

# The Harvard Crimson

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## TELLS OF HARVARD SQUARE EVOLUTION FROM COUNTRY LANE TO CITY'S CENTER

**G. G. Wright, Oldest Local Tradesman, Recounts 50 Year  
Developments That Have Taken Place Outside the Yard--Cattle  
Preceded Auto in Creating Traffic Problem**

NO WRITER ATTRIBUTED

The days when Harvard Square was a village centre--with the town pump and the hay scales in the middle of the square, with a small common used for tethering cattle where the present subway station is, were called out of the past by Mr. G. G. Wright of 20 Mellon Street, Cambridge, in an interview yesterday. Mr. Wright, President Emeritus of the Harvard Square Business Men's Association, is the oldest business man in the Square. He is famous for his collection of old books, prints, and directories. Mr. Wright related to the CRIMSON representative yesterday his impressions of the Square as it was over half a century ago, together with a number of interesting facts concerning its early history.

"Harvard Square," he said, "was originally a crossroad, marking the intersection of the Brighton, Arlington, and Cambridgeport highways. It had a small grass plot in the center that was called a common, but was used most frequently as a parking space by farmers trying to sell loads of hay.

"The West India Goods store near the corner specialized in salt fish, rum, molasses, vinegar, farm produce, grain, tea and coffee, hardware, paint, lard oils and a hundred other general commodities. The local jail occupied the property now the site of the Pi Eta clubhouse near the corner of Mt. Auburn and Boylston Streets. The community was small and everybody knew everybody else and all about them.

"People came to the Square on market days with large baskets on their arms and bought produce from the local farmers. The well-cultivated acres of these farmers were a source of great pride to the Cambridge people of those days.

"One of the greatest problems of the Square was then, as now, the proper control of traffic. However, in 1857, the trouble was due to the herds of cattle that were driven through daily on their way to the Brighton market. Several hundred steers, direct from the fields, would be driven into the Square each day by a few herdsman. There they would promptly start milling around to the danger of all citizens nearby. For the better part of an hour, their custodians would yell and crack whips in an attempt to straighten out the cavalcade and herd it on to the Brighton road.