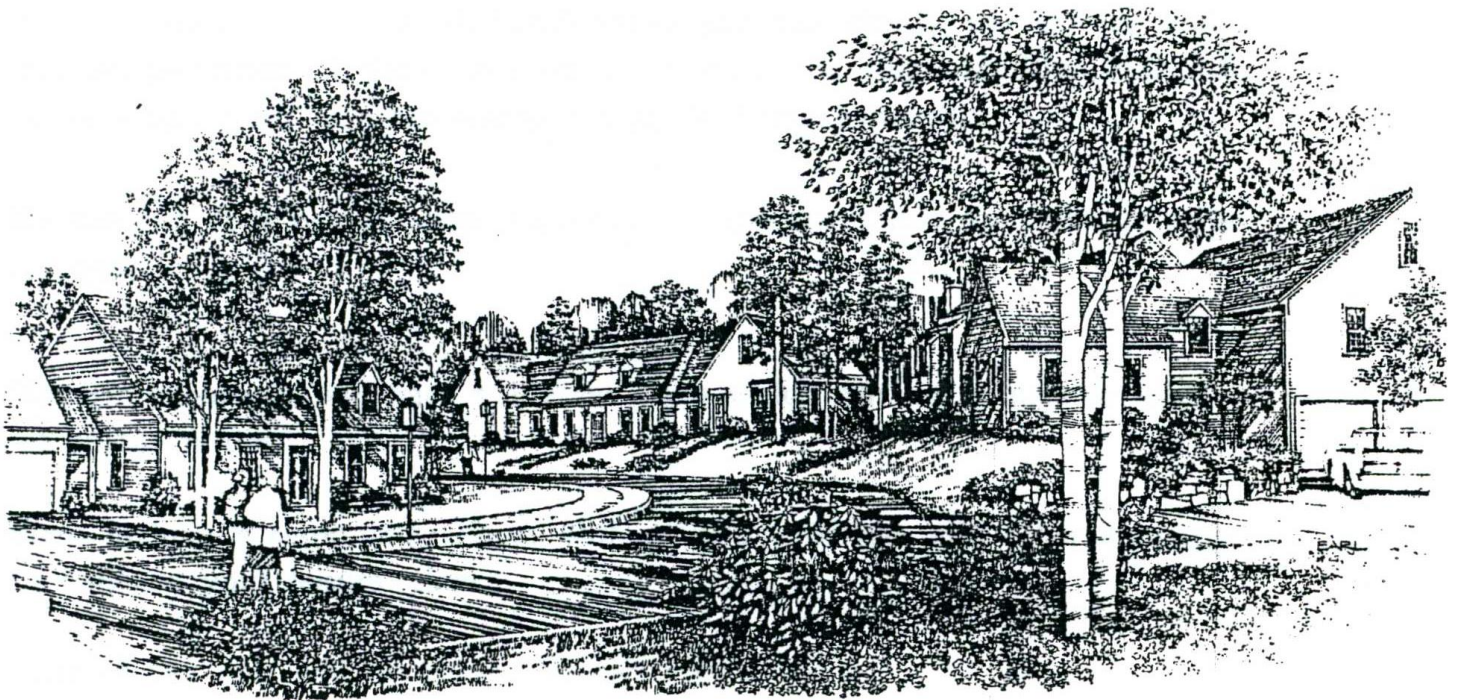


2020
CELEBRATING
40 YEARS OF H.O.M.E. INC.



H.O.M.E.
TYPICAL CLUSTER

From 'Pine Tree Brook Farm' to H.O.M.E. Inc.

By Linda Pirie



With the arrival of the railroad in 1847 a trip to Boston from Milton Village was reduced to 30 minutes, thus making commuting practical. Around this time, New Bedford cordage merchant **Benjamin Smith Rotch** (1817-1882) and his wife Annie Bigelow (Lawrence) established a home in Boston and would soon acquire land in Milton where his sister Elizabeth and her husband Rev. Joseph Angier already had a home on Milton Hill.

Described as reserved by his son, Rotch was said to have had a "sensitive feeling for form and color" in his landscape paintings—several of which are in the collections of the MFA and the Boston Athenaeum.

In 1856 Rotch purchased 46 acres of former church land—H.O.M.E. Inc. is located on a portion of this lot. The following year he built a large house and a barn on the property. Eight years later he purchased 30 acres from the estate of Rev. Samuel Gile -- Gile Road

was named in his honor. According to recorded deeds Rotch would eventually acquire more than 200 acres, making Pine Tree Brook Farm one of the largest in Milton. Rotch died at his Milton home in 1882.

His **Italianate Rotch mansion**, with wrap-around veranda draped in wisteria, was accessed by a carriage road though grounds lavishly landscaped with mountain laurels; azaleas and rhododendrons. An ancient bed of rhododendrons received an award from the Massachusetts Horticultural Society in 1959.

As an aside...perhaps things did last longer in the old days as evidenced by the gold rice cloth wallpaper from the Orient, chosen by Benjamin and his wife, was still hanging in the sitting room of the mansion more than 100 years later when granddaughters Rosamond & Aimée Lamb owned the property! The mansion burned down while unoccupied in the 1970s.

A large, slate-roofed barn with match-board interior, housed the family's horses, carriages, cows, fowl—which included Indian runner ducks--and livestock.

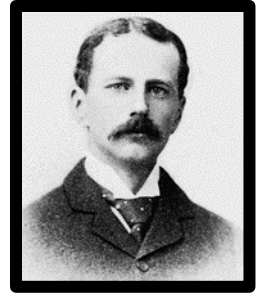
The barn along with an adjacent garage (where Frank Puopolo had stored his belongings) were both destroyed by fire around 1983.



A farmhouse and other dwellings were eventually added to the estate to house a caretaker, chauffeur, farm hands, and help. In the early 1980s at least one of these buildings burned down according to Frank who was working for H.O.M.E. Inc. contractor Ted Bielski at the time. A condition of sale in 1978 was that the new owners were to preserve the house at 484 Blue Hills Parkway where the Lamb estate caretakers Ottie & Irene Lutes lived and to allow them to live in it for a stated period of time. The caretaker's house, which could not be moved to the buffer zone as originally planned, was demolished and a new caretaker's residence for H.O.M.E. Inc. was built at 23 Azalea Drive in 1983.

The Rotch estate, which ran along both sides of Blue Hills Parkway and Canton Avenue, was an early experiment in scientific farming. Rotch, along with Thomas Motley who had a farm at Forest Hills, introduced the first Alderney and Jersey cattle to this country. Interestingly, in 1853 Motley paid Milton artist Thomas Hewes Hinckley \$300 for a painting titled "Group of Alderney Cattle, view of Blue Hills from Bussey's." Jerseys, prized for the high butterfat content in their milk, were raised at Pine Tree Brook until 1928 according to Rotch's daughter Mrs. Horatio Lamb.

Benjamin and Annie (Lawrence) Rotch had seven children, two of whom had strong ties to Milton. Son **Abbott Lawrence Rotch** (1861-1912), a graduate of MIT and later a professor of meteorology at Harvard, built the Blue Hill Observatory -- the oldest continually-operated weather observatory in the United States; and daughter Annie, wife of Horatio Appleton Lamb, who inherited Pine Tree Brook Farm-- a working farm as evidenced by a glass milk bottle embossed 'Pine Tree Brook Farm' given by the Lamb sisters to Maritta & John Cronin. Pine Tree Brook Farm's heavy cream was sold at Everett's Market in the Village according to 1914-1917 newspaper ads. Maritta shared that Thatcher Farm used the Rotch-Lamb field (now the site of Quisset Brook condos) when putting their cows out to pasture.

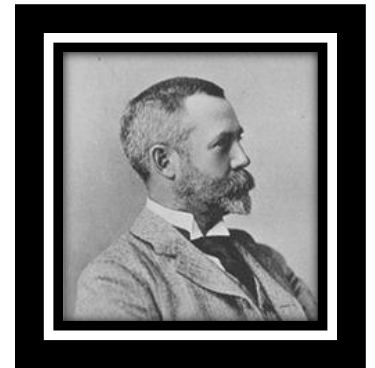


Mrs. Horatio Lamb (Annie Rotch) (1857-1950) in 1949 described travelling to Mattapan Square along Blue Hills Parkway as a young woman: *"Between Mattapan and my house we drove—no automobiles then—over a shady and usually muddy road, more in the nature of a lane, and very pretty with the brook and big willow trees."* She noted that *"Pine Tree Brook literally flowed through our house, for a large windmill pumped its water from the brook to our house where it was used for all but drinking purposes."*

Bob Sheffield stated that *"in 1896 or 1897, a large portion of Rotch-Lamb land south of Canton Avenue was given for the creation of the Blue Hills. The family also gave some of their land for the laying of Blue Hills Parkway which was designed by Charles Eliot and the Olmsted brothers. This would have been the first large reduction of land from the Rotch-Lamb estate."*

Today all that remains of the Rotch-Lamb estate are two stone pillars along Blue Hills Parkway which mark the carriage road entrance to the property. Unfortunately the 20 inch diameter stone balls which once topped the columns were stored in the barn and were 'cooked' (as described by John Cronin) when the barn burned down.

Horatio Appleton Lamb (1850-1926), who was in the dry good commission business (mill and manufacturing interests) in Boston, also served as a financial officer in several industries and banks. It was said that Horatio Lamb *"delighted to engage in horticulture and agriculture, his gardens and his herd of cattle"* at Pine Tree Brook farm in Milton. The Lamb family stopped raising Jersey cattle at Pine Tree Brook Farm shortly after the death of Horatio Lamb in 1926. Around that time pasteurization was forcing small dairy farms to sell their herds, rather than to purchase the costly equipment pasteurization required.



The family maintained four residences, occupied by season: in the winter a Boston townhouse; their Milton farm for the spring rhododendrons, gardens and late fall foliage; a small cape in Dublin New Hampshire in late spring and apple season where Aimée later maintained an art studio. August and September the Lambs occupied their cottage on Sutton's Island Maine where they were noted as being *'the most frugal of the Northeast Harbor summer residents.'* Weekends were often spent in Milton at Pine Tree Brook Farm.

In 1991 M. Louise Fogel reminisced about *"... the former Lamb estate with its caretaker and beautiful virgin lands [and] ... the S. S. Pierce truck delivering gourmet foods and exotic delicacies to the Lamb family. From time to time, Pine Tree Brook over-flowed its banks to such a depth that Blue Hills Parkway...had to be negotiated in row boats."*

Of the six Lamb children, only three survived their parents: sisters Rosamond and Aimée (who inherited Pine Tree Brook Farm), and their older married brother Thomas, who lived in Waban Massachusetts. In 1956 his son Thomas II moved to Bermuda and purchased the Pompano Beach Club. Tom III is currently its Managing Director.



Aimée and Rosamond Lamb, described as public-spirited, modest, gentle and unassuming, were well known for their philanthropic work. The Athenaeum, the Museum of Fine Arts, the Massachusetts Historical Society, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and many other institutions, were beneficiaries of their generosity. However, the sisters were very frugal in the way they lived. While out sailing with neighbors from Sutton's Island the sisters were observed making dresses for themselves--sewing all the stitches by hand!

In 1974 the sisters donated the **1811 Powder House**, which was located on their property, to the Town of Milton. The cost of moving the Powder House to a new location was paid for by The Milton Historical Society as its contribution to the American Bicentennial celebration.



By 1970 the sisters, who lived in Boston, and were seldom using Pine Tree Brook Farm, gifted a portion of the property to Massachusetts Hospital Research & Education Associates, Inc. with the understanding that the stately home would be used for medical meetings and seminars. After realizing the high cost to make it suitable for those purposes, the property was returned to the Lambs in 1974.

In the fall of 1977 a group of Milton Kiwanians and Rotarians, headed by Marvin Gordon and Roger Foley, who believed in the need for attractive, non-governmental subsidized garden apartments for middle income persons, 62 years and older or physically handicapped people of any age, formed a charitable non-profit corporation Housing Opportunities Milton Elderly, Inc. (H.O.M.E. Inc.) to address the need with Marvin Gordon as its President. Mary Sheffield, the only woman officer, was elected Secretary. According to Bob Sheffield, when discussions on the Lamb property had stalled, Mary called the sisters and told them that if they wanted the highly valued stand of rhododendron to be preserved they could demand that the preservation be agreed to as well as other conservation conditions. Very shortly thereafter their attorney contacted the Town and things moved quickly resulting in the sale. Mary was also involved in the naming of the streets at H.O.M.E. Inc.

Through a unique method of membership, (\$3,000 deposit bond per member with a maximum of 150 members) the non-profit corporation was able to purchase the land without the need of borrowed capital. Milton seniors who wanted to remain in Milton would purchase a life-lease on their townhouse unit and no local, state, or federal funds would be used.

In 1978, after a number of cordial discussions, the Lamb sisters agreed to sell to H.O.M.E. Inc. thirty-three acres of land for \$230,000, was well below market value, with fourteen of the acres set aside for conservation purposes. H.O.M.E. Inc. resident Bob Sheffield stated that the sisters *"...did not wish to divide the main estate although they eventually would do so. They had a concern that others would judge them imprudent in disposing of the property."*

H.O.M.E. Inc. resident J. Murray Regan, who appraised the property for the sisters, remembers the beautiful apple orchard that stood on the property.



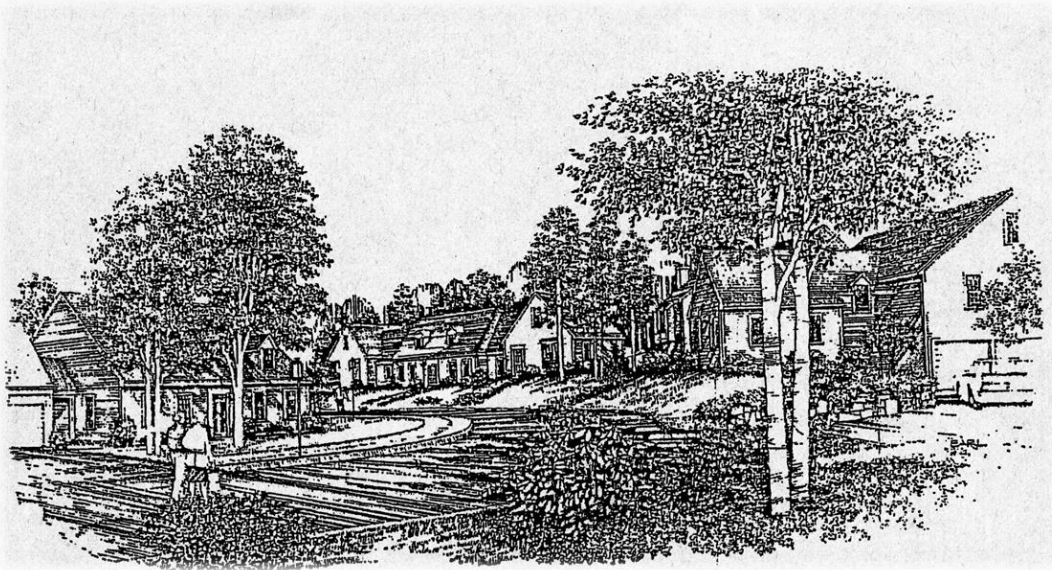
The Lamb sisters divided their Pine Tree Brook Farm property, selling 33 acres to H.O.M.E, Inc. for \$230,000; and 22 acres to the Town for \$170,000. A total of 22 acres would be untouched to conform to conservation restrictions imposed by the Lamb sisters and agreed to by the Warrant Committee. No construction by H.O.M.E Inc. was allowed by the zoning statute in the 150' buffer zone. The remaining 32 acres, located on the opposite side of Canton Avenue, was sold to private developer Richard C. Fitzgerald of Milton for construction of up to 75 luxury condos-- Quisset Brook Condominiums.

When Aimée and Rosamond Lamb later returned to tour H.O.M.E. Inc., they were pleased at how well the property was maintained and were happy to see the intact large stand of rhododendron on Mountain Laurel Path. The sisters, who were close in life, passed away a few months apart in 1989 and are buried at Milton Cemetery.

Architect Richard H. Walwood of Milton was chosen to design the 28 proposed buildings at H.O.M.E. Inc. that would resemble large single-family homes. Dick was also the architect for "Emerson Woods" in Milton as well as the faculty condominiums at Milton Academy. Although Dick's name was on 'the list' at H.O.M.E. Inc., he never became a resident.

The Dedication of Pine Tree Brook Homes took place on October 21, 1979.

H.O.M.E. typical cluster



Phase I general contractor was CMJ (Corcoran, Mullin & Jennison). The first 30 units, at an average cost of \$42,000, were initially expected to be built by the end of 1979. By early November 1979 work on many Phase I foundations had been poured and framing was about to begin, with the first 27 units expected to be ready for occupancy about March 1980.



Phase II, III, and IV general contractor was Jensen-Bielski Inc. Jensen, Bielski, Stepanek Realty Trust developed Indian Cliff Estates in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Upon the passing of Robert Jensen, Ted Bielski formed Indian Cliff Building Corp. and built custom homes in Milton and surrounding towns.

Phase I construction of 2, 4 & 6 Sugar Maple Lane

H.O.M.E. Inc. was fully occupied in 1982 with Henry Stoller as its Manager, according to Jim Walker who succeeded Henry as Manager in 1992. In 1983 the final structure at H.O.M.E. Inc., a caretaker's residence at 23 Azalea Drive, was built.

The last of the original H.O.M.E. Inc. residents, Anne Crowley of 22 Sugar Maple Lane, passed away in 2018 at the age of 100.

I wish to thank former Town Administrator John Cronin, attorney Bob Sheffield, and J. Murray Regan who appraised the Lamb property for sharing their memories, also Frank Puopolo and Jim Walker for sharing their knowledge of the construction and development of H.O.M.E. Inc.

“Founding Fathers” of HOME Inc.

John A. Cronin, Roger M. Foley & Marvin A. Gordon

by Nancy Edwards

John A. Cronin

John A. Cronin, retired Milton Town Administrator, has been an enthusiastic supporter of HOME Inc. from its inception. Early in his career, prior to working for the Town, he was a founding member of the Milton Conservation Commission. In this capacity, John had the pleasure of meeting with the Misses Aimée and Rosamond Lamb for tea in their home on the Lamb estate. This occasion predated the idea of the HOME Inc. community. The purpose of the early meeting was to inquire of future plans for the property and their willingness to sell to the Town appropriate pieces of land for conservation purposes. Small areas of land were eventually acquired and this was the beginning of a relationship of mutual respect, trust and cooperation between the Town and the Lamb sisters. Subsequently, over several years working with Marvin Gordon and Roger Foley on behalf of HOME Inc., this established relationship with the Lamb sisters served the Town and HOME Inc. well. The Town was interested in purchasing acreage for much needed athletic fields. These are the current fields adjacent to HOME Inc.

We are indeed fortunate to have had the expertise, knowledge and skill of John Cronin to support the HOME Inc. Board in bringing the Lamb Estate from private ownership (a complicated and lengthy effort) to benefit hundreds of happy residents past and present and to foster the acquisition by the Milton Public Schools of spacious and attractive fields for generations of students.

Roger M. Foley

Roger M. Foley is credited with being our founder and was also known as Member Number One, the very first name on “the list”. A gentleman of great foresight, vision, and determination, he was very civic minded and charitable. It could be said that he devoted his retirement to the concept of HOME Inc. and its completion, giving untold hours to what a daughter said he called his “project”.

Educated as a lawyer he was also a CPA and in the 1970’s saw the need for more senior housing in Milton. Roger walked the land and negotiated with the Lamb sisters, owners of the property. They were anxious to see their magnificent land used responsibly and in the best interests of the residents of Milton. Roger’s background working for the IRS locally, regionally, and even courted by President Truman for national positions, afforded him the acumen needed for setting up our unique non-profit status. A member of the service organization Kiwanis, Roger joined forces with Milton Rotary and worked tirelessly and cooperatively with many members most notably, Marvin Gordon. Their selfless work together has resulted in the “Currier and Ives” community that we all treasure and is the envy of many!

Notably, the library in our community center is named for Roger. The Foley Fund as well is in Roger’s honor and provides amenities such as grab bars and chair lifts to our residents as needed and free of charge. Mr. and Mrs. Foley resided on Azalea Drive for several years, a happy and well deserved outcome!

Marvin A. Gordon

Milton's own Renaissance man, Marvin A. Gordon was a critical link at the beginning of HOME Inc. and in its ultimate success as a most popular housing option for our town's seniors.

In 1978, Marvin was Chairman of the Town's Athletic Facility Committee when Roger Foley approached him to take on the Presidency of HOME Inc. then in its early stages. The Athletic Facility Committee was left in the capable hands of our current resident at HOME Inc., Chuck Burnes.

Thus began intense negotiations for the purchase of the Lamb property and the subsequent planning of HOME Inc., and most importantly, securing the approval of various Town boards. The Lamb sisters wanted their property sold as one piece. To meet this requirement, the Athletic Facility Committee and the HOME Inc. board had to coordinate their needs and efforts, no small task. Marvin's business acumen, perseverance and people skills as well as a deeply ingrained sense of civic duty met all the challenges ahead. Of great assistance to him, he credits, Roger Foley, Town Counsel, Bob O'Leary and Chair of the Warrant Committee, Charlie Winchester. Marvin assigned special recognition to John A. Cronin, Executive Secretary of the Town as "...a great facilitator in knitting together all the parties at interest: Town, neighborhood, schools, other non-profits and religious groups for one common cause".

The road to Dedication day, October 21, 1979, was filled with twists and turns involving financing, marketing, and countless hours of meetings and negotiations. Of primary importance during negotiations were Marvin's visits to the Marlboro Street, Boston, winter home of the Lamb sisters for whom he had great respect. Their sole purpose in selling their property was to benefit the townspeople, monetary gain was never the goal. In an interesting side note, Marvin was friendly with a classmate at Milton High School whose father was caretaker of the Lamb Estate. As a teen he visited the mansion little dreaming he would one day play a key role in the acquisition of this property for the Town of Milton.

To coordinate the sale and subsequent development of one of Milton's most important land use decisions was an extraordinary achievement requiring exceptional leadership skills. Marvin could be called a multitasker and our Town owes him a debt of gratitude for his altruism. Not only did HOME Inc. benefit but he spent years on the Milton School Committee, Warrant Committee, the Select Board, and the Beth Israel Deaconess/Milton Hospital Board among many other efforts. All the while he was running a successful business, raising a family and oh yes, sailing. When asked how he managed it all, his immediate answer was, "I know how to delegate", yet another quality of an outstanding leader. It was our great good fortune that Marvin was available to us at the time of HOME Inc.'s development. It is certainly essential to have the idea, facilitators, and support systems but without a leader to plot the course and set the sails things don't always come together as smoothly and successfully as our HOME did. Endless gratitude to Marvin A. Gordon for his selfless leadership.