

Institutes and Outing Clubs: The First Field Trips to Stonehurst, the Robert Treat Paine Estate

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Introduction: Mystery Boys

A group of boys is gathered together for a photograph. Sitting on the ground and the curved stone wall of the terrace at Stonehurst, they wear what is probably their Sunday best, some in hats, ties, and suspenders. Many hold croquet mallets, one boy is wearing a catcher's mask and glove. Some are smiling, a couple hold their hand up to their foreheads to shield their eyes from the sun as they look toward the camera.

A second photo opportunity appears to have taken place later that day. The photographer was not as steady this time, so the boys' bodies are blurred. But we can see that they are seated at the dining room table at Stonehurst with a fine white table cloth. Again, smiles are seen on several faces and we wonder what they are waiting for with such



anticipation.

There are many things about these photos that cause us to wonder. What we do know is that these photographs were taken in May 1904, the date that is written at the top of a page in

Ethel Paine's photograph album. The setting is clearly Stonehurst, the home of Robert Treat Paine and his family. But the full story remains a mystery.

These photos of youth enjoying a day at the Paine family's country estate in Waltham that were discovered in the Stonehurst archives in 2016 were a starting point for this research project. Together with a large body of known, by largely untapped, archival documentation on Robert Treat Paine's industrial institutes, the photos suggested a compelling new viewpoint from which to interpret the site, that of workers both young and old. Were the boys in the two recently discovered photographs students of the Boys' Institute of Industry, supported by Robert Treat Paine, or, more likely, were they members of the St. Andrew's Mission Boys Club in the West End of Boston, led by Ethel Paine? What could we find on the youth and adult workers whose educational opportunities and country excursions were supported by the Paine family? Most importantly, which contemporary organizations carry on the legacy of the Paines' charitable work with children, workingmen and working women and how might they be engaged today in the historic property?

Many of these questions will remain unanswered, at least for the time-being. Combing through archival material, annual reports from the Paines' charitable institutions, newspaper articles, and materials saved by Robert Treat Paine in a scrapbook dedicated to his Institutes for workingmen did not yield new insight into the boys' visit in 1904. However, this particular inquiry did result in a consolidation and clarification of some information about the Paine-supported Wells Memorial and People's Institutes, whose members made summer visits to the Paine estate.

While this report does not answer all the questions we had at the outset of this research project, it will complement what is already known and already being done at Stonehurst, and will provide some food for thought about further community engagement.

Robert Treat Paine's Philanthropic Philosophy: "Not Alms but a Friend"

"The need of wiser methods in our efforts to improve the condition of the working classes is deeply felt. Charity begins to shrink from physical relief to the poor, lest pauperism be encouraged. Prevention is better than relief. Self-support is better than aid. Industry, skill, thrift,

*respect for one's self and for others, and the true knowledge and love of God, -- these are what workingmen (and we all) need."*¹

■ *First Annual Report of the Wells Memorial Association, 1880.*

From nearly the very earliest days of European settlement in Massachusetts to the present day, the question of who is worthy to receive aid has been at the core of providing poor relief or government assistance. The Massachusetts Bay Colony followed the example of English law, which required individuals to be residents of the town to receive assistance from the local town meeting. Regular "warning out" of non-residents ensured that strangers could not take advantage of the system.

Aid to the less fortunate in the era before federal government assistance was delivered by a variety of institutions. The town's Overseers of the Poor managed the local almshouse or poor farm and facilitated the binding out of children from poor families to others who would be able to care for them in exchange for the child's labor as an apprentice or domestic. By the late nineteenth century, dozens of organizations had been founded and/or supported by upper-class Bostonians. These ranged from industrial training schools and settlement houses to homes for orphans and the aged.

Robert Treat Paine believed that financial security resulted from hard work and thrift and not direct financial assistance. This philosophy is documented in his public lectures and published writings as well as in private requests he received by mail. During the opening exercises of the Wells Memorial Institute following Paine's death, Francis B. Sears recalled Paine as "Always ready to give assistance in cases of distress, he undertook also permanently to relieve such cases by teaching people to take care of themselves."² Before addressing the specific institutions he founded to facilitate the self-support of workingmen, this section briefly describes the beliefs Paine espoused and the values he promoted in his charitable work.

Proper homes and healthy environments

Paine's interest in tenement house reform and helping working people move into single-family homes was part of a broader movement in major cities at the turn-of-the-century. A

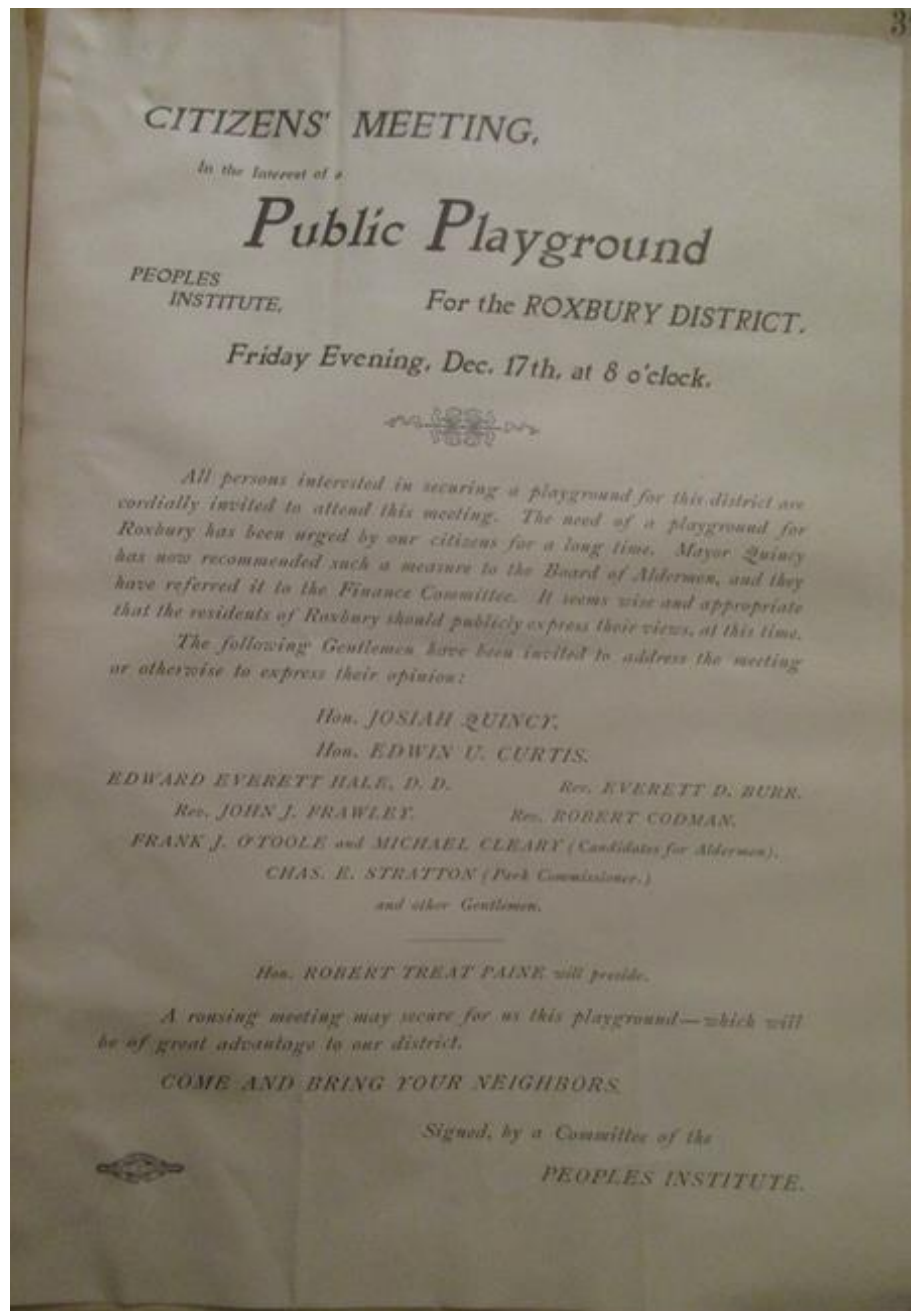
1904 article on progress in this effort cited the enactment of ordinances, establishment of commissions, and passage of legislation related to tenement houses in Chicago, New Jersey, Boston and New York. Movements in smaller cities like Baltimore, St. Louis, and Cincinnati were also underway. In 1901, New York passed what has become a very well-known tenement law requiring more access to natural light, better ventilation, wider corridors, and private water-closets, among other improvements to facilitate healthier living environments.³

Paine was very much aware of and active in efforts to improve living conditions in the city. President of the Associated Charities of Boston which professionalized social service visits to the poorest neighborhoods of Boston, Paine regularly witnessed first hand the deplorable living conditions of the “rankest of the poor homes” of Boston and other cities like London. In one 1892 investigation of the North End and South Cove districts with a team of philanthropists and sanitary engineers from MIT, Paine found “festering plague spots,” cellars full of filthy water, overcrowded tenements with no fire protection, and, sadly, a sick woman, living in what he described as “a dark rat hole,” foul and without sunlight.⁴

Like many of his peers, he decried the conditions of densely populated tenement districts, which were largely believed to be the source not just of poor health but the root of vice: “If they are left in foul and overcrowded slums or damp basements or dilapidated barracks, it is too much to expect them to be virtuous or self-respecting or independent. These rotten slums are hot-beds which propagate low life, shattering the health of occupants and so promoting pauperism, loosening the morals and so promoting vice and crime; and perhaps worst of all in their poisonous influence on the children who grow up in them too often without virtue, self-respect, health or hope.”⁵ Paine’s language was not unlike that of other reformers, including others who later described these same areas of Boston known as the “concentrated district” (primarily the North and West Ends, as well as the South Cove, near the Wells Memorial building) in graphic detail. For example, in his study of the South End in 1899, Robert Woods, founder of the South End Settlements, described how poor drainage in sections of the South Cove built on “made land” contributed to unhealthy living conditions: “So thoroughly is the soil saturated with water that most of the basements and cellars of the district are very damp,-- in many cases they are wet. . . . To give a single experience: in a front basement on the

easterly side of Harrison Avenue, a woman was found lying ill upon a mattress, which lay upon the board floor; and under the floor the water could be heard to swash at every step.”⁶ Like fellow reformers, Paine worked to expose the poor quality of living conditions in the tenements in hopes improvement could be made. Over decades, from the 1870s to the 1910s, he studied and personally invested an abundance of resources in improving those living conditions for both the poorest of the poor and the “working man.” Thorough study accompanied all of his investments, as attested by his substantial personal research library. In one typical letter, he asked the Chief of the Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics of Labor to forward to his correspondent the recent two-volume report on sanitary conditions of Boston’s tenements.⁷

In addition to tenement reform, Paine promoted and supported what he saw as an even better solution, moving people out of tenements completely into homes of their own. In his address delivered during the opening of the Peoples' Institute, Paine focused on homes for workingmen, exclaiming: "The greatest stride ever made by workingmen will be made with the present hope shall become an attainable reality, that every workingman shall own his own home. Then farewell to the slums and the filth and the degradation which boards of health too long tolerate, and which, even now, should be utterly destroyed. Farewell to the fatal heresy that workers cannot save and get ahead."⁸ Paine indicated that the path one chose to home ownership was one that encouraged workingmen to "stand up and help themselves and insist on happier and nobler lives for themselves, their wives, and their children."



As the founder of a Cooperative Bank for workingmen and investor in homes that were within their means, Paine clearly had an interest in the influence of the physical environment in which people lived. This concern extended to the built environment, particularly in the

availability of playgrounds. The Peoples' Institute, in particular, supported establishing a playground in Roxbury, of which evidence is found in Paine's scrapbook and in news articles, including references to Mayor Quincy's support for the effort in his opening address to the Institute in Fall 1897. Later that year, 300 Roxbury citizens gathered in People's Hall at the Institute to rally for a local playground. R. T. Paine presided over the meeting and his address "laid great stress on the needs of the district for a playground. He quoted from the reports of the New York commission on parks to show that the death rate in great cities was diminished by the introduction of parks, and said that not only were the sanitary conditions of the city improved by parks, but in many cases undesirable buildings, where crime is bred and fostered, were thus done away with."⁹

Industrial and vocational education

*"Statistics show that our jails, reform schools, and penitentiaries are crowded with people who have not been trained to early habits of industry. We believe that prevention is the Heavens-inspired whisper of to-day, hence classes in cooking, millinery, shorthand, and instructions in music have been formed for the girls."*¹⁰

Education was at the heart of Paine's philosophy of betterment for the working classes as it was the core of the work of other Boston philanthropists of the Progressive era. A 1907 article in the *Boston Daily Globe* demonstrates the vast number of free education opportunities that were available to people from all ages and social classes. Publicly funded schools included elementary and high schools; technical schools that offered night classes in English for the foreign-born, stenography, bookkeeping, and other office work; grammar schools dedicated to teaching woodworking to boys and sewing and cooking to girls; and normal schools to train teachers. The article also highlights the work of private individuals and religious institutions who provided trade schools and evening classes for boys, girls, and workingmen. Paine's Wells Memorial Institute was included a partner of the Lowell Institute, which also offered free instruction to workingmen under the auspices of the new Massachusetts Institute of Technology.¹¹ The Peoples' Institute also offered similar evening lectures and educational opportunities for men and women.

Thrift and Personal Responsibility

Several letters written to Paine directly to request loans or funds to support a variety of causes were respectfully declined, in part because he rightfully notes that he doesn't have the means to support every cause that might interest him. However, he also professes that the individuals are responsible for their own financial health made possible by thrift. In 1893-1894, the country's first major economic depression led to increased unemployment and hardship among working people. Paine's organizations were engaged in providing relief during this period, including the creation of sewing rooms that employed women at the Wells Memorial Institute.¹²

However, in a letter to Reverend Alden L. Bennett of Waltham, Paine expressed concern about the lack of thrift in individuals who might have weathered the downturn more easily had they prepared with proper savings:

How can working people learn lessons of supreme and infinite importance to themselves and their wives and children? I have stated in more than one hundred addresses that the operatives in the Waltham Watch Factory were the best paid in the world, so that now to find any considerable number of them in straits at the end of a few weeks idleness, is the most painful fact in my observation. Nothing can be of more use to them than to practice and to learn economy. I do not believe one out of one hundred or let me say one out of ten will even now practice the economy in diet which I was compelled to do and enjoyed doing the two months I was studying German in Berlin in the spring of 1858. It was a lesson to me of value through life. I had to do it and I enjoyed it.¹³

Paine's belief in thrift and the virtue of savings even included a disagreement with Ella Cabot regarding over providing annuities to teachers, in which he provided the following example: "I remember well when John Graham Brooks came back from his year of observation and study in Germany, and made his great official report to the Government describing and approving the German system of pensions, that I was greatly in doubt whether that was not to be compared

to the introduction of the gypsy moths, taking something from abroad which would be tremendously detrimental in America.”¹⁴

Robert Treat Paine’s public views on issues related to proper housing and healthy environments, industrial and vocational education, thrift, and related issues were well known due to his regular public speaking engagements on these topics, lectures that were often published in newspapers, pamphlets, and annual reports. As a leader in the philanthropic community, Paine spoke often to audiences of fellow charity and social welfare workers. Paine also frequently shared his views with those who he hoped to assist during ceremonial presentations at the Institutes. Addressing this particular audience on the topic of raising up the workingman was an interesting choice—a not so subtle reminder to those benefiting from his benevolence of the values that Paine supported.

Translating Words into Action: Paine’s Institutes and other Civic Outreach

Robert Treat Paine put theory into practice through the establishment of many social welfare organizations and of particular interest to this research, “Institutes” for working people that provided opportunities for education, moral uplift, and recreation. Given the rather lengthy number of settlement houses and other organizations that provided aid to working class people, it is important to specify which were directly related to Paine, and which were connected to him in other ways. For example, Paine served as a board member or officer on the board of many philanthropic or social service organizations, including the Boy’s Institute of Industry, which was located just down the street from the Peoples Institute and used the first floor and basement level of the Peoples Institute building beginning in the late 1890s. This section describes the institutes that had direct connections to Paine as a founder, with a focus on the Wells Memorial and Peoples’ Institutes, and those with slightly more tangential connections.

Robert Treat Paine Association

In 1890, members of the Paine family founded the Robert Treat Paine Association and conveyed to it five properties associated with different philanthropic endeavors. The Associated

Charities and Working Girls Club Building was located at 401 Shawmut Avenue. The People's Institute at 1171-1175 Tremont Street in Roxbury, was opened concurrently with the founding of the RTP Association.¹⁵ Further research into the Working Girls Club and the Home for Aged Women might provide additional context for the work the RTP Association engaged in at the Wells and Peoples' Institutes but was not within the scope of this particular project.

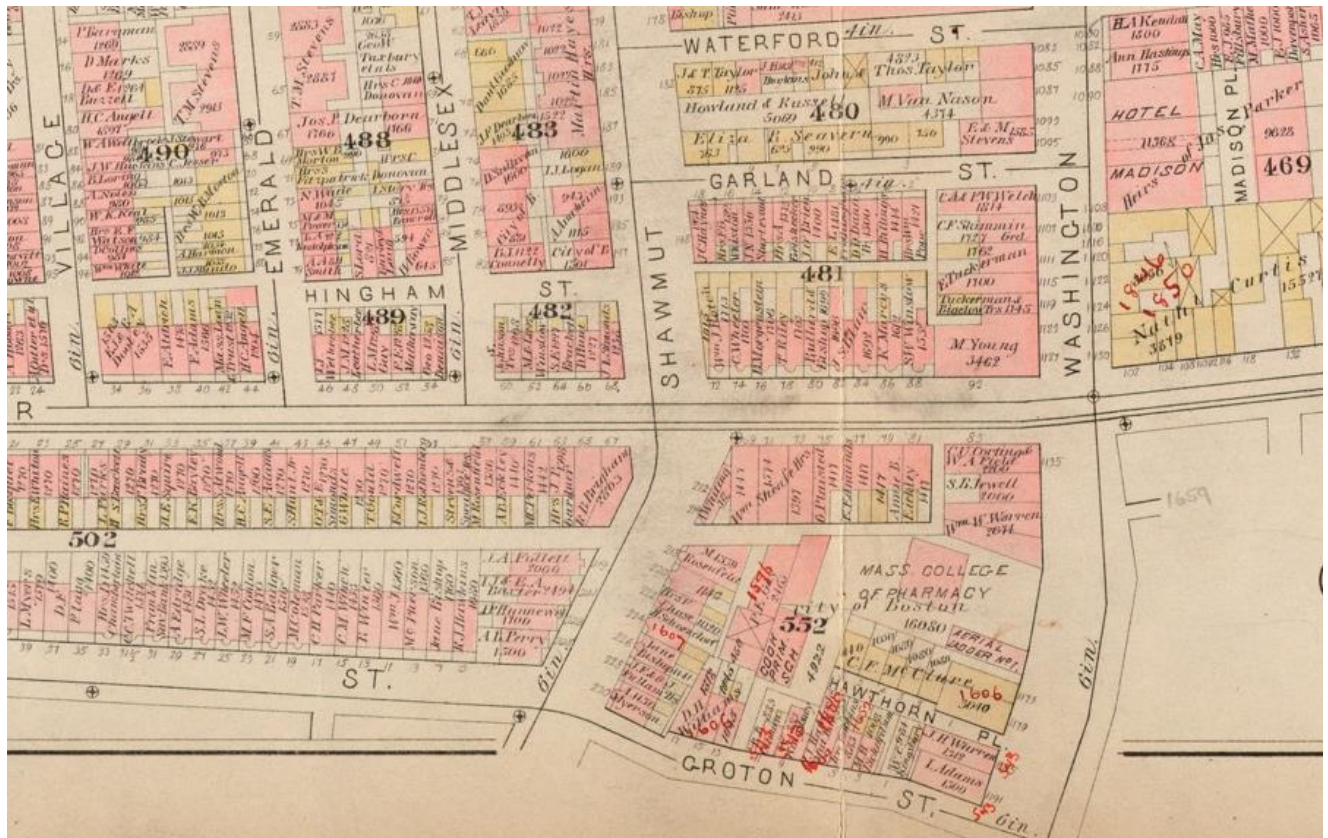
Wells Memorial Institute (See also Appendix A)

The original Wells Memorial Institute was located in the South End; a branch of the institute was also opened in Dorchester in the Fields Corner neighborhood. The Wells Memorial was named after the Reverend E. M. P. Wells, of Hartford, Connecticut, who oversaw Hartford's Episcopal City Mission, which served poor families in the area. Shortly after his death in 1878, Robert Treat Paine was among attendees of a public meeting at Trinity Chapel to discuss how to honor the work of Rev. Wells. The resulting committee, of which R. T. Paine was a member, ultimately recommended establishing a Workingmen's Institute.¹⁶ The resulting Wells Memorial Institute reflected the ideal described in the institution's first annual report:

"Locate it where the greatest numbers are found. Make it simple, spacious, and fitting. Equip it with ample reading room, game room, class room, refreshment room, baths, and whatever else experience may suggest. Many kinds of instruction, either free or with some small fee, may grow up in time. Open its doors wide and free. Ask no questions as to creed. Welcome all."¹⁷

Although Christian themes, values, and specific references to God are explicit in documents associated with the Wells Memorial, as described above, no questions appear to have been asked regarding to the beliefs of those who wished to join. Members of the Institute would need to abide by certain rules, such as those related to game playing and temperance, but any individual was welcome who wished to improve himself (and eventually herself) by participating in classes, debates, and other activities held within the Institute's walls.

The first Wells Memorial Workingmen's Club and Institute was located in "spacious, cheerful, and well-equipped rooms" at 1125 Washington Street and opened on June 18, 1879.*



G.W. Bromley & Co. "Atlas of the city of Boston : city proper." Plate K. Philadelphia: G.W. Bromley & Co., 1883. *Digital Commonwealth*, <https://ark.digitalcommonwealth.org/ark:/50959/m900r527g> (accessed June 29, 2018).

Located along a main thoroughfare in the South End, this location was close to businesses and dense residential areas, reflective of the founders' desire to locate in a place where potential members could access the facilities easily. From the beginning, the goal was not only to serve the needs of workingmen by promoting "the best welfare of the working classes" but to involve them in the management of their club through a joint committee of workingmen and members of the Board of Trustees. Dues of one dollar were assessed to help

* The first location of the Wells Memorial Institute and its subsequent building at 985 Washington Street would be roughly in the neighborhood of Washington and Herald Street in today's South End, just south of the Tufts Medical Center/Tufts University Health Sciences Campus and the Interstate overpass.

The central location of the Wells Memorial in Boston's South End was largely to its advantage, although not without some challenges. The construction of the elevated railway along Washington Street changed the streetscape and led to train cars traveling directly in front of the building's windows.



Castle Street junction looking north. The Wells Memorial Institute is visible to the left of the tracks. Boston Elevated Railway photographs, 9800.018. City of Boston Archives.

In his opening address to the Wells Memorial Institute on the 25th anniversary, Paine reported that “damages from a suit against the Boston elevated on account of the noise created by the cars—about \$32,000—had enabled the trustees to wipe out much of the indebtedness.”¹⁹

In 1893, the Institute opened its doors fully to the families of working men by admitting women to membership for the first time.²⁰

Entertainments

The Wells Memorial Institute offered its members a wide variety of options for wholesome entertainment through specific events and self-directed activities that were available in the building at all times. The topics upon which local politicians, professors, and other experts presented were extraordinarily varied. For example, the inaugural year included a lecture by the architect William Ralph Emerson on “The Arts” and a lecture by Major B. S. Calef on “Life in the Southern Prisons” in addition to a performance by a magician and a concert and coffee party.²¹

Debates

A debating club was also among the activities in which a member of the Wells Memorial Institute could participate. Although not all topics were particularly relevant to workingmen (“Resolved, that the Duke of Wellington was a greater general than Napoleon”), the majority of topics did address challenging subject matter, such as woman suffrage (2 debates), conflict between Capitol and Labor, capital punishment, whether labor-saving machinery was injurious to the working classes, and if there should be a limit to the individual acquisition of wealth.²²

Education

Educational activities were at the core of the Wells Memorial Institute’s mission and the range of subjects for instruction was broad. Practical skills such as penmanship, writing, and book-keeping were common from the beginning. Music and singing classes provided opportunity for cultural education and recreation that could ultimately lead to higher status. An article on the evening lectures and classes at the Wells Memorial and Peoples’ Institutes specifically addressed the value of dancing and deportment, which “does not impress the casual observer as of practical value, but that is just what it has proved, for a peculiar reason. Awkward boys and girls make a poor impression upon strangers, and the grace and ease of carriage acquired in a dancing class give one that ‘pleasing address’ which goes a long way in business.”²³

A partnership with the Boston Public Library also furthered the educational mission of the Wells Memorial Institute. When the first building opened, the Institute itself owned 50

volumes another 100 were loaned by the BPL. The Institute also carried magazines, newspapers, and mechanical journals.²⁴

The Wells Memorial Institute was celebrated during Paine's lifetime as a place for men and women to attend lectures on topics related to technical subjects. These free classes were at times funded by the Lowell Institute, often taught by professors of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and offered in the Wells Memorial Institute building. In 1907, the Boston Daily Globe highlighted the upcoming series of classes: "The subjects taught will include mechanical drawing and practical electricity. The class will be under the instruction of Prof W. L. Puffer and Thomas Hawley and Hanson W. Hayward. For women household science and cookery will also be added features."²⁵

The admission of women as members shifted some of the Wells Institute programming. In 1893, the first year that women could join the Institute, it offered a series of lectures on the "American Home," by Ellen Richards, the first female student, and later faculty member, of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.²⁶

The MIT connection is a particularly interesting one, given the status the school has since achieved. However, during Paine's lifetime, the Institute of Technology was still relatively new and had yet to move across to the Charles River to its permanent home in Cambridge. Henry S. Pritchett, MIT's president, spoke during the opening ceremonies in 1904, telling the assembled audience that "he too, was a working man and had worked so hard yesterday that he himself would enjoy a few words of encouragement. He told the audience that any institution which stood for work that its members might attain a higher class of citizenship, was one to be proud of whether it was the Wells memorial or the Massachusetts Institute of Technology."²⁷

Recreation and Fellowship

Although education was an essential part of the Wells Memorial Institute's mission, providing healthy and wholesome opportunities for recreation, amusement, and fellowship were also important. Paine was a strong supporter of temperance and spoke often against the influence of saloons. By providing a club for workingmen, he offered an alternative

environment where men could still enjoy games like billiards but without the temptation of alcohol.

The Wells Memorial Institute offered fellowship through its many entertainment programs but also organized activities that took place beyond its walls. Chief among these were the outing clubs, about which more will be said later. In addition to the annual outing to Stonehurst, visits to other historic and cultural sites were part of these recreational activities. Discount tickets to resort areas such as Nahant and Provincetown were also sold, which gave working people the ability to leave the city's heat.

Physical activity was also encouraged and promoted through activities at the Wells Memorial, and later the Peoples' Institute. Athletic facilities for use by members of the Wells Memorial Institute were also acquired in Dorchester on Franklin Field in 1898. A building once owned by a cricket club was purchased and adapted for the use of Wells Institute members and friends. The facilities were described in the Boston Daily Globe: "The building has been divided into two parts, one for men and one for women. The easterly side allotted to the men is fitted up with 100 lockers, and in a week or two shower baths will be in readiness. The members will have use of the tennis courts which were laid out last season, and the park commissioners have promised to lay out two or three more."²⁸

Cycling became especially popular with club members in the 1890s, just as cycling fever became a nationwide phenomenon. In an 1897 article on an intercity cycling race, the Boston Daily Globe described the cycling scene in the city: "During the early evening hours the park system is thronged with riders, and the size of the rolling army of wheelmen and wheelwomen on any pleasant evening is astonishing. During a short 10 minutes rest in the Fenway the other evening the writer counted over 300 riders on single machines going and coming, and in addition to that there was a larger number of tandems."²⁹ Both the Wells and Peoples' institutes had clubs of "Wheelmen," who met for regular runs in the greater Boston area, which were often announced in the Globe, along with new of the various local cycling clubs.³⁰

People's Institute Wheelmen.

The run for today will be to Quincy point, leaving the rooms at 3 p m. The club is invited to Robert Treat Paine's country home on the 25th.

Bill McKinnon is with battery K, 1st heavy artillery, at Gloucester.

Boston Globe, June 19, 1898.

The first annual report included attendance figures for each of the entertainments offered that year, most of which were lectures. Among the most popular were the magician and the concert and coffee party, which drew nearly twice as many attendees than average. Even the Honorable Josiah Quincy and Mr. Paine himself were able to draw only 60 attendees compared to the 130 who attended the concert and coffee party. The lack of participation was noted: "The Entertainments, or rather the Lectures, have not been so well attended as they deserved. A bare lecture does not seem to take as well with the men (rank and file) as a varied performance." At the beginning, Trustees of the Wells Memorial Institute were likely unsure of how much engagement they could anticipate, "There are some who do not visit the Rooms more than once a month. The reason of this, I presume, that they are busy, or otherwise engaged, or very tired after their day's work is done."³¹ However, its 30th anniversary, the Wells Memorial Institute had much to celebrate. The Institute also expanded into the ground floor and basement of its building, which added a lunch room, bowling alleys, shower and tub baths, and a game room with billiards.³²

The Institute seems to have remained strong following Paine's death. In 1915, the board of trustees began to discuss the need for a new building to support and increase the ability to engage with the community. That year, the Institute held 24 classes for working people and had a membership of nearly 1800.³³ The fact that the Institute persisted in some form until 1950 indicates that Paine and the Institute's trustees laid a solid foundation.³⁴ The Daily Boston

Globe reported on September 15, 1950 that the Wells Memorial Institute would close following 71 years “of tending the educational needs and welfare of thousands of citizens of the South End” due to a lack of funds. Financial support had been provided by the Community Fund since 1932 and a survey conducted in the late 1940s by the Fund identified the Wells Memorial as one of several of its endowed organizations to be closed. At the time the closing was announced, plans were to move Wells Memorial classes to the YMCA and YWCA and the Wells Memorial Lounge was to be managed by the Federation of South End Settlements.[†]

Peoples Institute (See Appendix B)

The Peoples’ Institute (spelled both with and without the apostrophe) opened to the public in July 1890. Located at 1171-1175 Tremont Street in Roxbury, the Institute was housed in a three-story brick and brownstone building with interiors finished in ash, heated by steam, and lighted by gas. Amenities included a 300-seat entertainment hall with a platform (presumably a stage) and piano, billiards tables, a smoking and game room where members could play chess, checkers, and dominoes (but not until after 2:00 p.m.), and bathing facilities (for men) with two large bathtubs with hot and cold water and toilet rooms. When the Institute opened it also featured a temperance coffee house that served inexpensive meals and had the initial intent of serving as “a school to educate the people in the arts of domestic economy, namely, selecting economically and preparing healthfully the most judicious articles of food.”³⁵ However, the coffeehouse was closed by 1897, after they “proved so unsatisfactory.”³⁶ The closing of the coffeehouse had a positive spin; the Boys’ Institute of Industry was able to move into this space and expand their activities.

Like the Wells Memorial Institute, the Peoples’ Institute was located in center of working-class life. The Whittier Machine Company, a church organ manufactory, and the Boston and Providence Railyard, among other factories and shops, were nearby.

[†] Although the YMCA, YWCA, and Federation of South End Settlements took on the activities and services of the Wells Memorial, it’s not clear whether this meant an actual merger with the shuttered institute. Whether the institutional records of the Wells Memorial were transferred to one of these organizations is unknown. However, further research should be undertaken in the following collections, United South End Settlements Records, and Young Men’s Christian Association of Greater Boston Records, both in the Northeastern University Archives and Special Collections.

The activities held at the Peoples' Institute were similar to those at the Wells Memorial, with a focus on education and wholesome entertainment and recreation. Among the events regularly described in print were the opening and closing ceremonies of the season, which typically included a welcome and short presentation by R. T. Paine, an address by local politicians or religious leaders, and music or other entertainments.



Bromley, George Washington, and Walter Scott Bromley. "Atlas of the city of Boston, Boston proper and Roxbury." Map. Philadelphia: G.W. Bromley & Co., 1895. *Digital Commonwealth*, <https://ark.digitalcommonwealth.org/ark:/50959/m900r903q> (accessed June 24, 2018). Plate 20.

Unlike the Wells Memorial Institute, the Peoples' Institute did not exist for many years following Paine's death. At the twenty-second annual meeting of the Robert Treat Paine Association, the trustees decided to close the Roxbury Institute:

On motion it was VOTED That it is desirable to close the People's Institute and that a Committee of three, consisting of Robert Treat Paine, John H. Storer and Charles K. Cummings, be authorized to take such steps as may be necessary therefor; and also to

make such other disposition of the building as may seem best for carrying out the purposes of the Trust.

On motion it was VOTED to authorize the refunding to any member of the proportionate part of his membership dues for the unexpired portion of his membership year, or to pay the Wells Memorial Institute for membership in said Institute for such unexpired term, if arrangements therefor can be made with said Institute.³⁷

The sale of the building turned out to be a difficult business, but eventually sold in 1941.³⁸

Joint Efforts of the Wells Memorial and Peoples' Institutes

Although these two institutes started within a decade of one another, were located in different neighborhoods, and had separate memberships, in 1892, both institutes were officially united under the presidency of Robert Treat Paine.³⁹ Given the similarity of activities and offerings at the two locations, the joining of their management under Paine and superintendent Edmund Billings was likely deemed to be a more efficient way of doing business.

A mutual benefit of membership in either institute was access to discounts on staple items, including coal, barrels of flour, and coffee and tea. This benefit was initially offered to members of the Wells Memorial. According to notes from the 1898 annual meeting, members saved 50 cents on a ton of coal, and 25 cents on a barrel of flour.⁴⁰

**Do You Know That You Can
Save 50c. Per Ton on Your Coal!**
By being a member of the Wells Memorial Institute for Working Men, 387 Washington st., or **People's Institute**, 1171 Tremont st., beside obtaining many other advantages.
ROBERT TREAT PAINE, President.
MEMBERSHIP - - \$1 PER YEAR.

Boston Herald, September 7, 1892, 1

Fellowship and recreational activities were natural opportunities to bring together the members of both Institutes. Among the many regular social events that engaged both Institutes was the Thanksgiving dinner. One of, if not the first joint Thanksgivings was described in the annual report as follows:

“About 200 men, most of whom were unable on account of distance to be at their own homes on that day, sat down to dinner with us in one of our large halls. Our President, Mr. Paine, presided at the head of the table, with various members of the Board of Trustees on either side. After a most thorough and vigorous discussion of the ‘bird emblematic of the day we celebrate,’ which consumed about two hours, an adjournment was made to the largest hall for the after-dinner speeches and a royal good time.”⁴¹

An invitation from the 1897 celebration saved by R. T. Paine in his scrapbook dedicated to Institute activities includes the bill of fare for the day--roast turkey, chicken pie, cranberry sauce, mashed potatoes, squash, celery, mince, apple, and squash pies, strawberry, vanilla, and chocolate ice creams, bisque glace, citron, almond, and coconut cake, macaroons, tea, coffee, hot rolls, and nuts and raisins—which was a veritable feast. The meal was followed by addresses by Bishop Lawrence, Edward Everett Hale, and Paine himself, along with musical entertainment. During the previous year’s celebration, guests included other individuals engaged in the support of working men and women, Robert A. Woods and Helena S. Dudley, who managed settlements at the South End and Denison Houses, respectively.⁴²

Paine Family and Youth Programs at the St. Andrew’s Mission

As prominent members of Trinity Church, the Paine family was naturally involved in the wealth of social service work sponsored by the church. Although addressing the family’s specific activities in this realm is technically beyond the scope of this project, I was urged to conduct research on Trinity’s St. Andrew’s Mission since a published family history and an unpublished letter in the Stonehurst archives specifically mention children of this mission visiting Stonehurst with their instructor Ethel Paine. The inspiration for this research project, the 1904 photos of

the group of young boys at Stonehurst found in Ethel Paine's album, could very well be visual documentation of these visits. The St. Andrew's Chapel in Boston's West End was established in 1874 in a building on North Charles Street and moved to the Reformed Presbyterian Church on Chambers Street in June 1886.⁴³ Among the services offered by St. Andrew's were several that provided education for children, specifically the Boys' Club and Girls' Industrial Club. R. T. Paine's daughter Ethel was the director of the Boys' Club or Boys' Industrial School of St. Andrew's. Two family references mention regular visits of these children to Stonehurst at the invitation of Ethel Paine. The Trinity Church Archives record how outings, exercise and fresh air were promoted to the boys and girls who attended programs at St. Andrew's, but no additional references to visiting the Paines' Waltham home were found in Trinity Church records or (unindexed) local newspapers to supplement those in the family records.

Other Youth Programs Supported by the Paine family

One of the lines of research for this project has centered on determining whether students of the Boys' Institute of Industry in Roxbury who took classes within the Wells Memorial Institute building had excursions to Stonehurst along with the adult students in that building. The 25th Annual Report for the Boys' Institute is among the materials in the Stonehurst archive. This particular report was published in 1910, the year of R. T. Paine's death, which resulted in a short dedication to their benefactor in the report. Research untangled the threads of connection between this organization and Paine's workingmen's institutes and support for the education of boys and girls in industrial arts. However, it remains unclear as to whether students of the Boys Institute of Industry ever visited Stonehurst.

Paine's connection is described in a *Boston Daily Globe* newspaper article from January 31, 1927, which reported on a merger of two boys' clubs, one from Roxbury and one from Charlestown. The two organizations came to be known as the Boys' Club of Boston. The article includes the following information about the history of the Roxbury organization:

The Roxbury Boys' Club, slightly older of the two, was founded in 1884 by Edward Everett Hale. It was formally chartered April 27, 1885, as "The Boys' Institute of Industry," Dr. Hale first conducting it as a school of carpentry. Some years later, it was

determined to enlarge the scope of the school, and Bishop Phillips Brooks and Robert Treat Paine, joining the board of directors, aided its expansion materially. Mr. Paine fitted up rooms for the Institute at 1158 Tremont st. Roxbury. Classes in many handicrafts were started.

Dr. Hale served as the president of the Board for 22 years and was succeeded by Henry F. Miller in 1906. Shortly after Dr. Hale's death in 1909, the name of the organization was changed to the Roxbury Boys' Club and Institute of Industry, a title which it has retained up to the present time.⁴⁴

The legacy of this merger is the current Boys and Girls' Clubs of Boston.[‡]

[‡] Boys and Girls Clubs of Boston, <https://www.bgcb.org/who-we-are/>.

Hand, Heart, Home, and Health: Connections to Stonehurst, the Robert Treat Paine Estate[§]

“May we all feel profoundly our responsibility, both to the very poor, whose hard lot demands our supreme solicitude, and also towards the great mass of honest, industrious, hard-working men and women. The elevation of working men is the hope of the world.”

■ *Robert Treat Paine Association Articles of Incorporation, 1890*

As a physical embodiment of the concepts of Hand, Heart, Home, and Health, Stonehurst has the opportunity to further enhance its ability to promote the values infused in the home’s architecture and landscape.

Manual training/education and the Arts & Crafts Movement (Hand)

Although Paine was a Harvard graduate whose professional vocation was the law, based on the records of the Wells Memorial and People’s Institute, he clearly understood the value of manual education as a means for financial independence. The craftsmanship and technology on display in his Waltham home suggests a personal appreciation of these values. Manual training and general education for workingmen were at the heart of the activities of the Wells Memorial and Peoples Institutes as well as institutes for boys and girls that were supported by the Paines.

Civic engagement, the greater good, and philanthropy (Heart)

Paine’s most enduring legacy has been the philanthropy that was at the heart of the Institutes and is willingness to engage directly with the men and women for whom the institutes were created. He was a regular attendee and speaker at opening and closing ceremonies, the master of ceremonies at the Thanksgiving meal, and relentless advocate for the institutions he created. Paine is emblematic of the local philanthropist who lives in the community he serves and seems to have understood that by supporting local workers, all could benefit. The core of these values seem to have stemmed primarily from his religious faith but

[§] The inspiration comes in part from the motto of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, with which the Wells Memorial Institute had some connections. *Mens et manus*, Latin for mind and hand, symbolizes the school’s belief in the combination of knowledge and “learning by doing.”

he extended opportunities to all who wished to avail themselves. However, it is important to acknowledge that Paine's firm belief in personal responsibility for one's financial success and comfort does not address the structural inequalities that made it difficult for all working people to rise in social status.

Plumbing, steam, and mechanical engineering in the domestic sphere (Home)

Lectures related to industrial training at the Wells Memorial Institute featured instructors from the recently established Massachusetts of Technology, at the time located in the Back Bay in the vicinity of Trinity Church. Given Paine's key role in Trinity's construction, it is likely that this proximity brought him in contact with staff from MIT in addition to personal connections with other Boston "Brahmins" of the era, including Abbott Lawrence Lowell, who established free courses at the Institute of Technology and the Lowell Institute's lectures at the Wells Memorial.

Among the Institute's staff who led series of lectures at Wells was Ellen H. Swallow Richards, the first woman admitted to MIT, who later became the Institute's Instructor in Sanitary Chemistry and authored several books on sanitation and hygiene. Stonehurst provides many physical examples of how issues of hygiene and health could be addressed in the domestic sphere, such as its elaborate bathrooms, sleeping porches, and the large windows that provided natural light to the kitchen and laundry spaces.

The virtue of physical activity and exposure to the outdoors (Health)

One of the original goals of this project was to document outings made by members of the workingmen's institutes and boys and girls institutes of industry to Paine's Waltham estate. Visits by members of the Wells Memorial and Peoples Institute are regularly mentioned in the annual reports of these organizations and occasionally mentioned in newspaper articles (See Appendix C for transcriptions). Invitations to the outing are also found in the scrapbook that Paine kept as a record of the institutes.

Although the outing to Waltham was evidently a much-anticipated event, referred to one year as a "red letter day," members of the Institutes participated in other activities that

promoted outdoor physical activity. The Peoples' Institute had an organized baseball team and as noted earlier, both Institutes had bicycle clubs, which in some years organized one of their "runs" to coincide with the Stonehurst outing.

Reflecting back on the two photographs that originally launched this inquiry, the exposure of children from the city to fresh air and open spaces was also mentioned in the reports of Paine's institutes. In the third annual report of the Peoples' Institute (1893), reference is made to a Summer Home in Revere: "where our boys spent the summer vacation through the kindness of Mrs. M. McClure, who offered it free of rent. Several furniture dealers assisted in fitting it up and as many boys as could be accommodated enjoyed a week of seaside air away from the hot streets of our city." The address is not provided, but the location was generally described as Revere Highlands, a section of town with "ample playgrounds, including a garden with pears, cherries and quince trees from which hang our hammocks and swings." The South End and Lynn and Boston Railroads provided over 1000 tickets for boys to be transported to the house in Revere and other parks in the city. The project was clearly successful: "The boys were so delighted to have a place that they could call their own that after the holiday season was over they would make a bee line for Revere on Friday evenings after school, often remaining till Monday morning."

Response to Paine's work in his own time.

The contemporary response to Paine's approaches to philanthropy and self-improvement were generally celebrated among his peers. However, there are some intriguing references to his being "misunderstood" or that his approach may have been misguided. Edmund Billings, superintendent of the Wells Memorial Institute, offered this recollection of Paine during the Institute's opening exercises in October 1910:

Just one word more, in my experience I have never known intimately a man whom I believed to be as truly great, as Mr. Paine, who at the same time was by so many so thoroughly misunderstood. This is perhaps a strange thing to say at this time and on this occasion, but it is nevertheless true, he was misunderstood, by a portion of the community and in the country as a whole. They failed often to understand his ideals, but

they were the ideals and plans of a practical, farseeing master mind. The idle, and careless and good natured distribution of wealth, had no place in his scheme of things, [p. 2] but rather the serious life work of making his brain and his money contribute to the development of better and happier conditions for men and women--not the dependency of individuals but independency--that was what his life was given for, and yet men, women and communities often misunderstood and misjudged him. . . . Mr. Paine in his following of his Master was at times misjudged, but his works are going to live after him, and in the years that are to come, history is going to write him as one of the truly great of our generation, who often seeing far beyond his fellows had the courage, in the face of opposition and sometimes ridicule to use the great opportunities that God gave him, for the lasting benefit of his fellow men.⁴⁵

The Legacy of Paine's Institutes

Given the extensive network of organizations that Robert Treat Paine and his family founded and those to which he contributed to, it can be challenging to determine the modern organizations with direct ties to the Institutes of the RTP Association. Despite searches for archival materials in all the likely repositories, the location of the complete records of the Wells Memorial Institute, the People's Institute and the Boys Institute of Industry remain elusive. Mr. Paine kept Annual Reports and scrapbooks of the Wells Memorial and People's Institutes, now housed in the archives at Stonehurst. Records of the Robert Treat Paine Association, run by descendants of Robert Treat Paine are also housed in the Stonehurst archives.

As part of this research project, I was able to review the documents and reports in the Stonehurst collection related to the Institutes, of which the annual reports and scrapbook were the most rich in content. The minutes book of the Robert Treat Paine Association was primarily a record that annual meetings were held without much information about the agendas of these meetings; however, after Paine's death, there is more information regarding the closing of the People's Institute and the sale of property. Paine's correspondence also provided some contextual information about his values, primarily regarding thrift, and demonstrated that his personal values were at the core of those he espoused in public. I also reviewed transcriptions

in the Stonehurst archives of material from the Paine family papers in the Massachusetts Historical Society collection.

My efforts to learn more about outings to Stonehurst by members of boys' and girls' institutes with which the Paine family had connections took me to the Massachusetts Historical Society, where I reviewed portions of the Trinity Church collection that are associated with the St. Andrew's Mission. Very little relevant information was found in these materials. I was also able to visit the archives at Trinity Church to review their St. Andrew's material, which included a scrapbook and a full run of the Trinity Church Annual Reports, which included documentation of activities at the St. Andrew's Mission. While no direct references to bringing students from the children's classes to Stonehurst were found in these materials, I was able to take reference photographs of a wealth of materials that may help Stonehurst staff interpret the Paine family's involvement with this mission church, which was located in Boston's West End, another densely populated section of the city.

Recommendations for Future Research and Outreach

The greatest challenge I faced in this research project was the overwhelming amount of material that is available on Robert Treat Paine. Therefore, this report merely scratches the surface of the subject of Paine's leadership in social welfare work during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the complexity of his beliefs about aiding those less fortunate, and the extent to which his efforts were successful. These are questions that I could only begin to consider because each question led to finding more sources and taking me further down rabbit holes, so to speak. As a result, I have compiled a substantial amount of digital research that requires further mining. Many of these digital items may duplicate writings or clippings that are compiled within Paine's scrapbooks and other papers but are much easier to read and manage in the digital format and will allow for less disruption of the archival versions. It is my hope that by collecting these materials and providing a structure for processing the information (specifically appendices and a table that can be expanded) that additional information can be captured to further fill out the story.

There may also be additional archival materials that could be tapped. The City of Boston Archives has started digitizing their materials and provided the wonderful photographs of the elevated railway on Washington Street. Given the extensive amount of photography associated with the building of the MBTA system, there may be other images that show construction in process. Since the Wells Memorial building no longer stands, it would be interesting to see if the City Archives has images associated with demolition in the South End. Additional outreach to the South End Historical Society and Roxbury Historical Society might also lead to additional documentation of the Institute buildings as well as possible programming partnerships. As noted in a footnote above, other collections worth reviewing are in the Northeastern University Archives and Special Collections, specifically related to the South End Settlements and YMCA. The South End Settlements records would be the priority collection to review, in my opinion, because of the physical proximity to the Wells Memorial Institute and the fact that Paine and Robert Woods, the founder of the South End Settlements, were contemporaries and peers who knew each other.

The other question that lingers in my mind is why the Paines focused their philanthropy on Boston workers and were less engaged in assisting the workers of Waltham, a city renowned as a cradle of the Industrial Revolution. Any untapped potential in archival collections in Waltham would be worth additional review.

Endnotes

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- ¹³ RTP to Rev. Alden L. Bennett, Crescent Street, Waltham, Mass, August 24, 1893 [1992/2.90]. RTP Correspondence, 1893, Stonehurst Archives.
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- ¹⁵ Robert Treat Paine Association Records, Stonehurst Archives (Articles of Incorporation, By-Laws, etc. 1890). R. T. Paine Papers, Scrapbook, 1890-1905, Stonehurst Archives.
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- ¹⁷ *First Annual Report of the Wells Memorial Association*, 5.
- ¹⁸ *First Annual Report of the Wells Memorial Association*, 7.
- ¹⁹ "Its 25th Anniversary: Celebration by Wells Memorial Institute," *Boston Daily Globe*, October 26, 1904.
- ²⁰ *Fourteenth Annual Report of the Wells Memorial Institute for Workingmen For the Year ending March 31st 1893*. Boston, 1893, 17-18.
- ²¹ *First Annual Report of the Wells Memorial Association*, 10.
- ²² *First Annual Report of the Wells Memorial Association*, 11.
- ²³ Article on scrapbook pg. 34. [illeg] EVENING LECTURES. Classes at the Wells Memorial and the People's Institute., R. T. Paine Papers, Scrapbook, 1890-1905, Stonehurst Archives.
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- ²⁶ *Fourteenth Annual Report of the Wells Memorial Institute for Workingmen*, 1893, 26.
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- ³⁵ Robert Treat Paine Association Records, Stonehurst Archives (Articles of Incorporation, By-Laws, etc. 1890). R. T. Paine Papers, Scrapbook, 1890-1905, Stonehurst Archives.
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- ³⁷ [loose pages at the front of the bound book][Page 1] The twenty-second annual meeting of the Robert Treat Paine Association was held on Tuesday, April 4, 1911 at 5 P.M. at No. 6 Joy Street, Boston. Robert Treat Paine Association Minutes Book, Robert Treat Paine Association Records, Stonehurst Archives.
- ³⁸ A special meeting of the Robert Treat Paine Association was held in Cambridge on Saturday, October 11, 1941, at 5 P.M. Robert Treat Paine Association Minutes Book, Robert Treat Paine Association Records. Stonehurst Archives. Reference image IMG_0825.
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