

SWANZEY PLAYERS

1955

**SOUVENIR PROGRAM**

Friday, Saturday and Sunday Evenings

14th Annual Revival

DENMAN THOMPSON'S

"The Old Homestead"

Potash Bowl Swanzey, New Hampshire

DIRECTOR

*Harold F. Drew*

IN THE

MONADNOCK REGION

MUSIC DIRECTOR

*J. Edward Bouvier*



Uncle Josh  
*Willard L. Thompson*

and

Aunt Matilda  
*Ethel Dudley*

# *The Old Homestead*

DENMAN THOMPSON'S parents, Capt. Rufus Thompson and the former Anne Hathaway Baxter, daughter of Dr. Henry Baxter of Swanzey, lived in Beech Wood, Pa. for a short time and it was during this time that Denman was born. After returning to Swanzey, Denman attended Mt. Caesar Academy during the winter, and worked on the farm summers.

At the age of 17 Denman left home and joined a circus in Boston, riding with the opening pageant, and working with the wrestlers and tumblers. Later he went on the stage and played comedy parts.

At the age of 42, Denman Thompson wrote a skit characteristic of New England life which he called "Joshua Whitcomb" and which character part he portrayed. This skit was later developed into "The Old Homestead" play which opened in the Boston Theatre on April 5, 1886. The play toured all the major cities of the United States and its success was tremendous. Denman played the character lead of "Uncle Josh". It is said that he played this part 15,000 times, a single role, longer than any other actor on the American stage.

The theme of the play is built around the age-old story of the Prodigal Son and if Denman had searched the world over he could have found no other theme which would touch as many human hearts as this. Denman embodied in this play the finer yet homlier characteristics of New England life — simplicity, rugged honesty, piety, benevolence, partly hid beneath a rough exterior. Everywhere his drama of Yankee life has stirred the hearts of men.

In 1939 the Hopkins P.T.A. and the Swanzey Congregational Church joined in sponsoring a revival of this famous old play. It was a difficult task but the incentive was there, for this was no ordinary play — this was practically a living page from the history of Swanzey. The original script, which is faithfully followed in the revivals was presented by Mrs. Ethel Homes and Miss Anita Gilpatrick to the Old Homestead Association.

The Swanzey Players take great pride in the authenticity of their production; it has all the heart-warming philosophy of "Uncle Josh", the Yankee wit of "Cy Prime" and "Seth Perkins", and the sympathetic story of "Rube Whitcomb."

The audience, as of yore, still thrills when the yoke of oxen, drawing the "last load o' hay", passes in front of the stage; when the Salvation Army lassies march by singing in front of the original Grace Church scene, and when "Josh" finds his erring son on the sidewalks of New York.

All in Swanzey are proud to give their services to further this wonderful example of neighborhood cooperation; and each year the profits derived from this production are equally divided among the four churches of Swanzey — Catholic and Protestant, and the Community Houses of North and East Swanzey.

*"God Bless You Denman Thompson, for the good y' do our hearts  
With the music an' the memories o' youth,  
God Bless Ye for the faculty that tops all human arts  
The good ol' Yankee faculty of Truth."*

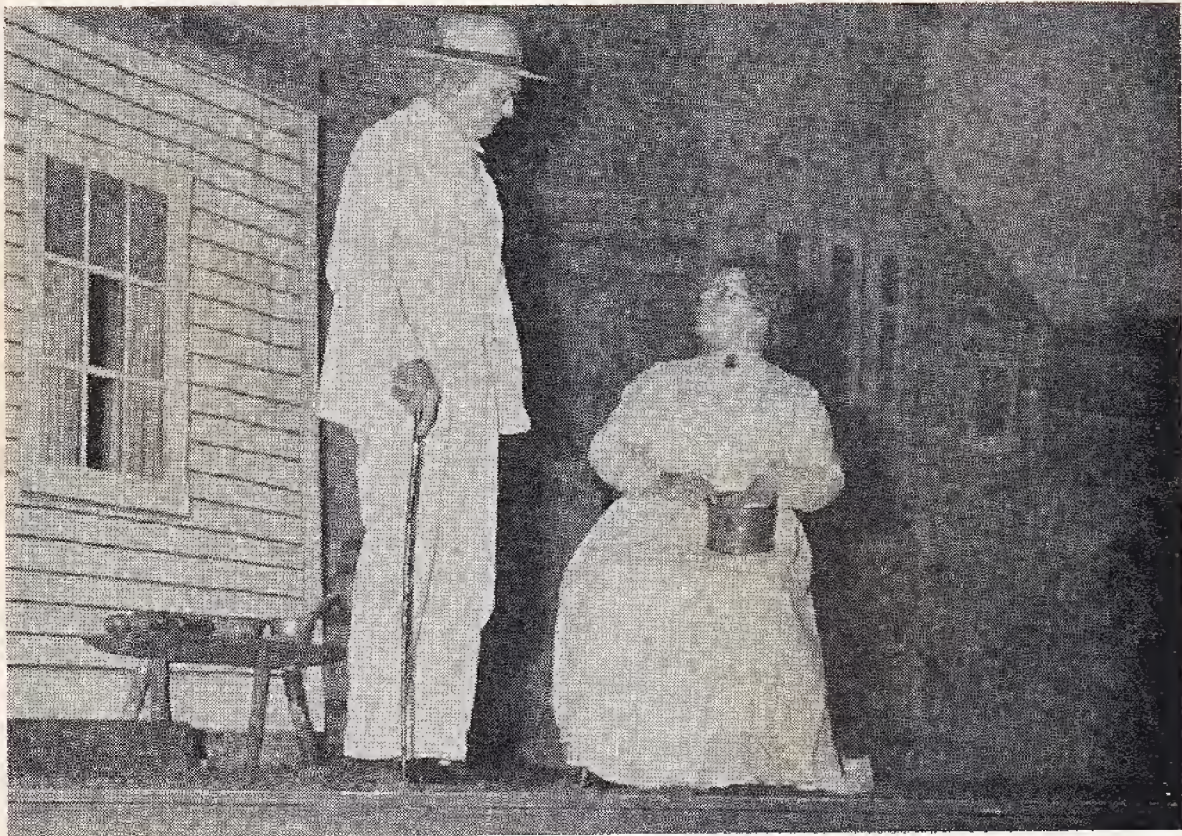
— EUGENE FIELD



Theodore Moe  
*President*



Harold Drew  
*Director*



Aunt Matilda and Cy Prime  
*Ethel Dudley and Arthur Hanrahan*



Uncle Josh  
*Willard L. Thompson*

Rickety Ann  
*Dorothy Barrett*

Happy Jack  
*Maurice Sullivan*

## THE POTASH BOWL AND VICINITY

MANY PEOPLE have perhaps wondered why this amphitheater is called the Potash Bowl. During the early part of the last century and possibly earlier much of the business of the general stores was by barter and one of the items taken in trade was wood ashes. As early as 1800 the proprietor of one of these stores in Swanzey, advertised in the New Hampshire Sentinel that he would pay 1s 6d for good wood ashes or would allow that much in trade for English and West India goods such as West India rum at 5s 11 pence per gallon, sugar, 7 pounds for 6s, and other articles in proportion.

The ashes taken in trade by at least one of these stores near this amphitheater were stored here, and later processed in huge iron kettles to produce potash, lye, etc. for making soap and for other uses. Part was used here and the rest sent to Boston.

It was therefore due to the early use of this site and to its natural contour that it was thought fitting to call it the Potash Bowl.

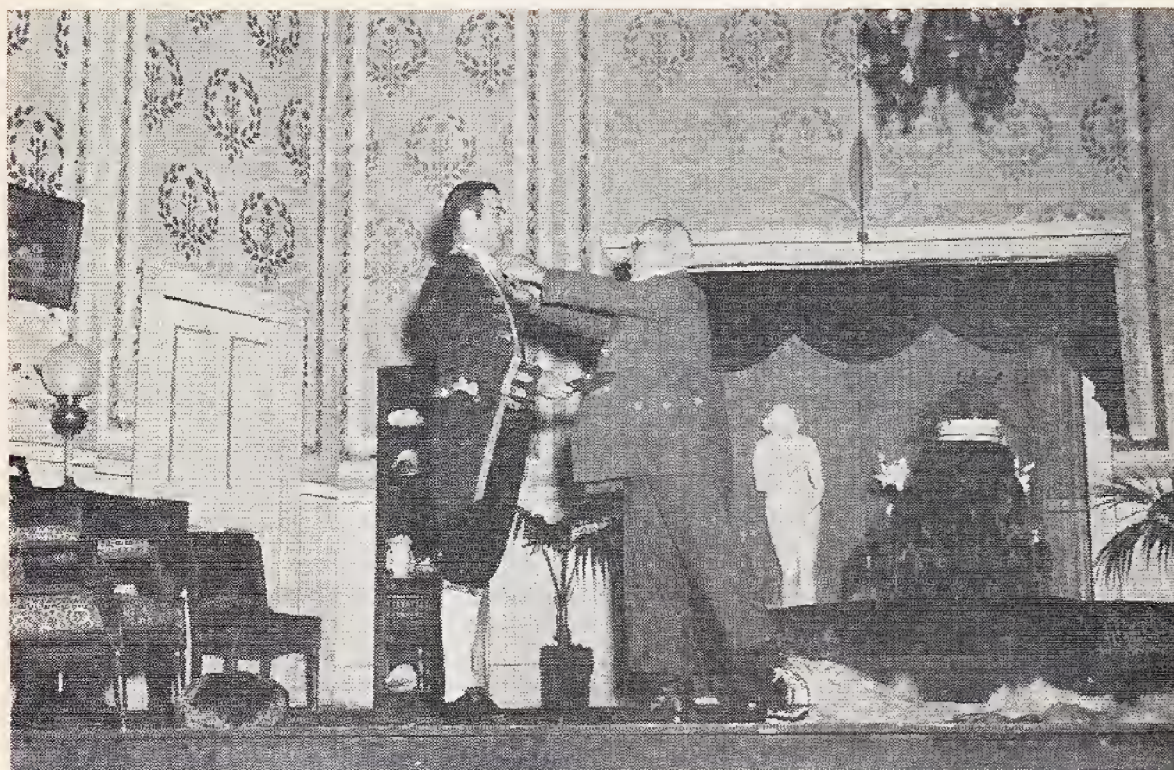
The old road that passed by the Potash Bowl, once known as the Boston Road, was at one time the most traveled road in Cheshire County. Most of the travel from this section of the state as well as much of that of Vermont going to Boston passed over this road. Due to this heavy travel there were at various times as many as eight places in Swanzey Center used as hotels or inns for entertaining the traveling public. The last building used as a hotel was on the site of the present Grange Hall adjacent to the Potash Bowl.

Near the Potash Bowl, to the west of the Carpenter Home, is the site of the first church or meeting house which was built around 1764-5. Before it was entirely completed it was damaged by the hurricane of 1765. Tradition says that the members of a church council holding a meeting in the church had hardly left the building when the hurricane passed and turned the building one quarter round, so that it was made to face the east instead of the south.

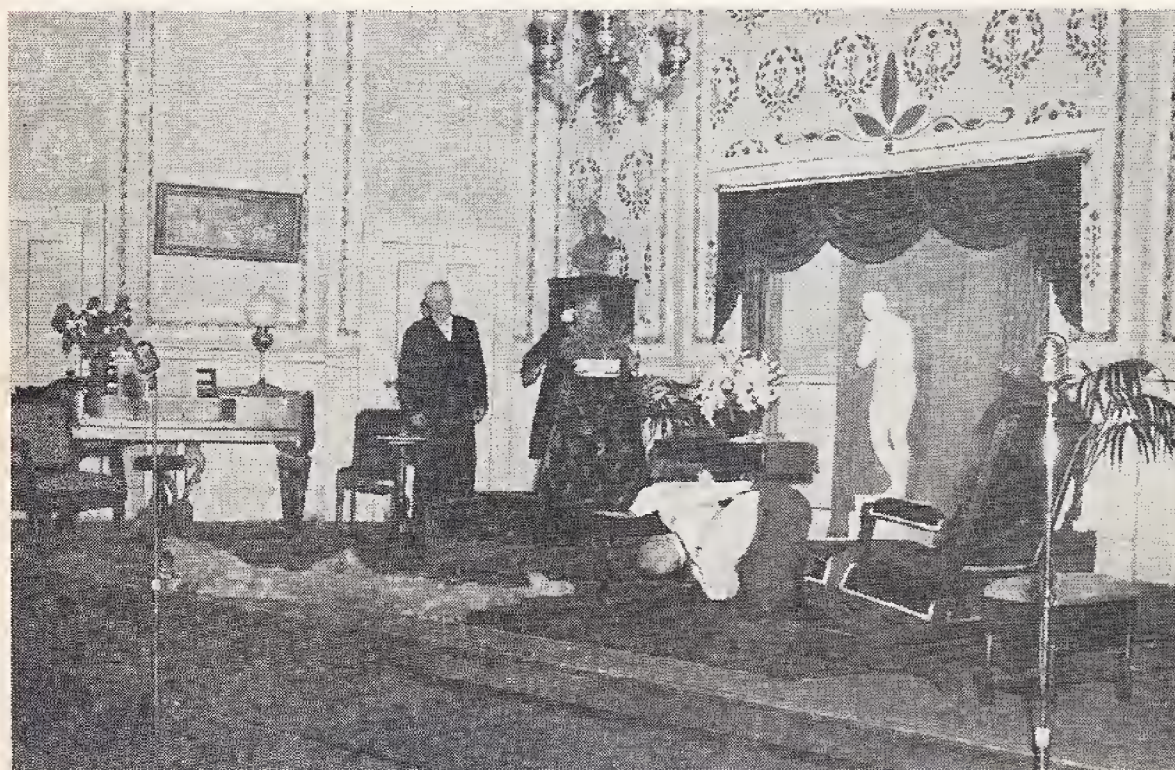
The Mt. Caesar Union Library across from the Potash Bowl was formerly the Mt. Caesar Seminary and Swanzey Academy which was founded in 1843. It flourished for several years and many of its students later became prominent in the industrial and educational life of the country. The library now houses in addition to the library an extensive and interesting collection of relics and mementos of the past.

The fields to the east and south of the library were used for military musters during that period when all able-bodied men from 18 to 40 were required to serve in the militia. At one muster in 1810 as many as four thousand troops participated.

— LEON A. WOODWARD



Uncle Josh and Francois Fogarty  
*Willard Thompson and Robert E. Parent*



Uncle Josh Looking for Bootjack

## SWANZEY MEETING HOUSES AND SEMINARY

THE FIRST SETTLERS came to Swanzey in 1733 and the Potash Bowl is in the approximate center of this early settlement. The township was chartered by New Hampshire in 1753 and took the name of Swanzey. It is not known by whose influence the town took this name. Some of the early settlers possibly had connection with Swansea in Wales or from Swansea, Mass.

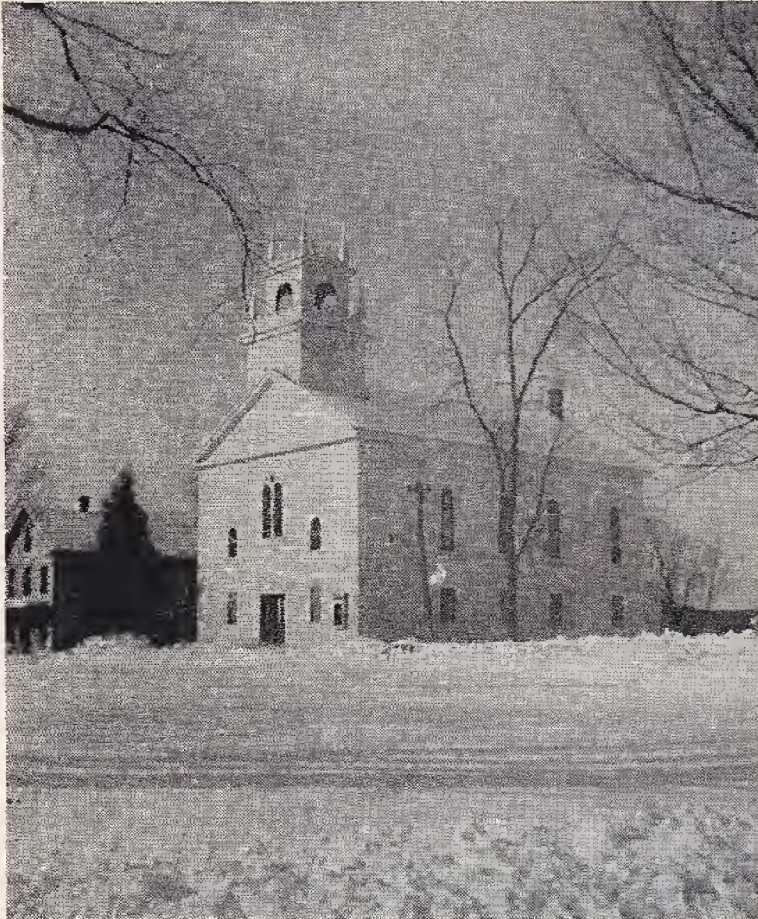
The first Meeting House was built on Meeting House Hill in 1755. (This site is marked by a stone tablet a few hundred feet to the north-west at the rear of the Carpenter Home). It is perhaps doubtful whether it was entirely completed before it was damaged by the hurricane in 1765 and the damages then caused were not wholly repaired until 1771. The building was "50 by 40 feet on the ground and 22 feet posts. A gallery was on three sides, a row of pews around the sides of the house, and back of the body seats; and likewise a row around in the gallery." This building was used as a church building and town house until about the year 1776 when a new building was erected by the town (where the present Town Hall stands). This building was used by both the Congregational and Universalist Societies until 1836 when the Congregationalists built their own church — the Brick Meeting House.

The Baptist Church (mentioned in the play by Uncle Josh and Henry Hopkins in Acts II and III) is now the West Swanzey Community Church where church services will be held this year. The church was formed in 1792 and the meeting house erected in 1804, "standing lengthwise north and south, thirty-six feet in width by sixty feet in length, with a gallery on the east side — box pews on the floor and a line of pews in the rear of the gallery — the seats of the pews were hung with hinges and by custom were raised during the time of prayer, and the 'Amen' was the signal for the falling of the seats, causing a clattering somewhat like that of heavy musketry.

The Mt. Caesar Seminary was established in 1842. Denman Thompson attended the seminary from 1847 to 1850 during the winter months and worked with his father at the carpenter's trade the rest of the year. Three winter terms at Mt. Caesar Seminary represents all the time he spent in acquiring a higher education through school media. The Mt. Caesar Union Library Association was formed in 1880 and, in 1885, by deed of Quitclaim by Mr. George Carpenter, the old Academy building was presented to the Library Association, subject to the following provisions: — "That it shall always remain where it now stands; that it shall never be sold or transferred under any circumstances whatever; that it shall never be used for a hotel or lodging house; that it shall never be used for the sale or use of any intoxicating liquors or drinks whatever; that it shall never be used for dancing, card playing, gambling or skating . . . it shall always be kept for literary purposes and for the promotion of knowledge and intelligence among the inhabitants . . . and as long as the United States remain free and independent the boys in the neighborhood shall have the right unmolested, to ring the bell on each succeeding Fourth of July." (This deed may be seen in the Library, as well as many interesting and historical relics, valuable for their antiquity.)

*(Taken in part from HISTORY OF SWANZEY, N. H., 1734 TO 1890,  
by Benjamin Read)*

## BRIEF HISTORY OF THE BAPTIST MEETING HOUSE OF WEST SWANZEY



*The Old Baptist Meeting House, West Swanzey, where the Old Homestead Sunday Service will be held at 11 a.m., July 31.*

PREVIOUS to the year 1880 little is known of the history of the Baptist Meeting House as it came to be known in later years. However, what little information we have concerning it would indicate that it really came into being in the year 1792 with twenty-five charter members.

The first meeting of this church on record was held eight years later on April 18th, 1800 in what was then known as the "Corner School House." This record is rather vague, however, in that it did not record the names of either the moderator or the clerk who participated.

It was later recorded that on October 13, 1803 the church united with the "Leyden Baptist Association" at Guilford, Mass. and in the year 1809 by her own request was dismissed from said Association and united with the "Dublin Baptist Association" of N. H. She is still a member of the latter Association in good standing. A period of 146 years.

According to the records at hand it appears that the church was not finished immediately at the time of erection in 1804, for it is recorded that

in 1814 the exterior of the Meeting House was finished at a cost of \$400.00, and in March 1820 the sum of one hundred and fifty dollars was raised to complete the interior.

Twenty-three years later, in 1843, extensive alterations were made throughout and it was at this time that the original box pews were replaced with the more modern type.

Again in 1873 a committee was chosen to remodel and repair the Meeting House. This committee raised the necessary funds and went about the task assigned to it and in June 1874 the work of remodeling was completed and the church was dedicated to the service of God in due form.

This Church, and the Methodist Church, after having served for many years as two separate bodies decided at last that the Kingdom of God could be better served if they could come together and work as one church to the honor and glory of God. So, on January 22, 1939 forward steps were taken to this end. Several meetings were held during the next four months; and finally on the seventh day of May, 1939 the work of organization was completed and the two churches became one under the official name, West Swanzey Community Church, and under that name she has carried on for the past sixteen years.

A church, like a home, needs to be remodeled occasionally for the good of all concerned; therefore, with this thought in mind, in the winter of 1946 plans got underway for another remodeling job. A committee was appointed to raise the necessary funds for this purpose, with the result that a new Altar, chancel, parapet, lectern, pulpit, organ and chimes were installed, a carpet was laid in the chancel and a runner in the middle aisle, and two beautiful memorial windows set, one in the back and the other in front over the Altar. These were all given in memoriam. The auditorium, vestry and kitchen were redecorated all at a cost of about \$9000.00. On the 18th of April, 1947 the church was again rededicated with appropriate services.

Thus the old Meeting House has stood the stress and storms of time, in war and in peace, sorrow and joy, as a beacon light in the center of the community. Her voice is still proclaiming the unsearchable riches of Christ. "And whosoever will may come."

— REV. R. W. E. MACKENZIE



## Church Program

Community Church (The Old Baptist Meeting House) West Swanzey, N. H.

Rev. R. W. E. MacKenzie, Pastor

Barbara Grover, Organist

SUNDAY, JULY 31st, 1955

Organ Meditation "ADAGIO" *Ducoudray*

Processional: Hymn No. 300

Call to Worship: "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength and faith, through prayer. For prayer is the sacred key which fits the door between man's soul and God."

Response: "Come, then, let us worship Christ the Lord with hearts sincere, through songs of praise and prayer. Amen."

Invocation: (In unison)

Almighty God, author of eternal light; illumine our hearts by the light of thy grace, that our lips may praise thee, and that our worship may glorify thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Response (Organ)

Responsive Reading: (Selection 68) "Coming Back Home"

Gloria Patri

Anthem "O Morn of Beauty" (*Sibelius*) Old Homestead Male Quartet

The Scripture Lesson: Mark 9:1-7

Tenor Solo "If With All Your Heart" (From "Elijah" — *Mendelssohn*)

Richard Hutchins

Pastoral Prayer

Response (Old Homestead Male Quartet)

Offertory "Andante Pastorale" (*Stephens*)

Doxology

Anthem "Peace I Leave With You" (*Roberts*) Old Homestead Male Quartet.

Ken Hallenbeck—Soloist

Sermon: Regal Companionship

Hymn: No. 384

Benediction

Threefold Amen

Old Homestead Male Quartet

Postlude "March From Tennhauser" (*Wagner*)

The pastor and people of the Swanzey Center Church are participating in this, the annual "Old Homestead" Sunday Service. Rev. Herbert Buhler will assist.

The "Old Homestead" Double Male Quartet is furnishing the music. Prof. J. Edward Bouvier, Director and Guest Organist.



Judge Patterson  
Leon Haskins  
Henry Hopkins  
Leslie Frazer  
Singing the Fire Song at the Melodian



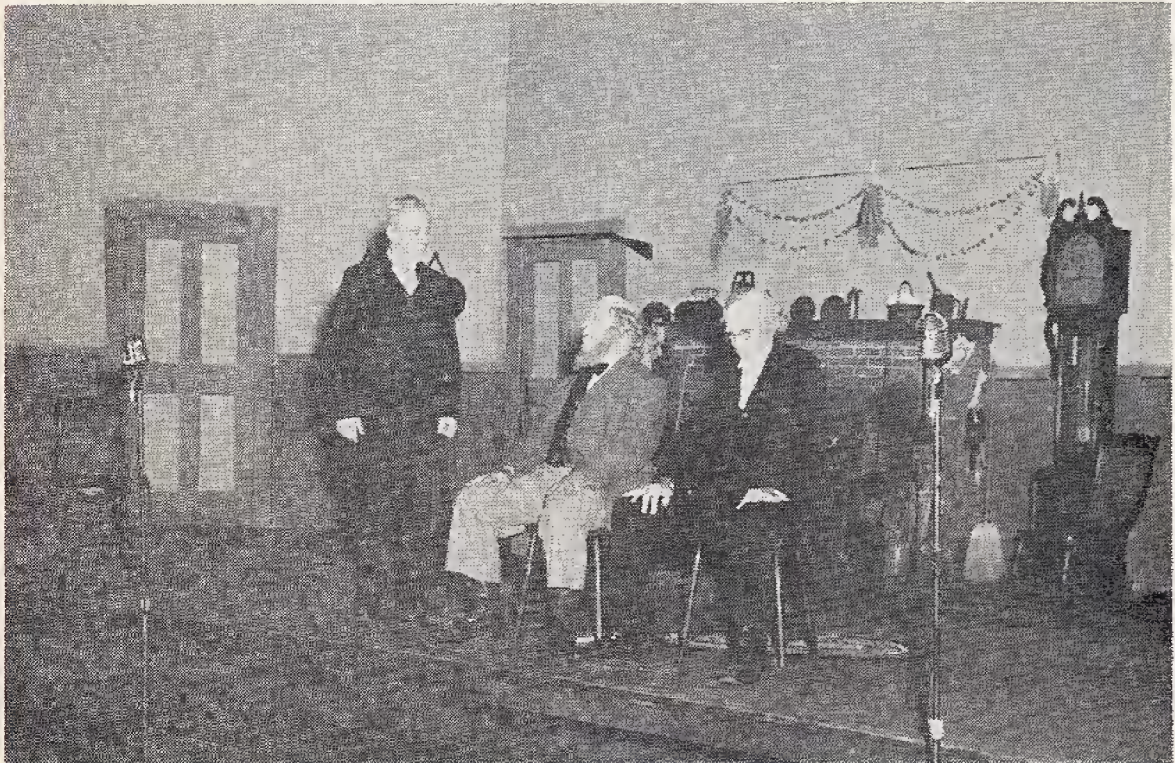
Mrs. Maguire  
*Irene Wood*

One of the Finest  
*Kendall Page*

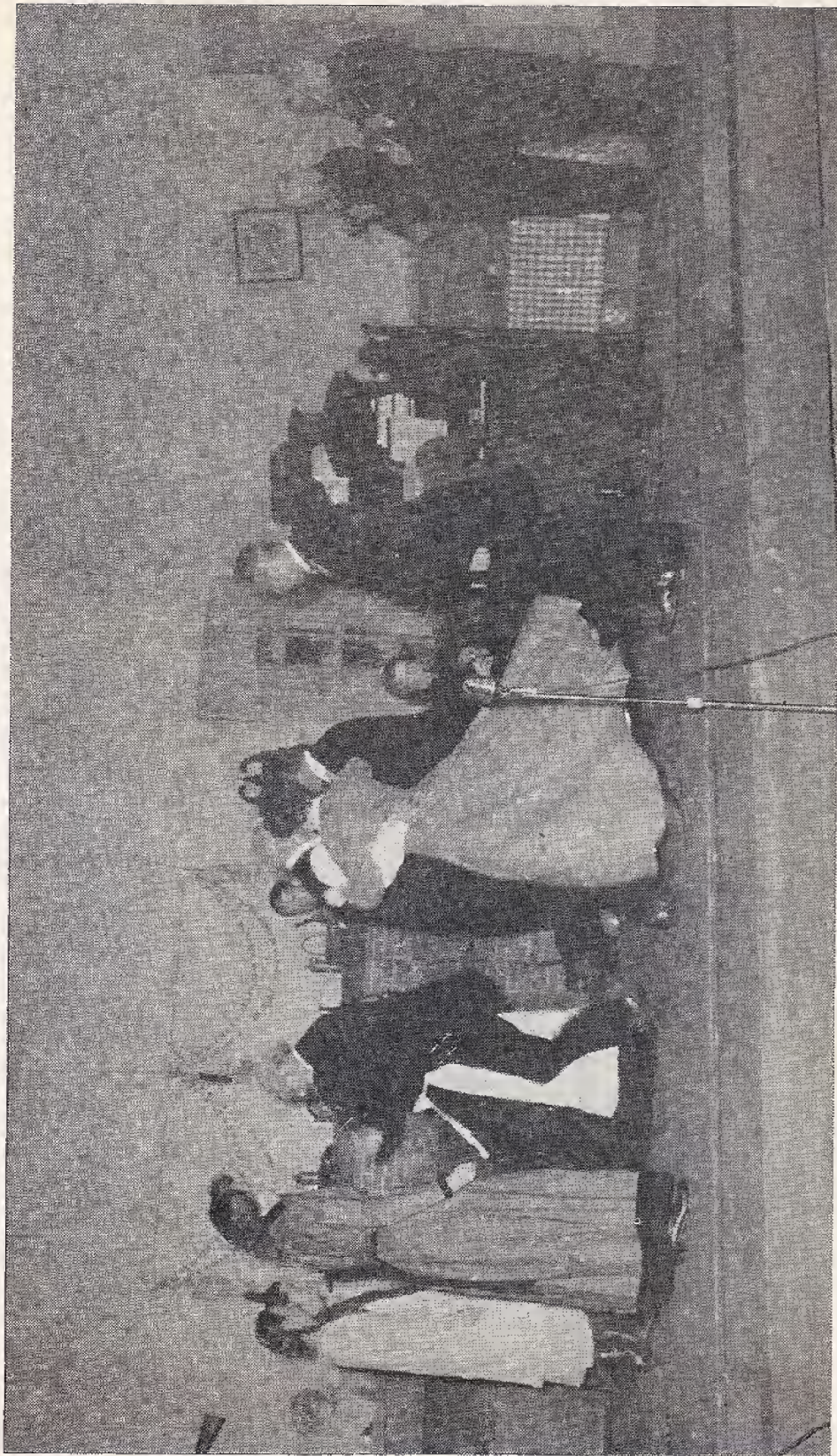


Eb. Ganzey (*Willard H. Thompson*)

Rickety Ann (*Dorothy Barrett*)



Happy Jack (*Maurice Sullivan*) Seth Perkins (*Harlan Barrett*) Cy Prime (*Walter Hanrahan*)



And There was Music and Dancing in the House

# ASSISTANTS TO THE DIRECTORS

## Make-up

Mildred Wilson  
Lauralee Hooper

## Scenery & Stage

Leland B. Bogue  
Norman Cota  
Walter Fred  
Chester Guillow  
Philip Woodward  
John Madden  
Edgar Madden  
Karl Boes  
Charles Hanrahan  
Foster Martin  
Wesley Castor, Jr.

## Properties

Marion Haskins  
Nathalie Tisdale  
Marguerite Moe  
Frank Tisdale  
Leon Haskins  
Hazel Wheeler  
Dewitt Skinner  
Amy E. Wright  
Albert Armstrong

## Wardrobe Assistants

Jean Belding  
Arline Lane  
Bertha Fairbanks  
Pauline Ridley  
Edna Stone  
Barbara Emery  
Rita Stone

## Sound

Clark Whittemore  
Caryle Lane  
Pete Holbrook

## Lighting

Everett Simonds  
Carle Bell  
Lyman Lane  
Dan Emery  
Don O'Brien

## Souvenir Sales

Rev. R.W.E. MacKenzie  
Elsie Navish  
Jeanne MacKenzie  
Ruth Aron

## Publicity

Harlan Barrett  
Philip Woodard  
Perley Safford  
Heien Kershaw  
Evelyn Thompson  
Elsie Navish  
Roger Emery  
John Wright  
Leon A. Woodward

## Grounds and Beautification

Warren Tracy  
Douglas Navish  
Edward Aron  
Norman Stauback  
Morris Wilber  
Edwin C. Landers  
Arthur Duke  
Dwight Stone  
Carroll Dunham

## Souvenir Program

Rev. R.W.E. MacKenzie  
Elsie Navish  
Leon A. Woodward

## Seating

Austin Curtis  
Fred Frieze  
Cecil Plummer  
Rodney Plummer  
Henry Oski  
Ralph Plummer  
Oscar Bloom  
Elbert Willard  
Paul Fisher  
Austin Curtis, Jr.  
Carl Jeffs, Jr.  
Leo Miller  
Al Dunnell  
Reginald Grover  
Waino Kauppi  
Don Guyette  
Joe Budzir

## Information & Registration Booths

Evelyn Thompson  
Helen Kershaw  
Elsie Navish

## Fire Protection

Robert Goodale, Capt.

Ernest Dunham  
Richard Goodale  
Paul Talbot  
Herman Twombly

## Refreshments

Ellsworth Wilber  
Harry Dunham  
Edward Bourassa  
Richard Keating  
Louis Kirby

## Box Office Assistants

Mary Bogue, Chr.  
Jacob Hackler  
Roger Emery  
Ralph Winham

## Ticket Takers

Raymond Lane  
Frank Domina  
Francis Stone  
Elmer Barton  
Borden Webb

## Grange Supper Committee

Willard Adams  
Anna Goodale  
Elise Adams  
Thomas Fairhurst  
Harry Adams  
Veronica Goodale  
Myrtie Hackler  
Harriet Corliss

## Church Supper Committee

Phyllis Tracy, Chr.

## P.T.A. Refreshment Committee

Charlotte Skinner, Chr.

## Parking

E. Swanzey Fire Dept.  
K. Ridley  
E. Ridley, Sr.  
E. Ridley, Jr.  
L. O'Brien  
R. Rines  
H. Johnson  
E. Morse  
M. O'Brien  
Max Brink

G. Marsh  
E. Jenks  
H. Lewis  
M. Goodell  
E. Devoid  
R. Parent  
R. Pollard

## Police

Chas. H. Miller, Chief  
Ralph Rines  
Max Brink  
William McLellan  
Randolph Lavigne  
Westly Braley  
Robert Cornwell  
John Dennis  
Donald Duquette

## Advertising

Ethel Barrett  
Hazel Wheeler Snelling  
Mary Bogue

## Music

J. Edward Bouvier  
Harlan Barrett  
Mary Stone  
Myrtie Hackler

## Exhibits

Dorothy C. Robinson,  
Chr.  
Mildred Cross  
Gladys Starkey  
Francis Small  
Zora Lane  
Mary Whittemore  
Myrtle Dunham  
Edith Cummings

## Ushers

Grace High  
Clara Gomarlo  
Esther Blake  
Vera Blake  
Myrna Curtis  
Nancy Bradley  
Patricia Sarsfield  
Mary J. Perry  
Martha Perry  
Patricia Armstrong  
Norma Richardson  
Ceona Martel  
Barbara Stone  
Barbara Bussiere

"Where Is My  
Wardering Boy  
Tonight?"  
George Lovell

"Palms"  
Fred Hebert

"Trees"  
Friday  
Geraldine Plamondon  
Garro  
Saturday  
Robert Prince  
Sunday  
Gordon H. Sargent

Chimes  
Richard Bogue

Double Male Quartet  
John Russell  
Herbert Capron  
Richard Hutchins  
Frank Niles  
Fred Hebert  
Joseph Kershaw  
George Lovell  
Ken Hollenbeck

Salvation Army  
Fred Hebert  
Herbert Capron  
Robert Calef, Jr.  
Evelyn Thompson  
Myrtie Hackler  
Mary Stone  
Alice Blackmore  
Helen Kershaw  
Mary Bogue  
Amy Wright  
Rose Dubois  
Hazel Wheeler  
Snelling  
Ethel Barrett

Driver of Oxen  
Robert Smith

Owner of Oxen  
Charles Richardson

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

*Joshua Whitcomb* ..... Willard L. Thompson  
*Aunt Matilda* ..... Ethel Dudley  
*Cy Prime* ..... Walter Hanrahan  
*Happy Jack* ..... Maurice Sullivan  
*Eb Ganzey* ..... Willard H. Thompson  
*Rickety Ann* ..... Dorothy Barrett  
*Frank Hopkins* ..... Theodore Richardson  
*Annie Hopkins* ..... Edith Armstrong  
*John Freeman* ..... Jerome J. Rogers  
*Nellie Freeman* ..... Josephine Richardson  
*Maggie O'Flaherty* ..... Joyce LeFebvre  
*Henry Hopkins* ..... Leslie J. Fraser  
*The Dude* ..... Clifford Coles  
*Mrs. Hopkins* ..... Marion Haskins

### Alternate — Rua Ridley

*Judge Patterson* ..... Leon Haskins  
*Nellie Patterson* ..... Josephine Richardson  
*Francois Fogarty* ..... Robert F. Parent  
*A Drunken Man* ..... Albert Armstrong  
*Rueben Whitcomb* ..... Edward Jenks  
*Hoboken Terror* ..... William Mitchell  
*One of the Finest* ..... Kendall Page  
*U. S. Letter Carrier* ..... Lester Pelletier  
*Mrs. Maguire* ..... Irene Wood  
*Seth Perkins* ..... Harlan Barrett  
*Mrs. Murdock* ..... Ethel Barrett  
*Stratton Girls* .. Esther Blake, Joyce LeFebvre, Karen Stone  
*Warren Ellis* ..... Walter Parker  
*Les Holbrook* ..... Harold Bell  
*Dave Willard* ..... Anton C. Bowie  
*Jew's Harp* ..... Laverne Bushnell  
*Melodeon* ..... Myrtie Hackler

## A C T S

1. Homestead Farm of the Whitcombs  
in Swanzey
2. Interior Hopkins Mansion, New York  
City
3. Grace Church at Night, New York  
City
4. Kitchen in the Old Homestead in  
Swanzey

# DEDICATION

It is impossible, in an undertaking of this size, to properly credit all who contribute to its success. There are many people in Swanzey and elsewhere whose names do not appear on this programme, but have had a large part in the work of "putting on the show".

We wish to thank these folks and everyone else for their unselfish help, their constant effort and their splendid cooperation.

## THE DIRECTORS OF THE OLD HOMESTEAD ASSOCIATION

### OFFICERS OF THE OLD HOMESTEAD ASSOCIATION

President ..... Theodore E. Moe  
 Vice-President ..... Harlan G. Barrett  
 Treasurer ..... Mary F. R. Bogue  
 Secretary ..... Elsie C. Navish

### DIRECTORS

Harry Dunham	Perley F. Safford	Harlan G. Barrett
Warren Tracy	Francis Stone	Ivan L. Scribner
	Ellsworth Wilber	

### COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

General Manager ..... Harlan G. Barrett  
 Asst. Gen. Manager ..... Warren Tracy

Supervisor of Police and Parking: Ivan L. Scribner	Supervisor of Grounds: Warren Tracy
Supervisor of Refreshments: Ellsworth Wilber	Supervisor of Seating: Francis Stone
Ushers: Grace High, Clara Gomarlo	Publicity: Harlan Barrett
Souvenirs: Rev. R. W. E. MacKenzie	Fire Protection: Harry Dunham
Overnight Reservations: Helen S. Kershaw	Advance Ticket Sales: Evelyn Thompson
Supervisor of Box Office: Mary F. R. Bogue	Advertising: Roger Emery, Philip Woodward
Director of Play: Harold F. Drew	Electricians: Richard Sloan, Lyle Talbot, Clifton Hills
Make-up: Dorothy C. Drew	Director of Music: J. Edward Bouvier
Stage Manager: Edwin E. Brewer	Supervisor of Music: Harlan Barrett
Asst. Manager: Kenneth K. Lane	Scenic Designer: Leland Bogue
Wardrobe Mistress: Jean Belding	Asst. Scenic Designer: Mildred B. Wilson
Director of Lighting: Everett Simonds	Master of "Props": Leon H. Haskins
Sound Engineers: Clark Whittemore, Pete Holbrook, Caryle Lane	Asst. Master of "Props": Carroll Dunham
	Exhibits: Dorothy Robinson

### OLD HOMESTEAD BAND

Director ..... J. Edward Bouvier  
 Manager ..... Harlan G. Barrett

Harlan Barrett	Carol Bernier	Frank Blackington
Richard Bogue	Barbara Bernier	Carleton Russell
Rose Marie Niles	Charles Banner	Robert Calef, Jr.
Fred Story, Jr.	Harold Bernier	Edwin Sterling
William Zimmerman	Francis Wheeler	Edgar Reed
Cecil Nash	Harold Tyler	Dominic King
Herbert White	Philip Barrett	Anton Bowie
Robert E. Bethen	Carol Croteau	Frank Niles
Laverne Bushnell	Herman Hill	Solon D. Connors

This Play is produced by special arrangement  
with the

WALTER H. BAKER CO. of Boston, Mass.

Tentative Dates 1956 — JULY 20 - 21 - 22 — FULL OF THE MOON

"Now don't let this be your last visit to THE OLD HOMESTEAD"