

# Skinner's

By David Connell

In the heart of East Bridgewater stood the local capital of sugary delights and ice cream that left an indelible mark on our memories. Every Friday afternoon in the seventh and eighth grades, the school bell chimed, and a caravan of eager kids would embark on their pilgrimage. It was the first steps we'd take down our busy town streets without the watchful eyes of our parents — a rite of passage.

As the final bell rang on those eagerly anticipated Fridays, a motley crew of youngsters would spill out of the school's front doors. Laughter and chatter filled the air as we walked in a bustling procession across Central Street and towards the candy haven. The journey itself was part of the adventure as we'd exchange stories of the week and savor the anticipation of what awaited us. There was no greater feeling than to cross the town center and see its blooming red placard beckoning us toward the world of flavor ahead. "Skinner's Sugar House," it read.

The first children to arrive were littered amongst the property in groups of friends, each clutching brown bags of candies or digging into a bowl of ice cream. Ascending onto the deck and entering, it was like stepping into a time capsule, adorned with vintage glass jars of local jams and nuts, charmingly old-fashioned displays enticing us with homemade chocolates and fudges. Further inside was a white room like a rotary of commercialized confectionery. The air was thick with the aroma of sugary wonders, promising a world of enchantment within its walls.

The sugar house always gave up plenty of options, be it their great array of ice cream flavors and toppings, or their even greater selection of candies. Our pockets filled with allowance, we made our selections. As we indulged in our sugary symphony, friendships were forged and bonds strengthened. We shared tales, we played games, we gossiped, and we laughed. Skinner's catalyzed a camaraderie that we'd forever look back upon fondly.

Those Friday afternoons were more than just candy runs; they were moments of innocence, unity, and unadulterated happiness. They were cherished memories forever woven into the tapestry of our hometown stories. Though the years have evaded us, the magic of Skinner's lives on. In a world that moves relentlessly forward, the store reminds us of the simple pleasures that once shaped our lives — a testament to the power of a small-town candy shop to create lasting connections and sweet memories.