

ROADS AND INCORPORATION

By 1913 the need for a street improvement program was obvious to all. concerned. it is not clear just when or by whom the first significant step in that direction was taken, but apparently in the summer of that year, the 'Town was persuaded to concrete Woodville Road. At the same time Robert Smith, an engineering contractor who then owned the John Bellport house on Tagliabue Road, and whose work in the Huntington area had given him prior experience with the potentials of concrete, got together with A.O. Smith, a former owner of the A. Barnhart house, and between them were

(continues on next page)

instrumental in inducing the Town to undertake the work, probably on an experimental basis. At about the same time, several of the more affluent property owners in the northern reaches of the Old Village banded together to concrete the roads in their vicinity, which are now known as Gridley Road, Barnhart Place, Tagliabue Road and Thompson Street. It is not clear whether all the work was privately financed or whether the Town absorbed some part of the cost.

In any event, the work was undertaken and a gang of laborers from Italy, Sicily and Sardinia appeared on the scene to build the roads with the relatively crude machinery available in those days. After completing the work, many of them remained in the area and found employment that would take care of them and their families. Many of their descendents continue to live hereabouts. Incidental to the building of those first streets, we also had our first storm drain. It was only a short drain, running from the low point in Gridley Road a short distance to the north and west of Village Building #2 and the west parking lot.

What about the rest of the roads in the Old Village? The work on Woodville Road and the northerly streets was impressive, and a clamor arose to have the rest of the streets similarly improved. Unfortunately, it seemed that the Town felt it had lent enough assistance, and other means for financing the improvements had to be devised. The answer turned out to be simple: incorporate, and thereby create a municipal authority which, through its power to tax, would have the credit standing necessary for the borrowing of the needed funds.

In the summer of 1913, the initial steps to incorporate were taken, and at an election held September 6, the proposal to incorporate the Village was approved. On October 4, 1913, the first village officers were elected: a President, two Trustees, a Treasurer, and a Tax Collector.

A complete list of the principal officers from 1913 to date appears in later pages of this history.

Some of the older reports on Shoreham's history intimate that the purpose of incorporation was to be "exclusive". Your historian takes exception to this version and expresses the view that the real purpose of that action was to provide the Village with the streets it so desperately needed.

Considering the cost of road construction today it may come as a surprise to note how little our roads cost when first built. In 1913-14, an expenditure of \$500 was all that was needed to extend the storm drain south from Gridley Road to Sturgis Road, and an \$18,000 bond issue sufficed to pave the remaining streets. We may note, however, that the concreting of Beach Lane was financed out of current funds. The storm drain under the Siegel and Spier properties, and the storm drain extension from Sturgis Road to Overhill Road were likewise financed out of current funds.

Next section

Table of Contents