

Address

at

Leeds, Me., Centennial Celebration

Aug 15, 1901

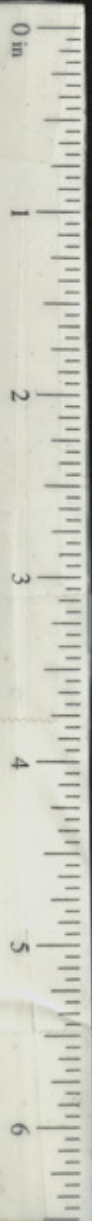
No. 19. Vol 8.

Subject

Penninsular & old families

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BURLINGTON, VT.



*Leeds
20 September 1911 file*

My fellow Townsman:-

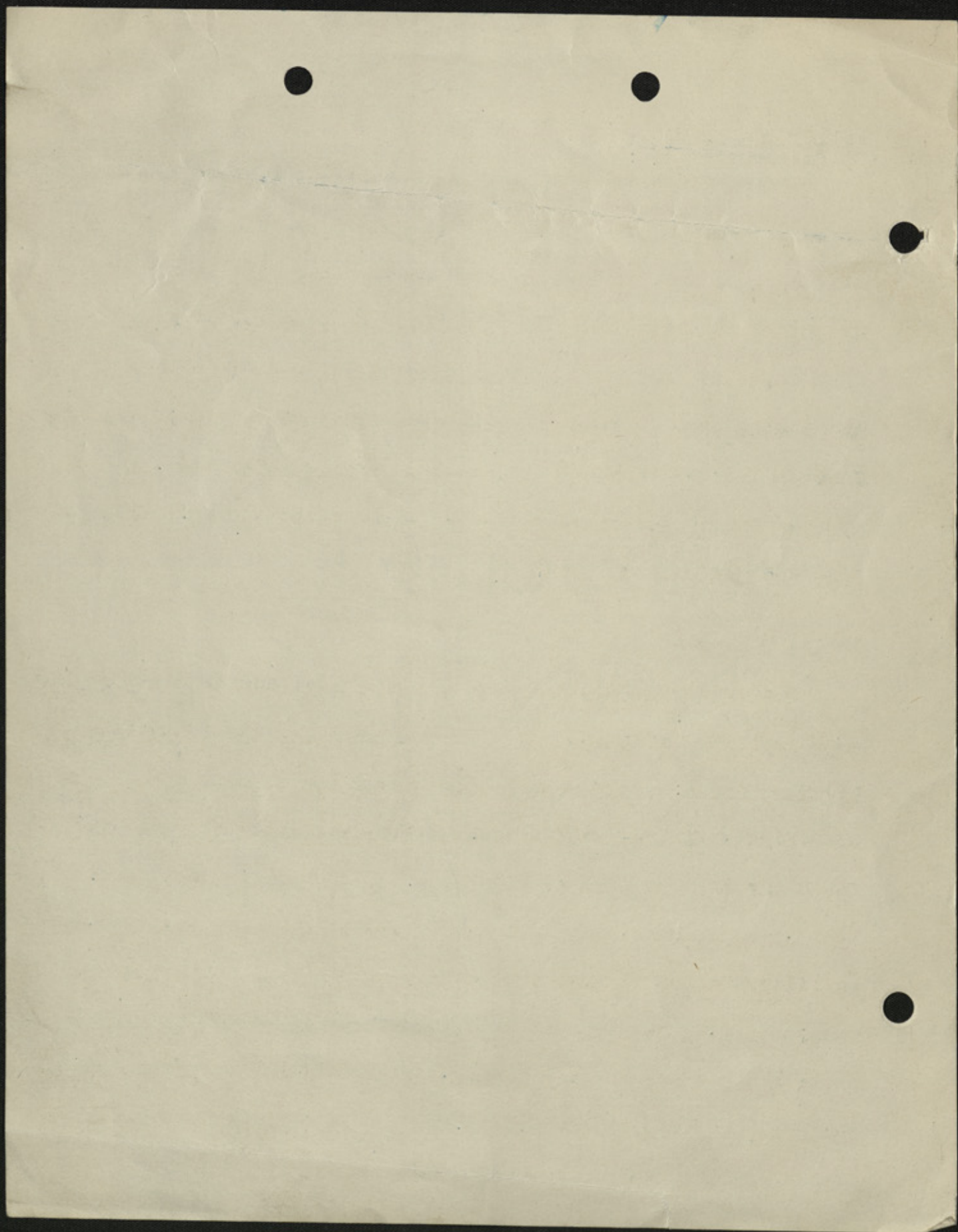
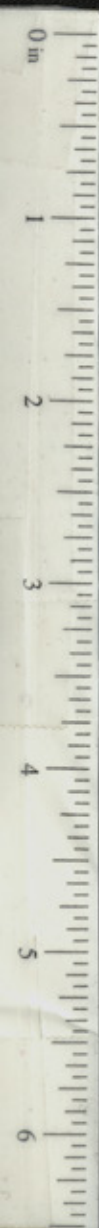
This year, which you call for the town of Leeds--"The Centennial," is the 71st of my own entrance into this bright world. When I was thinking of my early days and the environments, I began unconsciously to say to myself:

"How dear to my heart are the scenes of my childhood,
"When fond recollection recalls them to view;
"The orchard, the meadow, the deep tangled wildwood;
"And all the loved spots that my infancy knew.

Here at Leeds how vividly they come up before me! The child at first does not see far; but his eyes soon take in some things which remain very precious pictures on the retina, or are soon transferred to the fresh tablets of his memory. They do, however, remain forever.

(I) The Mother:

First, it is--that mother. How my eyes and little feet followed her from room to room in Capt. Seth Howard's big house. The table, the kitchen, the spinning wheel with its pleasant hum, the quilting and spooling machines and the great loom in the northwest room; these, and every piece of furniture from the bench I sat upon to the handsome parlor mirror, are associated with some graceful action of Eliza Otis Howard.

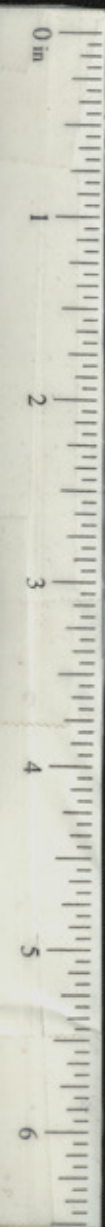


(2) The Immigration:

My grandfather, Capt. Seth Howard--then, like me today, over three score years and ten next filled my eyes. How straight and tall he was. How gentle and kind to me. How dignified he appeared even when sitting by the fire frame smoking his pipe, or when with spectacles down from their usual resting place he was reading the weekly paper. From his lips came to me the story of the tremendous journey from old Bridgewater, Mass., which brought his growing family to Leeds, a country where there was more wood to burn and new soil to till.

(3) The Distribution:

Stillman, Rowland, Aurelia and Lucretia, and Frank (born here) were residents of Leeds and vicinity. They all had goodly families that scattered to the four winds. (Gen. Dan Sickles declared that I, Howard, had a cousin at every railroad station in nine states of the Union). Ward went to Peekskill, N. Y.; Seth, the son, the present Seth Howard's uncle, found his way to Philadelphia and thence to Mobile, Ala.; Everett went hither and thither, painting and leaving likenesses instead of children and grandchildren to perpetuate his memory, always roving until his death. I did not exactly mean to sketch a family tree, but simply to turn over a few tablets in the book of remembrance.

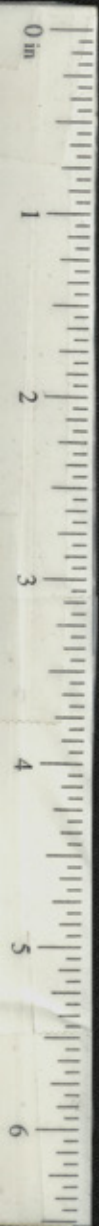


(4) A Boy's Environment:

I looked out of the window of our two-story farm house, to behold the Wayne pond and the great hill of Leeds, at least the north side of it. My father was what the young eyes sought and found. He was not quite so tall as grandfather. I remember an occasional smile was in the sudden kindness of his eyes rather than from the wrinkles of his face, but with his sandy side-whiskers and his lengthy eye-brows he usually looked seriously at me, and often, doubtless with good reason, became a little stern, particularly when I lost his tools or broke a pane of glass. He was at work in the garden with a hired man; or he was in some one of his cleared fields; or he had his horses one at a time scampering around him in the dooryard; or he was building the stone wall and planting those trees that have today such magnitude and magnificence; he was always busy.

(5) The Baptist Church:

Rowland B. Howard, my father, loved music, played the flute, enjoyed reading, especially poetry and good books. Once he repaired the old Baptist church and rebuilt the sheds back of it. He called me one Sunday morning to go to meeting there, hallooing from the front of our house. I was keeping the cattle from the corn in the upper field, and the wind was blowing against his face. This vocal effort was too much. That day at church commenced the fearful



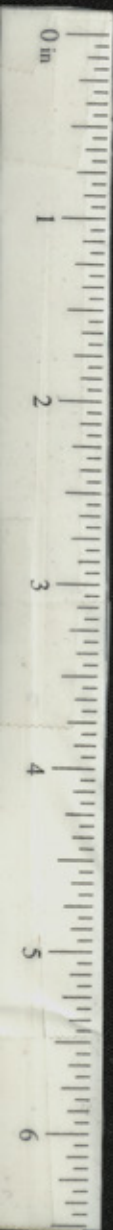
hemorrhages of his lungs which caused his death.

(6) The Neighbors--Uncle Barna An Object Lesson:

Beyond our orchard grandfather's brother Barnabus Howard settled. Oh, what a beautiful place was that to the boys of my age. His grandchildren--Luther, Melvin, Lucy, Merilla, Elmina, Mary and Dexter. There were plenty of boys and girls there for fine play. The small ponds by the ridge where we constructed ingenious rafts; the apple orchard to climb in; the maple trees in spring time for sugar and for famous camping; the long barn with all its attractions--hay-mows with ladders to ascend, and hens eggs to find; and outside the large barn doors just right for "barn ball." Rowland and I were always happy when mother gave us a holiday at uncle Barna's. She sent us off after she had put upon us white collars and charged us to keep them clean. They sometimes came home very bloody and always soiled. It was an object lesson to hear uncle Barna read the scriptures of a morning and pray--simple, earnest, faithful old soul, he never knew how much good he did. One Sunday I was told that he and his family forgot that it was the Sabbath; he was working all day in the hayfield. A neighbor returning from church saw him over the fence and called to him--"How is this Uncle Barna--breaking the fourth commandment be'nt you?"

"Why, why, sartin--it is not Sunday."

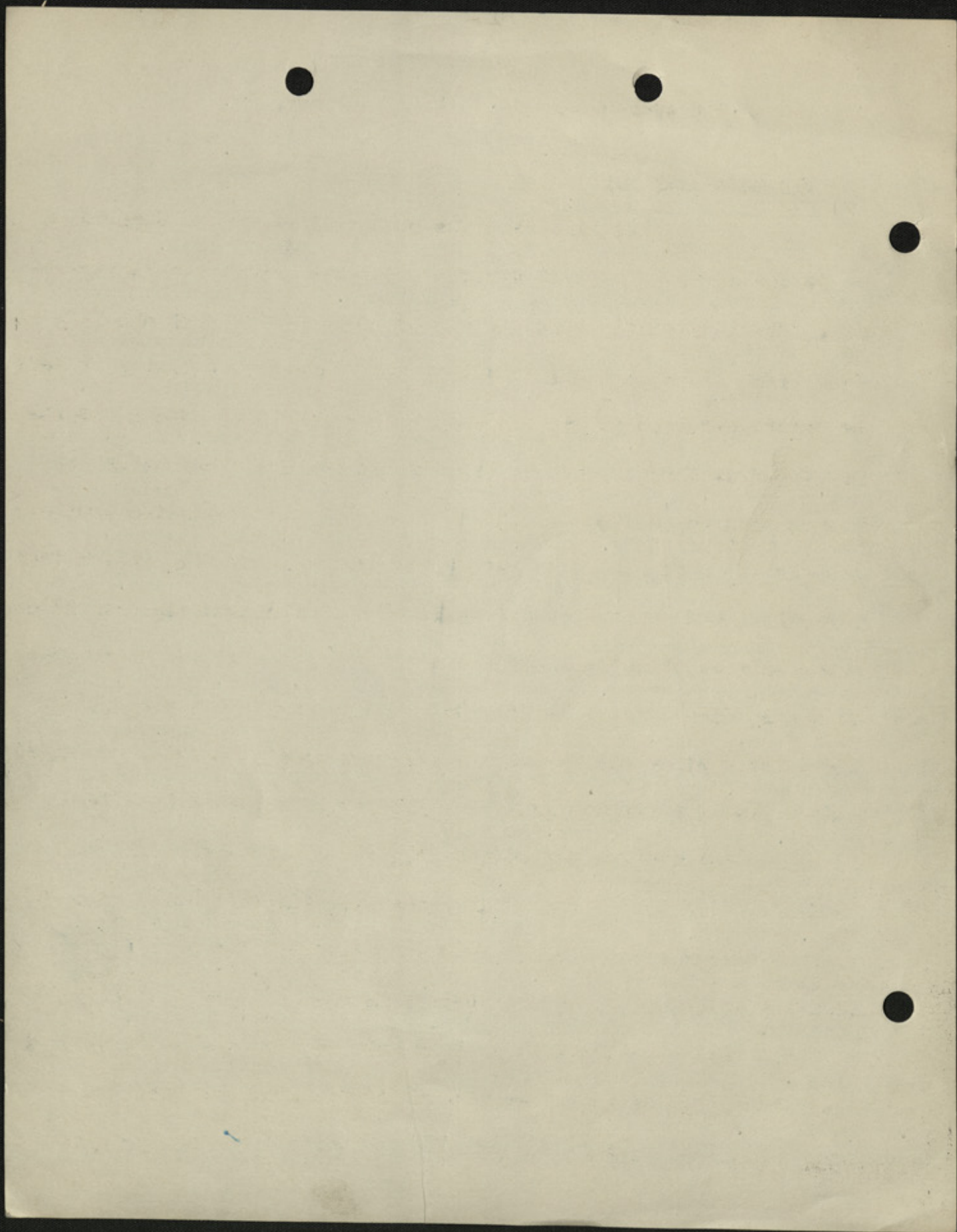
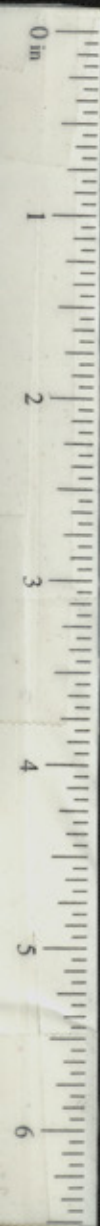
"Oh yes it is--'Sabba-day,' and I'm coming home from meeting."



"Well then," said the old man, "I'll keep tomorrow." So uncle Barna understood the spirit of things and acted nobly.

(7) The District School:

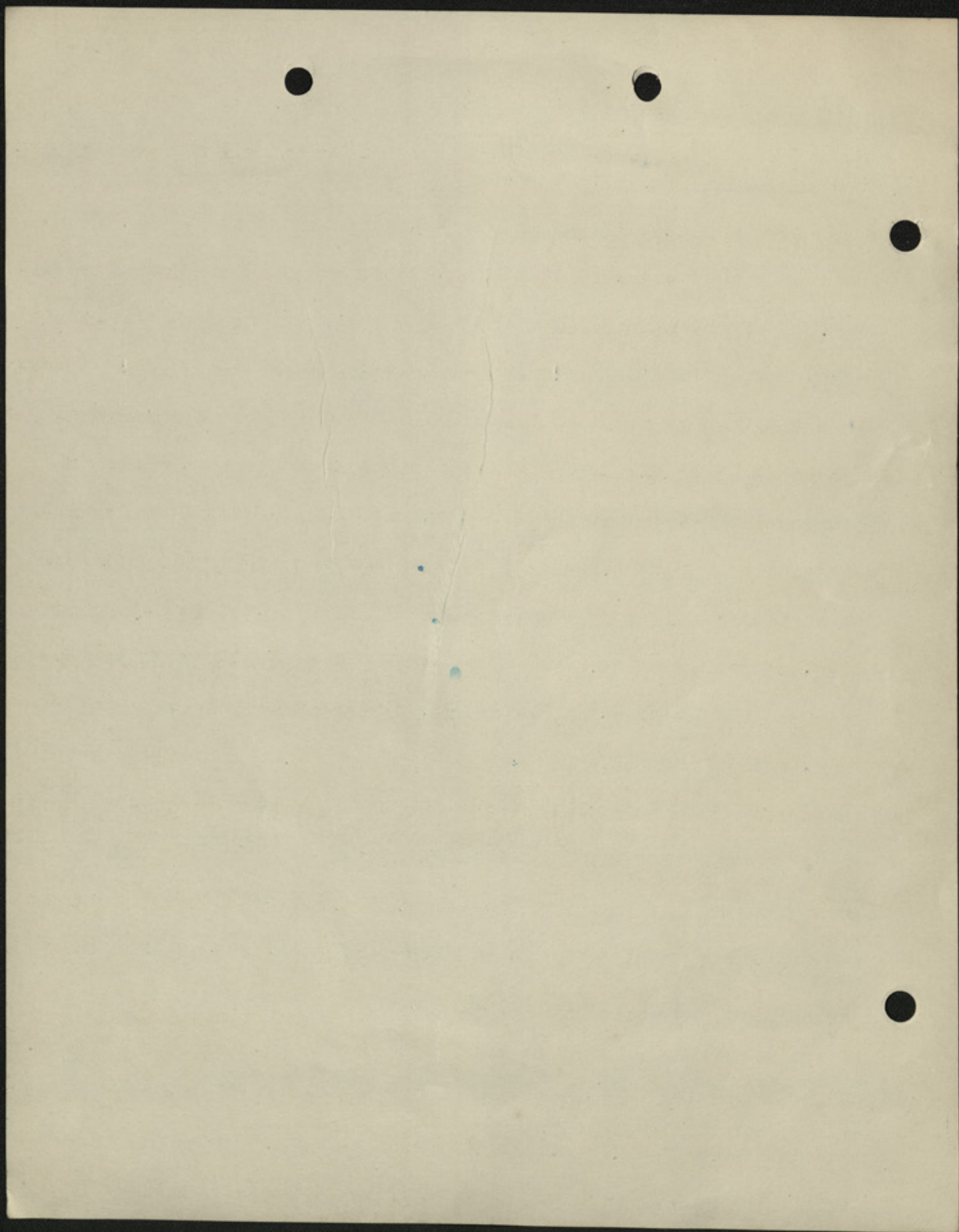
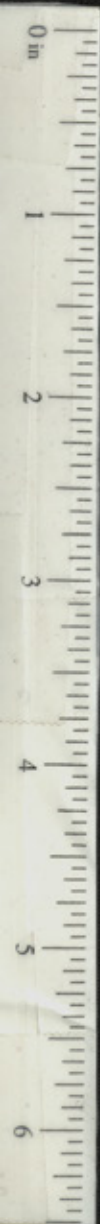
The school broadens the horizon of a boy's outlook. I think Hannah Knapp was my first school-mistress. I remember how we boys at four and five years of age trudged up the ascending aisle of the old unpainted school-house, doubtless proud and somewhat vain, with short new trousers, bare feet and straw hats in hand. Kate, Hannah's sister, was a fine girl too who, after some years, followed her sister's calling. Chas. Knapp the father, our neighbor, had a large choice family; people did in those old halcyon days. His voice was like a shrill clarion, pleasant to children when they were not mischievous. He had these children, Arch, Sewall, Hannah, Katharine, Rufus, and the two Hutchins boys by adoption. Rufus was somewhat older than I. When I was eight he was fourteen and at school. He was muscular, five feet ten and as strong as a giant, but fortunately good natured. It took during our recess at school Chas. and Geo. Lane, the sons of John Lane, Judson Lane, the son of Issachar, Henry Millet, the son of John Dyer, Clark and Aubrey Woodman, the sons of Ammi Woodman, Melvin and Otis Howard, all combined, to tackle Rufus Knapp, throw him down and lay him out on a snow back. It often gave me a sore neck and bruised shoulders to run between his great legs and trip him up for the other boys to



pile on to his arms and feet and hold him down.

(8) The Madawasky War:

About that time came the wonderful Madawasky war. Then, as in our subsequent Civil strife, Leeds was phenomenal in patriotism. How the men ran together at the sound of the drum and fife in John Dyer Millett's yard! How they were chosen by a draft! I never before had seen so grand a spectacle as that the Leed's company presented as they marched up and down in new uniforms, having red plumes with white tops for the men, and bright distinctive feathers for the officers. My father was drafted and being infirm from rheumatism had to send George Washington George, a cross-eyed soldier, as a substitute. George was brave and evaded the sharp eyes of the surgeon, "for," he declared, "I can shoot with the best of them, for I close one eye when I sight my gun." You will remember that before the Leeds' contingent arrived upon the battle-field Americans and British had caught glimpses of each other on our Maine frontier and both had run away. Gen. Winfield Scott came and somehow parleyed with the English Commissioner, and settled the boundary question without bloodshed. He had had enough of fighting with our British cousins at Lundy's Lane twenty-four years before. That bloodless war terrified the people of Leeds and made the women and children cry. It was so near, and Maine, not Maryland and



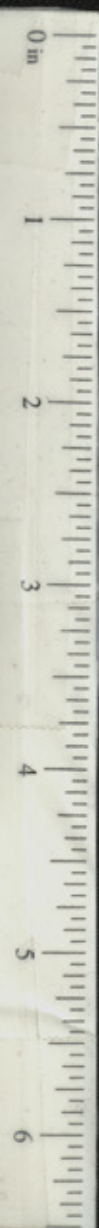
Virginia, was the state to be desolated by the war. Who does not recall the old flint-lock, cartridge-box, wide belt and powder horn?

(9) Religious Controversies:

What a school we had then both winter and summer. My cousin, Thomas ~~K.~~ Bridgham, the teacher for one winter, I liked. He had to ferule me, together with some other lads, for going off into that tempting woodland where the hackmatacks, with an occasional spruce, pine or fir grew; it was the going off during the school hours!—I do not see how such serious boys could have done that! Thomas was converted that winter when my father lay ill. He came to my mother with his troubles. His father could not tolerate the orthodox folks at the center and yet Thomas the son felt it his duty to join them. Dr. Bridham said—"If you do that Thomas, never see me more." My mother thought he ought to join the church, but my father said it would be better for Thomas to obey his father and wait. By this the whole town was agitated and much divided. Leeds has often had its religious controversies and been much exercised to so provide that every one can now worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience.

(10) Politics:

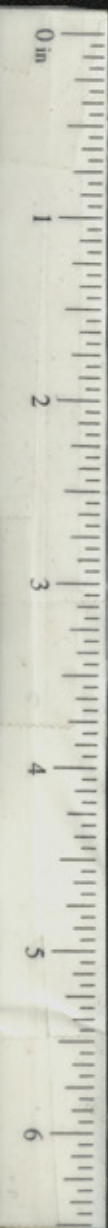
During the years before the presidential elections politics raged more than religion. In 1840 the excitement in Leeds was at its height. The whigs for William Henry Harrison erected



liberty poles and the loco-focos cut them down. Then when new ones went up the young whigs filled the poles with nails and spikes for several feet from the ground and prepared themselves with shot guns to defend them. Peas, I understood, were used and actually fired into loco-foco legs. All this was done at night. Our family was divided. Grandfather and father were pronounced whigs while uncle Stillman and the older children were Jackson-Democrats, called by the whigs loco-focos. Notwithstanding this commotion and contest, when the day for election actually came both parties went down to the old town house and behaved all day with great propriety, quietly slipping in their votes. Then politics grew milder and milder till nearing the next political mile-stone.

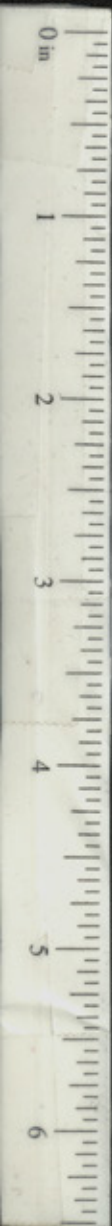
(II) Leeds' Families:

The first year of my college life, as I was passing from my fifteenth to my sixteenth year, I came home from Bowdoin and wanted to teach school to help out the meagre purse; but the school committee said--"Otis, you are too young." I had no beard and tho of fair size my voice had nothing grum in it. So during that winter I nominally remained at home, but roamed about the town and visited here and there my friends outside of Leeds. If you speak the name of a Leeds' family I notice that I have some association with it; for example--the Lothrop's. Col. Leavitt Lothrop was my guardian after my father's death; Francis was a teacher and helped



me on greatly in my mathematics: Warren and I went to Mr. Dean's high school together at the brick school house in the Curtis or Lindsey district; again, he and I were associated in the army after his return from Mexico, at West Point, where I was a cadet and he was in the Engineer company: again when both were lieutenants in Florida. My first winter school as teacher was in East Livermore. The next at South Leeds where my stepfather Col. Gilmore lived. This brought me into closer connection with all the people on Quaker Ridge than in my school days.

Not many months ago I was in Detroit, Mich. A handsome lady spoke to me after a lecture: she said--"Don't you know me Otis, I was your next door neighbor." It was Betsey Bates the daughter of Chas. and Hannah Bates. I wish I could speak of them all--the ^{Richmonds} Brewsters, Baileys, Wings, Dunhams, Gilberts, Turners, Coffins, Lindseys, Bishops, Pettingills, Libbys. And also all clustered around Leeds Center, as--the Lanes, Leonards, Frances, Boothbys, Mitchells, Crummetts, Moores, Dwinells and Fosters. Then in our home district where, near my uncle Ensign Otis, I taught my last winter school: and, in West Leeds where we visited and had spelling matches and debates were, besides those I have named--the Sumners, the Robbins, the Whites, the Davys, the Fish family, the Rackleys, the Fosses, the Manleys, the Gilberts, the Cushmans, the Jennings, the Deans, the Francis, the Sylvesters, the Grants, the Herricks

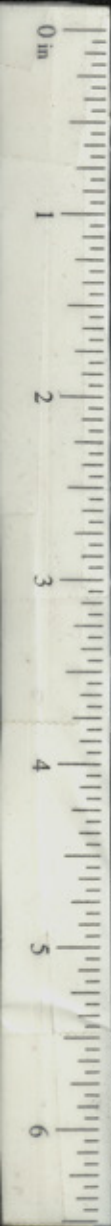


and the Ramsdells. And who can number the North Leeds' contingent, as--the Carys, the Greenwoods, the Cobbs, the Goulds, the Leadbeaters, the Parchers, or the South Turner-Ridge quota of the Welcomes, Athertons and others.

Leeds has been the dwelling place of my family on the Howard side, or some portion of it, for almost a century--it lacks but four years--and on my mother's side through the Stanchfields for more than a hundred years. Roger and Thomas Stanchfield, the one my great uncle and the other my great grandfather, lived near the floating-bridge, which I think they must have constructed. That bridge was an object lesson to me and a wonderful help in the civil war.

(12) Patriotic Devotion:

In the Civil war from '61 to '65 Leeds filled every commissioned grade of Major-General, Brig.-General, Colonel, Lieutenant-Colonel, Major, Captain and Lieutenant; also among the enlisted the non-commissioned of Sergeant and Corporal. Of the whole number who fought in the war I find none but faithful and glorious records. Many gave their lives in battle, or as a consequence of battles, fought for their country, and others passed away from sickness induced by hardship and exposure in service. Leeds, standing with other towns of the state, has ample reason to be proud of the patriotic devotion and the accomplishments of her sons.

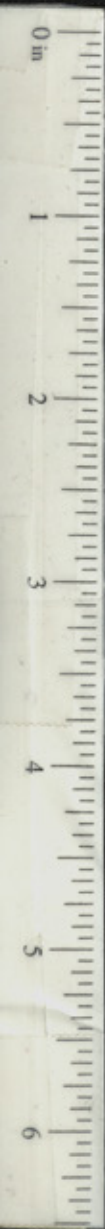


(I3) Leeds A Type Of Free Government:

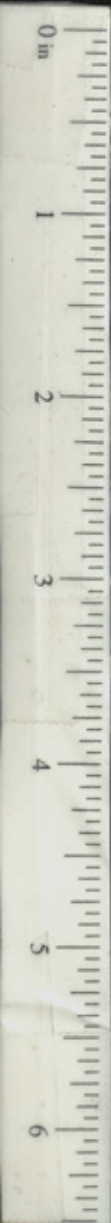
Leeds has never had a village, nothing more than corners and hamlets. It is a pretty large township--nine miles long and six miles broad, essentially a farming region, but for schools, churches and home-voting it has ever been a fair type of free government, a fine place to start children in the race of life. The railway running its whole length has caused some restlessness and carried off its girls and boys to other spheres of usefulness, and privileges superior to those of their fathers and mothers, but whenever I have met them, and I find them everywhere in and out of cities and places of trust, I have never been ashamed by the reminder that they were born and reared in Leeds.

(I4) Source of Regret:

My only feeling of regret comes when I see old farms deserted, the schools growing smaller and the families that once numbered many souls scarcely maintaining the name and place of their ancestors. But I for one have no right to scold, because I departed, and the faithful son of uncle Stillman, your justly honored citizen, Seth Howard, is the only one who represents the name of Howard in Leeds. And he, dear fellow, is peopling Iowa and the west. But I do hope "the home-coming" year by year will draw many families back to keep up the old homesteads. We are learning that the variety of production of a New England farm, where there are



well filled barns and cellars not to be despised, is a source of comfort, and even luxury, that city salaries seldom furnish. The good air, the pure water and the choice home society, with our Heavenly Father's blessing should count as much in 1901 as they did in 1801. So my townsmen hold the fort, and take courage to make the new century as bright as the old just past.



(14) Outlook for the New Century.

The material prospect from now to 2001, has river power and factories, good homes, fine farms, plenty of honey, butter and cheese, fruits, grain and berries, choice churches, on slightly hills for the Sundays, and good school houses with the dear old flag floating over them at masthead at every cross road; it has still beautiful self-respecting young women and sturdy, fearless, good principled young men - all this with the old Bible and God's blessing will keep up the heritage of contentment, courage and preparation for duty here and joy hereafter.

But beyond the boundary Leeds is the State. Our ancestor sat in its legislature and in the council chamber of its Governor, and watched its glorious beginnings. Your boys and girls have many of them during the last century joined the tide that was flowing into the cities. Now that city-tide is turning for pure water and air, for health and summer refreshment; the greatest, the richest, the best of the sons and daughters of Columbia are flocking to our rocky shores and peopling our rugged islands, and trying to monopolize our life-giving springs. Let them come. Maine has a strong welcome and a Yankee home-market.

But beyond the State, Leeds has a Nation. Every Leeds man who takes a daily or weekly journal keeps up his interest in public affairs. Nobody excels him in this. He has struggled, together with the volunteers, in spirit if not in person, in sympathy if not in hardship and exposure, through the malarious camps of the Southern border; through the high

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The material progress from now to 2001, the river power and factories, good homes, fine farms, plenty of honey, butter and cheese, fruits, grain and berries, choice churches, on a little hill for the Sunday, and good school houses with the best old flag floating over them at masthead at every cross road; it has still beautiful self-respecting young women and sturdy, fearless, good practical young men - all this with the old Bible and God's blessing will keep up the heritage of contentment, courage and preparation for duty here and joy hereafter.

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winds and waves of the great Mexican Gulf; though the rough and difficult landings on the coast and the terrific advance over the porcupine hills and almost impassible jungles of Santiago De Cuba to strike and conquer the foes of humanity with two to one against us. Now with great joy he beholds Cuba a free republic with a written Constitution and our Nation's Guaranty behind it to make it everlasting.

Porto Rico is a gem. Our citizen looks at it with wonder. How did we get it without blood and sacrifice? How shall we cleanse off the debris and polish it more and more? Oh, we will do it, say our home politicians when our own party gets into power. We will do it whether the Constitution follows the flag or the flag follows the Constitution. As in the Howard family of old, there may be division; the strife will be between great parties; but let us remember now that Washington and Jackson have both become immortal. Federal and democratic teaching and practice have both been essential to the making of a whole republic. The faults of parties and leaders pass away, but the products of their virtues are established forever.

Admiral Dewey, - how your hearts almost stopped their beats on account of his peril in the straits of Manila, - Admiral Dewey went there and struck hard blows and so expanded our domain. My honored classmate, William P. Frye, with other great associates dared as much as Dewey in settling with Spain for the Orient. They started 9,000,000. of people into life and growth, had privilege - the privilege of freemen - the privilege of our wonderful Constitution. Frye's commission did

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accomplish a magnificent work for humanity and our Senate and President and people have been superbly wise to confirm their action. Therefore:

All hail the dawn of coming days,
Which fill our world with brilliant rays;
May men grow better year by year,
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Oration O. C. H.
Leds, Me.,
Aug. 15, 1901-

