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# Thomas Gustave Plant 1859-1941

Thomas (Tom) Plant was born in Bath, Maine to Antoine and Sophia Plant, both French-speaking immigrants born in Quebec. The Plant family lived a modest, working class life in the “Canada Hill” neighborhood of Bath, where Tom grew up speaking both French and English. Tom had an older sister and stepbrother, as well as two younger siblings.

He was particularly close to his younger brother William, who would eventually help manage his shoe company. Tom excelled in various sports, especially baseball, swimming, and ice skating.

Leaving school at the age of 14 to help support the family, Tom worked as an ice cutter, at a ropewalk, and in a boiler factory before taking an apprenticeship as a shoe laster at a shoe factory in Richmond, Maine.

Top: Thomas Plant (left) with younger brother William, around 1865.

Bottom: Thomas Plant playing pond hockey, date unknown.

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In 1880, a fire at the Richmond, Maine shoe factory where Tom was employed permanently closed the facility, spurring Tom to move south to the center of shoe manufacturing at the time, Lynn, Massachusetts. Having previously apprenticed as a shoe laster, Tom eventually worked his way up to an edge trimmer position in the factories – one of the better paid jobs in shoe manufacturing. At age 25, Tom had the opportunity to buy a share in a new shoe manufacturing cooperative for \$100, which he reportedly did by betting on the baseball team he captained in a local game. After this cooperative and then a subsequent partnership both dissolved, Tom went into business for himself, starting the Thomas G. Plant Company in Lynn, MA in 1891 at the age of 32. His success in producing and marketing his Queen Quality and Dorothy Dodd shoes for women resulted in his retiring a millionaire in 1910.



Over the next few years, Tom purchased land in Moultonborough and Tuftonboro, NH, creating his Lucknow estate, where he lived with his wife Olive for the remainder of his life. He died in 1941, aged 83 years, at a hospital in Laconia, NH from complications following a surgical procedure.

