

THE PLAINS

PJ 13 May 82 -- Tuesday was "May training. Ye visions of Portsmouth Plains and molasses gingerbread.

See Frenchman's Lane (31) for 30 Dec, 1882.

PJ 3 May 1884 -- City-owned horse, incurably lame, was shot and buried on the Sherburne Farm at the Plains.

PJ 19 July 1884 -- Aldermen: Arrangements made to purchase lot of land at Plains, adjoining the gravel pit for gravel.

There is much material on The Plains in Brewster, and many news articles have been written about the locale.

PJ 8 September 1888 -- George F. Martin, engineer at the railroad pumping station at The Plains, fell, or jumped, from a freight train on which he was riding early Friday evening near Emery's crossing, and recived severe, if not fatal injuries.. Skull fractured. Brot to Cottage Hsp

PJ 10 Aug 1889 -- RR well at Plains caved in Friday night. It will be faced with stone when repaired.

PJ 28 May 1892 -- Would be great convenience if the Concord & Montreal were to locate a flag station at Portsmouth Plains. The RR there crosses one of the most heavily traveled carriage roads in all our suburbs, at a point nearly equi-distant from the Portsmouth and Greenland stations, which are four miles apart. There is a large community to be served, and considerable local traffic would be developed.

PJ 7 October 1893 -- Reminiscence: See OLD MARKET FERRY

PJ 26 August 1893. Edward Payson Sherburne asked to have Plains fenced in for playground and ball field was tabled.

PJ 23 November 1895 - Acting Asst Marshal [Lamont] Hilton and officers West and Holbrook raided the Plains Tavern, kept by Thomas Lynskey, on Sunday, but found only one bottle of beer. Lynskey was arrested and in court Monday. Judge Emery deemed the evidence insufficient.

PJ 26 December 1896 -

—"Jack," the city's horse and many years in service but whose days of usefulness were passed, was taken to the Plains gravel pit on Monday and humanely killed by Constable Hodgkins and buried on the city's reservation there.

The city's gravel pit at the Plains was known in contemporary times as the "Stump Dump" and was convenient place to which leaves, branches, etc, could be hauled. But, as everything else, a few people spoiled it for everyone else. It's now closed except to city personnelk.

PJ 8 August 1897 - Store of William N. Redden at the Plains was burgled; cigard and candy stolen. The culprits, believed to be boys, got in through a window.

See Lafayette road for 21 May 1898.

PJ 25 Nov 1899 -

—At a meeting of the police commissioners on Wednesday evening it was voted to instruct Marshal Entwistle to close any road house in the city limits and to raid the Plains tavern and the house at the Rockingham trotting park. Neither of these places can strictly be called a road-house in the usual acceptation of the term, and, in fact, there is no such institution existing in the city's jurisdiction. The statement in a local paper that the "Jim Blaine" and "White Rock" houses on Sagamore road would be closed by our police has caused much amusement at the police station, as these places are in the town of Rye and therefore beyond our police department's jurisdiction.

PJ 2 December 1899 -- Police Comish chair ordered bottlers in the city not to sell even "soft stuff" to the Plains tavern or the house at the trotting park.

PJ 6 October 1900-

Trolley Extension in Portsmouth.
The Boston & Maine railroad has petitioned the supreme court for leave to build extensions to its electric railroad in this city which will include a loop to the Plains and one to Newcastle going down Pleasant and Marcy streets and over the bridges and then up through Little Harbor road to the main line to Rye, and another from Lang's corner to Wallis sands and along Foss' beach joining the main line at Rye centre. This will effectually block the scheme to run an independent line to Newcastle that was said to be the tapis.

PJ 7 Dec 01

The following communication was received from City Solicitor S Peter Emery in regard to the Plains matter, on which an investigation was ordered by the council at its recent special meeting:

To the Honorable Mayor and Board of Aldermen:

In regard to the question as to where the city obtained the Plains, which was formerly known as the training field, I find that the General Assembly of the Province of New Hampshire, on the twenty-first day of January, 1716, made a grant to Thomas Westbrook to keep the only public house by himself or another, at the Plains to the Town of Portsmouth in consideration that the said

Westbrook should lay out six acres of land at the said Plains for an accommodation of drawing up the militia of the town or province

Westbrook, to enable him to do this, made an agreement with Henry Sherburn whereby he sold one half of his privilege to run a public house for three acres of land and other considerations. Later on Joseph Akerman deeded one acre of land at the Plains to the city free from restrictions which was afterwards added to the training field. I will have a further report to make at your next meeting

Respectfully,

S. PETER EMERY,
Solicitor.

PJ 21 Dec 1901 - Solicitor ruled that under the law "the city held the Plains as a public highway and as such the tracks of the local electric road were legally located."

Pj 18 May 01 - It is hoped that the loop around the Plaons can be built by the street railway company early this season, as it will not only be a great accommodation for the Country Club members, but also for people who dwell in that outlying district from the present ermini of the tracks on Islington street and Lafayette road. Much building, both on Middle and Islington roads, would follow the building of this loop.

PJ 13 July 1901

The work of constructing the Pla loop of the Portsmouth street railway was began Monday morning on Middle road by a large gang of Italians.

Contractor Killoran with a force of 75 laborers and a number of teams is in charge of the job. Work was started in front of Frank Newton's house and the first job will be to blow out the ledge there and fill in the hollow.

The residents of that district are hoping at the same time that the water commissioners will finish laying about 600 feet of pipe which has been lying at the roadside since last fall.

All of the material for the extension is purchased and it will be brought here this week.

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PH 25 May 1903 - Leonard F. Cook, keeper of the Plains Tavern, held for selling beer. Cook was leader in protest against fencing the Plains for a baseball field.

Herald 29 June 1903 -

The temporary injunction granted several weeks ago by Judge Young of the supreme court, restraining the city government from granting permission to fence in a portion of The Plains for a baseball field, will become permanent by its own operation, as the city has taken no steps looking to the dissolving of the injunction, and will take none. The strong opposition developed to the scheme killed it; but probably had the injunction been contested, the court would have decided that the city had not power to grant the permission asked for.

As to where the title to The Plains rests, the city holds a deed for about one acre of land on the northerly side, bought in 1800 for \$22, and this was its only title to any part of The Plains, so far as was generally known, until since the injunction was

issued; but since then, a former Portsmouth man, now a resident of Brooklyn, N. Y., who was born in the old "Globe tavern" at The Plains, and probably knows more of the history of the old training field than any other person living, has shown that in 1799 the town bought of Samuel Tucker for \$36 a strip of land on the southerly side, 48 1-2 rods long, 26 feet wide at the easterly end, where it met the road leading from The Plains to Rye, and 18 feet wide at the westerly end, at the old tavern, this strip being conveyed "to be a public highway forever."

This shows that the city owns two sides of The Plains, whoever or whatever may own the main portion. An act of the legislature granting the land to the city would settle the matter for good, and this is probably the way it will be settled in time.

The item below should precede 25 May 03 on previous page.

Herald 20 May 1903 -

Ald Paul offered the following resolution which was passed under a suspension of the rules

City of Portsmouth, In the Year of
Our Lord, 1903.

Joint resolution authorizing the
fencing of the Plains

Resolved by the city council of
the city of Portsmouth, as follows:

That for the purpose of amusement and the better protection of city property, the joint standing committee on streets are hereby directed to procure the fencing of that tract of land owned by said city, and known as the Plains, said tract lying between Greenland and Islington Road, so called, and the track of the electric railway of the Portsmouth and Exeter railroad.

Said committee are hereby author-

ized to make such contract for said fencing as may be for the best advantage of the city, but no fence shall be erected that will interfere with the public use of said highways and said electric railway or that will interfere with the drawing up of any militia.

A petition signed by a number of people protesting against the fencing in of the Plains was received, but no action was taken on the matter.

Ald. Fernald inquired if some of the signers did not live some distance away from the Plains, in fact two and three miles away.

Ald. Paul brought out the fact that some had signed the petition two or three times and out of the twenty odd names, one family contributed seven or eight.

PH 22 May 1903 -- Messenger from Exeter arrived at above meeting with injunction against fencing.

PH - 18 Sept 03 -

The following is a copy of the deed issued one hundred and seventy-seven years ago relative to hotel keeping at Portsmouth Plains:

"Whereas, the general assembly of the Province of New Hampshire on the twenty-fifth day of January, 1716, made a grant unto Thomas Westbrook to keep the only public house by himself or another at a place called The Plains in the town of Portsmouth in the Province aforesaid forever, in consideration that the said Westbrook should lay out six

acres of land at the said Plains for an accommodation of drawing up the Militia of the town or Province aforesaid.

"Now this instrument witnesses, that the said Thomas Westbrook, for and in consideration of three acres of land, bargained, sold and made over to him to enable him to perform the consideration of the above mentioned grant, by Henry Sherburn of the said Plains in the town and Province aforesaid, yeoman, as by his deed bearing even date with these pres-

ests. He the said Thomas Westbrook hereby give and grant, assign, assure, make over and confirm to the said Henry Sherburn, his heirs, executors, administrators and assigns forever (he they or some of them paying the one half of twenty shillings yearly into the treasury or otherwise expressed in the grant) the full moiety of one half part of the privilege of keeping a tavern at The Plains as amply to all interests and purposes as the same was granted to the said Westbrook by the general assembly, aforesaid, to have and to hold the half of the said privilege with all the profits and advantages belonging to the same, to the said Henry Sherburn, his heirs, executors

and administrators paying ten shillings per annum as aforesaid, forever. In testimony whereof the said Thomas Westbrook hath hereunto set his hand and affixed his seal on the thirteenth day of September, 1726, and in the thirteenth year of his Majesty King George's reign.

Signed sealed and delivered in presence of Thomas Westbrook (L. S.)

Richard Waldron, Jr.,
William Locke
York St. Falmouth, Nov. 27, 1741
Thomas Westbrook, Esq., personally appeared and acknowledged the above and foregoing instrument to be his act and deed before
Jer. Moulton, Jus. Peace.

Herald 15 April 1904 -- Resolution passed approving erection of a waiting room at The Plains for electric road passengers

PH 16 May 1904-

The supreme court has overruled the exceptions in the case of Sherburne et als. vs. City of Portsmouth. This was a bill in equity "to restrain the city from building a baseball park at The Plains, a public common containing about eleven acres given to the city in 1716 for the training of a militia for the town and province and used since for that purpose and by the public generally for a pay ground; also to restrain the city councils from voting to fence the Plains for the purposes of amusement and the better protection of the city property. The bill alleges that the city councils in-

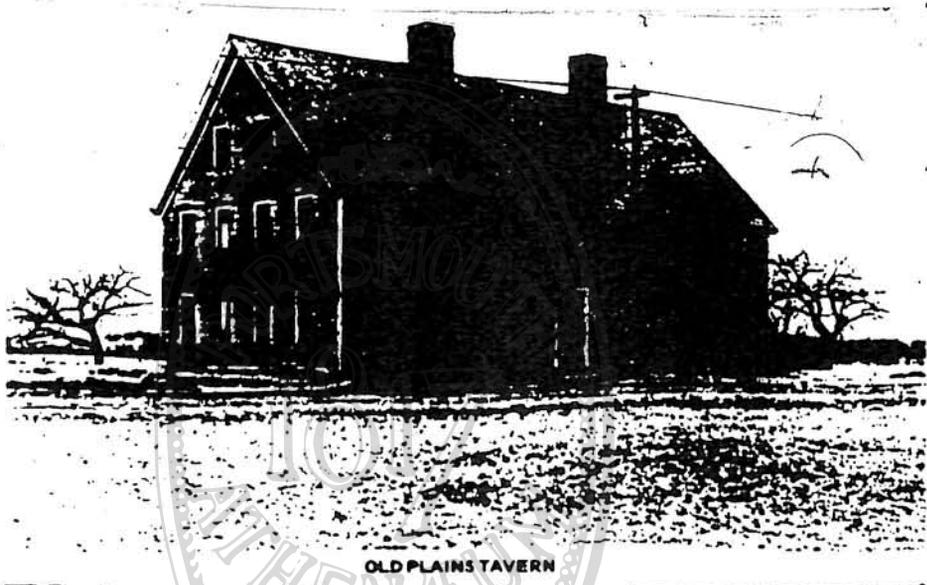
tend, under this vote, to inclose the greater part of the Plains with a high board fence and give the control of the premises to certain individuals who will use them for a baseball park and athletic field, and will exclude all who do not pay an admission fee. The plaintiffs are taxpayers in Portsmouth and own property adjoining the Plains. The defendants demurred and the court, Pike J. transferred the questions raised by the demurrer.

John W. Kelley for the plaintiffs.
Ernest L. Guptill and Samuel W. Emery for the defendants.

On Saturday 3 October 1908 Portsmouth High played the first game of football ever staged at The Plains, beating Dover, 2-0.

"The game was the first ever played at the Plains and with a little assistance from the city, it could be made into a very good field. A few loads of dirt and haf a day's work woul place the field in fine shape...."

Herald 21 February 1986



OLD PLAINS TAVERN

Plains residents plan reunion on Aug. 23

On Saturday, Aug. 23, the Portsmouth "Plains" will be holding a reunion at Yokers.

All "Plains Indians", those who lived there in the past and those who now live there, are invited to the special evening which will begin with a social hour at 6 followed by a buffet at 7.

Tickets are \$14 per person and reservations must be made before Aug. 5. Anyone interested and wanting more information should contact any member of the planning committee: Charles W. Clark, Norman Clark, Hezabeth Caswell, Paul Connors, Robert Durgin, Carol Pearson, Donald Ricklefs, Walter Swasey, Paul Teague, William Wood and Helen Worden.

The reunion committee hopes that all "Plains Indians" who will be joining in the fun of the night will bring with them anything relating to

Captain Shackford, was sent to intercept them. This was done the next morning while the Indians were eating breakfast in the area now known as the corner of Lafayette Road and Breakfast Hill Road in Rye.

The soldiers recovered the prisoners as the Indians made a hasty escape. Mrs. Mary Brewster, reports shown, was severely wounded and left for dead, her scalp having been removed but she recovered and became the mother of seven children.

In the 1700s the Plains almost became a separate town. It had a school, a church, a tavern and a training ground for the Militia.

In 1750, Mr. Gotham built the tavern, sometimes called King George Tavern. In 1773, the name was changed to Globe Tavern, and records show it was still standing in

PH 27 Oct 1909 -- Teams from USS New Hampshire and pick-up Portsmouth club played a 5 to 5 tie

NHG 12 June 1761 - To be run for on Monday at the usual Race Grounds, the Portsmouth Plains, near the Globe Tavern, by gelding White Stockings and the Newington Mare. Purse of considerable value.

NHG 21 August 1761 -

This is to give NOTICE, That on Monday the 31st Instant August, at Three o'Clock, P. M. there will be a very good SILVER WATCH almost new, set up to be Shot for, the Distance seventy Yards, at Six Pounds Old Tenor per Shot; the Price of said Watch is One hundred and twenty Pounds Old Ten. the Money to be paid at the House of Mr. John Parry Innholder in Portsmouth on the Plains; Tickets to be had of said Parry at his House, who will receive the Money, and deliver the Watch: The nearest Ball to the Center wins the Watch.

NHG 27 November 1761 -

To be Shot for at the Plains in Portsmouth, on Tuesday the 8th of December next, a Yoke of OXEN coming Six fit for Beef, or work: And also a good Gun, and a Silver Watch, to be Shot for at the same Place, on the Tuesday following, all at Eleven o'Clock. Tickets to be had of John Parry L. O. S. T. a Pocket Book in Town with about £. 15 10/ Old Tenor about Two Weeks ago, who ever brings it to the said Parry shall be well Rewarded. Lent a walking Cane with a Cocoa Nut Head, but forgot to whom, if they Please to Return it, will be kindly accepted by the aforesaid JOHN PARRY.

Herald 5 Dec 1913 - Council-

A petition of Mr. N. A. McKenna for the purchase of land at the Plains was brought up. Mr. McKenna has purchased the Plains Tavern which he is tearing down, and wants to develop the property. The lot of land was shaped so that it could not be worked to an advantage at the end of the lot. The city owns a half acre of land in side of the electric road track, which would shape his land up so that it could build, and he wished to purchase it from the city. He had two plans to make a swap with the city

or purchase. The land in question is absolutely of no use to the city and very few even thought it belonged to the city. The matter was explained by Mr. McKenna who appeared before the Council and explained his plans for erecting two houses there next spring. Mr. Paul also appeared in favor of the purchase.

The matter was finally referred to a special committee consisting of Mayor Badger, Councilmen Dunham and Plakham.