then Sturgis St. named after the Sturgis family who had salt works at Pt. Shirley some 30 years from 1812 — well and happily known here and in a much broader field. Then we come to Irwin St., named for Samuel G. Irwin, one of our well known real estate men (who bought, in 1877, the Winthrop Horse Railroad — 3 miles, capital stock \$100,000 — for \$12).

Then Ocean Ave. laid out through the Wyman Land and then Cutler St. laid out through land of Elisha Cutler whose principal business was marketing a well graded gravel-sand from these premises for ship ballast and other special uses. Then comes Nevada St., and we cannot now guess why the name. Then comes Forrest St. named for actor of that name.

Then we come to an interestingly historic (locally) strip of beach land, as naked a strip of "Cape Cod sand" as you ever saw — bought of Wheeler and laid out by Dr. Samuel Ingalls in 1875. This was the first summer beach property on the Winthrop peninsula laid out for summer cottages and it became a popular success attracting many well known and worthy people from outside at once and so continuing as a very, very valuable community to this day. Dr. Ingalls gave the names, as we have them: Dolphin Ave., Pearl Ave., Wave Way, Sea Foam Ave., Trident Ave., Coral Ave., Mermaid Ave. and Neptune Ave.:

all names with a salty beach flavor as you will agree.

We now come to a further limited area of Tewksbury beach land, laid out in 1876, which they nicely called "Atlantic Wave" with streets named Hawthorn Ave., Myrtle St., Beach Road and Rue de Mer — this latter named way being later — 50 years since — merged into the Metropolitan Winthrop Shore Drive. Here were the "Beach Bars" of old notes and records.

Adjacent to the above Tewksbury beach tract was the Deacon David Floyd tract extending to Revere St. (a part of the Winthrop farm until 1854 when it was conveyed together with the famous old house, to Floyd). The Floyd's laid out house lots and three streets in 1875 giving us Locust St., Almont St. and Cross St. and calling the new village Floydonia. We must here digress a bit to mention Lucius Floyd, a son of Deacon David. He, Lucius, as a young man probably had to do with the lay-out and the naming of these streets as he did in the matter of many of our streets at a later day: as time advanced he became Selectman for some twenty years and was Town-meeting moderator many, many times.

As we pass by we note nearby Crescent St. extending across Shirley St. in a curve, close by the former Ocean Spray R. R. Station.

Now we come to Winthrop Highlands, the northerly hundred acres of the Winthrop Farm — four beautiful hills. This large tract was sold to the City of Boston in 1866 for an insane hospital but was never used as such and was sold at auction in 1883 to Wm. B. Rice. Not a house

on it: used as a cow pasture in all the years after it had been denuded of the primal forest. Whitman & Breck proceeded to lay out this large and interesting tract into lots and streets with the result as we later see them. (The Broad gauge railroad came through the tract in 1884 and the Narrow gauge with the Highlands R. R. Station in 1887.) Streets were named, and are, as follows: Grovers Ave. for Deane Winthrop's son-in-law, Sagamore Ave. — out of respect for Sagamore George, (son of Nanepashemet, last of our "Injuns"), Hutchinson St. for Thomas Hutchinson, last of our native Royal Governors, Temple Ave. for Sir John Temple (whose daughter married Lieut. Gov. Thomas Lindall Winthrop), Floyd St. for David Floyd, 2nd who helped name these streets as he helped the layout and building up of the Town as one of our most respected and valuable citizens, Quincy Ave. for the town where Rice and Whitman resided, Sewall Ave. for Judge Samuel Sewall, the famous diarist and Deane Winthrop's good neighbor who owned our adjoining Belle Isle (Orient Heights), Deane Ave. of course, for Deane Winthrop, Summit Ave., Crest Ave., Nahant Ave., Upland Road and Pond St. for apparent reasons and later Argyle St. and Bayou St. for a finale.

Here we have Revere St.: the old Indian Trail, then path, then cartway and then a street laid out, with Winthrop St., across the Town by the present post office and then along Somerset Ave. to the Harbor, laid out by the Selectmen of Boston in 1899. The Revere St. was, of course, for our neighbor Revere who adopted that name in 1871, and the name Winthrop St., of course, is

from the Winthrop family, our first Governor and for Deane, the Deane Winthrop House and farm.

Branching off of Revere St. along here are short streets, Harvard St., Franklin St., Central St., Cherry St., and Taylor St. getting their names at different times and for minor reasons. There is a little street here, Payson St., cut off by the Town's purchase of lands for Veteran's Field. This small remaining Payson St. is for our Revolutionary hero Rev. Phillips Payson, "the fighting parson."

So we come to Magees Corner and Main St. laid out to the new bridge built in 1839 to East Boston, over Belle Isle Inlet.

Up to near the time — 1852 — when Winthrop was set off as a Town there were but three real streets in our area, Revere St., Winthrop St. and Shirley St., Main St. and Pleasant St. added made only five streets, but with many house lanes, as we started our new town.

Running from Main St. extension near Magee's Corner we have Bowdoin St., properly named for Gov. James Bowdoin (second Governor under the Constitution) and owner of a portion of land that it traverses. Below Bowdoin St. is a short street called Main St. North, running from Main St. extension toward Ocean View St. named for reasons apparent. Crossing or running from Bowdoin St. are Center St., Ocean View St., George St., Wadsworth St., River Road, Madison Ave., Buchanan St., Chester Ave., Thornton St., Willow Ave. and Bates Ave.

Center St., with the nearby Atlantic St. and

Linden St. were laid out about 1870-80 on property of and by Herman B. Tewksbury a well known and respected citizen. Ocean View St. was laid out about the same time by Samuel Belcher's heirs as was another street called Spray View St. — the latter name having been succeeded by Bowdoin St. George St. was named for Sam George as was Wadsworth St. for John Wadsworth, both well known citizens. And across from here, close to the old Samuel Belcher house, we have Belcher St. and Cora St., properly placed.

Buchanan St. was of course named for Pres. Buchanan as was Lincoln St. — for Pres. Lincoln — these streets being laid out about Civil War times. We have several streets named after the Presidents, all as we think coming after and because of the Lincoln and Buchanan streets and names. These are Washington Ave., Madison Ave. and Jefferson St. — and Fremont St. but he failed of election. (We should note also the residence on Washington Ave. (then a lane) of Washington Tewksbury and two Geo. W. Tewksburys who may have helped President George Washington in naming this street.)

Chester Ave. was laid out through land of one of our first selectmen, David Belcher and the street was named for his grandson, Chester Freeman. Thornton St. as well as Thornton Park was named for J. Wingate Thornton who lived at that location — a well and widely known man of parts of Boston as well as Winthrop. Willow Ave. was just a name for a nice little street.

Bates Ave. was named, showing proper gratitude, by the great grandchildren of Joshua Bates

of due fame. Joshua Bates born in Weymouth got for a wife, across the Harbor at Pt. Shirley, in 1813, the daughter, Lucretia Augustus, of Samuel Sturgis and so his descendants here, and with every good reason, in laying out streets over the family lands, named one for him. Joshua Bates was a founder and principal patron of the Boston Public Library, Bates Hall and a Boston School bearing (like Bates Ave.) his name. We may make note of his further good work here and abroad, becoming the head of Baring Bros., etc., etc.

River Road is just below us laid out as a through road in the early 1900's — along near the River — or old Fisher's Creek, an earlier name.

Lewis Ave. and Lewis Terrace (and Lewis Lake) are named for Orlando E. Lewis who, coming from the West was given to much appreciation of our Town. We made him Selectman a number of years. Elmwood Ave. and Elmwood Court were laid out and named by M. Austin and Henry M. Belcher.

South Ave. and North Ave. (still private ways) were laid out on his property by Albert Richardson, a selectman, and author of "Seven Years Under a Cloud". James Ave. and Edgar Terrace are on land of James M. Belcher and on land where he had a splendid garden and layout. Vine Ave. is a nice little name applied to a nice little street. Villa Ave. and Buckthorn Terrace were laid out by Orlando F. Belcher on the fine property formerly of Deacon Moses Ingalls.

Putnam St. was a lane along by the Putnam's

residence, later widened and extended as the present street. Railroad St. is along the former Railroad bed. Sea View Ave. was built on the rear land of Josiah Floyd and given that name, of course, because you could see the sea.

Dr. George S. Carter, not quite a century since, surprised some of our people by offering a thousand dollars for an acre or two of beach land. He built a house on Sunnyside Lane and so we have Sunnyside Ave. Pico Ave. was laid out on land of Charles Stevenson; the street name he brought from California. Frances St. was named for a well known lady living there.

Hiram Plummer came to town with his son-in-law Charles L. Bartlett about 1850 and became one of our first Selectmen in 1852. Plummer Ave. was, of course, named for him. He was the means of getting Pleasant St. laid out and built and was the means also of applying its pleasant name. Bartlett Road and Bartlett Parkway were named for the Bartlett family and particularly for Major General William Francis Bartlett, Winthrop's hero of the Civil War. (See his picture in our Public Library and his statue in the State House.) The short William St. (*not* Williams St. as the sign says) nearby is named for the general, at the request of his mother, as was Francis St. although the latter has been later swallowed up in Woodside Ave.

Woodside Ave. and Woodside Park were named for the Wood family. Nearby Dix St. has a little name for a little street. Seymour St. is a name applied from the family of Orlando E. Lewis. Orlando Ave. is named for Orlando E.

Lewis and Orlando F. Belcher ("that other Orlando") laid out on lands owned jointly by those two well known citizens. Eggleton Park is a little street and park with a family name. Cottage Park Road was so named, as it was the ingress to the once well known Cottage Park Hotel.

Bellevue and Somerset Ave., and later Prescott St., were good names applied by the owners and residents.

Sargent St. was a family name of a century ago. Johnson Ave. was for Benjamin Johnson who lived on the street and Marie Jansen, daughter, actress of note.

Court Park name was applied by the well known Emerson, Lowell and Loring families who came there as early as 1847 and applied the street names when the tract was laid out in streets and lots fifty years ago. Thus we have Court Road, Emerson Road, Lowell Road, Loring Road, Maple Road, Birch Road and Circuit Road.

Pauline St. was laid out about seventy-five years ago and was, very agreeably, named for, Augusta Pauline, the wife of Dr. Samuel Ingalls who owned a large tract of land here. Waldemar Ave., Wheelock St., Brookfield Road, Enfield Road, Edgehill Road, Ingleside Ave. and Palmyra St. were laid out on her land — as was Zenobia St., but that street was later swallowed up in Court Road. (Mrs. Ingalls gave the Ingleside Park area to the Town.)

Marshall St. was named for an early resident. Beal St. and Read St. were laid out on the Bill estate by Edmund S. Reed who came among us seventy-five years ago. Read St. name was, of

course, for the owner and Beal was easier and better to say than Bill — and much the same phonetically. Walden St. was well named for the one time president of the B. R. B. & L. Railroad. Little Walden St., Short St. and Jerald St. are convenient names nearby.

Tileston Road name was given by Edgar F. Power, well known citizen, for his father. Girdlestone Road was named for the proprietor of a kerosene oil works once conducted here. Sunset Road — and now Sunset Plaza — are good names for the new Veteran's Housing here.

We have two brand new little streets laid out by Willis Reid just west of Pleasant St. extension called Pleasant Court and Willis Ave. Next we come to Pleasant Park Road, named of course for its pleasant location.

Here on Main St., in 1857, Gov. Marcus Morton built a fine house for his daughter, Mrs. Hawes and so we have named a street, parallel with and north of Main St., running to Banks St., Morton St.

Then we come to Fair View, a name properly applied by its several residents in place of the early Inskip St.; name given it in honor of Preacher Inskip.

Now we come to the new Veteran's Housing and five new streets. First is an extension of Read St., named as noted above, for Edmund S. Read. Then Russell St. for Charles Russell Sturgis who built a fine house here on the hill about 1870 and Edward St. for Squire Edward Floyd who built the next nice house in 1842. Then Douglas St. for former residents here.

Then we come to Banks St., named, as was Fort Banks, for Gov. Nathaniel P. Banks who had to do, as an official in the Legislature, in the setoff of Winthrop as a new Town as of March 27, 1852. His statue is on the State House grounds.

Next we come to the Benj. Paine farm on which have been laid out Wilshire St. and Paine St. and then the little Kay St. and we have completed the circuit of the town of 1075 acres with 175 streets with their christening and a bit of their background. Most of these streets are public ways; a few are not. And a few bits of ways, with only one end, and footways are doubtless left out, they being often difficult to corral.

It is a good family record and we are pleased to have a part in it.

CHANNING HOWARD.