



A Home in the Woods

STONEHURST



Dedicated to the children of Waltham, Massachusetts.

This book was made possible by the Boston Foundation for Architecture, the Robert Treat Paine Historical Trust and the City of Waltham, Jeannette A. McCarthy, Mayor.

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STONEHURST

Ann Clifford

with new photography by Thomas P. Lang

ROBERT TREAT PAINE HISTORICAL TRUST

Waltham, Massachusetts



Once there was a beautiful stone house on a hill in Waltham. The family called it Stonehurst.

The Paine family lived in the house six months of the year—spring, summer, and fall. But through the winter Stonehurst lay silent.

The children dreamed all winter long about their special place in the country. The house sat only ten miles from the busy city of Boston, but it felt hundreds of miles away. Their winter dreams were filled with this other world of forests, fields, rocks, and hills.



In their dreams the children remembered the giant rooms...
with wide doorways, high ceilings, massive fireplaces



and a mountainous staircase where they could climb up and
down, stop and sit, or peek through the balusters.

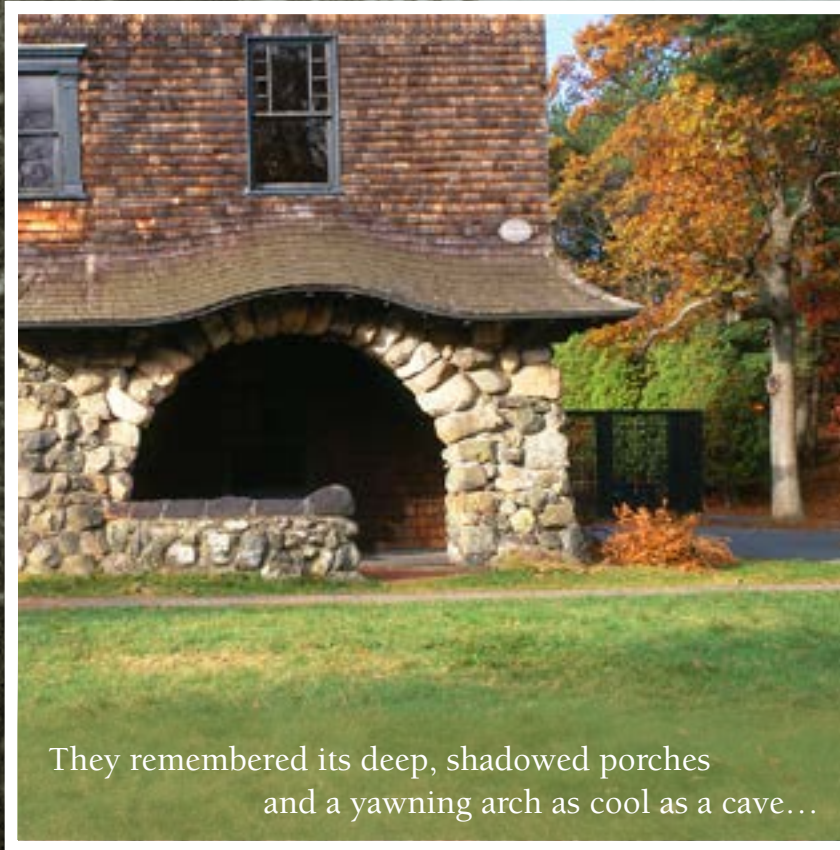
In their dreams the children remembered the little details of every room...



the carvings of familiar plants and animals,

and strange creatures from far away lands that peered down from above.

and the soft winds that swept across the open terrace, carrying the faint scent of ripe strawberries in June and hay and apples in autumn.




They remembered its deep, shadowed porches and a yawning arch as cool as a cave...



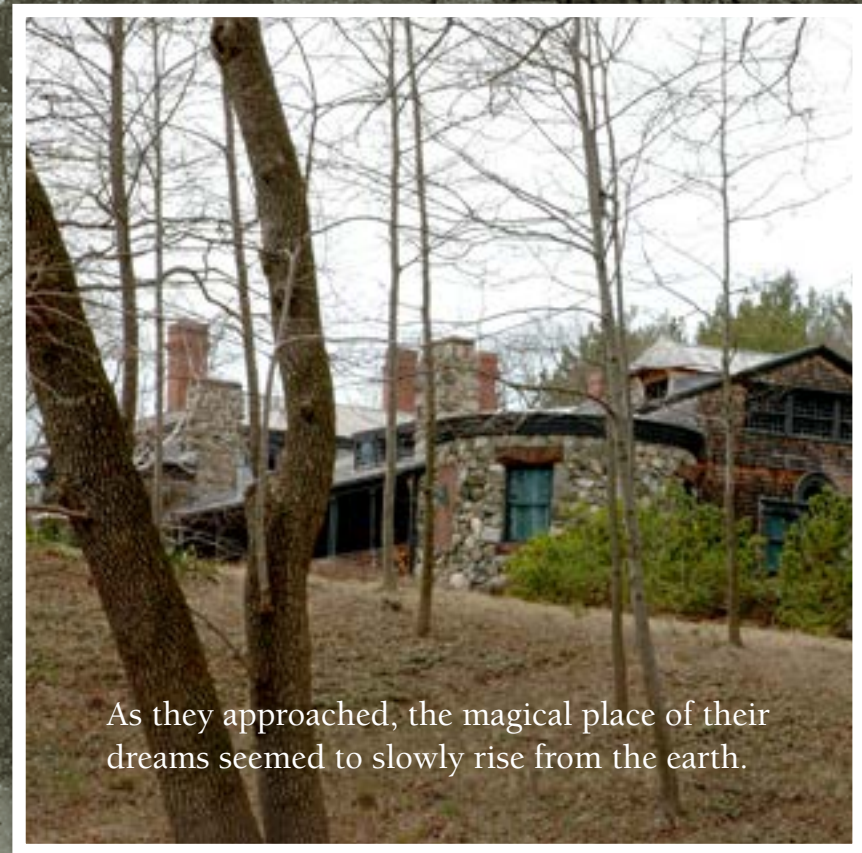


In the Stonehurst of their peaceful inner world, warm breezes drifted through the flowing spaces like friendly spirits gliding to and fro.

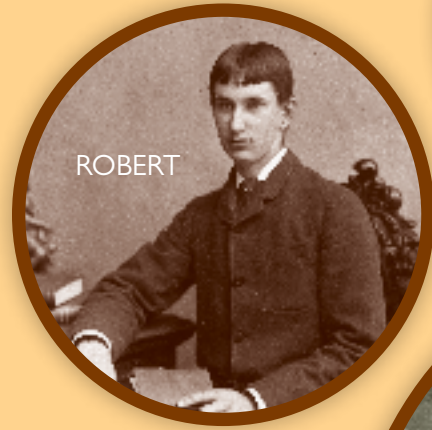




When spring arrived, the Paine family left the city far behind and joined a caravan of horse-drawn carriages filled with cousins, aunts, and uncles, all heading to Waltham.



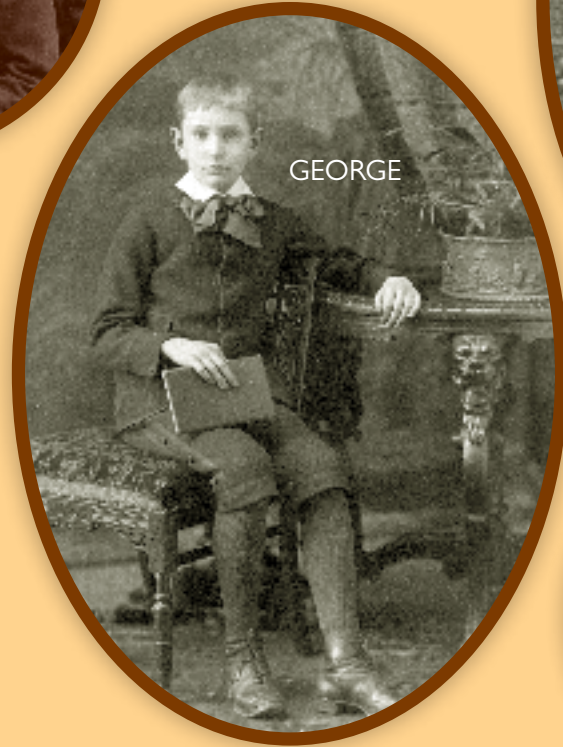
As they approached, the magical place of their dreams seemed to slowly rise from the earth.



ROBERT



EDITH



GEORGE



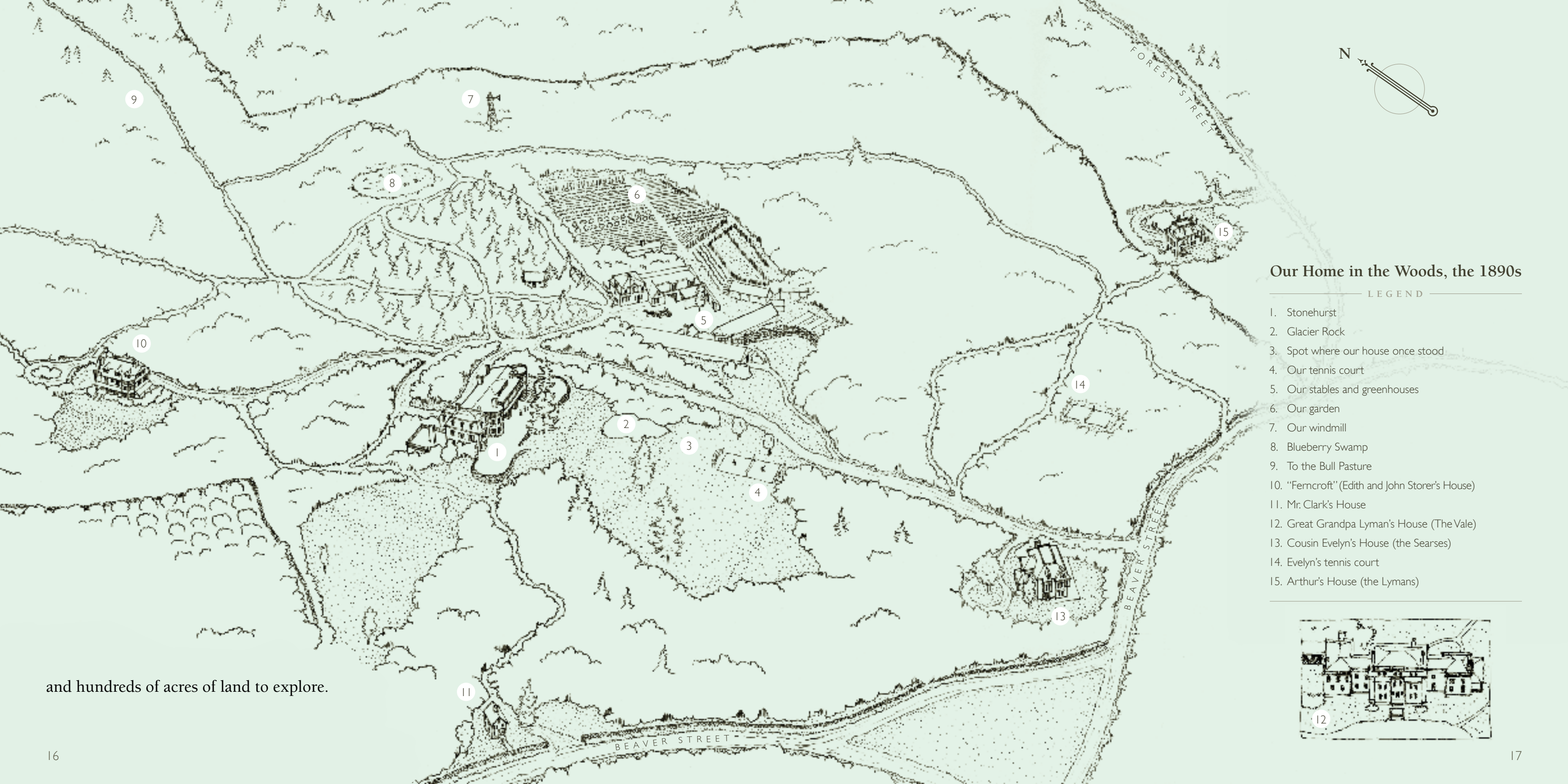
LILY



ETHEL

George and Lily—the youngest of five siblings and fifteen cousins—had plenty of playmates in Waltham





Our Home in the Woods, the 1890s

LEGEND

- 1. Stonehurst
- 2. Glacier Rock
- 3. Spot where our house once stood
- 4. Our tennis court
- 5. Our stables and greenhouses
- 6. Our garden
- 7. Our windmill
- 8. Blueberry Swamp
- 9. To the Bull Pasture
- 10. "Ferncroft" (Edith and John Storer's House)
- 11. Mr. Clark's House
- 12. Great Grandpa Lyman's House (The Vale)
- 13. Cousin Evelyn's House (the Searses)
- 14. Evelyn's tennis court
- 15. Arthur's House (the Lymans)



and hundreds of acres of land to explore.

From the Stonehurst terrace, with its sweeping view across the countryside, the Paine children could imagine an earlier era when Great Grandfather Lyman bought this land along the winding Beaver Brook.



They could imagine their mother as a child playing as they played on the “hill pasture” overlooking their great grandfather’s mansion...



or rowing as they rowed across the shimmering Lyman ponds.

Distant memories of early childhood preserved a time before their stone house was built, when they lived in a boxy summer house that stood below their "Glacier Rock." They could still smell the lilacs that once grew by the front door.

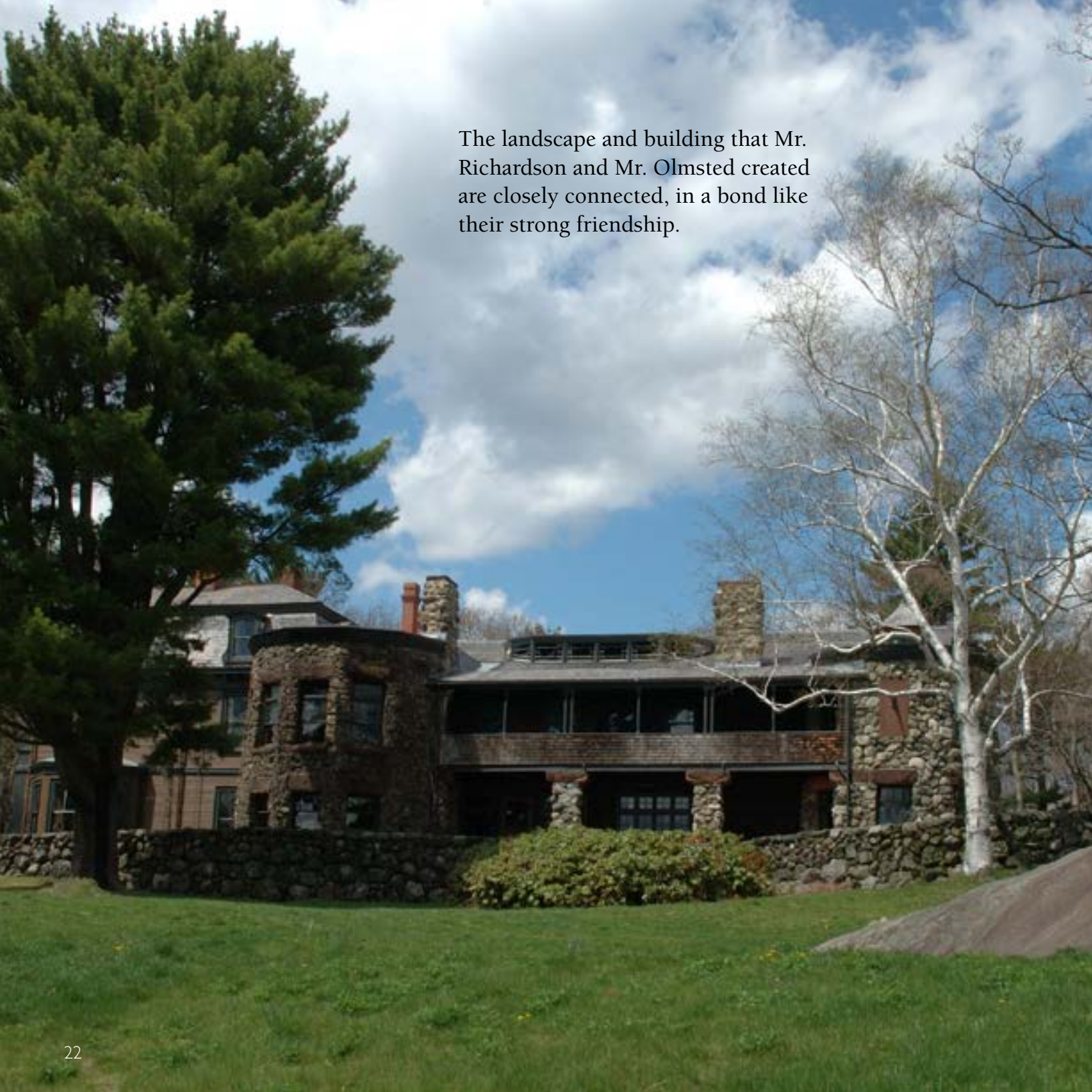


One summer, when Lily was nearly ten, the old house was raised up on railroad ties and slowly, very slowly, pulled up the slope of the hill by a team of oxen to where it now stands with the stone addition twice its size.



Henry Hobson Richardson and Frederick Law Olmsted were the famous architect and landscape architect whom their papa chose to design Stonehurst.

The landscape and building that Mr. Richardson and Mr. Olmsted created are closely connected, in a bond like their strong friendship.

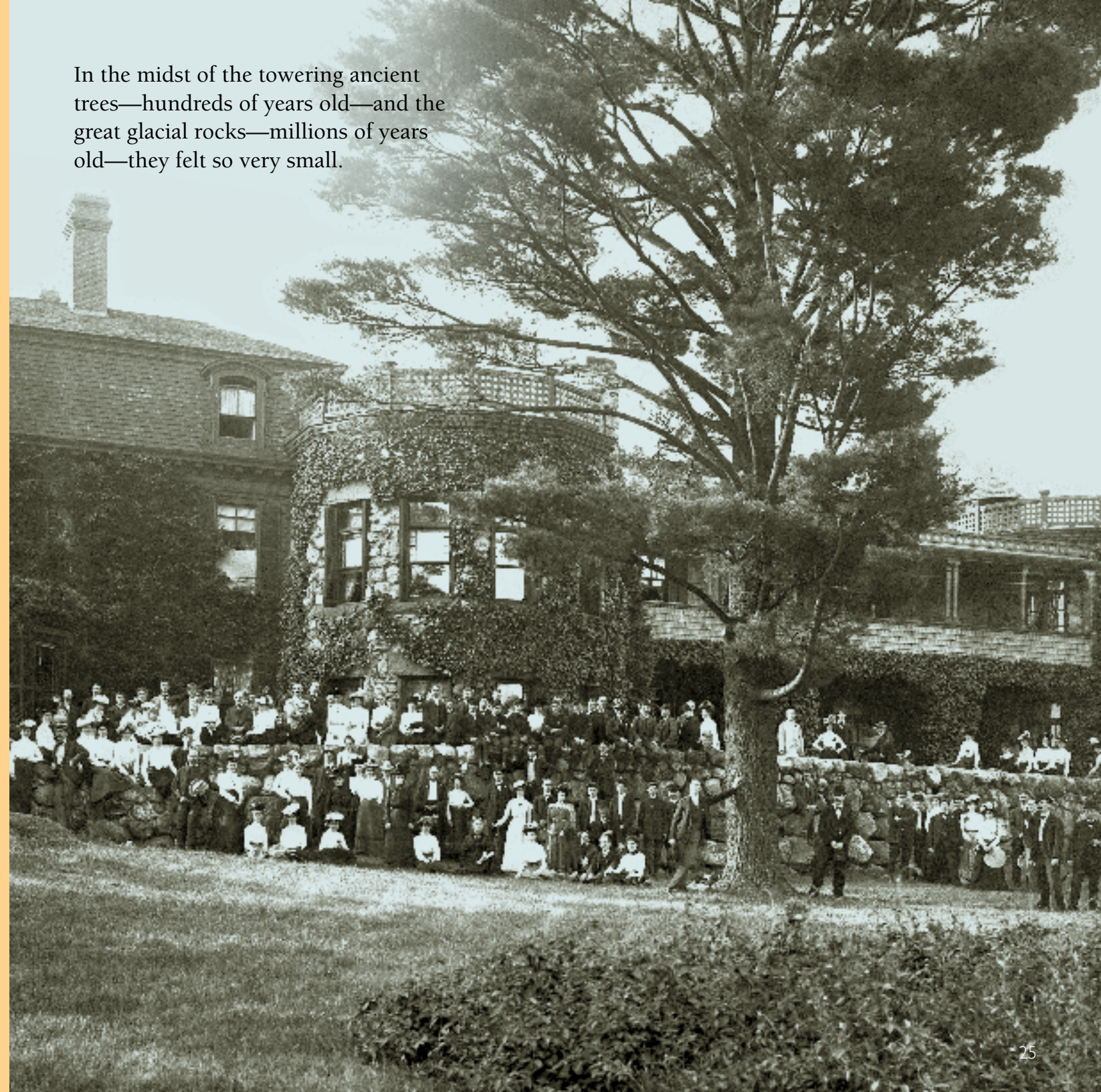


The arms of the terrace reach out to embrace land and sky.

George and Lily loved climbing the great boulders of the terrace, walking atop the curved terrace walls, or scrambling across Glacier Rock, looming large over it all.



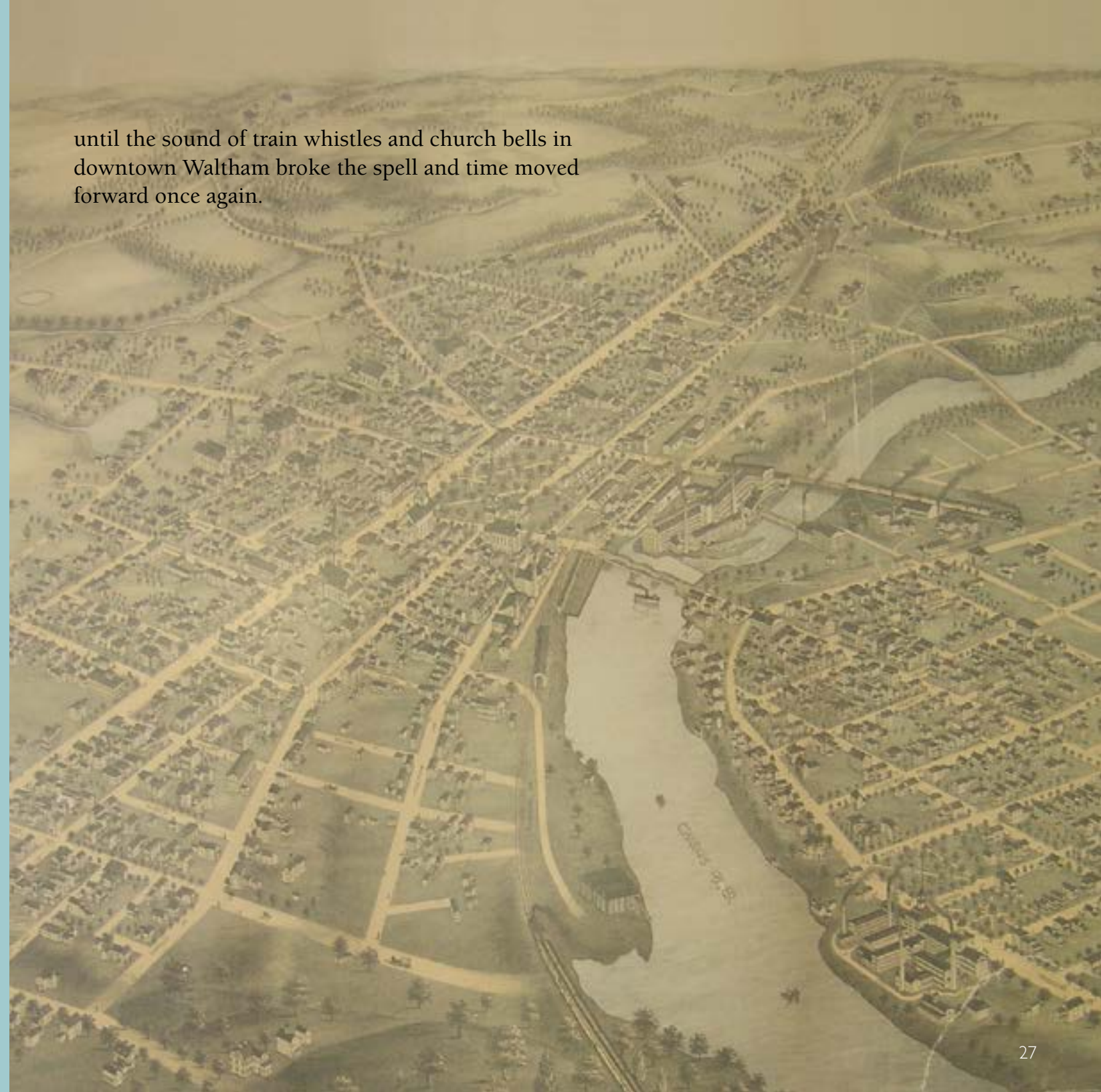
In the midst of the towering ancient trees—hundreds of years old—and the great glacial rocks—millions of years old—they felt so very small.





Time itself relaxed at Stonehurst. The sun crept so slowly across the broad summer sky that the shadow of the sundial seemed to linger at every numeral. Time almost seemed to stand still...

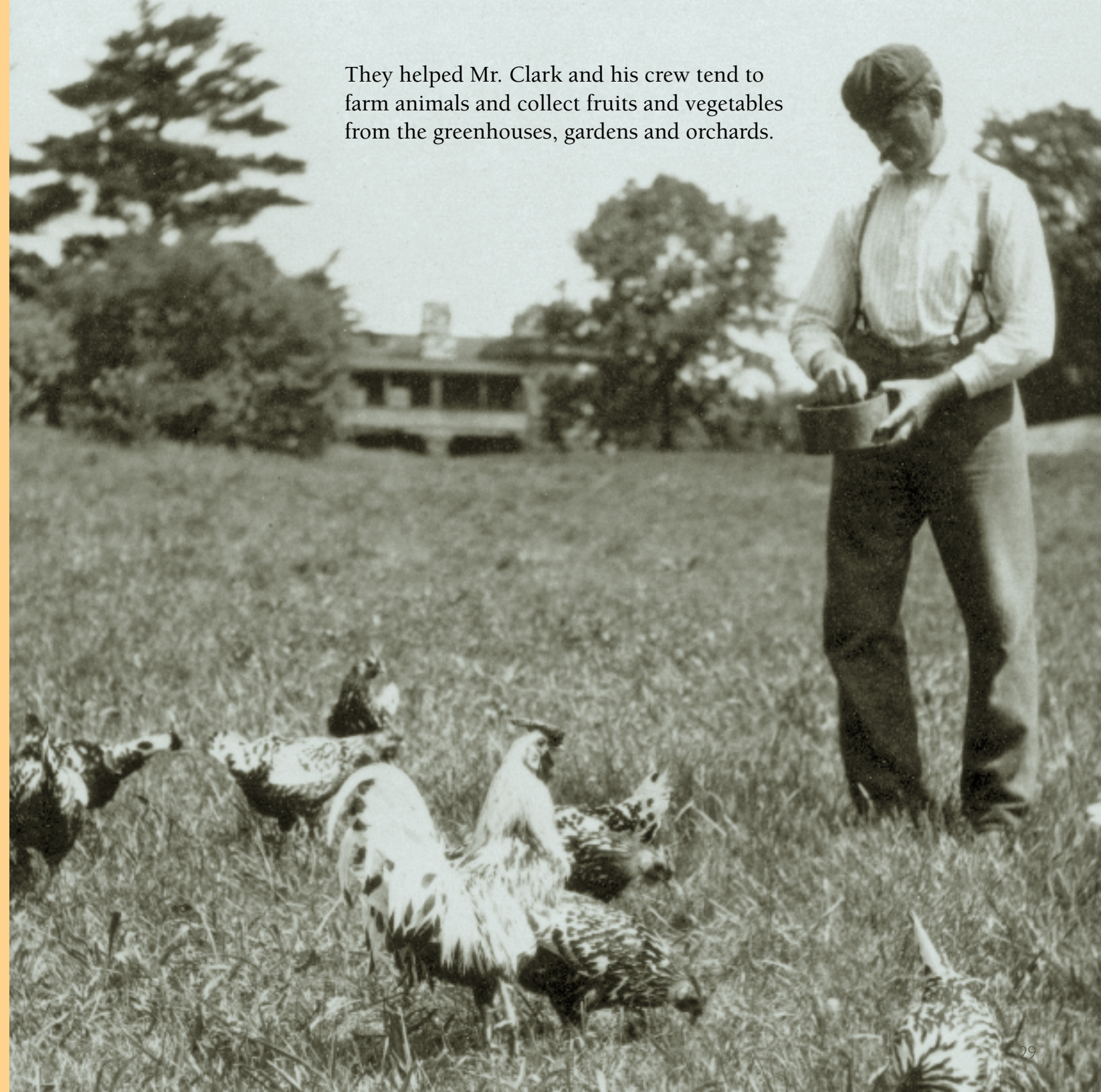
until the sound of train whistles and church bells in downtown Waltham broke the spell and time moved forward once again.



The Paine children and their cousins filled long summer days riding through shaded streets and wooded trails on Brown Jug, Marietta, Malech, Mazeppah or Faery Queene.



They helped Mr. Clark and his crew tend to farm animals and collect fruits and vegetables from the greenhouses, gardens and orchards.





Lily learned to identify plants by gathering flowers and leaves and pressing them between the pages of her journal.



They played lawn tennis and croquet with brother Bob, sister Ethel and cousins Frank, Dick, Mabel and Evelyn nearly every sunny day.



George knew the songs of the birds and collected eggs and nests from the woods and fields until the distant ring of the bell called him home. Even the tadpoles and salamanders of Blueberry Swamp and Uncle Arthur's pond were their friends.



When the clouds brought rain, George and Lily played hide and seek with their little nieces and nephews, hiding in the cozy nooks and cubbies, crawling under furniture, or huddling in the secret closet under the stair. Only the servants' quarters—and their papa's study of course—were off limits.



In the attic playroom with the drum of rain overhead, they explored trunks full of treasures from generations long before. Long lost precious letters written in elaborate script might have carried secrets of the Revolution known only to the patriot Robert Treat Paine, their great great great grandfather.

At the end of the day, the family played backgammon, chess, dominoes, and whist. They wrote in their journals and read book after book.



On very hot nights, when Lily had difficulty sleeping, she might have quietly slipped outside to the hammock on the covered balcony outside her bedroom to pick out star constellations in the clear night sky.

On cool evenings, the family gathered in the Autumn Parlor, closed the doors, pulled the heavy velvet curtains, and lit a fire, knowing it would soon be time to leave Stonehurst and return to Boston for the winter.



And so it went. The seasons changed and the years passed. George and Lily grew up and had children of their own. Year after year, decade after decade, they came back to Stonehurst.

Stonehurst grew old too.

Its roof leaked,
its windows rattled,

and its meadows grew into a forest that surrounded and preserved it
like Sleeping Beauty's castle.

Many years later, the Paine family gave Stonehurst to the children of Waltham. Thousands of boys and girls rediscovered this beautiful stone house and let it into their hearts.



Now they tell their children stories of Stonehurst.

Fun Facts

Waltham is a place name meaning “home in the woods.” Stonehurst means “stone house on a hill.”

George went to Harvard and became a minister. Lily married an architect.

Lily was born in America’s centennial year, 1876, ten years before Stonehurst was built. George was two years older than Lily.

George and Lily’s papa, Robert Treat Paine made his fortune in Western railroads and copper mines. He devoted his life to helping poor people find nice houses in which to raise their families.

The Paines’ lawn tennis court was one of the earliest in the country.

The Paines were one of the first families in the area to have electric lights.

The designers of Stonehurst, Henry Hobson Richardson and Frederick Law Olmsted, also worked together on many public parks, train stations, public libraries and community centers.

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