

**ANNALS OF THE
BROOKLINE WHIST
CLUB, 1873-1907**

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Annals of the Brookline Whist Club, 1873-1907 by Edward Stanwood

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EDWARD STANWOOD

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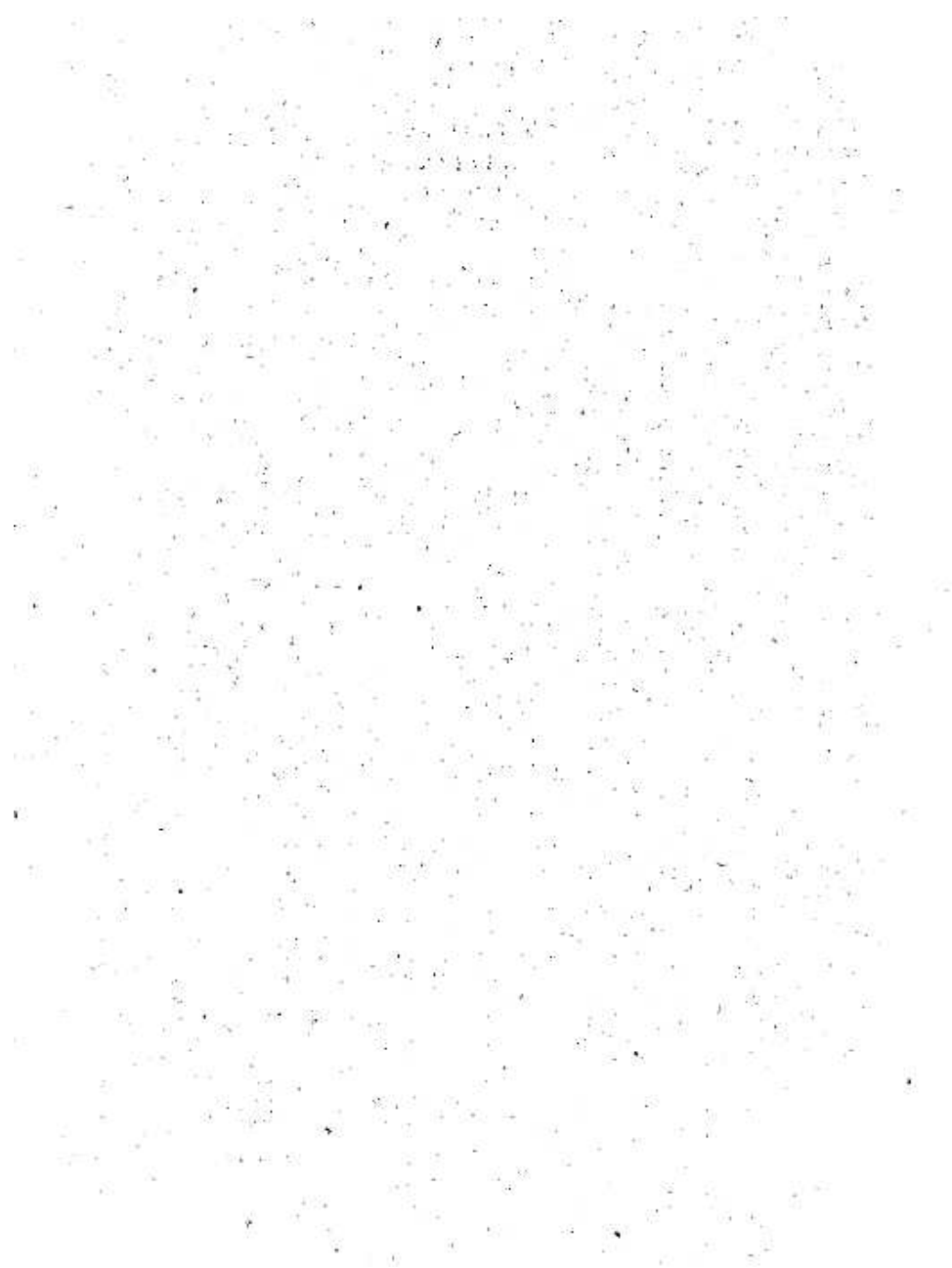
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Annals of The Brookline
Whist Club, 1873-1907



BY AN OLD MEMBER



ANNALS

OF THE

Brookline Whist Club

1873—1907

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Edward H. Andrews

1907

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Dr. S. R. Green
Boston

AMONG the great historic events, the date of which has been irretrievably lost, is the establishment of the Brookline Whist Club. Nor does any evidence exist that will inform future generations in whose mind the idea originated, although there is a good conjecture that the prime mover was Mr. Charles D. Head, who was beloved not only by his fellow members, but by all who knew him. At the time these meager chronicles are set down, only two of the original members survive, and only one of them retains his membership.

It was probably in the autumn of 1873 that the first meeting of the club took place. A member of the family of Mr. Parsons remembers that soon after their return from Europe in September, 1873, there was a meeting at their house, and that the members of the club looked over the photographs they had brought home. On the other hand, the earliest mention of it in Mrs. Poor's diary is this, of November 28, 1874: "Henry went to Mr. Head's to a Whist Club." The form would naturally have been "the Whist Club" if it were not a new thing. The original members were, in alphabetical order:

John C. Abbott, for a long time a prominent insurance agent in Boston.

Edward Atkinson, president of the Manufacturers' Mutual Insurance Company; statistician, sociologist, economist.

William I. Bowditch, the leading conveyancer of Boston.

Charles D. Head, probably the originator of the club, a stock-broker.

Thomas Parsons, a prominent citizen of Brookline, whose chief occupation, beyond managing his own property, was the service of the town.

Edward S. Philbrick, an eminent civil engineer.

Henry V. Poor, railroad statistician, and founder of "Poor's Railroad Manual."

Moses Williams, the youngest member of the club, then only five years out of college, who had his reputation still to make, and has made it, as a lawyer and financier.

No record exists as to where the club first met, but it is certain that the system that now prevails was adopted at the beginning. There is no organization, and there are no officers. The club meets at the houses of the members on Saturday evenings, in the alphabetical order of their names, so far as is convenient. The first session of an annual season is usually held at the end of October or at the beginning of November, and each

member entertains the club three times in a season, which ends in May. The host of the evening signifies to his fellow members that his house is theirs for the time being by leaving his door so that there is no need of a latch-key or of a maid to open the door. Absolute good-fellowship prevails. During the twenty-five years the writer of these chronicles has been a member of the club he has never heard an intentionally severe word spoken by one member to another, nor observed any incident which ruffled the universal harmony and good-will.

Attendance is compulsory. That is to say, the most imperative reason only is allowed by any member to excuse his own absence. If a member finds himself unable to be present, it is his duty to give ample notice to the next host in order that, if necessary, his place may be filled by an invited guest.

The club has always consisted of eight, nine, or ten members, except in one or two short periods, when vacancies had reduced the number to seven. Although the club has probably completed thirty-three years of its existence, it has had only twenty-seven members in all.

Short whist is the game. Five points constitute a game. If more than eight members are present, the waiting member is taken in at the table at which a rubber is first finished, when the players "cut out," "the highest out." At the conclusion of the next