

Town Resident Observes Ninetieth Birthday

Robert S. Atkins celebrated his ninetieth birthday on Monday at his home, 15 Center Street. With him was his cousin, Mrs. John C. Fairbanks and her husband; and another cousin, Mrs. Fred L. Pigeon of East Boston who arrived last Saturday and brought with her a beautiful birthday cake. Mrs. Pigeon's son and daughter-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. A. Standish Pigeon of Boston, were also present. Mr. Atkins' only other surviving cousin, Miss Josephine West of this town, was unable to be with the family because of illness, but telephoned her congratulations. Mr. Atkins had many callers during the day, and received about sixty birthday cards.

Mr. Atkins was born on November 14, 1865, in the Center Street house where he and Mr. and Mrs. Fairbanks have made their home for some years past. His mother was the former Miss Mary J. West of Nova Scotia. His father was James S. Atkins, who was born in Provincetown, and was a sea captain for many years fishing off the Grand Banks, and who later went coasting. A brother of Mr. Robert Atkins, James E. Atkins, had a furniture store for about sixty years, where the present Bedding Center is on Commercial Street. Originally this store belonged to an uncle, Joseph West, who later was Postmaster here.

Mr. Robert Atkins graduated from the Provincetown High School with the class of 1884, and is now one of four surviving members of that class which numbered twenty-four. The other three are Miss Phoebe Freeman, Mrs. Nellie Watson and Mr. Henry P. Nickerson. Mr. Atkins then went to Bridgewater Normal School, and after graduating, began teaching in Quincy where he spent ten years. In 1892 he went to Boston and served as master in different schools there for the next thirty-three and a half years until his retirement in 1936. Since then he has spent summers in the old family home here, and part of the winters in Boston.

Among Mr. Atkins' recollections of early days in the town is a memory of the Misses Mirenda and Eunice Nickerson who lived in what is known as the "Mattie Atkins" house, across from the Post Office on Commercial Street, and which is now being torn down. "These two maiden ladies had a little

store across the street from the house, where the Post Office now stands," Mr. Atkins said. "Among other things, they sold toys, and items of interest to children. I can remember, around Christmas time, seeing the children running eagerly into the store; and there was always a swarm of them around that part of Commercial Street." Mr. Atkins said that Miss Mirenda Nickerson was the "businesslike" one of the two sisters; and every fall she travelled to Boston to sell the cranberries from the bogs owned by her and her sister. The house where they lived was left by them to Miss Mattie Atkins, a relative, who was also a distant cousin of Mr. Robert Atkins.

Persistent rumor has it that the Art Cinema folks, the George Shafirs and son, Bill, have purchased the Matenos property across from the Post Office, where, rumor further has it, a new Art Cinema will be constructed.