

Suffolk University Archives
Early Student Research Project

**Harry Ernest Burroughs
Suffolk Law School 1915**

Harry Ernest Burroughs was born on April 15, 1890, in Volenia, Russia.¹ He came to the United States in 1903 and began working as a newsboy in Boston.² In 1911, around age 21, he enrolled at Suffolk Law School, graduating four years later in 1915.³ He became a naturalized U.S. citizen in 1913.⁴ By 1917, he was living at 722 Commonwealth Avenue and had his own law practice.⁵ He served in World War I, then returned to his law practice.⁶ By at least 1923, his office was located at 18 Tremont Street, where it remained until at least 1936.⁷ In the 1924 Boston business directory, he is listed as a Justice of the Peace.⁸

In 1927, Harry Burroughs established the Burroughs Newsboys Foundation to give newsboys between the ages of 12 and 17 the opportunity to learn, socialize and develop leadership and other skills.⁹ The Foundation also provided college scholarships.¹⁰ A newsboy himself as an adolescent, Burroughs felt compelled to provide “wholesome adult guidance” to young boys who often had to provide for themselves their families by working in the adult world, thus missing out on some of their childhood.¹¹

In 1935, Burroughs, by then a very successful lawyer, bought a summer camp in Poland, Maine, called Camp Maqua and devoted it to his Newsboys Foundation.¹² The camp opened in 1936 under the new name of “The Agassiz Village of the Burroughs Newsboys Foundation” after Alexander Agassiz, the son of naturalist Louis Agassiz and father of Maximilian Agassiz, who financed the camp.¹³ The camp was open to Burroughs Newsboys Foundation members, as well as “any other boy age 6-17 who was part of a trade group.”¹⁴ In only its fifth summer, in 1940,

¹ World War I Draft Registration Card 1494/567, January 5, 1917.

² United States Census 1920, Massachusetts, Suffolk, Boston, Enumeration District 5, Sheet 21B; “Suffolk University to Dedicate Nathan R. Miller Residence Hall,” Suffolk University Press Release, September 27, 2005, <http://www.suffolk.edu/opa/news/nathanmiller.html>. Note: The 1920 census indicates that Burroughs came to the U.S. in 1903, but his obituary says that he came in 1904.

³ Suffolk Law Alumni Directory, 30th Anniversary, 1936, p. 16. Note: Burroughs’ admissions application is missing from the 1908-1913 Law School Registrations volume.

⁴ U.S. Census 1920, Ibid.

⁵ WWI Draft Card, Ibid.

⁶ Obituary, *New York Times*, December 19, 1946, p. 29.

⁷ *The Boston Register and Business Directory: 1923*. Boston: Sampson & Murdock Co., 1923, p. 683; Suffolk Law Alumni Directory, 30th Anniversary, 1936, p. 16.

⁸ *The Boston Directory for the Year Commencing August 1, 1924*. Boston: Sampson & Murdock Co., 1924, p. 107.

⁹ Obituary, Ibid.; “Suffolk University to Dedicate Nathan R. Miller Residence Hall,” Ibid.

¹⁰ Obituary, Ibid.

¹¹ Obituary, Ibid.

¹² “Year by Year History of Agassiz Village.” *Welcome to Agassiz Village*, <http://www.agassizvillage.org/h/history.asp>.

¹³ “Year by Year History of Agassiz Village,” Ibid.

¹⁴ “Year by Year History of Agassiz Village,” Ibid.

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Agassiz Village housed one thousand campers.¹⁵ Though it has experienced some changes, the camp still operates today as Agassiz Village, Founded by Mr. and Mrs. Harry E. Burroughs, and caters to both boys and girls of diverse backgrounds.¹⁶

In Boston, the Burroughs Newsboys Foundation was located at 10 Somerset Street, which is now the site a Suffolk University dormitory.¹⁷ This dormitory, which opened in the fall of 2005, was dedicated as the Nathan R. Miller Residence Hall, named after the founder of Nathan R. Miller Properties, Ltd. of Boston¹⁸ In addition to being a prominent Boston real estate developer and donating \$2 million to Suffolk University, Nathan Miller is also a former Burroughs Newsboy and was one of the first Agassiz Village campers.¹⁹ The Burroughs Newsboys Foundation is commemorated by an exhibit in the lobby of the Miller Residence Hall.²⁰

In addition to running the Burroughs Newsboys Foundation and Agassiz Village, Harry Burroughs was also an author. His book *Boys in Men's Shoes* was published in 1944 and is both an account of his life and a social commentary on child workers.²¹ Burroughs efforts to improve the chances of success for young working boys did not go unrecognized by his alma mater; Suffolk University granted him an honorary degree of Doctor of Human Letters sometime between 1937 and 1946.²²

In December of 1946, Harry Burroughs died at the age of 56.²³ At that time, he was living in Brookline, Mass.²⁴ He was survived by his wife, Hannah, two sons, Harry E. Jr. and Warren H., and a daughter, Jean.²⁵ Warren Burroughs is currently the Honorary Chairman of the Board of Trustees at Aggasiz Village.²⁶ The Burroughs Newsboys Foundation lasted only five more years after Burroughs death, closing in 1951.²⁷

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¹⁵ "Big Newsboy Camp Hails Benefactors," *New York Times*, August 24, 1940, p. 11.

¹⁶ "Year by Year History of Agassiz Village," Ibid.

¹⁷ "Suffolk University to Dedicate Nathan R. Miller Residence Hall," Ibid.

¹⁸ "Suffolk University to Dedicate Nathan R. Miller Residence Hall," Ibid.

¹⁹ "Suffolk University to Dedicate Nathan R. Miller Residence Hall," Ibid.

²⁰ "Suffolk University to Dedicate Nathan R. Miller Residence Hall," Ibid.

²¹ Van Vechten, C.C., Review of *Boy's in Men's Shoes: A World of Working Children* by Harry Burroughs, from *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 50, No. 6, May 1945, p. 562, accessed via JSTOR online database, <http://www.jstor.org>

²² Obituary, Ibid. Note: It has been assumed that Burroughs received the honorary degree between 1937 and 1946 because Suffolk University was not incorporated until 1937, and Burroughs died in 1946.

²³ Obituary, Ibid.

²⁴ Obituary, Ibid.

²⁵ Obituary, Ibid.

²⁶ "Year by Year History of Agassiz Village," Ibid.

²⁷ "Year by Year History of Agassiz Village," Ibid.