

# Along the path to Pugwash

**Editor's Note:** This article is reprinted, with permission, from 'Hathaway Brown Today,' Spring 1983.

The author, a 1931 graduate of Hathaway Brown, wrote the story to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the first Pugwash Conference. Ms. Royon attended the 30th anniversary conference this summer and will provide an account of the event in a later issue of the Hub-Times.

By **BETTY ROYON**

As early as the days of the early '30's at Hathaway Brown, my ambition was to find a place in the world of business and industry as soon as my formal education was completed. Not in my remotest imagination, however, did I anticipate that such a career would lead, as it did, to association with world scientists and scholars in conferences in faraway Nova Scotia, to promote better international understanding and the life of the intellect.

After garnering bachelor's and master's degrees in nuclear physics at Smith College, and making brief forays into insurance and investment counseling, in 1937 I became assistant to industrialist-banker Cyrus Eaton and, without knowing it, I was on the path to Pugwash, the name by which the conferences became known when they were initiated in 1955.

The beginning years brought intense indoctrination in business fundamentals of iron ore, steel, coal, lake-shiping, railroads, utilities and other basic fields, including agriculture.

By way of contrast and complement to these more philistine but fascinating pursuits was parallel exposure to the literary and academic concerns of Mr. Eaton's broad-ranging interests. There was ample occasion to become acquainted with the philosophers, historians, scientists and other scholars with whom he was constantly meeting and sharing thoughts.

In the "cold war" years following World War II, Mr. Eaton became increasingly preoccupied with the quest for international understanding, disarmament and peace. On his 71st birthday in 1954, he remarked on the urgent need for innovative ways of thinking in this exciting but perplexing nuclear age, and announced that he was

dedicating his old family property in the quiet, seaside town of Pugwash, Nova Scotia, Canada, as a meeting place for thinkers of the world to "relax together, exchange views, sharpen their own thinking and design formulas for us to live by in this brand new world."

The first summer, in 1955, brought together a dozen leaders from such varied fields as biology, history, philosophy, journalism and industry, led by Great Britain's famed Julian Huxley.

The world press was quick to call them the "Thinkers," and the appellation was given permanence by a journalistic cartoon picturing a car speeding along a Nova Scotia country road past a pastureful of Shorthorn cows (reflecting Mr. Eaton's international recognition as a prize cattlebreeder) sitting around on rocks in the meditative pose of Rodin's statue, "The Thinker." One of the passengers in the car comments, "We must be pretty close to Pugwash."

The rambling old Eaton house that served as conference headquarters quickly took the name "Thinkers Lodge." A nearby, converted lobster factory on the waterfront made a picturesque dining hall, and also doubled as a meeting room at times.

As the conferences settled into a workable format, it was my privilege to function as Director of the Pugwash Secretariat, with responsibility for arrangement and conduct of the meetings.

**THE SECOND YEAR, 1956,** saw a Middle East seminar during the Suez crisis, with prominent participants from Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Iraq, Israel, the People's Republic of China, the Soviet Union and the United States in attendance. The conferees met as individuals, not as government representatives (an integral feature of the Pugwash plan) to enable full and frank consideration of touch topics, free of the artificial restraints that necessarily characterize formal diplomatic exchanges.

Also in that summer came the first of a series of "Intellectual Life" Conferences, which continued for half a dozen years, in collaboration with the Commission on Liberal Education of the Association of American Colleges, not only in Pugwash, but also in such widely scattered places as Florida, Tennessee and Colorado.

The 1956 Conference brought together 17 college presidents for study and discussion of four or five of the classics, with all shop talk on the administrative and monetary problems of their institutions forbidden. Spouses were welcome but silent guests; children were not allowed.

Not all was work at these or other Pugwash Conferences, since afternoons were mostly kept free for strolling along the shore, boating, swimming, tennis, croquet, golf, reading, thinking, of course, or just plain loafing. Similar Conferences for College Deans were instituted in 1957. Other Pugwash Conferences on "Non-Western Studies" were held in later years in collaboration with the Association of American Colleges.

The most newsworthy of the 1957 gatherings was the first Pugwash International Conference of Nuclear Scientists, which was also the first private, non-governmental, postwar meeting of scientists from East and West.

In 1955, physicist Albert Einstein and mathematician-philosopher Bertrand Russell, in company with a small, blue-ribbon group of western scientists whose work had led to the first atom bomb, issued a Manifesto calling on the scientists of the world to unite in warning mankind of the peril of nuclear weapons. The intent was for the Russell-Einstein Manifesto to be followed by a meeting of scientists from the communist and socialist nations with their western conferees, in a neutral location, to discuss and point out nuclear perils in great detail.

Difficulties in arranging the proposed meeting arose first from the death of Einstein, just before issuance of the Manifesto; and then from the Suez crisis of 1955 and the Hungarian crisis of 1956. Lord Russell then responded to an earlier suggestion from Mr. Eaton that Canada be designated as the meeting place.

Mr. Eaton and Lord Russell had been friends from the years in the 1920's when Russell was a professor at the University of Chicago. The Eaton offer included financial assistance, in addition to housing and meals. Mr. Eaton's facilities in his native Pugwash were well suited to the purpose, and the convening of the meeting in Canada assured the inclusion of Chinese, Soviet and other communist scientists who would have been debarred from the United States at that time.