Things Remembered

Things Remembered

Stories I Have Told

To My Grandchildren

Charles Austin Phelps

With photos and drawings by the author and others

Published by:

Mustang Bindery

Winchester, NH

Published by Mustang Bindery, LLC, 25 Michigan Street
Winchester, NH 03470-2424

Printed and bound in the United States of America using acid-free materials for longevity.

ISBN: 1-4243-1688-X

First Edition

Things Remembered

Preface

Growing up my brother Nathan and I had the privilege of listening to lots of stories from my grandfather, Charles Austin Phelps. He would enlighten us to "the way it was" when he was our age. His stories would vary from milking cows by hand and then by machine. He would also share his vast knowledge of our nation’s highways, the way they were then as to opposed to how they are today. Nate and I would sit and listen intently and pepper Grandpa with questions. We would suggest that he should allow us to record these stories, first with cassettes and then with video tape. He would kindly decline, so we tried to be sneaky, but at the first sound of a click or a flashing red light the story teller would fall quiet.

Then along came the computer. I introduced Grandpa to the computer and all the wonderful things this modern tool could offer him. At first he treated it, like all late 20th century conveniences as if they were made only for lazy people like other devices including remote controls, cordless telephones, power windows and seats, answering and fax machines. At first his resistance was not a surprise but the more I demonstrated to him just what the computer could do, the more he became curious almost interested. Grandpa's epiphany came when he saw the Word Processor attribute of the computer. It worked like a typewriter of old, but with a new twist. Mistakes were easy to correct and allowed different styles of print. He tried the word processor. I believe he really appreciated the power of it. The next time I saw his office, the typewriter was no longer on the desk but removed to the less important location on top of a cabinet. The computer with a printer had replaced it. A year after that, the typewriter was no where to be seen, fully retired!!! Once Grandpa had accepted the computer other modem conveniences were easier to introduce to him and can now be found throughout Grandma and Grandpa's home and the use of these devices is no longer considered laziness but rather a means to make life more enjoyable.

Grandpa then began collecting stories; he spent hours typing them into the computer. Over the years as new technology came out, I would upgrade Grandpas equipment. The addition of digital photography allowed him to put pictures into his developing stories. Soon after came the flat bed scanner, which allowed him to scan old photographs. He spent countless hours working on his memoirs making sure that they exist somewhere besides his memory. Grandpa wants to share with future generations his colorful memories, sharing the past makes the future more meaningful. Understanding where we came from makes where we are more meaningful.

I have learned many things from my grandfather. Among them are trust and respect. He has also shown me that it is never too late to learn, that one "can teach an old dog new tricks". The computer is the basis of my professional life as well as a hobby for me. The computer has helped bridge the divide of generations and allows Grandpa and me to connect and learn from each other. While this book is a collection of his youth, it is the foundation of the man who became my grandfather.

So, please enjoy and remember how Grandpa sounded when you heard about the time on Huckle Hill, Bald Mountain or the Hurricane of '38.1 am proud to be his grandson and will always remember the stories.

Austin Clayton Phelps

July 4th, 2006

Things Remembered

Introduction

The stories that you are about to read are all “Things Remembered” from my earliest recollections to those of just a few years ago. These are the stories that I have told my children, and most recently, my grandchildren. Two of my grandsons, Austin and Nathan Phelps, urged me many years ago to put these remembrances into a book. At the time I simply told them that “I’m not a writer” which is true, I’m not.

In order to make it easier for me to undertake this task, Austin got a computer for me and taught me how to use it. Since that time many years ago I have been slowly writing these stories, adding them as I think of them, editing them as the event remembered becomes clearer, checking for misspellings, and, all the while telling the stories in my own style, which I hope the reader is able to follow and understand.

I hope that the reader finds these stories of some interest. They happened during a time past that has gone all too quickly, they are of places that are long since forgotten, and tell of people that have long since passed on to another place. The events are real, and the stories tell of these events as I witnessed, or participated, in them. I hope that you enjoy reading about these “Things Remembered”.

Charles Austin Phelps
Warwick, Massachusetts
June 28, 2006

Things Remembered

Ludlow, Mass

Early Life

All of this about Ludlow came to me from other family members as I don't recall anything about the place when we lived there so I don't feel I can write memories if I don't have them. Mother told me I was born the day before Thanksgiving so she couldn't have any of the dinner the next day.

At some point in time brother John explained to me why Frank, myself and Ruth were born in Massachusetts and not in New Hampshire, as the first four children were. Someone had told father that if he wanted to have a farm of his own he should go to North Carolina to look, so he started for there, leaving mother and the four kids with Grandma Messer to wait for a telegram with instructions to join him when he located a place. He stopped in Springfield, Mass. to visit his brother-in-law, Frank Messer. Frank told him that was a long way from all the family, why not look around here for something. Father took his advice and found a place in Ludlow that he could buy and made arrangements to get the family to join him.

Brother John sketched the buildings and told me a few things about the place. Father had twenty-six acres in his first farm, one horse, a few, maybe only one or two cows at first, some hens, as I understand they sold eggs and butter that mother made. Mother told me about an incident I had when I was not too old. Father had some bees and one Sunday afternoon father, mother and I were going for a walk, I was old enough to walk as Ruth was the baby and was likely having a nap, or maybe even being carried along to get her out in the fresh air. Anyway, I decided to run ahead to the hive to open it. Of course the bees didn't like that one little bit and stung me every place they could, fortunately father got to me real quick, grabbed me and ran into the nearby icehouse so the bees would not follow through the door and he could wipe them off me.[1] Mother said I was very sick from the stings when I opened my mouth to holler and the bees just stung in my mouth as well as the rest of my face and when I threw up it looked like honey. The doctor told her that likely saved my life, as bee stings can be fatal. The best

[1] In John's genealogy the building is the hen house.

part of that episode, I like honey and it doesn't effect me to eat it. Some people can't eat honey at all, it makes them sick. The house is not there now as it burned down in later years, but another one was built on the same site, years later.

There were a number of years after we moved to Huckle Hill that we went back to Ludlow once a year, like old home days or something similar, and I remember visiting some of our former neighbors. The Potters were one family I recall; they had a daughter about the same age as Dorothy and a son about my age. Reynolds was another neighbor that raised horseradish and bottled it for market. They also used to pay us a visit about every year and bring a bunch of oysters for a big feed and get together, and always brought father a jar of his horseradish.

CHARLES AUSTIN PHELPS

Born -- Ludlow, Massachusetts, November 28, 1917.
Father --Austin Clayton Phelps
Mother--Florence Helen (Messer) Phelps
Grandfather--Alfred Clayton Phelps
Grandmother--Nettie (Seaver) Phelps 2
Maternal Grandmother--Helen Messer
Maternal Grandfather--Elwin Messer

Mother kept records of the children; mine was given to me several years after Mother passed away. I think I'll put it in at this point, for the record.

Born---Wed. Nov.28, 1917
Time---11:00 P.M.
Doctor--W.B.T.Smith
Nurse---Grandma Messer

Weight ----71/4 lbs at birth	7 months--13 lbs
2 weeks ---7 3/4 lbs	9 months--15 1/2 lbs
1 month---8 1/2 lbs	12 months-19 1/2 lbs

Things Remembered

2 months--9 3/4 lbs	14 months-21 1/2 lbs
3 months--10 3/4 lbs	18 months-25 lbs
5 months--12 1/2 lbs	2 years-- 26 lbs
6 months--12 1/2 lbs	2 years and 4 months-30 3/4 lbs
Length when born	21 inches
Length 3 months	22 1/2 inches

Short dresses at 6 months of age
Gave him Borden's milk---one can a week at about five months
which improved his digestion. --Drank from a cup.
He was good natured, very little colic---sleeps all night with two nursings at 7 months
Smiled before two weeks old
First tooth---left upper central--at 9 mo. Sept 5th
Second tooth--lower left central--2 days later
Third tooth---upper right central--Sept. 12
During this period-- more restless at night and bowels loose-- otherwise very well--no fever.
First rompers 9 months old and first shoes with soles-
First crept at 6 months and will walk, taking hold of chairs, etc. at 9 mo.
Climbs up everything so gets a lot of bumps.
Five teeth by October 5th
6th tooth Nov. 15th--he cut four double teeth in 2 weeks the following June--
12 teeth at 19 mo.-
Did not talk plain- until most two--
Said mama-- Dottie--baby--doggie
Height 33 inches at 22 mo.
Had 16 teeth through in Dec. 1919

---

[2] Anginnette Melverda Seaver, never knew her given name until a few years ago

Things Remembered

A lullaby I sang to Charlie which the older boys learned at school

Rock a bye baby, dear blue eyes so tired

Playtime is over & sleepy time is nigh.

The sandman is coming to take you to dreamland

Rock a bye baby, bye, bye, bye.

First gifts Christmas-- 3 rattles, post card--2 short kimonos-plain
1 embroidered short kimono

Had a funny way of calling for food at the table. He would say " I need some bread" or "had enough potato, mama, I need milk"

Was loving but somewhat obstinate and would not be put upon by his older brothers.

.

All the children in order of birth

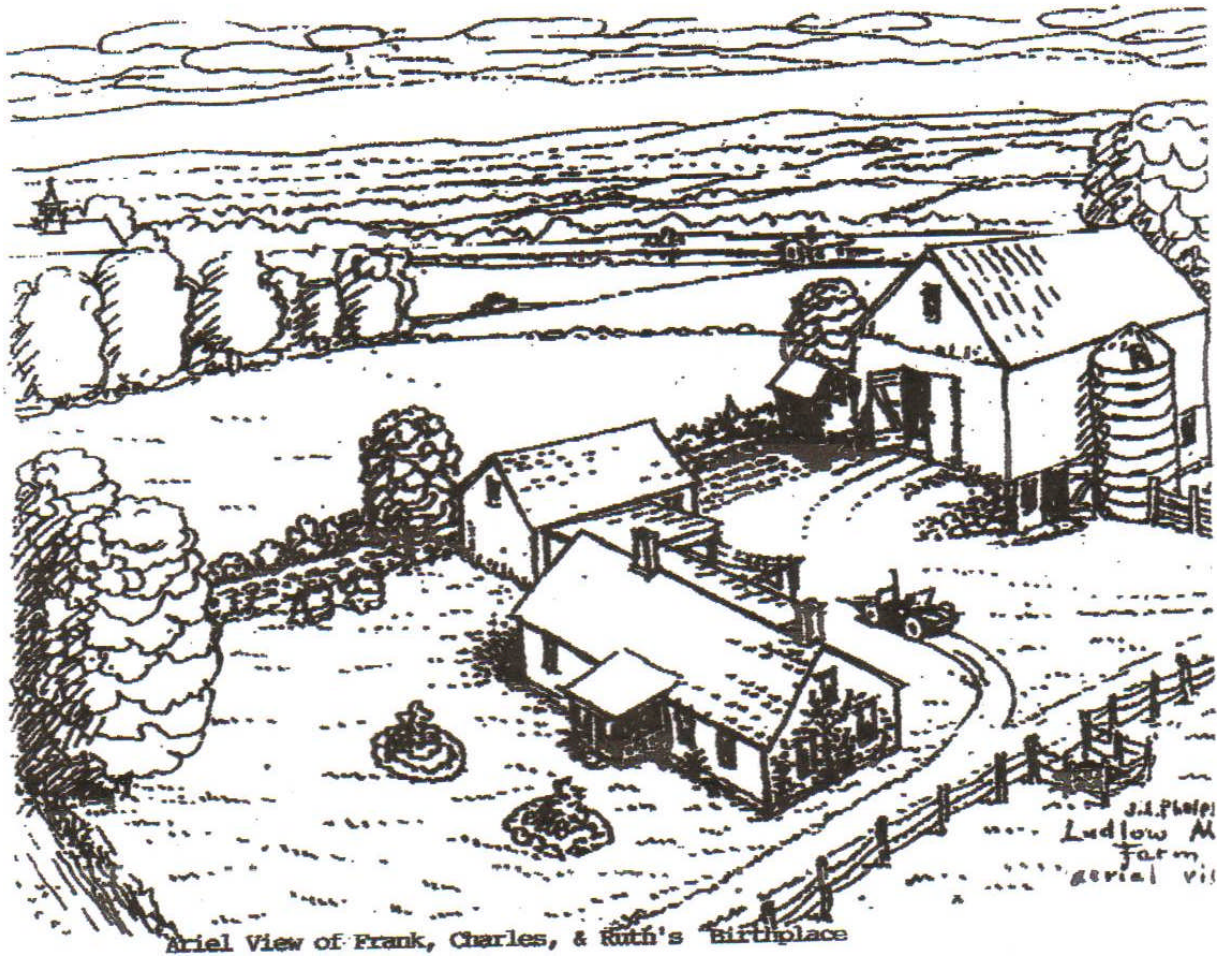
John Edward	October 12, 1907	Keene, NH
Richard Clayton	February 2, 1909	Keene, NH
Stanley Arthur	February 14, 1911	Marlborough, NH
Dorothy Helen	December 30, 1912	Roxbury, NH
Frank Henry	May 27, 1915	Ludlow, Mass,
Charles Austin	November 28,1917	Ludlow, Mass
Ruth Margaret	May 31, 1919	Ludlow, Mass.
Raymond Albert	December 14, 1920	Bernardston, Mass.
Helen Louise	July 27, 1923	Bernardston, [3]
Elizabeth Louise	June 23, 1926	Bernardston,
George Alfred	October 29, 1927	Bernardston,
Robert Seaver	March 17, 1933	Bernardston,

[3] Stillborn

Things Remembered

Airial View of Phelps Farm in Ludlow, Mass.

Birthplace of:
Frank Henry Phelps
Charles Austin Phelps
Ruth Margaret Phelps



Ariel View of Frank, Charles, & Ruth's Birthplace

Things Remembered

Things Remembered

Bernardston, Mass

Fox Hill

Father sold the Ludlow place and bought the farm on Fox Hill in Bernardston from Grampa Messer and we moved up there in May 1920. Grandpa and Grandma Messer moved down to a place on South Street overlooking Sanderson Meadows, where they lived when I first remember their home. Raymond Albert was born December 14, 1920. I remember two or three things about Fox Hill, one was seeing the horse and milk wagon stop in front of the barn and father getting out of one of the boxes to put the horse away. He bought a milk route from Egbert Cairns, and as he had to get up early to peddle the milk, he figured he could use an extra snooze, so when he got started up the Fox Hill Road he would slip the reins under the lid of the box with the empties, curl up in the box that was now empty and let the horse come home by himself. John explained this to me as all I could picture was the horse and wagon in front of the barn. The milk wagon was two boxes on a buggy running gear with a space to walk between them. One box would be filled with the milk to be delivered, and as the empty bottles came back to the wagon, they were placed in the other box. According to Stan bottles were used at that time and not tin cans like were used in the photo that appears later on. The first ones I really remember were eight quart, then ten quart and had a wooden bung, usually made of rock maple. Then there were twenty quart, metal covers, and then forty quart.

I also faintly remember John and Richard leading a purebred Ayrshire cow father had bought from Glabach in Leyden, just over the hill, on the old road that went on by the place into Leyden. It was grown up with brush, but could be walked. I'm quite sure her name was Dorothy Amelia, from what Stan has said in later years.

The older boys have told about some of the things that took place while the family lived on Fox Hill, like the blueberries that were on the place and people picking them by the wash tub full. Also there was a good sugar bush and Aunt Ethel and Aunt Minnie used to help with the boiling. However, father must have decided not to stay

there, and in 1923 he sold to Mr. Willis Herrick, and moved across the valley to a farm on Huckle Hill that had been owned by Maurice Cutting, and it was again in May.

Things Remembered

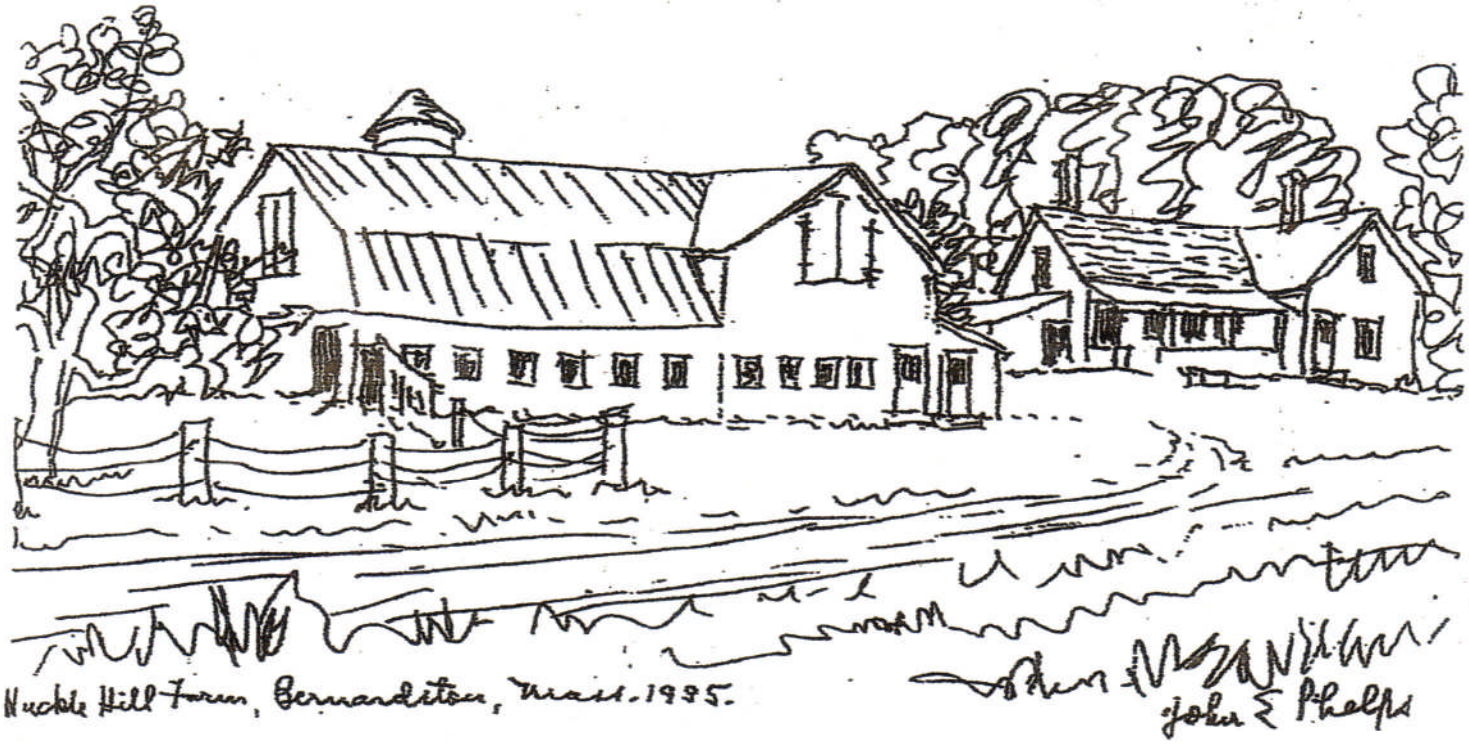
Huckle Hill

My earliest memories of Huckle Hill were after father had enlarged the northwest corner of the house to have a straight wall on the north side from the main building to the corner and then back along the west wall to the kitchen entry. He had also reversed the stairs to the attic to lead out of the enlarged room, instead of going up from the entryway as it was originally.

The farmhouse was set in a north, south configuration on a sharp curve in the Huckle Hill road. In the horse and buggy days the curve didn't make much difference, but when autos were used more, there were a few rather close calls on that corner. I remember when Sarah Fields was learning to drive, she was Bill Fields mother and was well along in years, she bought a Chevy from Mohawk Chevrolet in Greenfield and the deal furnished someone to teach her to drive it. Donald Woodward had that job and one day when they rounded the corner by the house they met a car and Sarah just took to the ditch, and beyond. Fortunately it was fairly level there, but plenty of rocks after she crossed the ditch. She just bounced over them and got back on the road again. Woodward was kind of shook up, but he stayed on the job and Sarah got her license.

As you approached the house on the road, about a hundred fifty feet before the corner, a driveway angled up towards the back entrance, and leveled off below the well so you could go to the right and park near a big rock maple, or bear left and continue. New woodshed on the right, clothes lines on the left and the old woodshed with a privy in the corner and the rest turned into a bigger hen house then up another rise to the wagon shed. Back to the driveway. It was still up grade to the entryway, but first the above mentioned well maybe twenty feet from the house, with a well laid curb and a cover. Between that and the door there where flat stones, then up a couple stone steps to the stoop. When it was time for haircuts this was where we sat while either father or mother did the cutting with the old hand clippers. It always seemed as though they pulled out more hair than they cut but we all got treated alike, one after the other. Also that was where we could help make home made ice cream. Mother would get all the ingredients ready while someone got a chunk of ice and broke it up in a bran sack to put

Things Remembered



Birthplace: Elizabeth Louise Phelps - June 23, 1926
George Alfred Phelps --- Oct. 29, 1927
Robert Seaver Phelps --- March 17,1933

into the ice cream freezer. There was always some rock salt handy to make the ice melt to advance the freezing process as the drum was spinning around . At first the younger kids could turn the handle but as it got closer to the finish the stronger ones had to turn it to finish it off. Then pack the remaining ice around the top and leave it stand till supper was done then open it up and have a real treat for dessert.

The entryway was quite open, so you could get to the woodshed easily, in the corner behind the door there were a lot of hooks, or maybe just spikes driven in a plank to hang heavy winter coats and overalls. That was also the way to the girls privy on the west wall about midway, and fathers work bench from the corner to the privy with his locked tool box with all his sharp tools out of reach of small children on the end. He put a couple windows over the bench so he could see what he was doing and I remember he had wooden vice bolted to the side to hold boards and things to work on. That one had a metal screw through wood to open and close it but earlier ones used a wooden threaded dowel to move the outside jaw.

The door on the right into the kitchen. and behind that door were more nails for work clothes. As you entered there were the usual things in kitchens of that time. Black kitchen range, a wood box, a table and chairs, iron sink with a pitcher pump on one end and a drain board on the other, and mother usually had a table and plants in front of the windows, especially in winter.

I mentioned the well out in front, that was the water supply. An inch and quarter pipe with a strainer on the end was installed just off the bottom and laid in a ditch under the kitchen, then up to the hand pump on the end of the sink. The pump was simple, a barrel with a shaft inside and a handle. At the bottom of the barrel, a flapper valve to let water through and closing to keep it from going back before the next pump. The valve was leather and the weighted flapper closed the inlet pipe, the shaft had a cupped leather packing that made a tight fit in the barrel. To make the pump work, raise the handle and pour some water in the top and work the handle up and down until the water is pulled up from the well. Might have to add water a couple times to get it started, but once it was there, all you had to do was raise and lower the handle to have water run out the spout. It took a lot of pumping to fill the reservoir on the end of the range, but it

was always ready for dishes and so forth. For wash days extra water was het[4] in a boiler or kettles. On cold nights in the winter father would let the water drain back to the well by holding the handle as high as possible, then in the morning, prime it again. The kitchen didn't stay warm enough after the fire died down to keep the water from freezing.

There was a narrow shelf above the sink, from the edge of the window into the corner and around to just short of the door to the hall where the mirror father used for shaving hung. I'm quite certain it was the one that father made when he was sixteen and worked in a framing shop during his Christmas vacation from school.[5] Hanging beside the mirror was fathers razor strop to keep his straight razor sharp as that was what he used at that time, also handy if needed for correctional purposes. I believe I was maybe ten or so that I remember seeing a safety razor. They might have been around before then, but I don't recall them. When mother was living on Birnum Road in Northfield she gave me a few of fathers things that he didn't take when he left her to go west and one of his straight razors was among them. The strop was likely lost a good many years before.

There was a cellar under the main house, but not the ell, which was also at least a foot lower. In the opposite corner from the sink was the range and then a door to the dining room. A big oblong table and chairs to seat at least ten people, a sideboard on the right and a bureau on the left that mother used for linens and things. I'm quite sure that's the one that came to me when mother had no room for it and I believe it came from mothers Grandma Baker, my great-great Grandmother on the Messer side, and could have been made by Grandpa Baker. On the north wall in front of two windows there was an iron couch that had sides that lifted up and made room for two people to sleep. Another window on the west wall to look out on the wood pile and the opening to throw the wood into the shed. He didn't have a glass window there, just a square removable door to put in after the shed was full. Just left of the door in winter a wood box and a sheet iron chunk stove then the door to the attic in the corner. In the spring the stove was cleaned out and went to the attic to be out of the way.

[4] heated

[5] Father gave it to Florence and myself in 1945, with the story on the back.

The door to the pantry was to the right of the dining room door. The pantry had lots of shelves and the ice box was in the back where father had put in a cement floor and as that had to have a place to drain the ice melt he sank a piece of pipe to take care of it. The icebox that I remember was a fair sized one, the top compartment held the ice. Lift the lid and place a chunk about one foot by one foot by two feet inside. Usually they were zinc lined and had a pipe down to the bottom for the melted water. Most households used a pan slid under the icebox to catch the melted water but the pipe eliminated that. People living in upstairs tenements had to be extra careful. The food was stored in the compartments below the ice, larger iceboxes had two doors and this saved some ice as opening a smaller door wouldn't let in as much warm air as a large door. The icebox was not as efficient as today's refrigerators, but it was adequate for the times.

We had our own ice, but people in towns had to depend on the ice man. Turners Falls had several ice houses on the bank of the Connecticut River above the dam, about where Unity Park is now. These were filled from the pond in the winter, and was likely enough to supply Greenfield and Turners both. During the summer the ice wagons would fill up every morning, and each had a route to tend to. The ice wagons were a one horse boxy type delivery wagon, and the driver would follow his route, watching for the cardboard _ICE_ sign the housewife would place in the window. The iceman got so he would know how big a chunk of ice to take in, so he wouldn't have to make two trips. There were usually kids around looking for a sliver of ice to suck on.

The separator was in the pantry also as father didn't have a milk room for a few years, and don't remember that he moved it to the milk room after he built one because he didn't separate much after he stopped shipping cream to Amherst Creamery. That was when he used ten quart cans with wooden bungs. There were plenty of shelves in the original pantry father added some more in the new part so there was plenty of room for pots, pans, dishes and other things that are stored in cabinets in modern homes. He set the flour barrel about midway on the west wall with a three foot square bread board on top for a working area. I remember father buying what he could in big containers, like he brought home tub butter in a wooden tub. I'm not sure what it weighed but likely about twenty pounds and maybe cost ten cents a pound. To make it easier to use he

took the cover off turned it bottom up on the kitchen table slipped the tub off and sliced it with twine to make three sections. He did that by wrapping the twine around it and pulling the loop through the butter twice. Then put tub back on and set it upright again a knife could cut a wedge out to be used for the table or cooking. By keeping it down cellar where it was cool it kept very well. There was always plenty of twine around in those days because anything purchased at the store was wrapped with paper and tied with string. Every grocery store had a fixture to dispense a sheet of butcher wrap paper. The clerk would pull out as much as was needed and pull up against the heavy cutting blade to cut for size, then place it on the counter and wrap the product tightly. Then there was a spool of twine nearby with the loose end handy to wrap around the package a couple of times, tie a knot and break the twine with a special twist around one finger so that the twine itself acted as a cutter.

There wasn't much light in the pantry so mother would bring the bread board out to the kitchen table to do her baking. Us kids were called upon to turn the bread mixer handle for the five loaves she made, of course baking them in the oven of the wood burning stove. I remember helping make ginger cookies, rolling them out to the right thickness and using the doughnut cutter with the center cutter removed. They were really good, nice and soft not hard and crunchy like most everything nowadays. They always tasted better because we helped to make them. Another thing I remember was the cracker barrel. Flour barrels were larger than apple barrels and crackers could be bought by the barrel and it was the same size as a flour barrel. These were the old fashioned soda crackers about three inches square and nearly a quarter inch thick. As I remember it the barrel would be less than half when father would get it and they didn't last long enough to get stale. When we got home from school and were hungry we could get some crackers and jelly or peanut butter for a snack to hold us till supper time. As I recall, lard and peanut butter were a couple things that could be bought in a five pound pail likely for ten or fifteen cents.

When they were making butter to sell, all the necessary equipment was acquired over the years and by the time I can remember their making it every thing but the separator was stored in the attic and only used when there was extra milk to separate and unless there was a lot of cream the small butter churn was used. There was a

bigger cradle type churn up there and when there was a lot of butter, a butter working table was used. This was a wooden trough about three or three and a half feet long, about two feet wide and tapered to eight or ten inches, four inch sides and a plate with a hole to accommodate a pin on the end of a wooden bar to roll back and forth on the butter to work the buttermilk out. The plate had openings for the buttermilk to drain into a pail as it was used in cooking and also was good to drink. The trough was on legs at a comfortable height to work and the leg at the narrow end was shorter for drainage. I can only remember helping once with it but that doesn't mean it was the only time it was used on Huckle Hill. I remember helping mother with the small churn a few times and usually she would just work the buttermilk out with a wooden spoon.

Mother used to make some wonderful raised doughnuts. She made regular ones too, but I remember the raised ones because they were a treat I could only have one for dessert and she didn't make them very often. She had two special boards of some kind of dark wood, that she would dust lightly with flour, and as she cut each doughnut, she placed them in rows on those boards to let them rise before frying them in the hot fat.[6] Regular doughnuts were dropped into the hot fat right from the cutting board but raised doughnuts had set for a while to rise and then dropped them into the hot fat. They were actually better for us because they cooked on top of the hot fat whereas the regular doughnuts always sank to the bottom and then as they expanded, float to the top to cook and were apt to soak up some fat in the process and therefore not too good for kids. She would also use them when we helped her make ginger cookies. That way we could cut them and have 'em ready for the pan when time for the next batch.

There were two more doors out of the kitchen, one the cellar door and the other to the hall of the main house. This was where you had to step up to get into the hall. One thing I remember about that step was when the young ones were creeping mother would lay a kitchen chair crosswise of the door so they wouldn't fall down the step.

The front hall was about six feet wide and extended from the cellar stairs to the front door. Two rows of hooks for coats and things on the north end, lower ones for the little folks. Father had his desk on the right, behind the kitchen door. There wasn't room for much of any furniture just a stand with a Fox typewriter on it, and occasionally a

[6] Sometime, since we've lived in Warwick, I got those two boards and have them in the shop.

telephone on the wall beside a door into the living room just before the front door. The front door was seldom used; everybody seemed to come in the back door, with special company using the front door.

The door to the living room was opposite the kitchen door. The first thing would be the chunk stove to the left, a wood box beside it, a rocking chair the other side, a center table in the middle of the room and two or three more comfortable chairs. The first stove I remember was a round one with a square base where the ashes dropped into a tray to pull out and empty when full. The ash pit door had a round, kind of bell shaped cap on a threaded spindle to turn in or out to close or open the draft. The firebox door was about half way up, and had one there to act as a check draft. I think that stove stayed there all summer as it was too big to haul up the stairs, later on we had a sheet iron stove there and we took it out in summer the same as the one in the dining room. This stove was the one that I remember sending our Christmas list up the chimney to Santa Claus. We didn't have a fireplace chimney to send it up, so the older kids would help us younger ones make our list on a piece of thin paper and fold it two or three times, put *to* SANTA *on it, then* they'd open the firebox door and we'd toss it up toward the stove pipe and close the door quickly. It was quite a few years before I came to realize that the paper burned up and didn't fly up the chimney to Santa.

Mothers' upright piano was in the southeast corner. Plenty of light to read the music, two windows on the east, and one on the south. Dorothy took piano lessons from a Miss Barrett who lived in Cushman Hall, across from P.I. Sunday afternoon would find the family gathered around mother at the piano to sing. Mostly hymns, but I also remember learning "The Bells of Saint Mary" and "When I Grow Too Old to Dream". That was maybe after Dorothy was playing the piano. Most of us kids would try to learn the scales and then if there was enough interest maybe lessons might be in order.

There was a big bookcase on the south wall between the window and the hall, that father and Richard built, with lots of good reading material. I don't remember all the book titles, but I'm sure there was a mother goose book, or two, for the little ones, and I read the Swiss Family Robinson at an early age. Pilgrims Progress was another one. I think I read Mark Twain after I went to P.I. and could go to the Cushman Library. There was a Newhall Bible that had a lot of interesting stories as well as all the books of the

bible including the Apocrypha. Newhall published a Bible that was about five inches thick and needed to be opened on a table to read it. Newhall was a great friend of Grandpa Phelps and grandpa inherited his personal copy, father had one also. Several years ago Ray left one of the Newhall bibles and the old dictionary that I remember seeing on Huckle Hill with me for safe keeping when he was heading west. That was possibly fathers bible and they are still with me to go along with other family heirlooms.

We had an assortment of games that we could play, but I don't recall that there were very many we were allowed to play on Sunday. I would guess that authors would be okay and likely Parcheesi would be a quiet game, also flinch. We also had a carom board, checkers and I think chess, I know grandpa had a chess game, so father must have had one also. When we were still on Huckle Hill a game of pit was given to the family, and I remember the older ones really got into the spirit of the game, especially Stanley, and he was hard to beat when he got rolling. I never saw a deck of playing cards in the house, or for that matter, anywhere else until I was in high school. They were associated with gambling, and in father's judgment were not for his children. The carom board must have been in the family for a long time as I remember when I was ten or twelve years old the side rails gave out and father replaced them with some maple wood that he had. They were a bit thicker then the original and he didn't have the felt buffer to put back on so it took some adjusting when shooting as too much power would send either the shooter or the carom flying across the room. I have that up in the attic and the original caroms. Some are cracked and I believe Richard made new shooters as the originals all got broke. I remember having to share a shooter if there were four playing.

I remember when I had the mumps; there was a small bed in front of the two windows, likely the above mentioned couch. That way we were down stairs and easier for mother to tend to us. Frank had them first and then I had my turn. Mother always took care of any sickness any of us had and the only time I remember going to a doctor's office was when I got my vaccination so I could start school. I remember in the winter time mother figured we needed cold protection of some kind so we had to take cod liver oil, boy was that an awful taste. If we seemed to be coming down with a cold mother would grease our chest with musterole and wrap a piece of flannel around us

when we went to bed. Then someone came out with Vicks Vaporub which was a lot milder and father wouldn't use it for a long time, said it wasn't strong enough to do any good. Of course in late years Musterole is no longer available on the market and I had a spell with pneumonia a few years back and I would have to agree with father on that one. Three times within a year was too much to suit me. I also remember taking a hot lemonade and a quinine then off to bed if the cold had caught up to us. I don't think now you can even buy quinine, I haven't seen any for years. I remember mother tell about how she saved Franks life when he had a bad case of whooping cough by using a mustard plaster and frequent hot baths, a lot of very young children that caught it didn't pull through it. Another poultice that mother had was antiphlogistine, and that would take the place of a mustard plaster. It could also be used for drawing out infections from a cut, etc.

The rest of the downstairs was father and mother's room and the girls' room which we hardly ever saw unless it was spring cleaning time and bedding had to be hauled out to the clothes line for airing out.

I mentioned earlier that father had reversed the stairs to lead out of the dining room to the attic at the west end. That attic was used for storing things on each side of a path to the big attic where the boys slept, one double bed on the north end, another double bed on the south end, and sometimes a small bed, if one of the older boys happened to be home or we might have company to stay overnight. I can still remember those feather beds we used in the winter. Free stones, or soapstone's, were not too plentiful in our house so we'd heat up a flatiron or two on the kitchen stove, wrap it in a piece of flannel, so we didn't get burned, and take it up to bed with us to keep our feet warm. Another thing I remember is the snow that would sift in under the shingles and had to be shook off the blanket in the morning. We always hoped somebody would poke up the dining room fire so we could run down stairs and have a warm place to dress. The flatirons mother used had a detachable handle which made them easier to wrap in a piece of flannel, not like the old sadirons they used to have. When father tore down the barn that Lunt gave him beside the timbers and other lumber he salvaged a lot of slate. This was Guilford slate, a blacker and smaller slate then most of the houses in

Bernardston used but he and Richard took the shingles off the east side of the main house and replaced them with the slate.

Arthur Nelson lived almost across the road from the Green School which was just up the road from Streeters Store on the Main street, and always had animals around, a cow or two, maybe a few goats and he had some Shetland Ponies. During the summer he pastured them around town or in somebody's pasture along with their young stock but in the winter it was possible to borrow one or two depending on how much room could be spared in the barn for their ‘keep’. As I recall father allowed us to keep one at least a couple winters and we could ride them or if we could find a way to hitch them to a sled we could drive ‘em. However we had to take care of them feed and water and curry them off when necessary. I remember their hair would grow quite long during the winter and where we sat on their back it would stay short or maybe pull out so that there was no question where to sit on him or her. One time we had a goat for a while and it had to be put on a platform so it could be milked from behind. The platform got it up high enough so it could be milked without sitting on the ground. I remember trying it but I don’t think we had it too long, maybe none of us kids liked the taste of goat milk as we’d been raised on cows milk.

Along about the time I’d have been twelve or so, Frank and I both had put together enough bicycle parts so we each had one and we sometimes could ride into Greenfield if we needed a part that couldn’t be found in the dump or by trading. I remember one time we rode in with Bradford Truesdell, one of the ministers sons and on the way home stopped to chat with the pilot of the plane at the Greenfield airport which was just over the town line from Bernardston in a big mowing on the west side of the road. Just south of there the road made a big curve around a swampy area and Yetter had a nursery and raised shrubs and other things. Later they moved nearer to Greenfield and were a big florist business for years. The plane was a two seater biplane and I think Bradford had been up and I don’t remember if Frank had or not but I never had so they tried to get me to take a ride. At first I thought it might be fun but I got cold feet and wouldn’t fly even though the pilot would take me up for two dollars which was what the three of us managed to find in our pockets. Seems as though the regular price was more then that. I think it was later probably when I was a sophomore that Turners

Falls had got an airport built and one weekend one of their planes crashed and one of the Drew boys from North Bernardston was in it. I remember hearing someone telling about how they found his shoes fully tied, his feet had pulled right out of them. At the time I couldn't see how it could happen but as I got older I was able to figure it out. After that I always said I'd fly as long as I could keep one foot on the ground and it was '92 before I flew in a plane.

Things Remembered

School Days

The year that I would be six by December first, and therefore could start the first grade, measles were going around and in those days if there was a case of them in a household, the place was quarantined and anyone that hadn't had them couldn't go out in public. There must have been one or more that had them, and the doctor would come and check me to see if I had caught them, and I just never would catch them. By the time the doctor decided I wasn't going to have them, it was so late into the year that he said I'd have to wait until the next school year to start. Dorothy and Frank were going to the Bald Mountain School and the next year I joined them on the walk down the Snake Road to get to school. We didn't live two miles from school, so we had to walk. There was a school bus, horse and buggy, Leon Nelson on the Northfield road had the job at that time, and they would go right by us and kind of make fun of us, just because we had to walk. Seems to me father got the job the next year, so we could ride, although I could have walked two years.

My first teacher was Miss Evelyn Nelson, her family lived on South Street, but the second year she wasn't allowed to teach because she got married to Fred Miller and married teachers couldn't teach school. That year our teacher was Miss Alta Dennison and she taught there for quite a few years, even after I had gotten into Powers Institute.

The Bald Mountain School was beyond the turn to cross over the Burke Flat Bridge to the Brattleboro road, on the Bald Mountain road. The building is still there, however it has been made over to a dwelling. Typical one room school house, double desks in rows facing to the east, teachers desk at that end, and the stove off to the right of the teacher as she faced the pupils. Black board on the wall at that end. A hallway as you enter the building to hang your coat and hat and a place to leave your lunch pail, as I remember a lard pail made a good thing to carry lunch in. Wood shed and a boys and a girls privy on the end. It seems to me the girls didn't have to go outside to their privy but the boys did. I don't recall that there was a swing, but I know there was a teeterboard there. A good sized school yard where everyone could join the recess and noon time activities. In winter we could cross the road and use the steep banking to

slide down with what ever we had to ride on. There were a few home made jumpers around. A barrel stave with a stick of wood nailed to it and a short board on top to sit on was a lot of fun. I remember seeing a store bought jumper, but we didn't have money for those things, so we made our own. We had an old flexible flyer from somewhere, maybe one of the older boys had dickered for it, anyway I tried to negotiate a path we had carved out of the brush on an angle down the steep bank with Norman Fields on my back and managed to hit a sapling with the steering bar right where my hand was and lost a fingernail out of it. I never tried that again. Other winter activities were fox and geese, and of course we'd have to build snow forts so we could have snowball battles.

I'm quite certain about doing the maypole thing for the first of May at Bald Mountain school, and I remember what fun it was weaving the colored streamers around the pole. As I recall this was an exercise where the students formed a circle around the pole and each would hold a colored streamer attached to the top of the pole. Then every other one would circle the pole clockwise and the others would circle counter clockwise until the pole was completely encased. Very lovely result. Another event was Decoration Day, it has since been changed to Memorial Day. When at the Bald Mountain school we would all march to the Old Cemetery the day before to place flowers, on the soldier's graves. This was because Decoration Day was a school holiday, and all the school children would meet at the Town Hall for exercises that were usually a speaker and some one, usually from PI, always recited the Gettysburg Address. Then a band would lead the march over to the Center Cemetery to decorate the soldier's graves there, and the buglers would play taps. Decoration Day was always on May 30, which, if I'm not mistaken, was the day President Lincoln delivered the Gettysburg Address. It has only been in more recent years that Congress changed most of the national holidays to Monday just so people could have a long weekend, and also have more highway fatalities. July fourth, Independence Day and November eleven, Armistice Day are still the same, except that now they call it Veterans Day.

There wasn't any water at the school, so a couple boys would go up the road a short distance to Miss Marion Denison's and fetch back a pail of water to have for drinking, using a short pole through the bail.

Things Remembered

It was Marion Dennison that took a few of the boys that were about the same age as her nephew John Dennison; he was in the same grade as me, to a movie in Greenfield on a Saturday afternoon. If I remember correctly it was to celebrate John's birthday. She took us to the Victoria Theater on Chapman Street. The Saturday matinee was ten cents apiece admission, of course, it was a silent movie, but that was fine, we went to a real movie. I'm quite sure it was Tom Mix we saw, a cowboy movie. John was close to my age, and his folks lived on the Bald Mountain road where the road to the old cemetery turned off.

Walking home after school in winter the Snake Road went up a fair grade after leaving the Bald Mountain road and I remember meeting Mr. Blodgett breaking out the road with his team and sled to make the walking a bit easier. In the days before snowplows the roads were broke out by tying a land plow to the side of a sled and driving up and down the road to make a track to walk in and also made it easier for the team to haul a load. I remember father breaking out a road to the wood lot that way to make it easier to haul the loads of wood out on the sled. If you have ever worked outside on a cold, windy day, you may remember how the nose tends to drip faster than you can wipe it away. Mr. Blodgett had a bushy mustache and it would be just solid with icicles from the cold.

This same Mr. Blodgett had a small place on the Bald Mountain road across from the Snake road, and raised strawberries. School would be finished when it was time to pick them and kids that were old enough could pick for him. Dorothy and I think Frank had picked for a couple years, and then Dot thought I should try it. There were some other kids from nearby that where about my age, so I got to pick berries for two cents a quart.

When father got the bus job he had a two seated surrey he used until the snow came then he switched to the sled. I think the fringe on top was missing by the time he got hold of it, that was large enough to carry all the kids on the hill. Brother John refers to it as a carryall, in one of his stories. In the winter he took the platform off the hay wagon and put it on the logging sled, a plank on each side for seats, and bows supported a tarpaulin to keep the snow and wind out, but not the cold. I remember that real well as Elizabeth Fields got pneumonia and died and Sarah Fields blamed father

for letting her get sick riding in the sled. Grandma Fields was quite a gal and she seemed to find something that father didn't do to suit her, especially when he was road commissioner. I remember one time hearing him sputter about her calling him to do something about the water running across the road and he had to go out in the rain with his shovel to divert it to a culvert. Stanley remembers getting up early and driving to the last house in Mass. to pick up the Sullivan kids with the sled.

I don't recall just when he got a model T truck to take the place of the surrey; he needed something bigger as every year there were more kids to carry. As I remember it was a long wheelbase with a Ruxtull rear end, this was a shift to change the gear ratio in the differential to give the wheels more power by turning slower with the same motor speed. It had a platform body, with slat sideboards. He used the same system for seats as he used on the sled, only Fred Allen the blacksmith in town, made brackets to bolt to the sideboards for the plank, and a step on the back to get up into the truck. Also he made a canopy using two by twos and covered it with a tarpaulin. When he used that system on the sled, he covered the sides as much as possible, but on the truck a little air getting in was welcome. I fell out of this school bus once. It was when I was going to South Street school, Stanley had his license by then and was driving that morning, as we went over the brow of Ledge Hill some one down front said "who is that ahead" and I stood up to look, the bad part was I was sitting on the end and the truck just went out from under me. I hopped back up off the ground, still holding my lunch bucket, Stan stopped the bus in short order, and I got back in, way to the front of the bus. I think after that, I wasn't allowed to sit on the end.

When the weather got too bad for the truck he switched to the horses, in mud time, the surrey, when it was snow, the farm sled. Sometimes the road might be passable for the bus as far as our house and then the ones above would have to get into the surrey and ride the rest of the way. I remember one spring the team had just left the house a short way, actually, just up around the first bend beyond the house at the junction of the Purple Meadow Road, as they went through a muddy spot the right front wheel suddenly dropped into a hole, Jerry the off horse, took over, he just lunged ahead and got the rig out of there in a hurry. That was one thing about horses, in a case like that an auto would come to a stop, horses not so. Seems to me Frank was driving, Stan

drove the bus, but there were chores to get started, so some one else drove the team to deliver the rest of the kids.

To make up for starting a year late, when some of the Huckle Hill children had to go to the South Street school because there were too many pupils at the Bald Mountain school, I did the fourth and fifth grades in one year. Miss Amy Whithead was the teacher there.

After South Street School, I went to Powers Institute. If I remember correctly that was the first year for sixth graders to go to P.I. The upstairs rooms were for the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. Down stairs the west room was for the freshman and sophomores and juniors and seniors in the east room. My sixth grade teacher was Miss Beatrice Jeffrey and I passed along to the next grade with no problems. I don't remember who taught seventh grade, probably Miss Jeffrey, as I don't recall there being two teachers desks in the room. The next year the eighth grade had to use some of the upstairs rooms in Cushman Hall across the street from P I. Classes were getting bigger each year even then. Cushman Hall had been the dormitory for Powers Institute when it was a private school. Miss Esther Olsen was English teacher and had her eighth grade classes there. We made a sort of news paper that year called the Beacon and I have one of them filed away. It's a copy of the original that Miss Olsen loaned me from the Historical Museum, but it came out good. Has some prints that were made by cutting a design on linoleum with a sharp knife to use in a mimeograph, Milton Streeter and I did the art work, some different than what we have to work with today. Don't remember the Freshman year too well. Miss Olsen was teaching English and I think Latin. Miss Palmer came along about then and taught ancient history and French. Ancient history was probably my favorite subject and Beryl Foster used to get all out of sorts with me because I'd have the answer to a question from Miss Palmer and raise my hand ahead of her.

I'm not positive what year the class started taking a trip to Mount Tom amusement park at the end of the school year. Might have been the eighth grade year and I do remember going at least twice and possibly three times. Almon Flagg had the bus job after father gave it up and he had a real school bus like the ones now but not as big. I don't recall how he was paid, maybe everyone that went had to chip in for the trip

and getting into the park. Then if I remember correctly fifty cents would get rides on everything but the roller coaster, which was extra. There were a lot of things to ride on or in, the dodge-em cars were what I liked the best. As I remember they were for one person and powered by electricity The ceiling was a wire mesh that was hot and each car had a pole up to it with a small mesh that made contact and when you pushed the pedal on the floor the car would move and the more you pushed the faster it would go. The cars had a hard rubber bumper all around it and you could bump into other cars and push and jockey each other. If anybody got too rough the attendant would holler at them to slow down, or they would have to leave. The other rides were calm compared to what the amusement parks had in later years. I refused to ride the roller coaster for a long time but I think it was the second year we went down everyone ganged up on me and to save face I rode it once and I've never been on one since. I think Beryl was one of them that practically dragged me on the thing then sat with me in the first seat, even so, I still wouldn't ride again.

My sophomore year I started late as I had worked for Cutts in Milford for a while but I got along good and was passed into the junior class in June. In March, Frank and I got an extra day off. Brother Robert was born March 17, 1933. Father let us have the day off as we had a nine inch snow storm and there was some more wood to draw up to the house to saw up for fire wood. At that time of year it didn't last long, but I think we got most of the wood up before it all melted. Dr Barnard from Greenfield was mother's doctor for Betty, George and Robert. The snow hadn't all melted when the doc got ready to leave and instead of backing around and driving down the driveway the way he came in, he drove ahead and cut to the right to get into the road. There was a problem, he cut too soon and went into the ditch where the sink drain from the kitchen emptied and then we had to get the team to get him out. He drove a newer Packard than the one Stan had, but it was a heavy vehicle and gave us a little trouble, but we did it. I'll remember that day for a long time.

In my junior year father sold the Huckle Hill place and rented the Henry Holton farm on the Northfield Road at the top of the hill just west of the Connecticut River. He gave me the option of transferring to the Northfield school to finish the year and also my senior year or I could work the farm and leave school as I was sixteen and could if I

wanted to. I had never been to school anywhere but Bernardston and decided I wouldn't go to a new school, so that was the end of my schooling.

I'd like to note here that the Pioneer Valley Regional School which opened in 1958 is built where we raised silage corn the year we moved from Huckle Hill.

I mentioned mud when I was talking about school back a ways. Folks in today's time have no idea what mud time really was. Every spring was mud time, in the winter the roads were not opened up for autos to any great extent. I mentioned a track opened up with a land plow anchored to a sled and dragged along. If the storm had been a bad one and there were drifts, sometimes it was necessary to break a path for the horses, either with a shovel or by slogging through on foot, then go along to the next drift. Then when autos were used more in winter the roads had to be cleared of snow more.

Along about 1930 the town voted to purchase a tractor with a vee plow on it. The idea being it could also be used in the summer or after mud time to drag the scrapper for road work instead of using teams to pull it. The tractor was a Cletrac crawler, not very big as we see tractors today, but it was quite a piece of machinery for those days.

Albert LaValley died from a ruptured appendix because of a snow storm that he couldn't be gotten to the hospital in time. This was on a Friday, the wind and snow blew all day Saturday and by Sunday there wasn't a sign of the roads, just white everywhere. All the men in town that could, got out and began to open things up, starting at the Bald Mountain Road where the state had the main road plowed, and then up the Huckle Hill Road as LaValley's was about a mile beyond us and I believe the funeral was from the home. Stanley was married and lived in town so he was one of the shovelers. I think one of the Deane boys drove the plow and as that wasn't able to get through all the drifts, Fred Wright had a caterpillar crawler, no plow on it, but when the plow got stuck then the Wright tractor, I believe Herby Wright drove it, would find a way to get out ahead and hook a chain to the plow and, with the help of the shovels, get a path through. As I remember it was getting along towards the middle of the day when they got as far as our place. I can see them now getting through the drift by the driveway over to Almon Flaggs place where the wind swept across our pasture and dumped the snow in the road, it took a while to just go the three hundred yards up to our barn where

the buildings broke the wind and there was only about a foot of snow until they got around the house and started up the hill. Here the roadbed was lower than our field and as the wind swept across it dropped the snow on the bank with about room enough to walk in the ditch on the right hand side and sloped up to near eight feet deep over the left ditch, this was all hand work as there was no way to open it with the tractors. The snow was packed so hard you could walk on it and hardly make a mark. I remember getting out to help so they let me shovel up near the top and throw down the slope to the next person who would add a little from his level and toss it to the next one. There was a pretty good set of stairs there by the time we got up to the curve at the Purple Meadow road. Anyhow they got the road open and had the funeral on time.

When the weather began to warm up and the snow began to melt and the frost began to come out of the ground, the roads were used daily. Wagons and buggies would make ruts but usually not deep ones and with care wouldn't disrupt travel a great deal, but when cars were used about all winter and tire chains were necessary on the ice, or frozen snow, the ruts would start earlier and travel was heavier and therefore the ruts would get worse daily. At night they would freeze, sometimes quite hard, and Frank LaMountain, if I recall correctly, a nephew of Levi LaValley, Alberts father, worked in Greenfield so he was one to get out early to go to work. One morning as he was on his way, he had come by Bill Fields place and was negotiating the ruts up the rise towards the sheep pasture at the top where the road curved a bit to the right where the pasture gate was. He had a Model T touring car and he was pretty good at getting through by picking a good looking rut and staying with it, however this particular morning the plan didn't work as well, somehow the front wheels decided to try a different set of ruts then the rear wheels and when Frank tried to get them back in track, the whole shebang just jumped right off the road and into the sheep pasture. This might have been all right except the snow was about all gone so it didn't slow him down and the terrain pitched down rather steeply and also there were some apple trees over there too. Anyhow, he didn't think he could stop the car as the pasture was quite icy that morning, so he got out over the side onto the running board, the driver side on the Model T didn't have a door, pushed up the throttle and headed for the nearest tree that would stop the car and

jumped off just before it hit. Stove it up a little, but those “T’s” were easy to fix and at least he didn’t have to pull it all the way up out of the woods.

There are some other interesting things that should be in here somewhere, and this is as good a place as any. This was during the time of prohibition when the use of alcohol in any form was against the law. I remember hearing the older folks talking about rumrunners, and some of the things they might do. The Huckle Hill Road went into Vermont just beyond the Ted Sullivan place and there was talk that it was part of the route from Canada, where whiskey was legal, into the states. Charles Neff lived a mile or more above our place, and drove a powerful car, like a Cadillac or maybe a LaSalle and there was speculation that it was part of the system. One time I remember we were eating supper and we could hear this car roaring up the road by the house. Father said it sounded like he hadn’t shifted down, but just kept the throttle wide open in first and it was Charlie Neff. Father thought he was likely drunk again. It wasn’t too long after supper that a state trooper stopped to inquire where Charlie Neff lived. He went off the road and tipped over before he made it home.

Another thing I remember were the times Grandpa and Grandma Phelps who lived in Keene would visit us on Huckle Hill. They would come down on the train, and father would meet them at the station. I got to go with him a time or two that I can recall. I remember waiting on the platform as the train pulled into the station. Someone always had hold of me so I wouldn’t get too close to the edge as there was usually steam exhausting from the engine. Even then Grandpa was hard of hearing and we had to learn to speak loud and plain enough so he could understand us, which was probably a lot of help in later years when we had to speak in class. Grandpa liked to stand out by the well there on Huckle Hill and play the drum for us on his birthday, which was the Fourth of July. Another Fourth of July event was firing the little black powder cannon that father had. It was loaded the night before and touched off at daybreak to start the day off. Sometimes it was loaded up and touched off after dark because there was quite a flash at night. The time I remember the best there was a cat had just started up the driveway and was about six or eight feet from it when it fired. I think it was a couple days before we saw the cat again and it seemed to be okay. The last I knew, John has the drum, but I guess it needs a lot of work to preserve it and I’m not sure where the

cannon is. Grandpa would always stand ramrod straight and I think it was because of his brother Francis who was killed in the Civil war. He was real proud of him.

Fireworks were not too expensive in those days and we'd usually have a nickel package of Chinese firecrackers for the daytime, and a box of sparklers at dusk. Then father would set up a trough out beyond the barn pointing it out towards the swamp to set off some sky rockets and there where four or five roman candles. One fourth of July John and Richard where going perch fishing at Lake Wyola and asked me to go along. We started early and as we went by Grandpa Messer's on South Street I was supposed to throw a torpedo onto the blacktop to make a big bang but I don't think I was able to throw down hard enough. We fished most all day and they had taken a milk can to put the fish in. I was going to say it was a forty quart can but I don't think they were in use yet so it had to be a twenty quart can and it was partially filled with water so the fish wouldn't die on us. I think I only caught one perch but the can was pretty well filled when we quit. There was enough so the boys stopped at the Burkes and dressed out a good feed for them and we had the rest. That was the first time that I can remember being in a boat.

We used to fish for trout at the quarry hole on Dry Brook in Roots sheep pasture or walk down to Falls River at the Burke Flat bridge. We'd carry a length of fish line with a hook on it and cut an alder bush for a pole. That was an exercise in itself as the pocket knife one of us would have was never very sharp and sometimes took quite a while to cut around and through a one inch stick. Over at the quarry hole you could see the trout swimming around but they never seemed to be interested in our fish worms. Since I've got older and used real tackle I realize we should have approached the hole from a side where the trout couldn't see us and we might have had better luck. Father had two or three fish spears and the older boys would use them to spear suckers in Falls River. They were quite good at it and would bring home suckers twelve -fourteen inches long and sometimes a couple even longer. Good eating but very boney so we learned to be very careful not to get choked on a bone. I remember when the covered bridge was still in use at Cheapside in Greenfield that father dropped off the older boys there one evening to fish for eels under the bridge while the rest of the family went to visit Uncle Stanley and Aunt Ethel Grant in Deerfield. Then when we came back father

went down the bank to help the boys back up with the fish so we could go back home. Eels were good eating but hard to skin.

Monday in those days was wash day, as regular as Saturday was bath night. Up to the time Betty was a baby, mother washed by hand, two wash tubs set on a bench in the kitchen, a wash boiler on the stove, and a laundry stick to prod and turn the clothes for dirt removal, and to transfer them to the tub of soapy water. The second tub was the rinse water into which a portion of bluing had been added to make the clothes whiter. A hand wringer clamped to the side of the tub was used to remove most of the water and moved to the second tub for the last wringing to the basket and out to the clothes line.

Father bought the first washing machine I'd ever seen. It was a Maytag, looked then the same as they did for many years, a square aluminum tub, a wringer mounted on the right back corner that could be rotated full circle. The power was supplied by a two cycle, gas engine mounted under the tub, with a foot lever starter mounted on the right front leg. After mixing the gas and regular motor oil at the proper ratio, the tank was filled and it was ready to go. It was set up in the kitchen, with the above mention tubs on the bench, set so the clothes from the machine would pass through the wringer to the first rinse water, and then turn the wringer and pass the clothes through to the final rinse, and then through the wringer again to the clothes basket to be carried to the clothes line outdoors to dry. The exhaust had to be piped to the outdoors. A six foot flexible, metal pipe was bolted to the exhaust port of the engine and passed out the door to a two inch steel pipe in the entryway, out to the yard. When everything was set up, the operator would push down quickly on the starter lever, after setting the choke, to prime it. Then the next crank or two the engine was supposed to fire and run for as long as it took to do the wash, or 'til the tank went dry. When it was new, the engine would start about the first try, but as it got older, it sometimes took several tries to start it. The spark plug was apt to foul up from the oil mixture,[7] and then it wouldn't fire, it had be removed, cleaned and replaced. Then there was a good chance it was flooded, so, remove the flexible exhaust pipe, get a kitchen match, light it and stand clear while you held the flame to the port, whoof, the excess gas would burn off and the chamber was clear for another try. Sometimes it took quite a few tries to start it. I remember getting

[7] Two cycle oil came into being after the chain saw was invented

home from school a lot of times that mother had given up and us kids would have to help get it running to finish the wash. As soon as we moved to where there was electricity, the gas engine was replaced with an electric motor, but that wasn't until after Robert was born.

I mentioned that Saturday night was bath night. I recall baths would start with the youngest and work up through. As we had no bathroom or running water, the kitchen was used for bathing, and a wash tub set in front of the kitchen stove, oven door open to help with heating, was what we used. To save water, at least two and, if the water wasn't too dirty, three would bathe, dump the water and start a new batch, girls always had first chance, they were not supposed to be as dirty, I guess.

Father didn't like to have wet wood to burn, so he built a big woodshed on the west side. This was about five feet from the corner of the entryway to about the same distance from the northwest corner of the dining room, extending out to the driveway, about twenty feet. I know it took a lot of wood to fill it and I helped throw in many cords over the years. The roof he put on was corrugated tin and what a racket that would make if a hail storm came along. I believe that roof lasted well over fifty years, as I talked with the family that own the place at the present time and one of the sons spoke about the old tin roof still being there when his father did some remodeling.

The square hay barn west of the driveway was what father built on to for the good sized barn that he had in the end. The first thing he did was measure out what he wanted for a stable and dug a ditch. I remember him telling how the neighbors couldn't see why he would dig a ditch out there; water wouldn't run way over there from the road, besides it would have to run uphill. Anyway, he told them he was making a gutter for the cow stable. Of course that set 'em off, not very many farmers in those days had heard of a cement gutter. The stables then were usually built at ground level using planks under the cows. What passed for a gutter was usually planks placed length ways of the stable and only four or five inches lower than where the cows stood. Most farmers used chains to tie the cow in the stall, or to be more specific, in place as there were not always partitions between the cows. These neck chains were made especially to be used for cattle, and had a loop at one end to anchor on a round post at the manger, which usually was a trough the length of the stable and a board or two slanted to the

sides to make a vee with the bottom cut off and a wide board. or two boards nailed together, that dropped down on the barn floor side to put grain and hay through. After the loop and two or three links there was a swivel to keep the chain from twisting and choking the critter, then two or three more links and a triangular link from which there were two chains, one longer than the other, one to pass around the neck and hitch to the shorter one by pushing a four inch bar on the end of the short length through a round link at the appropriate size for the neck of the animal, these links being spaced to accommodate small to large necks. Manure was pitched through a sliding door in the wall behind the cows and built up against the barn until such time as it could be forked into a tip cart or on a sled in winter to be spread on the land. I remember the barn that Bill Fields, our next neighbor up the road, had with just such a stable as described above.

If the stable was above a barn cellar, wooden floor and gutter, the same as the other type, the difference being, the manure was shoved down to the barn cellar through scuttle holes behind the cows. The first time I had experience with these was when I worked for Cutts in Milford, more on this later. Same method of getting the manure onto the land as mentioned above, except the sled was hard to get into the cellar, so the tip cart was the norm.

Father didn't want either of the above methods, so, he put in a cement gutter. He made it with a slope towards the west and then a ninety degree turn to the south out towards the road. This made for drainage of a lot of the water and was a help when cleaning stables. More on that in a bit. As I think back, it seems like he put in eight wooden stanchions and a box stall for a calving pen. The first stable still used planks, later he cemented the feed alley and walk way behind the cows. It was easier to keep clean as the milk was weighed and strained in the stable. He squared the stable to the west to make room for the two horses, Ben and Jerry, with a narrow passage to get around back of the horses from the stable. He also had a door in back to get the horses into the stable from outdoors, but the feed went into their mangers from the stable side. He built a wooden grain box in front of the horses for the cow grain and sometimes the horses would get some bran as a supplement to the corn on the cob, which was their main feed. Father made his own mixture of grain for the cows. Bran was fairly cheap,

cottonseed meal was another good ingredient, he would sometimes use gluten when cottonseed meal was hard to get and usually corn meal, and sometimes ground oats, mixing it to feed each cow while he was milking it. He also had plenty of windows on the south wall.

I spoke about cleaning stables. All the years we lived there, this was done by hand, father made a special wheelbarrow to use for the job. There were not any metal wheel barrows as we know them today and father wanted to empty the manure to the side and not take off a side board. The wheelbarrows then had removable sides, and the body tapered from the handles to the wheel. To empty it, remove a side panel and tip what ever you had on, out on the ground. Using boards cross wise of the handles in such a way as to make a tub like affair that could be emptied either side. The reason for this was the way he had his manure pile. Before he built a shed over the manure, it was just lay one end of a plank on the manure he had dumped for a day or two and just dump off one side then the other and move the plank as the pile required. He had built on to the barn to the west by the time I was old enough to clean stables, and built a shed to keep the manure under cover and also to have a pig pen. The filled wheelbarrow had to be pushed up a plank into the shed, which was perhaps four feet higher than the stable door. The plank was long enough that the pitch was not too steep, unless it was rainy or in the winter, icy. After you got into the shed, the next plank was level and all that was necessary was to tip the barrow to the right or left and the manure would slide out and then you head back for another load. Father had planks at least twelve inches wide; even then it could be tricky to navigate on a wet day.

One Saturday in the spring it was my turn to clean stables. It was warm enough so I could turn all the cows out to water at one time as they could go out to the brook that ran through the pasture out beyond the pughole. In the winter only a few at a time could be let out as they had to drink from the spring fed watering trough by the barn door. I had turned them all out but one cow named Lena, an Ayrshire with big horns, and getting near to calving. She was on the end as you entered the stable and sometimes she had trouble getting up, probably had a little rheumatism. It was towards the end of sugaring and the snow had about disappeared and after the cows had their drink they'd check the sap buckets that we had out in the woods, as there were no

covers, they'd drink the sap. I went ahead with cleaning the stables and let her stay there. She had a tendency to kick at who ever was working the shovel behind her, so I made sure I got the gutter clean while she was down, at least I wouldn't get kicked that day.

I had the stable nearly cleaned out before she managed to get on her feet, so I opened her stanchion and let her out. I wouldn't have to lug a pail of water for her, she could get her own. By the time the stables were cleaned, and the bedding shook up a little the cows were back up to the barnyard so I let them in. Then I discovered Lena was missing. By the time Lena was able to get on her feet, the rest of the cows had been out to the brook and checked the buckets, but she had to check them herself, so, instead of taking the long way back, she cut cross lots near the pug hole. Big mistake, when I found her she was bogged down in the mud, couldn't move anything but her head. Stanley hitched Ben and Jerry to the stone boat and found a way around that had fair footing for the team. Then with a good heavy rope around her horns the team pulled her onto the boat. Then dragged her over to Flagg's barn. His stable was under the hay barn and had a big feed alley, and a couple pens in front of the tie-up, and left her there overnight. I think Stan said they had to use Jerry single to get through the door. The next morning she was on her feet but father figured the calf would not survive the ordeal, so he sold her to Streeter for beef. Herman said the calf would have been okay, but father didn't want to chance it.

The older boys had to do most of the farm work as father had to find other work to keep the family eating. I remember at one time he was the road commissioner and Grandpa Messer, who was a fine teamster, used his team with another team, either Townsends or John Chapins, for a four horse hitch to haul the road scraper. Another thing I remember was turning the grindstone that sat under the apple tree in front of the barn to sharpen the scythes for cutting the brush along the roadside, and that was also for sharpening the mowing machine sections, grass scythes and axes. Back then all the brush was cut with a brush scythe which is a heavier snath then a grass scythe and all roads might not get done every year but usually there were men enough looking for work to keep most of the roadsides clean.

Things Remembered

I remember father trying his hand at peddling and was driving a bread truck for Hathaway bakers. Sometimes he had bread or donuts left over and would bring some home for us to try but I know they were never as good as mother could make. That company was taken over by Bond Bakers and I don't remember who came after them, maybe Wonder.

There wasn't much money to be had in those days, but we always had enough to eat. The garden was a priority and that was up to the younger children. When we got to be tall enough to lead the horse, we could help cultivate, and the weeds would have to be pulled by hand or use a homemade scratcher. Back then, everything had to be canned or salted to preserve it for any length of time. Father raised telephone peas that had to be supported. The best thing we had that didn't cost any money was brush. Us kids would go out to the side hill where the birch had been chopped in the winter and pick out enough tops, or branches to plant in the row for the peas to grow on. Seemed like it took an awful lot to do the job, but probably because we were kind of small, it seemed like more. Then when the peas were ready father or one of the older boys would get out early and pick them. As I remember there was always a bushel or two. All the kids were set to work shelling, and mother would get the quart jars and the canner ready. The canner would hold eight jars at a time; mother would pack each one full, using a special funnel that was just the size of the jar opening, and then put on jar rings and tops, flip the bail up and put them into the canner, using the wire rack to let them down into the water. Then they had to boil for two hours to seal the rubber rings. Hoping that all would seal, and none would break, the wire rack was designed to prevent the jars bumping together during the boiling process. All the garden stuff had to be treated the same way, so we would have plenty to eat the rest of the year. Except for apples, the other fruit had to be canned, or made into jams or jelly.

Everybody had a chore to do, like filling the wood boxes for three fires in the winter, but only for the kitchen range in summer. Then we might have a calf to mix up a feeding of dried skim milk for. We didn't have the pails with a rubber nipple on it, so the calf would think it was drinking from it's mother, we had to teach it to drink by dipping a couple fingers in the warm milk, stick them in the calf's mouth and as she began sucking, get her head down into the milk and hope she would learn to drink as you

carefully removed the fingers. Didn't always work the first time, and be sure you had a firm grip on the pail, as she was apt to bunt if she stopped getting milk with the fingers, same as she would if the teat slipped out of her mouth while nursing on her mother. Summer or winter we always had to eat breakfast and it was a nourishing breakfast too. There weren't any precooked cereals when I first remember, but shredded wheat came on the market probably in the twenties. Our cereal was oatmeal most of time and then there was cream of wheat, our own milk and sprinkle a little sugar on it. I remember having shredded wheat occasionally and it was a treat to be savored. The box then was a different shape then the box used now-a-days. There were three layers of four biscuits with a divider between each layer, that meant there was a dozen shredded wheat in each box and if I remember correctly the box cost ten cents. Niagara Falls decorated both sides of the box and the shredded wheat biscuit was also pictured. There wasn't any orange juice then but we could have toast made on top of the range in a wire toaster that you could turn and toast the other side. Mothers Oats came along there somewhere and to promote the sales had a cereal bowl inside the box. Later on they added small plates and it seems as though cups and saucers. Mother had a lot of them as I recall, of course a box of oatmeal didn't last too long around our house.

Another of our summer chores, when we weren't helping with the haying, was filling the wood shed. Father and the older boys chopped wood in the winter and hauled it up in back of the house while there was snow on the ground and piled it near the saw rig father had set up. He always cut it what he called 'sled length'. That also saved a lot of chopping as there were only two ways to work up wood then, a crosscut saw or an ax. The saw arbor was set on sturdy posts; dead chestnut was everywhere and made good long lasting underpinning. Blight had got into this country, probably from China, and it had killed every chestnut tree. Most would stand for years, and even if they fell over, would stay sound indefinitely. This happened about the turn of the century, in the twenties there were still a lot of good, usable dead chestnut wood.[8] Before the blight, chestnut was used a lot in post and beam building, and there are still some old buildings where the timbers are still sound. Probably the best use for dead chestnut was for fence

[8] When we bought this place in 1958, there was a dead chestnut tree still standing near my spring, four feet in diameter.

posts, being quite straight-grained, were easily split to a workable size to drive into the ground. To finish up on the saw rig. There was a slight bank back a ways from the house and father utilized it to have a place for the wood to drop away from the saw blade and by adding a wide board outside the saw, one of the younger kids could stand out of the way and as the cut off stick rolled off the inclined board onto the ground, pick it up and toss it over to the pile. The power for the saw-rig was a one cylinder gas engine, six inch wide canvas belt to the rig. The saw blade was on the left side of the arbor, pulley on the right, as the operator faced the carriage. It was a lot of years later before I came to realize that most saw rigs were set up to saw right handed. Father set up that way to take advantage of the banking.

That was when I first learned about belt-dressings. In later years to keep drive belts from slipping, spray cans of belt dressing were available in stores. Father had a cure for the belt slipping on his rig. In the early spring, before any of the pine trees that he had cut were hauled to the sawmill to be sawn for lumber, us kids had to scrape the pitch that had oozed out of the ends of the logs into a bucket or tin can. Then when the saw rig was started, the can of pitch was set where the exhaust from the engine could warm it up enough to apply to the belt with a stick. The old canvas belts they had in those days had a tendency to stretch a trifle as they got warm from running, so, apply a bit of pitch to prevent slippage.

Father had saved out some chestnut poles and they were at the edge of the orchard. Frank and I were sawing them for fence posts using the crosscut saw, they had a tendency to roll, so I put my left foot against it to steady it, then the saw jumped out of the cut and slit my big toe. We were barefoot at the time, as we were anyway all summer and into fall. I bandaged it up and it healed and was alright for quite a spell, then one morning when I was getting ready for school I couldn't get my shoe on because that big toe had suddenly swollen up and hurt something fierce. This was well into September and was either cold enough for shoes or we had to wear them at P.I. So I stayed home and soaked it in sylpho-nathol[9], and when father could get to look at it, he sterilized a razor and lanced it to let the puss out. Seems like I was able to go to

[9] A disinfectant.

school the next day, but it was very tender for some time. He said it healed on the outside but there was infection underneath and putting on shoes stirred it up.

Speaking of going barefoot, we usually weren't allowed to go without shoes until Decoration Day as up until then it was too cold and we could catch a good cold paddling around in the mud. The whole point of going barefoot was because shoes were hard to come by at our house and usually were passed down to the next in line when they became too small for the one wearing them. Father had a shoe last and all that was needed to keep the shoes wearable for years and I don't remember ever having a pair of new shoes until after I left home and that may be why I try to wear my shoes until there is no more repair to them even now.

I mentioned getting the wood into the shed before school started. I remember one time when I was supposed to be throwing in wood; I took a notion to go over to play with Bill Flagg. Almon Flagg, his father, owned the farm next to us, and when father came home from work and didn't find me throwing in wood he came after me, stopping as he passed through the orchard to cut a switch off an apple tree. Needless to say I tended to business after that.

When father bought the Huckle Hill place there were rock piles all over the place as well as stone walls. The land was so stony a plow would hardly stay in the ground. Father had a chance to sell them when the Brattleboro road was paved. I don't remember that it was called route five then, perhaps it was, and I just don't recall hearing it called that. I remember the big old trucks that hauled the stone from there to the construction site. The old Autocar was a chain drive and had solid rubber tires, and I'm sure there would have been a Mack and others that I never paid enough attention to remember the names. One or two others had regular drive and pneumatic tires. All the stone went into the trucks by hand, there were no tractor loaders at that time, and anything too big for two men to lift was broken down to size with a sixteen pound sledge hammer. Some of the big boulders never did get broken enough to be moved and were the start of more rock piles. Father found one of the sixteen pounders that got left on the job and we used it for years, it was great for driving fence posts. I was probably 12 or 13 before I could lift it high enough to drive a post, unless I could stand on the wagon, and that wasn't always possible. I have one like it at home that I got at an auction. That

stretch of highway has never been done over that I know of, and there are almost never any frost heaves. If I remember correctly, father got $100.00 for all the rocks, that was a lot of money in those days. When we moved from Huckle Hill to Northfield, there were still several rock piles around, not as many, but some almost as big as the early ones.

An incident that happened when the men were working on the rocks. A storm came up in the afternoon and the men were working in the pasture down beyond the barn, where the rocks were so think, there was hardly any grass between them. As it got real black and wind was gusting, the men headed for the yard. Father had built a board fence out towards the road from the barn, safer for the cows coming up to the barn door than barb wire, and as the men were scrambling over it a big gust helped a colored fellow over. However, he landed in such a way that his shoulder was dislocated. The foreman took care of it okay, he had a couple guys hold the poor fellow and he grabbed his arm, put his foot against his side and pulled until his shoulder snapped back into place. How he hollered. This past winter I was talking on the phone with Ray in Nevada, and we'd been talking about Huckle Hill, among other things, and he spoke about that incident. He is three years younger than I, but it made quite an impression on him. Said he could still hear him holler.

I believe that was the only colored man on the crew and the others seemed to find ways to pick on him. It seemed he was afraid of snakes and there were grape vines growing along most of the stone walls, so if he happened to be working near them, one of the guys would grab a vine an yank on it and holler snake, just to see him jump out of there. It seems to me that some of the family was talking about the crew that was working on the job and I heard it mentioned that most of the men were from Virginia.

Father had a barn given to him if he would tear it down and haul it away. Mr. Lunt, part owner of the silver shop in Greenfield had this old place on the Lampblack Road in Bernardston and he wanted to make it like an estate or something, so Father, Dick, Stanley and John said one time that he also helped, took it down and hauled it home. Father used a lot of the timbers, plus lumber he had cut off the place to build an addition on the west end of the barn to hold another dozen or more head, plus a bull pen, a good sturdy one. I remember a bull that father bought when I was about nine years old. He got it from Fred Winn in West Deerfield when it was about a year and a

half old and I went with father and Irving Barber, who had a model T Ford truck big enough to haul him home. A Purebred Ayrshire, father liked the Ayrshire because they would eat brush in the pasture where other breeds had to have good grass. Father named all the cows and weighted the milk and kept track on a chart so he knew if they were producing what they should for the grain they got. The heifer calves we raised and sold the bull calves to Herman Streeter, a cattle dealer in Bernardston.

Father raised field corn, Canadian Flint, because he said the smooth kernels where easier on the horses mouth then dent corn that most farmers raised. Every year he saved his seed from the best ears of corn he could find when he was husking in the fall, and that seed was planted the next spring. Over the years he developed corn that had ears as high as he could reach. Father was six feet tall, so that would make the ears over eight feet high and the overall height was close to fourteen feet. The first I remember usually grew to about five to five and a half feet tall. Father used the ears to feed the horses and would take some down to the grist mill and have it ground into corn meal to mixed with bran and cottonseed meal for the dairy ration mentioned above. Mother also had to have a supply in the pantry as cornmeal was used almost as much as flour.

Father planted his corn in a check row pattern, the field was marked with a horse drawn marker he had made which was a three legged, wooden rig with handles to guide it. The legs were three feet apart, and one of the kids would lead the horse and they had better lead him straight, because after marking the field in one direction, it was marked at exactly right angles to the first marking for a checkerboard pattern. This way it could be cultivated both ways of the field and made only a small amount of hand hoeing to do. Father was pretty good at driving the horse with the cultivator, but he had one of the kids lead the horse most of the time, figured it was good practice for us. Father did most of the planting, with his long legs he could walk a row, drop three kernels of seed into a hole at the marker cross, cover the seeds with his foot dragging dirt over them while making the next hole with his hoe, and repeat all the way across the field. Then back and forth, until the field was planted.

When fall came it was time to cut corn and the only way to do that was with a corn knife, a slightly curved blade on a wooden handle about eighteen inches long. After

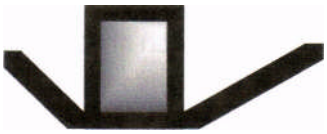
the stalks were cut off they were piled between the rows to be bundled up and then stooked. Some places refer to them as shocks, but we always called them stooks. Father was good at tying them without using string. He would get out early, while the dew was still on the ground and straddle the bundle facing the tassel end, pick it up, hold it between his knees, take a stalk of corn in each hand, pass it down under, change hands and bring it back to the top, put the two together and with a twist or two make a knot, drop it and go to the next. There was usually a chance for us kids to help stook it up after school, or on Saturday. We'd drag the bundles over to father and he would stand them up until he had enough to stand alone, then we could place them ourselves to get the stook to be about four feet in diameter, then on to the next. Father left them to cure in the field as long as he could so it would husk better. Then it was loaded onto the hay wagon and brought down to the yard, where it was stacked on wooden horses in front of the wagon shed. A long pole with two boards tacked on one end at an angle and the other end on the ground, then the bundles were piled on each side. This would shed the water and by having it near the house it could be husked when there was a little or a lot of time. Quite often there might be some snow before it was all husked and stored in the corn crib. His corn crib was built different then most farmers' instead of a narrow bottom tapered to a wider top, he made straight sides with boards vertical, then lined it with half inch mesh wire to keep the mice out. After he went to silage, us kids used the corn crib as a playhouse, but only in the summer. As all the husking was done by hand a husking pin was handy to have. Father had a machine made one, but as he only had the one, he made a pin by taking a piece of leather about three inches long and punched two holes in it in such a way that it would slide over a sharpened spike with a loop for the fingers. In this way you could pierce the tough dry husk, and by pressing your thumb against the pin, peal all the husk down and break the ear off the stalk. After you got the hang of it, a bundle of corn could be taken care of fairly fast. Richard had the machined one and the home made one, which he gave me several years ago. I keep it in my desk drawer to show to anyone interested.

I have a few other things that were fathers. Among them are a rabbeting plane, and a long smoothing plane, also the small sawhorses he used for drawing sash. The folding legs for supporting his papering board. I made my own papering board to use

them with, also the straight edge and cutter I had to buy as he took them with him when he went west. I also have half of the sawbuck father used when a small boy in Chesham, John has the other half,[10] he has written about it in his “Memories of this Octogenarian”. There was also a seed box that father always kept his garden seeds in. I remember it from Huckle Hill and Mother gave it to me when she no longer had a garden and I still use it and still buy most of my seeds from Harris, as I remember father buying from them.

When John sold his home in Springfield he gave me a fair sized box that was A. Clayton Phelps shoe repair box and there are other tools in it. Some are hand made by grandpa or his father Jason Phelps. Grandpa had everything necessary to keep their shoes in first class condition and that was where father learned to repair our shoes as I mentioned above. I think he saved every piece of leather that he cut off as he was working on shoes as I found two bags of pieces in there. Also there is a jar with wooden pegs in it that where used for pegging boots before the days when they were sewn. I’m in charge of it now that John has passed away and I manage to get it over to the West Northfield Playground for the Phelps family annual reunion on the fourth of July. That being the date that A. Clayton Phelps was born and it seems fitting to celebrate with a family get-together.

[10] I have both halves since John moved.



R.R. kerosene torch

Another thing I should mention is the kerosene torch that was used by the car knockers, so called, at the East Deerfield train yards where father worked at one time. They were the ones that had to check the bearings on the freight trains that came into the yards. Father took most of us over there to see what a big place it was with what seemed to us kids like acres of tracks and most of them used daily. Several engine barns where an engine could be overhauled and sent back to work in fairly good time. I think there were two turntables and father told us the big one was fairly new to handle biggest engines that were being built. This is the torch. The reservoir and spout were filled with waste which served as a wick, fueled with kerosene, then light the waste and holding the handle in one hand and a pail of oil in the other, walk along the train and make sure the truck boxes have plenty of oil. This was to forestall any hot boxes on the next run. A hot box could cause a lot of problems for a train by seizing up and the wheels stopping and if not noticed quickly could cause a few cars to derail. There was also a chance of a fire starting from the sparks flying off the rails. Father had two of the torches and a heavy monkey wrench that followed him home from the job. I have one torch, but I have no idea what happened to the other one. Father used the torch on Huckle Hill to burn out the tent caterpillars that managed to get by the spray. By adding a wooden handle, such as a rake stale, he could reach into the trees where the nests were. I also remember he would use them to start brush piles burning when it came time to burn in the spring. We used the monkey wrench to take the nut off when we had to grease the axle on the wagon, it was the only wrench we had that opened wide enough to get onto the nut.

Father was partial to White Leghorns and raised them from chicks. Kerr Chickerys in New Jersey sold day old chicks and shipped them by train. When I was

going to Powers Institute, the chicks would come in to the Post Office on the designated day and I would go over after school let out and get them to bring home on the school bus. They were shipped in a cardboard box, partitioned to four compartments to hold twenty-five chicks each, plus one or more each to allow for any that died enroute. There were holes punched all the way around the sides so the chicks could get air. Almon Flagg had the bus job then and didn't mind the chickens, now-a-days it wouldn't be allowed. Mother would have a place ready for them in the corner of the kitchen between the cellar and pantry doors. She made a pen of cardboard boxes and filled a gallon molasses jug with hot water, wrapped it with flannel to keep the chicks from getting burned, made a hood for them to get under, which also kept the heat from escaping and usually managed to raise most of them, usually would lose maybe eight or ten chicks, but that was pretty good, considering what she had to work with. We never knew how many pullets or cockerels we'd get, but it didn't really matter as when they got big enough to tell apart we would put them out in a movable shelter for the cockerels to fatten up for eating and, if there was room enough, put the pullets by themselves until such time as they could take care of themselves in the hen house. We always had eggs to eat and mother always did a lot of cooking and that took care of some of them. When the hens laid more than we could keep up with, mother put them down in water glass, a solution to preserve them. They could be used for cooking but I don't think they were quite as good to cook and eat.

Somewhere along in there we dug a trench about three foot wide and maybe eight feet long for a cold frame. This was on the south side of the barn at the west end where father had built the board fence, making it sheltered from the wind, and the sun would warm it up in the daytime. We found planks for the sides and ends, the back higher then the front so the sun could shine in on the plants we put in. We made a cover for it, using narrow boards for the frame, and covered it with flexo-glass. An imitation window glass that father had bought to use in the hen house, it came on a roll. We used horse manure for heat, with a layer of dirt on top of it. Mother always started tomato plants as near as possible to her birthday, March seventh. Planted the seed in garden soil she had brought in the fall before, kind of hard to find anything but mud at that time of year, she used a shallow wooden box, either what something came in at the store, or

we made them up for her. In later years I remember cheese would be packed in a similar box. The first ones could have been boxes made for plug chewing tobacco. Well, she'd put the seed in and lay a piece of cardboard on top, moisten the soil first, then set it up on a shelf in the kitchen, back of the stove to germinate. When the second leaves started she transplanted them to flats then when it warmed enough into the cold frame. If I remember right, she raised Bonny Best. Once the plants were in the cold frame and we had a cold night, we found old blankets to lay over the frames so the plants didn't freeze. Seems like we sold the plants for thirty-five cents a dozen. They were good healthy plants and most years would be a foot and half tall by Decoration Day. I think I got a portion of the proceeds, if so, that was one of the ways to get a few quarters.

Another thing I remember doing was going from house to house to get people to subscribe to the `Country Gentleman' a monthly magazine about like the Saturday Evening Post, only more about farm life then the Post. I think all I got out of it was a pocket watch, an Ingersoll. I believe then they sold for a dollar, but I was very proud to have a watch to carry and show off to my friends.

If I remember correctly Stanley was doing the farm work when father decided to make silage for feed as it took a lot of hay to feed the number of cattle he had built the herd to. Almon Flagg had put up a silo a few years before and the cattle were doing well. Almon's silo was a metal one and father decided he wanted a wooden one as the silage would freeze pretty good in the steel silo and made quite a job to get it out in the winter time. He found two wooden silos in Hinsdale, NH that he could buy reasonable, so with the help of the older boys, took them down with as little damage as possible, hauled the staves and hoops home and built one out of the two. Flagg had a blower, a big enclosed fan with blades attached, on the end of a trough with an endless belt that carried the corn into the whirling blades and blew it up a pipe into the silo. He used his old Fordson tractor for power to run it, but father wanted to be able to fill silo when he wanted to and not have to wait for someone else to do their work first, so he found an elevator, I can't remember if he got that in Hinsdale or not, might have got it where he got the silo. The chopper set out from the silo so that the trough sloped up to the top of the silo, the trick was to have it steep enough to get the chopped corn to the top and not have it roll back over the slats. The trough was about twelve or thirteen inches wide and

maybe four inches deep, the endless chain had slats about a foot or so apart. This sat on the front of the chopper on a shaft with two sprockets for the chain. The cutting was done with sharp knives on a shaft inside a chamber and the cut corn dropped down into the trough to be picked up by the moving slats and carried to the top of the silo. The drive pulley was on the right side so the power was inline with the cutter. The feed table was like the old hand choppers, except there was only one side rail to keep the corn stalks from going over the back onto the drive belt, and was wider than the hand chopper, the corn had to be pushed into the cutting chamber by hand, and be sure to keep the hands away from the cutters. For power father used the one cylinder gas engine he had used for years to saw wood, just dragged it down from the saw area and anchored it solid and was in business. The chopper didn't take as much power to operate as Flagg's blower, so we could fill silo at the same time as he was. We still cut corn the way we always had, with the corn knife, the difference being that we didn't have to dry the corn and husk it, also we stopped check rowing to get more stalks per row. Later on he built a square silo, but it didn't work out as well as the round ones, the silage froze worse in it than the other one, maybe because he built it on the north side. We used to like to ride back to the barn after loading the wagon and one day father stopped the team before it got to the chopper and had us pull ears off the stalk that he would say, that's a good one, now that one 'til he had a pretty good arm load. Then he let us go along to unload and he headed for the house and when it was time for dinner we had a batch of corn fritters that you wouldn't believe were made from field corn. He said it was because the corn was right in the milk stage and didn't need any added liquid.

Richard didn't like farming very much, and he went to Springfield at one point to work with Uncle Frank Messer, carpentering. I remember him telling about helping to lay floors there in Springfield. Then he went to college for a while in Ohio. He went to Antioch College where he would attend classes for six weeks and then worked at the Timken Roller Bearing Co. for six weeks. It was a struggle in those days to work your way through college and he gave it up after a while and came home and worked for Winnie Newton to get to know the carpentry business.

The year John tried to do the haying turned out to be a wet year and nearly every field got wet once or twice before it could be got into the barn. Grandpa Phelps came down from Keene to give him a hand, but father told me once that grandpa and horses didn't get along, so he wasn't much help that way, he did help with hand mowing and things like that. I remember him coming back from the Cairns lot where he had been trying to hand mow some heavy clover that was lodged so bad the mowing machine couldn't cut it and his scythe was bent something awful. I think father straightened it out so it was usable, but from what I've learned about scythes in later years, I bet it never worked as good as before. In those days if the hay dried somewhat, but not ready for the barn, and it looked like it would rain, the hay had to be cocked up. Build a pile in such a way as to shed water as much as possible. Then when it cleared off, and dried the ground, they had to be spread out again. I remember one piece, up above the spring for the barn, that was cocked up and shook out for more then a week. It finally went in the barn, but it was pretty black stuff. That might have been the same year the barn on the Doolittle Place up beyond Bill Fields place burned from spontaneous combustion. Tetreault owned it at that time and after a couple winters fighting the snow he moved back to Greenfield where he owned a livery stable and sent his help up to do the farming. They had seeded down with oats and the kind of year it was the help didn't properly dry them before putting them in the barn. Albert LaValley was doing the chores and had finished milking and driven the cattle across the road to pasture and as he was on his way back to finish chores when the roof exploded and of course there was no way to save it. Father hayed part of the place one year after I got to doing some of the mowing.

One year when we had got to making syrup on an evaporator that father bought from Mr. Charlie Day down on the Bald Mountain Road. His land abutted ours at the top of the hill and was later owned by Gilbert Hill.[11] I was helping to boil with Stan and when it came time for milking he left me to watch the fire while he was doing the chores, with instructions to make sure the level was at least an inch deep so it wouldn't burn down. It took quite a while to get to that point, and I thought I was doing OK, however, letting the fire die down as the supply of sap to be added disappeared, was not

[11] This same Gilbert Hill and his wife celebrated 80 years together at age 100

emphasized enough. The result was I went down to tell Stan when the depth was about right, and he was in the middle of milking a cow and couldn't just jump up and run up to the sugarhouse to draw off the syrup. When he finished, we walked back up to tend to it and we had gotten almost there when we could smell it, sure enough the fire was too hot and the pan was burning down. There was a little water handy and Stan threw that into the pan and raked the fire out onto the ground to cool things down as much as possible. The pan suffered quite a bit of damage, started the solder in the seams, so father had to do a lot of soldering to stop the leaks. The syrup was very black, but we didn't have to throw it away as mother used it for cooking. I think I was eleven or so at that time, but I never burned another pan down.

Father didn't have a gathering tank so he got two or three empty molasses barrels from the store in town and cut a square hole in the top to dump the buckets in and to prevent too much sap slopping out while collecting he made a wooden float to put into each barrel. Father used the front bob of the sled with the small rack off the two wheeled push cart to collect the sap. The first year the sap colored a might from the molasses, but after that it was alright. He always used the team as there was no shafts for one horse.

I believe that evaporator and arch was a Bellows Falls. One flat pan, either three by ten or three by twelve feet, five or six inches deep, with inch and half partitions every eight inches that didn't go all the way across, staggered so the sap would have to travel back and forth to the other end, starting over the firebox, and the theory was, when it reached the other end, it would be syrup, or close to it. There was a full partition almost to the end with a gate that could be closed to act as a finishing section. When it was ready to draw off, set a container big enough to hold the syrup, open the spigot and then the gate, the partly cooked syrup would chase the other around to the draw-off. What usually happened, we'd run out of sap before the syrup was ready, so let the fire die down and empty the whole pan and take it in the house to finish.

At Huckle Hill we made a little syrup in the house before father got the evaporator, on a square pan that would fit over four lids on the kitchen stove, this was my first recollection of sugaring. Father had a few wooden buckets that we soaked up to tighten the hoops, then used a bit-brace to drill a hole in the tree. There were three or

four big maples not too far from the house that would take at least three buckets apiece, and us kids would gather the sap after school using a sap yoke that, as far as we know, was made by Grampa Jason Phelps, my great grandfather. I remember having to wrap the chain around the end to keep the collecting pails from dragging as I wasn't tall enough then. The pan was usually on the back of the stove, just simmering all day, as mother had to use the rest of the stove for daily cooking and baking. This was a wood stove, I think a Glenwood, but I wouldn't swear to it. In later years boiling sap on the kitchen range was apt to peal the paper off the walls, but I can't remember as it did back then, maybe because the house was too drafty. Anyway, father would slide the pan to the front of the stove after the days work was done and whoop up the fire to finish off the syrup. Didn't make a lot but it sure was good. I have that sap yoke at the house, as I used it when I was making syrup here in Warwick. When he bought the evaporator he got enough more buckets to set about a hundred by using some trees of the neighbors along with the ones out in the pasture, mentioned in the Lena story.

Raymond was the last one that I mentioned being born. That was on the Fox Hill place. Helen Louise was stillborn at Huckle Hill July 27, 1923, Elizabeth Louise, Betty as she has always been called, in 1926. June 23, 1926. George was the next in line, October 29, 1927. The year George was born the Connecticut River flooded, and I remember riding in the surrey up the road towards the Fields place and we could look over to the east and see the flood water. In later years, about the forty's, the trees had grown so much you couldn't even see to the river. I was ten the following November.

Grandma Messer died of cancer in 1926 and before she passed away she had requested a family reunion be held every year so the Messer family would always be in close contact. So far I think it has taken place every year with the possible skip of maybe one or two war years. The first one was at Henry Roots sheep pasture on the Purple Meadow Road. There was a nice grassy area at the gate big enough for all the families to spread out blankets and have a get-together. That was fine, except the week before it was scheduled dogs had got into the pasture and killed all his sheep. Father and one or two of his brothers in law went over the day before and buried all the dead ones anywhere near the gate as they were beginning to smell, and we had the reunion as planned. I think the next year we met at Millers Grove on River Road and it was there

for quite a number of years. Millers Grove was his cow pasture and we usually had a game of ball and tried to avoid the cow flops. Reunions have been held in a lot of different places over the years, Greenfield, Shelburne, Bernardston again, Keene, Brattleboro and for a long time now in Vernon VT. In 1938 it was held at Wheelock Park in Keene in early September and then the hurricane later in the month knocked down just about every tree in the park.

Abbie Isabelle Phelps was born to Richard and Audrey, September 1st 1932, which was labor day that year. Early that morning father took Frank and I up to climb Mt Monadnock, I had never climbed it but Frank had. He had the Chevrolet coupe at that time. He drove us to the Charcoal Road in Marlborough and out it a ways for us to climb the Marlborough trail up the mountain. As far as I know there is no Marlborough trail today. [The 1938 hurricane did so much damage, that the trail was left to grow over] We carried a nap-sack with sandwiches and something to drink, as we would be all day up and down. We came down on the Dublin trail and father met us there and we came home to find that we had become uncles.

Instead of starting school that fall, I went to Milford, NH to work for Mr. Cutts. Father never said, but that was likely where he went after he let Frank and I off. Stan was working for Myron Barber in the grocery store in Bernardston and had a Packard car. Barber bought his stock from the Holbrook Grocers in Keene and to save trucking charges Stan would drive to Keene, load up the Packard and drive back to the store. Father asked him if he would give me a lift with my bicycle as far as Grandpa's and then I could ride to Milford on the bike. That was quite a ride in those days, pretty much the present route to Milford, except it was longer as there are parts of it now that have been straightened, and you almost bypass Peterborough, cutting by the south edge, and Wilton is bypassed. Temple Mountain is still there, it doesn't seem as steep as then, but I have never ridden a bicycle over it since, and modern cars hardly notice the grade. I walked the bicycle most of the way up, no ten speeds or even three in those days, and then the other side was so steep I didn't dare ride some of the time as the brakes were not very dependable. We made our own bicycles in those days, by searching the town dump at regular intervals, we could find parts, a frame, maybe without a sprocket, or perhaps a front fork, or a wheel that needed some repair, spokes or hub. Of course,

there were other kids dump picking also, and we could dicker and swap parts and come up with a workable bike. I mentioned this earlier when I told about refusing a plane ride at Greenfield airfield. The brakes were New Departure and worked by reversing the pedals to expand a drum inside the rear hub to slow the wheel down. If you didn't have a mudguard on the front wheel and had shoes on, a foot against the front tire would slow you down. By the time we got hold of them the hub was worn so much that the bike could not be stopped, we came up with a method to work for a time. We would find a tin can and cut a strip about a half inch wide and long enough to go around the drum. By putting this inside the hub the brakes would work for quite some time, of course, depending on how much you had to use them. Living on Huckle Hill, they were used most of the time and didn't last too long. I remember one time I was going to town to mow Mrs. Wessmans lawn, with a push lawn mower, of course and I got a quarter for each time. The brakes were very bad at the time so I figured to walk down Ledge Hill, but I couldn't stop the bike at the top, so I just hung on and started down. Dirt road and a little rough. The front fork only had one set of ball bearings, the top ball race was missing, and about half way down I couldn't control the steering and flipped over the handle bars. Landed on my head and bit right through my tongue. I got up, brushed myself off, spit out the blood and dirt, picked up the bike and pushed it down to Frank Oakes place, about a quarter mile, they cleaned me up some and I continued on to mow the lawn. I think Mrs. Wessman felt sorry for me and gave me fifty cents that time. Boy, was I rich.

I must have worked for at least six weeks for Cutts. This was the first time I had ever seen cows milked by machine. He had a Hinman milker, powered by a gas engine, although he had electric lights, his farm was just out of town; electric motors were big and cumbersome at that time. A wooden bar that moved back and forth at the top of the tie-up was connected by an arm to the flywheel. The vacuum pump was a cylinder for each machine that anchored on the frame and the piston rod dropped into a hole on top of the bar. His stanchions were different than the ones we had at home. The frame was a solid line, one side of the cows neck was a plank bolted top and bottom to horizontal rails. The other side was spaced to accommodate the animals neck, and a single bolt at the bottom allowed it to open wide enough to let the cow put her head

through, then that side was pushed back to a stop, and a short piece of wood, also using one bolt, was dropped down to hold that side in place. The animal had to get used to not being able to turn its head like the ones we had at home which used a short length of chain, top and bottom, to allow it to swivel. It was set up to milk two cows at each position, then slip the pump off the pin, pick up the milker, of course first removing the teat cups from the cow, emptying it into a pail, and going to the next position to do it there. He had two milkers going at a time, so one man could milk faster than a man milking by hand. He also had Ayrshires. I drove the team, learned to strip behind the milker, cleaned stables. His barn had a barn cellar and the manure was pushed down the scuttle hole that I described above. There was still some rowen[12] to get in and then the silo to fill. He had the second corn elevator I ever saw, so I had no problem working with it, having helped on fathers. Another first for me was having to go to a barber for a haircut and sat in a real barber chair also it was the first time I ever used an indoor bathtub with running water. Working for Cutts I earned four dollars a week and board and room. Father got two dollars of it and the other two was mine. After father brought me home to go back to school, as I remember, twelve dollars was mine and the folks took me to Greenfield to buy a suit. The first new clothes I ever had, up till then, always hand-me-downs. We bought a suit at J. C. Pennys, coat, vest and, I believe, two pair of pants for the twelve dollars. First long pants, up till that time I had only worn knickers and knee length stockings.

We've been spending Christmas in Florida for a few years now with Larry and Darleen and Austin and Nathan. After experiencing a big Christmas day around a loaded tree with all the kids I remembered how slim our Christmas was when we were growing up with so many in the family and a depression at the time. The present generation has so much they can't imagine what it was like. We'd hang our stockings on a string behind the stove in the living room as we didn't have a fireplace mantle and Christmas morning there would be an orange in the toe and maybe a pencil and eraser or some crayons. Might have been something else, but not very much. Most of the things we got on the tree were clothes, Grandpa and Grandma Phelps sometimes sent a box with one thing for each child. Also the tree was live but except for one year it was

[12] The second crop of hay in a season

a hemlock. There was one spruce tree growing in the pasture and by the time I remember it, it was a foot or more in diameter, too big for an xmas tree, but I believe two or three years before father sold the place he had one of the boys, probably Stan, climb up and cut the top off and it was a perfect tree.

I don't remember that we had any fancy balls for decorating the Christmas tree but we would all work on making our own. Seems like the folks had clip-on candle holders but the candle was never lit because it was too dangerous and nobody wanted to have the tree catch fire. We made stringers out of colored paper and also strung popcorn to drape the tree. As I recall we cut strips of fairly heavy paper the right length to make a link an inch or more in diameter when pasted together, then the next one slipped through the first one before pasteing and so on till we made it long enough. The paste we used was simply flour and water and we had to be careful to keep it thick enough so it would stick and dry without having to hold it forever. By alternating colors the chains made quite colorful decorations, with the popcorn too for contrast. We used to make popcorn balls but I'm not sure if did it at Christmas time. Could have as they could be hung on the tree and then they could be eaten as a treat. Making popcorn balls was a fun thing and everybody got into it. It took three or four poppers full of corn and then a mixture of molasses and probably sugar and likely something else that was boiled to a consistency that would stick the popcorn together then pour it over the popcorn in a big container, stirring it so all the corn would be coated. Then get to work making balls about the size of an orange, pressing it together nice and firm and stick a piece of twine to it so it would hang up and when it was all finished, you could suck the goo off your fingers or wash it off.

As long as I'm thinking winter, might as well tell about some of our activities. There were always skates hanging in the attic, and as soon as the pond froze enough to hold us up we'd be out there skating, or trying to. Most of the skates were clamp on type, that would lock onto the sole and heel of our shoes. Even though we had different size skates, it was sometimes a trick to make them stay on. A lever connecting the front and heel clamp was adjustable to tighten it to the shoe and it might still come loose after a short distance. After the clamp skate there was a model that had a key to tighten the clamps, they were better, but not as good as the shoe skates that came along later. I

don't remember ever using shoe skates unless someone might have let me try a pair to skate on Silver Lake at P.I. When I was old enough to go out in the evening sometimes Frank and I would hitch Jerry to the buggy and drive down to skate on the mill pond with other kids in town. We took the buggy because the roads where cleaned off for autos more so a sleigh had trouble finding enough to ride on. We'd put Jerry up in the church shed for a while with a blanket over him then he'd be ready to bring us home again. Then we had skis, just one leather strap to slide your boot into, and it used to slide out just as easy if you tried to go uphill. Dick and Stanley got quite good with them by using another strap to go back around the heel, but I never really got proficient. I preferred the double rip that father had, but then you had to have a hard track or a good crust. Francis Clark had bought the Vail place and when there was a good crust we would go up there and slide down the steep hill towards the house and barn but turn away near the bottom to where it leveled out for a good stopping place. Francis had three or four daughters that liked to slide with us which made it fun on a moonlight night. The older boys would sometimes slide down Ledge Hill to school, there was hardly any autos then, so it was safe enough.

One thing I must put down somewhere along the line is about the ice we used in the summer. The nearest place to cut ice was down at the mill pond not far from Streeter's store. This was nearly two miles from home and all up hill. Too much for a team of horses, so father decided to make his own pond. Earlier I mentioned the pug hole in telling about Lena getting stuck in the mud. Well, that's where the ice pond father made was. This was a swampy place anyway, so father tried to scoop it out with one of those horse drawn dirt scoops. Worked good to get the mud off to begin with, but as soon as that was gone he ran into clay. Harder then all get-out. He took his land plow and could loosen it some, then scoop again and then plow, and so on until he had dug to where the horses would have trouble getting up the bank where he had been dumping the dirt and had to call it enough. We cut ice there as long as we lived on the place. It was also a great place to skate until the ice was cut, usually in January or February, depending on how well the ice thickened up. I remember one year that it must have been really cold as there was no water left under the ice when he started cutting, but the second day the water had come in enough to float the cakes. The pond was not

too deep, maybe eighteen or twenty inches, and most years he would cut when the ice was a foot thick, made it fairly easy to handle and kept quite well in the icehouse, so that year it would have been quite a job to handle it.

The first icehouse was the wagon shed where he had tied up the stock before he got the barn built, hitched to posts and beams, any place available to get them under cover. Then he built a better one down a ways from it, using dead chestnut poles that he cut out in the woods, set them into the ground and boarded on the inside so the sawdust could be pushed down around the ice, leaving the top open. We had to shovel out the sawdust the year before in the fall so it would be out of the way and ready to be used again. When the ice was ready, they started in with the ice saw and cut one way on the pond for a certain distance, then measure over a bout two feet and cut another line the same length, then cut across the end and two feet along to make squares. After the first row was out it became easier to work, cutting out squares, first one way, then the other. Using ice tongs, the blocks were dragged out of the water, except for that one year I spoke of, there was always enough water to float the cakes. The blocks were then dragged onto the sled, the platform was on for this job and the blocks had to be stood on edge or they would slide off on any up grade, of course there were stake chains across front and back to hold them in place. When the sled was full, then up to the icehouse and unload. The way father built the icehouse the bottom layers were fairly easy to unload, just slide the blocks down into the house and place them in a big square, leaving eight inches around the outside for sawdust. The second layer went the same way and so on up to the top. It got harder to slide them up a plank to the upper layers, but it had to be done. After the ice was all packed in then the sawdust had to be put back in, some could go in before the job was done, but only on the sides and don't get any on top, father didn't want any sawdust between layers. As I remember, it took a hundred or more cakes to last through the summer. Sometimes we would run out of ice before the weather got cold, then father went down to Charlie Deane's on the Gill Road and bought what he thought would get him through, and bury it in the icehouse.

When father was doing his building, he made a cement cooling tank for the milk cans in the milk room at the end of the stable, separate from the stable as it was necessary, according to the milk inspectors, to go out of the stable and then into the

milk room, two doors. At the time I remember father was using forty quart cans, at one time he shipped cream in ten quart cans and they had wooden bungs in them. They had to be taken down to the depot and put on the train to ship to Amherst Creamery. Then there was a spell where twenty quart cans were used, and then the forty quart became pretty much standard. The milk at that time went to Springfield or Holyoke and was still shipped by train. In the forties it was picked up by truck and hauled to West Springfield.

I remember having to get ice for the cooler, usually a couple of us kids would go up to the icehouse and try to remember where the last cake was taken out and keep in line as much as possible, shovel the sawdust away and force a cake out, in real hot weather it would take a whole cake as some would have to go to the house for the icebox in the pantry. The sawdust had to be removed from the cake of ice before it went into the cooler or the icebox, scrape off as much as we could in the icehouse to save it and wash the ice down by the barn, handy to the cooler.

When father made the ice pond he located it at the upper end of where water drained away from the swampy area, and by building a dam across at that point, helped to hold more water. Then he dug the ditch deeper to make sure the run-off went where he wanted it to. He used dynamite to do most of the digging. Almon Flagg knew some about the use of dynamite and showed father how to use it. Father would set charges along the natural course the water wanted to run, spacing them apart to form a ditch, using a half stick at each place and cutting the fuses so that he could start with the longest and run down the line, lighting each as he went. He always set them off just about dark and everyone was out to see the fireworks. It was more than a hundred yards up to the first building and there was never any damage from flying stone or anything. As I remember he had to do this at least two times to get a ditch long enough. Besides having a place to skate in the winter on the ice pond, we had lots of fun catching frogs in the summer with hook and line using a piece of red flannel for bait. We would have at least one good feed of fried frog legs every year, and if there was a bumper crop, we could have more. Later on Stan got a single shot, 22 caliber rifle, a small one, as I recall, about 18 inches long and he would shoot frogs with that and use a rake to get them out of the pond afterwards.

Another interesting thing father got hold of was the carbide gas plant . Before electricity was very widespread, the alternative to kerosene lamps and lanterns was gas. Natural gas was used in some places where it was possible to get it from a nearby source, in Bernardston there was no such source, so a gas company was formed and a plant built across from the Baptist Church on Depot Street. The main line extended from the Congregational Church to the inn on the corner then south to Dwight Slate's. Then from the corner of Church and Center Street north to Cushman's. The Library, Town Hall, Baptist and Congregational Churches and some private residences were piped for gas. (from Bernardston History, page 48). Father took it out of the building and moved it up to the house, set it up in the cellar and piped the house and barn for gas. The plant consisted of a double tank and lots of iron pipe and light fixtures from quite a few of the buildings that had been serviced, some of them single jet and there were a couple three jet chandeliers. The tank was, as I recall, oval shaped, about five feet long and about three wide. I could see into the float part of the unit without a box or something to stand on, so that side was maybe three feet high and the rest of the unit, with the hopper was a couple feet higher. The lid on the hopper could be opened for filling and it had to have been locked on or gas could escape. The float controlled the amount of gas being generated as the carbide from the hopper dropped into the water. I don't remember if it required more then a forty quart can of water to fill the unit, but it had to be hauled down the bulkhead as we never did have running water at the house. Everything was hooked together in such a way that after filling the bottom part with water and the hopper with carbide, a slid valve connected to the float, would open and let a few pieces drop into the water, which would generate gas and raise the float. When it had generated enough to raise the float about five inches the valve would close and no more carbide would drop into the water. The gas generated was enough to last for quite a long period of time, it seems as though father would fill the hopper about once a week, and the drum of carbide, I think about twenty-five pounds, lasted for two or three months. Father piped the house, even the attic where the boys slept, and also laid a pipe to the barn and had fixtures behind the cows, he didn't put any up in the hay mow as it was a fire hazard, too much dust. He always cautioned about any open flame any nearer to the tank than ten feet, even though everything was very well constructed and there was never any odor of

escaping gas in the cellar. Gas gave a wonderful light, a lot whiter than kerosene, and almost the same as electric. We never had electricity all the time we lived on Huckle Hill, it was 1940 before it was put in at the old place. I was back living there when that took place, but that is another story.

The residue from the carbide had to be removed after a while and it was great for whitewashing the barn and hen house, a lot cheaper than paint of any kind. The milk inspectors said the stable wall and ceiling had to be white, so father figured that would do the job. Father mounted the spray rig on the wagon for the job. The rig he had was used every spring to spray the apple trees, so it wasn't any big thing to set it up to spray the barn and hen house. This residue was like a white mud, and by mixing water with it in the sprayer tank, it would go through the hose and nozzle without clogging. This was another job for one of the kids that was big enough to work the hand pump to get pressure to spray with. Sometime in the past several years I picked up one of the pumps similar to the one on fathers rig, and still has some spray residue on it. After a while carbide got more expensive and the milk business was going down hill, so father stopped buying it and the generator just sat in the cellar and collected dust.

We didn't have any of the things kids have in today's world and take for granted. TV was unheard of, radio was very limited, H. S. Streeter got a dealership and had a set in his house. I remember going there and using the earphones to listen. A few years later a new one came out that had a speaker, and everyone sat quietly in front of the set. I think the first program I remember was Amos and Andy. The telephone was in the house intermittently, usually if father had some business or other, like when he was road commissioner, etc. I don't remember that any of the children could even listen on the phone, it being a party line, it wasn't right to listen in on other folks. We had books to read at home, and Cushman Library, near Powers Institute, was open one school day a week, and there were games to play when there was time. Every one went to church. Mother was raised a Congregationalist so everyone went together to that church. Then father and Rev Truesdell had a falling out, he thought Stan was a bad influence on one of his sons, and father and mother then went over to the Baptist, and Stan and the younger ones with them. John, Richard, Dorothy and Frank decided to stay there. Stan told me once that it was likely the other way around but by changing churches every

one was happy. In the summer the Congo Sunday school had what they called a daily vacation bible school and I remember going to that, I think we had to walk down but I enjoyed playing with the other kids for a few hours a day. I believe the Baptist minister at the time was Reverend Adams and Stanley decided to join the church and be baptized and father said he would join at the same time as he had never been baptized before. Stanley was baptized but father backed out at the last minute. Baptism in the Baptist church is by immersion and Stan told me one time that father was afraid the minister would drop him.

When we got home from church we had dinner all cooked in the oven, baked beans. Saturday evening, before bath time, the kids would have to look over the beans.[take the pebbles and shucks, etc. out] Father raised yellow eye beans and dried and thrashed them in the fall, and of course there were tiny stones and bits of stalk in them, so, a quart or more would have to be looked over and put to soak for Sunday. Sunday morning some one would get up early enough to make griddle cakes; these were made with graham flour, white flour, an egg or two, baking soda and sour milk. Mother had an iron griddle that fit over two stove lids and a big iron spider to cook them on. It took a big stack to feed everyone. We didn't always have maple syrup, but there was always molasses, and mother could make a passable substitute of brown sugar and water. After breakfast, mother would fix the beans for the oven, they were put on the stove to parboil, during the time when breakfast was being cooked and eaten. By then they were ready for a spoonful of baking soda, then rinsed and put into the bean pot along with a chunk of salt pork, molasses and perhaps a little brown sugar, covered with water, and placed in the oven. Make sure the firebox was full before leaving for church. When we got home from church, dinner was ready. After dinner we could read, or gather around the piano for singing.

Our Sunday meals seem to stand out more than other days of the week, perhaps because we helped with them more. We never went hungry that I recall. Stan has told about eating so much corn meal mush he never wanted to see any again. That was before I can remember, but I don't think we had any after I was old enough to remember. Mother used cornmeal in a lot of things, it was a cheap ingredient and we liked corn muffins. Another use for cornmeal was to roll the trout, or other fish we'd

catch, in before frying. I don't recall having a lot of red meat, once in a while father would buy a steak, but mostly it was chicken or a hen that had stopped laying. We had venison some, usually out of season. Stan tells about shooting his first deer when he was fourteen. He sneaked out around below the rye field where the deer couldn't see him and got near enough so he killed one with his first shot. In the spring it was not unusual to see up to a dozen just before dark feeding on the winter rye. Dick was upset when Stan shot a deer the first try as he had been trying for a long time and never was able to get close enough to kill one.

Some of the meals we had then, the kids today would turn up their noses at. We were glad to have something on the table and not go hungry. Bread and milk don't sound like much when you think of the bread you get nowadays, but back then it was home made bread without any additives and had some body to it. Dried beef was cheap and in a white gravy poured into a big bowl of toast made a good wholesome meal.

Father raised many varieties of apples. Early on he sent for a few trees to plant at open spots southwest of the barn beyond the Baldwins. Then he would take scions from them and graft onto the wild apple trees that had grown up along walls where the birds had likely dropped seeds. There were a half dozen apple trees up in back of the house. The early one was a Rambo, a good pie apple, then there was a Wealthy, the Macintosh hadn't been developed at that time, as far as I know. I think a couple were Ben Davis and I'm not sure about the other two. Across the road from the house there were sweet and sour cherry, not one tree, of course. The sweet cherry was a fair sized tree, maybe ten, twelve inches in diameter, big enough to climb, and we liked to climb up and eat the ripe cherries right off the branch, of course it was a good idea to pick some for the house too, or we might get a call down for climbing the tree. We didn't care much for the sour ones unless they were made into a dessert of some kind. Father claimed the Mulberry tree that grew nearby kept the birds from eating the cherries and I guess it did because we seemed to get more of the fruit then they did. Between those trees and the stone wall there were big blackberry bushes that had berries as big as a thumb.

The Baldwin trees were all tall and produced many bushels of fruit. There were five trees across the road and one near the barn. When father was picking in the fall he

made a heap where there was a space between two of them so he could cover them if it got too cold before he could sort them and put ‘em down cellar. I remember seeing a pile ten or twelve feet long and maybe four feet high.

Father built two wooden bins in the cellar to hold the Baldwins and Ben Davis, which were long keepers, and a few barrels for early kinds to eat first. Another variety that was good to munch on was the Sheepnose, or Gillyflower, some people also called them crows’ egg. That tree was in the pasture beyond the barn and half of it was a sweet apple that the cows usually got most of them. When I was old enough to go hunting I always put some Sheepnose apples in my pocket to munch on. Mother made pies but mostly they were not good for small children, we were told, so it was quite a few years before we could have any, with the exception of custard. That was good for us as it was mostly milk and eggs. If there was a cake on the table everybody wanted to know whose birthday it was. We carried a lunch to school but I don’t recall just what was in it probably a sandwich or two and a cookie and maybe an apple. When we got home from school and was hungry we could have an apple or help ourselves to the cracker barrel in the pantry. Mother made jams and jelly and these were always available to put on the crackers. Anything else would spoil our supper, we were told.

We made most of our toys for outdoor play. The wood pile was handy and, with a little imagination, and a nail or two a truck could be made that would keep us out of mischief. Our play area was across the road from the house under the big maples. When father sold the stones off the place, the stonewall that formed a lane over to Flaggs place was removed and made a great place to make roads and farms, and anything else we could think of. After father built the garage across the road from the house, it was on the corner, so you could see both ways for traffic, there was a place to hide things out of sight of the house. Richard's Model T touring car was parked there after it had seen service for him after father bought a Buick from Myron Barber. Anyway, we used to sit behind the wheel and make believe the motor would run and take us for a spin. Another thing I remember was poking around in the transmission to see how things worked. The cover could be taken off with an old screwdriver and then you could look right in and see the parts move if you could find someone to turn the crank on the engine.

Another thing, under the maples, at the end of the lawn, was my first experience with pitching horse shoes. As soon as we were big enough to get a shoe from one stake to the other, there was always an opportunity to have a game or two. In those days we really pitched horse shoes, discarded ones that couldn't be used to shoe the team. It was hard to find two that weighed the same, but that was alright, we made do and got us interested in the game to want to pitch regulation shoes in later years. Stanley was real good at it when he worked for Myron Barber. Myron had stakes set up in back of the store on South Street, and had lights to play after dark. There was Myron, Stanley, Arthur Truesdell and I don't remember the fourth player, unless maybe it was Wendell Streeter. They were all real good at it.

Recently, John was up to the house here in Warwick, and something was said about when Father bought the Buick touring car. He had it in mind that it was when we were on Fox Hill, but I was old enough to remember the day and I had very few memories of that place, so I know it was on Huckle Hill. I don't remember what day of the week it was, but I recall the big red Buick in the driveway and Myron and Father dickering over the price. Of course, us kids were in the background and didn't actually hear any of it. After a while Myron headed back to town and Father went back to whatever he had been doing. It wasn't too long before Myron drove back into the yard, and we had a big red Buick touring car to replace the Model T. I remember one evening in early winter that Father hadn't been able to make it up Ledge Hill with the Buick. He had walked home and Dick and Stan went back to bring it home, Frank and I went along for the ride. As we pitched over the top of the hill, there were lights down the hill and Dick hit the brakes, father had left the small side lights on. I guess the left wheel brake worked better than the other one, because almost in an instant we were crosswise of the road. Model T's having only rear brakes made that happen. I don't really remember getting the Buick home, but the way that `T' snapped around made quite an impression me. There was snow on the ground why father couldn't make the hill so I guess they put chains on to get the Buick home.

Before we got the Buick, I recall a time, likely a Sunday afternoon that we were going for a ride in the Model T. I remember there were one or two brothers and maybe a sister in the back, along with me. It had to be summer, because we were going down

the Purple Meadow Road, and that was not passable even for a team in the spring, and winter travel wasn't even attempted, in those days. Pretty well down to the upper end of the meadow, a small woodchuck ran across the road in front of us and ducked into a culvert. Father stopped and somehow managed to catch the little feller. Then what to do with it. Under the back seat there was a space deep enough to carry a jack, a tire pump, tire irons, as the tires in those days were apt to go flat any time, and a few tools, in case. So, we lifted the seat enough so that father could chuck the woodchuck under and we all sat back down, to be sure it couldn't get out. It was said to be a mile from the Northfield road to the upper end of the open field. We hadn't gone more than three quarters of the distance to the main road, and the little guy wasn't too happy any of the time, scratching and whistling to beat the band. I remember Mother wasn't too happy either, kept sputtering about the racket, and maybe it could chew up through the seat and bite one of us kids. I don't think it would have, but anyway, Father stopped again and said he'd let him out. All well and good, except, when he lifted the seat, the woodchuck didn't hop right out and run away. The seats were coil springs in a steel frame, much like modern seats, top and sides covered with leather and burlap stretched on the under side. The burlap had broken away from one side and that little guy crawled right up into the springs and wasn't about to leave without some persuading. I think father had to take the seat outside the car and prod him out with a stick.

Another time we were going up the Mohawk Trail and got caught in a thunder storm. The side curtains had to be put on, the closed cars came later. What made me remember that particular trip was the way Father helped out the windshield wiper. The first wipers were a rubber blade, much like we have today, on a rod that had a corresponding rod on the inside of the windshield with a knob at the end that you could swing back and forth on the pivot through the windshield frame to swish the water off the glass. Later on there was a vacuum operated motor to swing the blade, then eventually an electric wiper. It was quite a trick to drive with one hand and wipe the windshield with the other. Father stopped at a farm house and procured an onion. This he cut in two and placing the flat side on the glass, proceeded to rub the onion around on the glass. Believe it or not, the water would run off the glass faster than the hand wiper could do it. Another trick that some used was to carry a bag of Bull Durham,

smoking tobacco, dangling from the wiper handle, and rub that over the windshield. Father never used tobacco in any form, so he didn't always have any handy.

We took a lot of trips that I remember after father got the Buick. There was more room in it, so more of us kids could squeeze in when we were going to Keene to visit Grandpa and Grandma Phelps, or maybe to Cousins George and Flora Woodward in Milford, NH. On that trip, going over Temple Mountain was an experience. The Buick had a motometer on the radiator to let the driver know if the motor was overheating. It was quite ornate, the radiator cap had chrome handles that extended out at least two inches on each side, the thermometer was in a round case on the top, glass on both sides with a small round clear spot that the driver could see the mercury as it climbed to the top, normal range was at the bottom of the circle, when it got to the top, it was time to pull over and let the motor cool down and add water if necessary, as it would boil away. I remember there was still a water trough maybe half way up the mountain that had always been a place to stop and water the teams as they rested on the long haul to the top, and we would plan to add water there before continuing on.

One Thanksgiving we were going to Keene for dinner, part of the family rode in the Buick and the rest got in with Dick in the model T. The road to Keene in those days was by way of Hinsdale and not over Manning Hill as it was in later years. There were several places the railroad crossed the highway, either an underpass or a grade crossing. At Doles Junction between Northfield and Hinsdale there were both as there were two rail lines that met there. I think it was the B and M that crossed the Connecticut River from Vernon and continued on to Keene and the Central Vermont from Northfield went up to Brattleboro. The Buick was ahead and I was in it. We made all the crossings with no trouble and arrived in Keene in good time and then waited for the other car to show up not too long after, but we had a long wait. The grade crossing just before Winchester was noted for accidents and sure enough there was one that day after we had gone through and the other car had to wait for the tracks to be cleared before they could continue on to Grampa's.

Dick and John had a pup tent they acquired in the early twenties. Some of the boys in town tried to have a scout troop but there wasn't enough to get it really going so they let Frank and I set it up across the road near the apple tree so we could sleep out

there when it was real hot in the attic. Once in a while a thunder storm would get us back inside. Mostly, we slept outside a good share of the summer. We camped out, but in our own yard. I suppose we didn't really camp out because we couldn't have a campfire, a lantern furnished what light we needed, and of course the house was nearby for breakfast. I believe that was the only place I ever slept in a tent.

Later on Frank and I slept in the square building beyond the garage, also near where we played making roads, and such. Father made it for broilers, but decided there wasn't enough money in it, so let us clean it up for an extra bedroom. He had put in a cement floor, so it was easy to make it into a cozy place to sleep, or when it was not too cold, it was a place to read or study. As I recall, we made bunks on one wall, and a couple of chairs and a small table. Someone gave Frank a hand printing press that he kept there instead of in the house. It was about the right size for printing letterhead, business cards and things like that. It came with trays of type, and the stick for putting a sentence together, there is a correct name for it, but it doesn't come to mind right off. Maybe it was a font holder. I remember what a job it was to sort the type if it happened to get spilled while working on it. Seems like that was called "pi" for some reason. Once the type was set, you had a roller to ink the letters, too much would blot when you put the paper thru, or too little, you couldn't read it. I don't know what happened to it when we moved to the Holton place, and I can't say I ever used it over there. There wouldn't have been any time for anything like that anyway, as there was plenty of farming to keep busy at.

I already told about father's bench and tool box in the wood shed. There were some tools that were not as choice and us kids could use them to make our toys. As I recall, the saw we could use to cut wheels from a stick of white birch seemed to take forever to cut through a stick, and then one side was thicker than the other, but, after we made a hole as near center as possible with a nail, because bits were not for us to use, they were passable. The nearest thing to a drill that I remember was an awl, but that wouldn't do much in wood. They were used more for making holes in leather, or some such material. At least we could make believe we had a real truck. I can't remember when I first had a metal truck. We never quite mastered a steering system, when we tried to put wheels on a stick with a nail in the center for a pivot it seems like the nail

would cause the stick to split and we'd have to start over again, or the stick wouldn't be long enough to allow any turn room and then it would break a wheel or cause some other difficulty. We would usually just put the wheels onto the four corners of the block of wood and make corners by lifting it up and setting it down going in another direction. The main thing was we had fun and kept ourselves occupied.

I don't remember exactly when it was, but I recall father taking Frank and I to Greenfield to see a circus unload at the freight siding at the foot of Bank Row. The whole circus traveled around the country by rail. I think that was before Barnum and Bailey were together, and it seems as though the one we watched unload was a small one with only one name, which I don't remember. The elephants were unloaded about the first, and were used to push the wagons with the wild animal cages any place where a push up a grade or ramp was needed. The wagons were all drawn by teams of horses. Everything was lined up as it came off the cars, and then made the trip to the fairgrounds. Through the underpass, along River Street to Wisdom Way and up the hill. The fairgrounds are still in the same place. We followed along on foot and then watched the big top go up with the elephants doing all the heavy work, moving the tent poles with their trunk to get them into position. The roustabouts seemed to be everywhere, handling ropes and anchor stakes, pulley blocks, ready to raise the canvas into place. Here again the elephants were put to work. The center poles were set and guyed first then the canvas spread on the ground so the center could be pulled to the top of the three poles simultaneously by the elephants. Once that was done, the sides were raised on shorter poles and guyed to stakes. There was a curtain all the way around, with a door way for people to get inside and portable bleachers set up. I can't remember if that one had more than one ring, but usually there where three. Things like the circus and the old time county fair are a thing of the past, and even telling about them, still wont bring a mental picture of what they really were.

I remember the family going to the Franklin County Fair, piled into the red Buick as many as could fit, lunch packed for a long day. There were a lot fewer buildings and midway then in later years. Cattle sheds were predominant, it being an agricultural fair, lined both sides with the finest animals to represent each exhibitors herd. The Roundhouse was the first building inside the gate, and that has hardly changed since it

was built. A two story building with booths and benches full of vegetables, fruit, flowers, baked goods, each with the exhibitors name and address, all looking for a blue ribbon, but willing to take any prize given. Seems like the school children had a special day to attend and there was a big parade around the race track, with floats and cattle and anything that could be lead or carried. The picnic area was on the northwest side of the fairgrounds where there were still trees at that time. Everybody had a grand time, and didn't need to be rocked to sleep that night.

As soon as I was old enough to stay on the seat of the dump rake I would drive Jerry to rake scatterings. If there was plenty of time and help when pitching the hay on the wagon, someone would use the bull rake, a wooden bar, one inch by one inch with teeth set in holes about five inches apart and twelve or fourteen inches long. The handle was two sticks about five feet long, one by three quarters, bolted together at one end and the other spread to make a vee and hitched to the first bar with an adjustable clamp. Down a ways from the upper end was a round wooden bar to act as a hand hold, one hand on it and the other holding the joined end so the rake could be dragged behind the operator, with the teeth flat on the ground and pick up the scatterings left when the tumble was picked up to go onto the wagon. This handle was curved some to help make the teeth follow the ground without the points digging in. Sometimes it wasn't possible to have the bull rake in use, there might be a storm on the way or just wasn't anyone to operate it and then the scatterings would be raked with the horse and picked up after and put into the barn. I did quite a lot of raking and could also drive the team some. I remember driving the team to the blacksmith shop for them to be shod. At first someone was with me, but when I got to be ten or eleven I guess Father figured I was old enough to drive alone. The year I was twelve Father started mowing grass for H. S. Streeter. We had quite a good sized herd by then and the hay we cut at home wasn't enough to carry us through the year, so Father agreed to mow and rake the hay fields that Streeter bought, some around town, and there were a couple in Northfield, for I believe, one load out of three.

The first place I ever mowed was the Eldred place in North Bernardston, just up the road from where Edward has built his new house. We had loaded the dump rake on the hay wagon, it was too wide, of course, and the wheels hung out each side. Father

cautioned me about the railings that would be at the culverts and bridges on the way, notably the Burke Flat Bridge and the Couch Brook. Then he chained the mowing machine behind and hitched Ben and Jerry on, handed me the reins and said he would meet me there. As I remember the trip was uneventful, not much traffic in those days and I got around any railings without catching a wheel. Father had timed his arrival to coincide with mine and he was there to direct me across the road onto the field. After changing the team from the wagon to the mowing machine, Father had me follow behind and observe what he was doing. What he did was lay out the field, that is mow around the outer edge. I was to watch how he would make the corners and the second time around, how he kept Jerry walking in the path left by the swath board and not skip any grass by letting him get over too far. I believe after the third time around, father got off and told me to go ahead and mow, make sure the horses didn't get too sweaty. In other words stop and rest them so they wouldn't. I wasn't very heavy and could hardly lift the cutter bar, but he told me there were hardly any stone on the field and I could probably lift it a couple of inches to clear any I found. As I remember he was right and I made out quite well. He took off and left me to go someplace and when he came back I had mowed quite a bit of the piece and he said I was doing all right. It was about time to feed the horses and I think we had some lunch ourselves. I've forgotten where the water was but we must have got some close by as the horses couldn't go all day without it. Maybe we led them over to the Eldred barn and got water there. After we had eaten, Father dragged out a section of railroad iron that he had gotten from somewhere, probably from the railroad section boss. There was a section house just west of the station where the crew kept the hand car and the tools necessary to keep the tracks safe for the train traffic. Frank Hale was the boss then, if I remember right, and Father knew every one in town and likely Frank gave it to him. Well anyway, he wired it to the mower seat to take some of the weight of the pole and cutter bar off the horses necks so they wouldn't get sores under the collar. A grown man weighed enough to offset the drag on the team, but the iron, added to my weight helped. We put the horses in the stable at the Eldred place that night and went back the next morning to finish mowing. When it was dry enough, we took one of the horses, Jerry, most likely, and hitched him

to the dump rake to get it in windrows ready for Streeter's men to load the hay onto a truck to haul it to the barn.

Streeter had the Cairns barn on the Northfield road and also the barn at his place across River road from his business. The Bernardston Auto Exchange, it is still at the same spot today, with a few alterations. There was a showroom in the front corner where he could show off the latest model Ford car. This has since been incorporated into the store, and where at one time a grocery was partitioned off on the other end, it has since become all store space. Under the building was a big basement where repair work was done. Also H.S. stored the town fire truck there and as there was always help around, it worked out well for the town when there was a fire. There was also a wrecker stored there. A converted Locomobile touring car that had a hoist mounted where the rear seat used to be, with a hand winch to get the front end of the damaged vehicle off the ground for towing. The one thing that sticks in my mind about the Locomobile was the gas tank had to be pumped up to get gas to the carburetor. The Model T depended on gravity to feed gas to the engine from the gas tank under the seat, and it worked alright until the tank got low and the hill got steep. I remember a few times that the motor would start to sputter and Father would quickly let the car roll back while cutting the front wheels to bring the car crosswise of the road. Thus allowing gas to flow to the carburetor and keep the motor running, then by pulling ahead and down the hill the gas supply was sufficient to back up to the top and turn around again to go forward the rest of the way. It happened more than once, as I recall. The Locomobile was too awkward a vehicle to ever do that with, so the hand pump for the gas tank. At one time it was said it was possible to buy anything you could think of ever needing at Streeter's.

Streeter had his hand in most everything, and he had got some Ayrshire heifers up in Canada a few years before, and got started in farming, so of course he needed more hay, and got into buying fields of hay around, and, not having equipment of his own, got father to mow and rake for him, as mentioned above.

Well, back to haying. I think we got one load of hay off that place, and by then H.S. had bought some more standing hay and we just moved to where ever the hay was. One of the longer trips was down the Purple Meadow Road to the Northfield Road then over past the Downs place and left at the fork as if going to the Mount Herman

station, but the first place on the right was Falsted's, and we mowed that. I was getting to do more mowing all the time as I gained more experience, and some of the pieces that were not too unhandy to maneuver in I would mow the whole piece myself. Father seemed to be busy doing other things; I believe he was getting into painting and papering quite a bit by then. He also did odd jobs. One was to get a large rock out of the way of driving into the back door of the barn at the Falsted place. He had tried to break it with the sixteen pounder and had finally got a small crack but couldn't seem to get any further, so he had me help him get a wedge driven into the crack to hurry it up. He was going to hold the wedge on the crack and have me hit it with the eight pound sledge. This was when he told me the story about the fellow that was working on a similar project with a helper. He was going to hold the wedge or drill in place and told his helper "when I nod my head, you hit it". When he finally came to and was able to speak, the first thing he said was, "what'd you hit my head for", the reply was, "that's what you said to hit". I think it was a lesson to be specific when giving instructions to a helper or anyone, for that matter.

Another place that was easy to mow was down in the meadow west of the river. There were two farms at the foot of the hill and another farm at the top. The meadow was parceled off in strips likely so any one of the owners couldn't say his strip was poorer land then the next strip. That way all the farms would have access to all the properties with a road down the middle. The last strip down at the point had a lot of blue joint growing. For some reason the owner of that parcel didn't cut it and Streeter decided it was good hay so we mowed it for him. Nice flat land and no stones and the grass grew higher then the horses back and it did make good hay. I think that farm also had a strip about half way down the meadow so it was a good place to mow. Father found a grinder made for sharpening sections that he bolted to a plank and we carried it along with us to keep the sections sharp for easier cutting.

Raymond quite often went with me, likely to keep me company as the time seemed to drag while traveling to or from a field we were cutting, Ben and Jerry were not speed demons. We had finished mowing the Charlie Streeter place, across from the Mount Hermon station and had loaded the dump rake on the wagon and hitched the mowing machine behind to head for home. The wheels on the mower where iron, with

raised cleats for traction. The roads were paved and the cleats would make a lot of vibration and we had just got on the Northfield road when Ray hollered to stop. I went back to see what was wrong and found the sickle bar had slipped by the stop on the cutter bar and was dragging on the pavement. The cutter bar laid over the machine at about a forty-five degree angle and in that position the heel was low enough to let it slip by. Now the trick was to get it back by the stop. To do this we had to raise the cutter bar to vertical and then pry the sickle bar back into position. Things went fairly well and the bar finally slipped into place. When it did Ray let out another yell. The bar nearly took his finger off. He was holding one of the mower fingers and the section cut nearly to the bone. I don't remember just how we treated it , maybe went back to Falsted's or just wrapped it up with whatever was handy and went on home. Could have been a lot worse if the bone had been broken, but the bar wasn't moving with any power so it didn't do more damage. I think after that we were both very careful where we held on to the bar when raising or lowering it.

The first of our haying away from home, we hauled our share on the wagon, later on Streeter's men would haul it with a truck, made it easier to move the tools back and forth. When we hauled our own up the Purple Meadow road there were water bars on the hills. These were at intervals to divert the rainwater off the road to prevent washouts, they were a big help for the team and we used them for a block to rest the team. If they didn't come in the right place, someone had to walk behind with a stone to put behind the wheel or the wagon might start to roll back.

Father had a good system for unloading the hay off the wagon, however, it was important to load it properly. First the corners, tying each with a forkful beside it, then the middle and around again until the load was as high as necessary, then to the barn. There were three places to unload, one under the shed on the north side, the original twenty by twenty hay mow, on the south side a door in the gable, and the west end of the addition. The method of unloading was a harpoon fork, about a hundred feet of inch rope, a system of pulleys and a horse out on the end. Stanley was pretty good at loading and could sometimes take off a load with eight passes of the fork. With that system by moving the pulley from one unloading point to the next it made for easier filling. When Streeter hauled the hay for us the men had to pitch it off by hand as the

horse would be at the place we were cutting, or moving to the next. Almon Flagg had a grapple fork in his barn. That would take a bigger load each time, but had to have a track in the ridge of the barn for a trolley and everything was unloaded from one place, the barn floor.

In 1930 Rev. G. Marcus Prangnell was hired by the Baptist Society as their minister. He wanted the young boys in town to have a kind of club to get together and hike or other things. I remember a group of us hiking down the Lampblack road to the Greenfield Scout camp. I'm not sure if he was thinking of Boy Scouts at the time, as he was a Canadian citizen and couldn't be a scout master. He did get enough people interested and the Bernardston Troop 12, B.S.A. was organized. The Scoutmaster was Richard Phelps and I believe Kenneth Fitzherbert and Frank Phelps were assistants, Howard Day carried the American flag and Richard Gordon the troop flag. There were thirty of us and Rev. Prangnell acting as advisor. On page 114, History of Bernardston, under Boy Scouts, the Greenfield Gazette & Courier mentions a scout troop in Bernardston in 1926, but no details. Troop 12 was the first chartered group. Meetings were held at the town hall and also at a plot of land in back of the Hollywood Club that belonged to Bill Forbes. This land was beside Fall River and could be reached by going down the small hill in back of the club and crossing the river by any means possible, quite often with wet feet if the rocks were a bit slippery. Another, longer way was to go along the Bald Mountain Road and through Walter Nelson's yard and just before the river, hike up through the field, over a fence
and then to the camp site. One project we did was to build a footbridge using logs. Dick showed us how to build a semi-cantilever bridge. Placing two logs that we scrounged from nearby, about two feet apart and reaching the middle of the river, weighted the ends with rock to hold in place and angled up to be met from the other side in the same manner. I believe we lashed sticks across to walk on. I don't remember if we ever got both sides done at the same time. I do remember that the high water in the spring would wash away whatever we had accomplished the year before. Father was giving me a ride to one of the meetings at the camp. They were held in the early evening, after the days work was done. Father had a Chevy coupe, maybe a '26 or '27, and he went across Burke Flat bridge and up towards the Hollywood Club. About a quarter mile from

there, a dirt road, private I imagine, went out through the field and crossed the river on a plank bridge, then continued on up to Walter Nelsons as mentioned above. Ruth went along with us that time and as we approached the bridge, I noticed Father twitching the steering wheel back and forth with no effect on the direction the car was traveling, which wasn't toward the middle of the bridge but to the left side. He quickly applied the brakes and the car came to a stop. He could look out his side window right down to the water, about six feet or so below. The left front wheel was out over the side of the bridge in midair. The first thing he said was, don't move, then he had me move carefully towards the door a little, then Ruth moved over to close the gap. After we had all moved over to the door, he told me to carefully open it and we proceeded to get on to firm footing. We were fortunate that when the bridge was built , someone had presence of mind enough to lash a telephone pole to each side of the bridge, that kept us from going in the drink. I ran up to the camp and all the scouts came down to get the car back on the road. By using a long pole for a lever under the front axle, father started the motor and worked it backward to hard ground. The cars then used ball joints on the steering mechanism. At the lower end of the steering column, there is a gear box with an arm out of the side that moves forward and back when the steering wheel is turned. This arm is connected to the front wheel by means of a steering rod, a ball and socket to allow for ease of movement on each end. The left front wheel is mounted to the axle with a spindle, the early cars had a solid steel axle with a 'C' on each end to mount the wheels using the above mentioned spindle. This was a unit, with a threaded shaft to accept the hub of the wheel, bearings, inner and outer, washers and nut with a cotter pin so the nut would stay in place and an arm for the tie rod to connect the two wheels, and make them move together. All of this description just to tell you that the ball and socket at the steering box got worn enough that it just dropped off. After getting the car back on the road, I think Milton Streeter got underneath and put it together again, tightening it enough so it would stay on for a while. I believe he was still driving it after we moved to the Holton place in Northfield.

This same Chevy was the first vehicle I ever drove, albeit, only from the garage to the barn. Father would take the milk down to town when he went to a job away from home. He worked at a lot of different jobs, some construction work. I think he worked for

Kelleher Corp. when the cement bridge over the railroad in East Bernardston was put in, replacing the iron bridge that was just south a short ways. To get back to driving, father showed Frank first how to start the car and back it out into the road, watching out for traffic, and then proceed down to in front of the milk house to load the cans in for delivery. After a while he let me do it once in a while, but I was only fourteen or so and Frank would get a license first, so he had preference.

1932 was an election year and at that time inauguration was the following March. The principle at P.I. was Mr. Alfred Gay and he thought it would be educational if the school children could hear the new president's inaugural address. Franklin Delano Roosevelt. More than likely, Streeter loaned him a radio, a table model, that he placed between the two rooms down stairs where the sliding doors are, opening them so both rooms could hear. If I remember correctly, all the students, upstairs and down, doubled up to include everyone.

As far as I know, this was the first time an inaugural address was broadcast nation wide. I know it was the first time the students at P.I. had ever listened to one. Today it is simple enough to have a big screen TV in the gym or some such place for all to see. It was during Roosevelt's administration that letters were used for departments, etc. in government, before that the whole name had to be used, like United States of America, not USA. I guess it was better in some ways, as he created so many new programs there wouldn't have been paper enough. C.C.C. meant Civilian Conservation Corp, W.P.A. stood for Works Progress Administration, not we play around, as it was often called. I have to give him some credit, he did get people to working even though there was hardly any money around. This was the time of the great depression and farm families were better off than city folks, at least they could raise food to take care of themselves. Also during this time the government began sticking there nose into everything, including farming, and I think father was getting pretty discouraged trying to keep up with things. So in 1934 he sold the Huckle Hill place and rented the Henry Holton farm in Northfield. Pioneer Valley Regional school now stands where I plowed and raised corn that year.

When father rented the place we moved the cattle and equipment over from Huckle Hill. However the house was occupied and couldn't be available until the lease

ran out, so, father arranged to have mother, Betty, George and Robert probably Ruth also, go to Keene to stay with Grandpa and Grandma Phelps until it was available. Frank, Raymond and myself bunked in the old gas station across the road with father. I can't remember if the gas pumps were still there, if they were, they had to have been hand cranked to fill car gas tanks. I do remember the signs were still around. Socony, Standard Oil Company of New York. Holton had built the station and added a long room for serving sandwiches and drinks, probably ice cream too. It was basically two rooms, one bigger than the other. There was a chimney, if I remember correctly, not just a stove pipe out through the wall. I imagine it was a lot safer in the winter that way. It worked good for us, set the kitchen range up to do the cooking. There must have been a sink of some kind, because there were tables and benches which would indicate dishes to be washed. I can't picture it, somehow, but I know we roughed it there until the house was ready the first of June. We moved in March so Robert had his first birthday at Grandpa and Grandma's in Keene.

When we moved over to Northfield I was in my Junior year at Powers Institute, father gave me the option of transferring to Northfield High, or working the farm. Frank helped with milking and some other things, but mostly it was my job to be the teamster, as Frank worked part time at Carmeens store on campus to help pay his tuition at Mt. Hermon.

Father had jobs to do, if I remember right, he was really getting into painting and paperhanging, so we had to do the things around the place. We raised some oats besides the corn and I remember sliding a load off as I turned the team to drive into the barn. Dry oats are slippery things and it's hard to load them to ride very far and also there was a slight pitch to approach the barn and as we were making the turn perhaps Jerry thought it would be a good idea to lean into the collar, which would give the wagon a bit of a jerk, and off we went. The barn was built to be able to drive the team in one end and out the other, pitching the load off the side into the bays on the north side or on the south side where it was the same level as the barn floor. The doors were still there on the east end, but the beams and planks outside were in too bad shape to allow driving over them, so we learned how to back an empty wagon out to the yard to go get another load. The stable was under the barn and the horse barn was separate in an ell

hitched to the main barn. I don't remember just what there was for a milk room, or even if there was one. I do know we cooled the milk cans in the watering trough in the barnyard. The water for this was pumped from a small brook at the edge of the big mowing across from the main house. There was a dam built there and a water ram that pushed the water up to the barn. I never knew exactly how far it was, but as I think how it looks today, it must have been nearly a thousand feet. Today route ten bisects that field and the dam has likely long since collapsed. The only trouble we ever had was in the winter; it froze on us and took a bit of doing to get it working again. The ram was inside a cement building and we had tried to bank it up for insulation, but it was just too cold and the water stopped. The inside of the building was pretty well iced up from the bypass valve spraying around, the ram was going back and forth, but the outlet was frozen. The only heat we had was a blow torch and kerosene lanterns. That was the only ram I ever remember seeing and would have a hard time describing it and how it worked. The water itself made the ram work so there was no engine or anything else to look after.

Father had decided to get out of farming and in May, of '35 I went over to Bernardston to work for Richard and learn some carpentering. Dick was building up a good business of his own, he had been working with Winnie Newton and learning the trade and as Winnie was getting along in years, he gave Dick a chance to branch out on his own. I lived with Dick and Audrey that summer at Henry Newton's house on Bald Mountain. Henry's farm was the last place on the road at that time, just below the house the old road continued straight on towards the Vermont line, maybe less than half a mile. From that road the driveway went up to the house and barn, curved around the lower side and then looped up to the right over to the house Dick lived in. I worked most of the summer with Dick, learned to drive on the road, and got my drivers license in May at seventeen and a half years.

The day I had an appointment to take the road test, I was mixing plaster for Dick and Winnie Newton to plaster the upstairs room in a house that Elsie's uncle Leon owned on the Lampblack Road. Dick couldn't stop off to take me to Greenfield, so Elsie came down with Stan's Essex and took me in, as there had to be a licensed operator with the applicant. The Registry at that time was on Federal Street at the corner of

Pleasant. I answered all the questions inside, then the inspector told me to go out to the car, he'd be right with me. I think he asked Elsie if she wanted to ride along and she declined. When he got in he asked if I had practiced, and I answered in the affirmative. Then he said to start the motor, which I did, that car had a self starter. Then he had me drive up Federal Street and as we approached Maple he said turn right, and I made the necessary hand signals and turned onto Maple, at the next street he had me turn right again onto Franklin and at the next street, make a left, I don't recall the name of that one. Then he said to pull to the curb and stop, now turn the car around and go back to Franklin. This I did without touching the curb on either side, and only once backing to complete the turn. At Franklin, another left out to Main Street. A stop sign there, then right to Hope Street and a left there, to Olive Street, a right over to Bank Row, stop, then right up Clay Hill. A short ways, then he asked me to parallel park at the curb and stop the engine after setting the emergency brake. So far so good, now, start the motor, pull into traffic and continue up the hill. I had been told before hand that this maneuver was supposed to be done without rolling backward. [Try it some time when you find a standard shift vehicle with a clutch] Then it was back up Federal Street to the Registry and park without bumping the curb. Back then you could park on the east side of Federal St., now there's too much traffic and it's not allowed. That was all there was to it, I got my license and went back to work.

I believe it was some time in August I decided I didn't like carpentering too well. We were topping a chimney over in Gill and it was hot up on the roof. My job was to mix the mortar and lug it up the ladder in a bucket to the roof ladder, which was actually just a wide board with cleats nailed to it for steps and held in place by another board on the other side of the ridge pole. A home made rig that could be used on most any roof, easy to put up and take down. Dick built a staging around the chimney to have a safe place to work from, and the bricks were placed there as we took them off down to roof level. Sometimes we had to go a couple courses below the roof, depending on the condition of the mortar. As I said before, it was hot and a tedious job, up and down the ladder. I decided I'd rather go back to farming. I talked it over with Dick as we had our lunch and he agreed that it would be better to go back to something I liked, than to keep on at something I was not happy doing.

Things Remembered

I believe that was a Saturday, the end of the week, which made things square out as far as to what was coming to me, pay wise. I looked the Recorder over for jobs and found a farmer in Shelburne looking for some one to work driving team and helping with the milking and other chores. I forget who took me up to see about the job, but I remember talking with the son, William Long Jr. his father owned the farm and was laid up with a broken leg. One of the horses kicked him as he was going into the stall.

This place was some different than what I grew up with. He had a fairly good sized milking herd, and four horses. Two were a matched pair of chestnuts, about 3500 pounds. Another was a dapple gray that they figured would go 2000 pounds alone, and the fourth was a rangy brown horse, not as heavy as the others, he was responsible for the broken leg and I was told not to go into the stall, some one that was more used to him would get him out for harnessing or what ever. I went in beside him once, just to prove to myself I could do it, but I never told anyone.

I think the job paid five or six dollars a week plus board and room. There was another hired man and we shared the same bedroom, separate beds, thank goodness. Every morning Mrs. Long would wake us up at four or four fifteen. My first chore was to hike out to the night pasture to bring the cows in for milking. Their collie dog went with me and was a big help to make sure I found them all as it was still dark, and sometimes foggy. Must have been a quarter mile at least to the top of the hill pasture, and that was where they were bedded down just about every morning. It was farther to bring them to the barn as the pasture angled down away from the barn to a gate and then up a lane to the barnyard. Kind of like a wide vee. While I was gone, the boss, young Bill Long, and the hired man would be getting things ready, milking machines, grain and what ever else was necessary to start milking as soon as all the cows were in their assigned stanchions. I don't remember if the milker was a Delaval, or a McCormick, both were around then.

We'd get done milking about seven and go in for breakfast. What a breakfast!! Hot oatmeal for a starter, then boiled potatoes with salt pork gravy, crisp fried salt pork instead of bacon, seems like a vegetable too, and toast or biscuit, finish off with fresh donuts hot off the stove. Alas, it was to catch up with me in the end. After that, we'd go back out to do the rest of the chores and then what ever jobs were in order, had some

rowen to cut, and various other things to take care of. I was able to get some experience driving a truck. They owned a big pasture in what they referred to as the “old world”. A section of Shelburne south of the town, and nearly down to West Deerfield, some of it might even have been in Deerfield, where they pastured heifers and springers. Bill kept track of when the cows would be due and try to bring them home before hand. I remember a couple we didn’t get in time and had to hunt for the calf, one of the calves we never did find, but I know we found one after crisscrossing the pasture for quite a few hours. Bill would let me drive the truck they had down to the pasture, but, he would drive back if we had a cow or two on. I don’t remember for sure, but it seems to me it was a Chevrolet, as I‘m pretty sure that’s what Bruffee’s Garage in Shelburne Falls sold.

While I worked for Dick I had gone to Greenfield one Saturday after work, I don’t remember who I was with, maybe Bradford Truesdell, one of the minister’s sons, and we were looking around at some of the cars in the showrooms, kind of window shopping. Wilcox Garage was on Federal Street next to the registry, and we had been looking at the new cars. The salesman saw that we weren’t really looking to buy, so he said why don’t we go down to the lower level and look at some used cars. Before the evening was over I bought my first car, an Essex roadster. I can't even remember the year, maybe ‘23 or ‘24. I paid fifteen dollars for it. I hadn’t ever got it on the road and I got a notice the garage would like it out or they’d charge me storage. So I registered it and it wouldn’t start, so Bill towed it up to the farm for me so I could work on it in my spare time. As it turned out, I never was able to make it run, so the garage up at the Falls came to take it up and work on it. After looking it over they said it would cost more to get it running than it was worth and would I be interested in something else. Then I bought my second car. I don’t remember how much I paid for that one, but couldn’t have been too much as I didn’t have much money. This one was a 1927 Nash Tudor sedan, it had solid steel wheels, and could get up to 45 MPH, down hill.

I mentioned earlier about the breakfast catching up with me. Well, after a while working there I had an infection on the left wrist that at first I thought was a boil, but turned out to be a carbuncle. The whole wrist and hand was swollen up so I could hardly work the dung fork to load the manure spreader. They didn’t want to give me any

time off to cure it up, so I quit, packed up my few belongings and drove down the trail. Stopped to see Dorothy, she was working on Congress Street, in Greenfield at the time. She advised me to have Father look at it, so I went up to Northfield and Father lanced it and put on an antiphogistine poultice, told me to take Golden Seal for a month and I'd be fine. Father figured it was so much fried salt pork that my system was not accustomed to, that did the damage. I don't remember having fried salt pork at home very often, salt pork was usually used in the beans and I didn't care much for it to eat, but it helped the flavor of the baked beans. As soon as the swelling began to leave, the carbuncle healed quite well and it was time to look for work again. There didn't seem to be anything around the Northfield or Greenfield area, but I found an add in the Springfield paper for farm help in Hazzardville, Conn. a town south of Springfield. As I had wheels, I headed down routes 5 &10 to look into it. Route 10 branched off at Holyoke, but 5 continued on through Springfield into Conn. As I mentioned earlier the Nash was not a speedy car, but it plugged along. I only got my license in May and this was, I believe, in October or thereabouts, and the biggest town I'd driven in was Greenfield, but I got through the city OK and continued on down for the job interview. Located the place without any trouble only to find out that the job was already taken. Oh well, better luck next time.

Brother John was living in Springfield at that time, I'm not sure if that was when he was doing the murals, more than likely it was. So, when I headed back I decided to hunt him up. I knew his address was Spring Street and it was off State. State St. intersects Main, so I turned right when I got to it and began looking for it. After going a ways on State I decided I had gone by it. I think Frank had told me it wasn't too far from Main. I found a place to turn around and began hunting again. It was getting near dark and hard to read signs and keep track of traffic at the same time. As I got nearer Main, there was a policeman directing traffic in the middle of the street, so I was easing over to inquire where Spring St. was and I happened to look up and there was the sign on the corner. I immediately turned to the right to enter the street and the cop gave me the whistle, so I pulled to the curb and waited for him to come over. He asked for my license and registration, looked them over and asked where I was going and I told him I was looking for Spring St., and was going to ask him where it was when I saw the sign

and turned. He told me I wasn't driving up in the sticks and to do what I did in the city was a good way to get my rear end bumped. I didn't get a ticket, which I likely could have, just warned me to be more careful.

I stayed with John that night and we got a newspaper the next morning to look for jobs. This time we found a farmer in Ellington, Conn. looking for a man. That wasn't too far from Springfield, so I went down to see about it. This farmer was looking for someone to help his son over the winter, as he and his wife were going to Florida to spend the winter. At first he acted as if I was kind of young, only seventeen, and his son was getting up towards thirty. After talking for a while I guess he decided I might be alright, and he would give me a try. I think I had to return home to get what I would need for the winter. Warmer clothes for one thing, and to let the folks know where I would be for the winter. This job was not much different than working for Long, except the food was more like I was used to. He milked some cows, had raised some corn and there was still some to be husked. They also raised turnips, seeded down a piece in the fall for hay and spread turnip seed with it. When I went to work there, they were harvesting them to sell in Springfield. I'd hitch the team to the tip cart and go down to the field and pull the turnips, throw them into the cart and when I had filled it drive up to the yard and dump them out on the lawn. Then put the team away and set and top them. The tops and little ones were fed to the cows; the marketable turnips went into baskets to go up to Springfield to sell at stores. I think he had standing orders for a certain amount each week. The last of them were getting frozen in the ground before we finished, about the last of November.

The folks had left for Florida soon after I started and the son and I were batching it. On Thanksgiving his married sister invited us over to their place, I believe it was in Somers, so we had a good meal. One thing he did a bit different was mix his own dairy ration. Father mixed it for each cow as he milked it but we had to mix it before hand. His barn floor was matched boards and nice and smooth, so we'd dump the different grains to be mixed right on the floor, he had his corn ground as cob meal, instead of shelling it to grind. Then with scoop shovels we'd just shovel it back and forth 'til it was well mixed, then bag it back up to use as we needed it. Another thing we did was deliver some wood to the school house. It was all sawed, so we just hitched the team to the lumber

wagon and threw on a load, probably about a cord, and drove down the road a mile or so and unloaded it next to the school house. It was cold, but no snow and the road blacktop. As we got back on the road, the horses knew they were going home and the nigh horse began to prance a bit. When I reined him up, his feet went out from under him, and down he went, right in the middle of the road. Steel shoes on blacktop can be slippery. We just unbuckled the harness and he hopped back on his feet. Harnessed him up, hooked him to the wagon again and continued on our way. He was a little more cautious after that.

We didn't have as much snow in Connecticut as I was used to, but that was alright, I wasn't too sure how the Nash was in snow, anyway. Along about March I heard that Henry Newton wanted a man to work for him so I wrote to see what the deal was and decided to go back to Bernardston to work for him. I guess it was a good thing I decided to go then as that was the spring of the 1936 flood in April. The winter in New England had seen a lot of very cold weather and about the normal amount of snow, but then the rains came and there were no flood control dams any where on the Connecticut or other rivers feeding into it. As the river began to rise, the ice would break up and float down stream. Then it would jam and back the water up to make an even greater flow. Many bridges were wiped out and farm buildings, especially tobacco barns were swept along to raise havoc. The Tenney Farm in Northfield Farms, was almost completely wiped out. Only a very few of the large herd survived. A tobacco barn in West Northfield slammed into the railroad bridge and took out half of it. Father had planned to move from the Holton place over to Meadow Street, but had to wait till the water receded as the old iron bridge was surrounded by water.

In fact, he told about the state asking him to monitor the ice bumping the bridge and report if he thought it was going out. He said he stayed on the bridge itself for quite some time. Leaving when there was only a narrow strip of land to get back to King Phillips hill. Then he had to follow the high ground back around to the Holton Place. That bridge held up and some years later it was replaced with the present cement bridge down stream a ways. The highway has never been under water since then. The Cembalisty place had water four or five feet deep in the house.

I worked for Henry during the spring and summer. I think it was along in the fall that Frank took over the grocery store in one end of Streeter's store. Stan had run it for a while, but with a family to feed, decided it was not a good business to be in. Frank took over and needed a helper. In those days store keepers operated a delivery system, and it required two people to make it feasible. Someone had to be at the store to wait on customers, the other person would drive around the various routes, stopping at houses that were regular customers to get an order. A lot of these people in those times never went to town to shop and most didn't have a car, so this was a service.

Frank would leave in the morning, and I would stay to answer the phone and wait on customers that would walk in from near by. There were two other stores in town that were competing for the business, so it wasn't all gravy. About eleven o'clock Frank would call in the orders he had for me to start putting them up. We had grocery crates to put up the orders in. These were rectangular, wooden boxes using spindles for sides, instead of boards, solid bottom and made to stack in the delivery truck. The crates were filled in the order of delivery, to make as little extra work as possible. I would begin putting the orders together in the crates, leaving out the meat or anything needing to be kept cool, until the last thing. We had quite a bit of room near the back door to spread the crates out and keep them organized to go into the truck. Frank would be getting more orders and when he got back to the store, we would work together and finish putting up the orders. The vehicle for delivery was a 1931 Ford Sedan Delivery. Three doors, driver's side, passenger side and a full door in the rear, no seats back of the driver which made a lot of room for cargo. The passenger seat was a jump seat that folded up towards the fire wall, so entry could be made from there if so desired.

Now my turn came to drive. I'd follow the same route Frank had used to get the orders and I had to learn the house to go with name on the order, not too hard, as I knew most everybody in town. Usually be dark or close to it by the time I'd finish delivering. We would stay open in the evening for a while, depending on business, and Saturday until nine. Closed on Sunday. Frank had a room with the Dunnell's on Depot Street and I had a pallet in the space over the back room of the store. I'd make my breakfast before opening the store in the morning and could make a sandwich for lunch, always something handy in a grocery store. I had to keep track of what I used as there

was never any thing free. At the end of the week Frank would figure it all up and pay me what was due. Frank was very well liked in Bernardston and it was not unusual to have two or three of the young fellows drop in around closing time, more to visit than to buy, although one or two would buy a candy bar or cookies. Quite often on Saturday, as we would be getting ready to close up, someone would suggest a jaunt to Franks Lunch in Greenfield for a plate of spaghetti. Franks Lunch was on the corner of Ames and School Streets. There is a parking lot now where the lunch car used to be. I call it a lunch car because it was patterned somewhat like the railroad dining cars. A plate of spaghetti cost a dime, if you wanted cheese on it, ten cents extra.

During the summer I had traded the Nash for a four door Reo. Henry had a Reo truck, but until then I didn't know there was a Reo automobile. I don't recall just when, but the tires began to give out and I didn't have money for new ones so, I sold it to Streeter. Must have been after I went to work for Frank. I didn't really need a car as I stayed over the store. Frank also had a Plymouth Roadster that needed some motor work and he let me do the job in my spare time. Then he was going to let me use it once in a while. The night before Thanksgiving the Victoria Theater in Greenfield was putting on a special midnight movie and Frank told me I could use it to go to the show. After we closed the store there was plenty of time until time to leave and there were some of the boys that had dropped in before closing and if I remember right, Jake Dennison and Bob Schaufus wanted to go along. It had been raining most of the evening, but didn't seem to be freezing there in the center of town so, we started. Going down South Street the road didn't seem to be at all slippery. I didn't go very fast, it being so wet. Everything was fine until we crossed the tracks at Hales Crossing. Likely the tracks being at a slight angle to the road started the car sliding and the back end tried to get ahead of the front, but didn't make it as a telephone pole got in the way and caught the left front wheel smack on the hub cap and I heard the antifreeze draining out on the ground. We were not going fast enough to more than shake us up a little, and we piled out and surveyed the damage. The visible damage was a jammed hub cap and a dent in the fender about an inch deep and four inches long. When Luther Gibson looked it over more closely, he found the frame was out of line at least three inches. That was the end of the Plymouth and we never did get to the show. There was ice on the road there, but

probably wouldn't have bothered except for the tracks. I didn't get another car for quite a while.

December passed rather quickly, and then as the New Year was drawing near and the weather was too cold to hike to Greenfield for any new years celebrations, I had gone to bed over the store as usual. About six forty-five the next morning the phone rang in the store below. I finally woke up enough to realize I should answer it. When I did, it was brother Richard to tell me that Frank had been killed in an accident on the way back from Boston. Frank had made trips to Boston and other towns nearby at various times, and was what I called a good driver, so it took me a few seconds to realize what Dick was saying. There were no other vehicles involved. Jake Dennison was riding with him, but was asleep in the back of the delivery truck on a seat that was just slid in for extra seating, and was uninjured. No one really knew exactly how it happened. The police thought perhaps he had fallen asleep and spun around causing the truck to tip over. I had a different theory but I was too inexperienced to know things like that, so I guess Father let the police report stand. Father was in Springfield visiting John, and came home as soon as he could, stopped to get me on the way, and also to see about closing the store. We went down to Ware where the accident had happened and the truck was still there, although Frank's body had been removed. There was a skid mark in the road where the left rear wheel dragged and the truck had flipped on it's left side, dumping Frank out and pinned him under the running board. The coroner said he died from suffocation; the running board was across his chest, all the weight of the truck on him. The truck came to rest against the guard rail, a wooden plank that was near rotten, but was not even broken. As I recall, Father looked it over good and decided it was safe to tow and I steered it and he hauled it back to Northfield.

My theory: On one of our excursions to Greenfield, there were several that I remember, usually with three or more young fellows from town. Just to be doing something in the evening, harmless roaming around. This particular evening we had quite a few boys, Jake Dennison, Ed Davis, Bud Foster, Bob Schaufus, myself and it seems like another I can't think of now and of course Frank driving. We were traveling west on Main Street between High and Franklin, when suddenly the emergency brake pulled us to a stop. The brake handle was in the middle beside the shifting lever and

Frank wanted to know why Bud, who was sitting in the middle, had pulled it on. He said he hadn't touched it. So the mystery was there. Frank took the truck to Gibson, who did all the work on the truck, and he said there was nothing wrong with the brakes and somebody had pulled it back as a joke. To this day I believe that the brake locked up one wheel and flipped the truck. Especially as the highway was perfectly dry and the guardrail was not damaged.

After the funeral, Father had to close the business down. As Streeter owned the building, father worked it out with him to take over the business, stock in trade and all fixtures, he wouldn't take any of the bills owed to the business. Father collected some of them, but some were never paid.

I needed a new job and Father took me to Greenfield to the Growers Outlet, the first such store I had ever heard of. As much like the super markets of today as anything I can think of for comparison. Anyway, I got a job in the fruit and vegetable department, putting stuff on the racks in their proper place. Helping carry out bags for customers and cleaning up at the end of the day. He found a room for me to stay in not too far from the Outlet. The Outlet was on Federal Street, across from where Bills Restaurant is now, after they went out there were several small businesses on the ground floor, and on the second floor later on were the unemployment office and the welfare office. The room father found for me was across and up the street from the store, in back of the Weldon garage. I think the number was 60 1/2 Federal St. the house is gone now, but then it was up on the bank above Jurek's parking lot. I believe it cost me three or three fifty a week. I could have a hot plate to warm up a can of soup, milk could be left at the door downstairs for me and it was close to the center for walking.

I don't remember just how long I worked at the Outlet, but a job turned up for Smith, Coat, Apron & Towel Supply, so I went over and talked to the owner and changed jobs again. In 1937, the Greenfield Laundry was located on the south side of Ames St. between School and Davis, and took up most of the block. A big brick building that housed the giant washers and the mangles and presses. Smith had a cubicle about the middle where we made up the bundles for the delivery truck to take on his route. This service differed from the grocery route, as there were specified stops for regular delivery. As the name suggests, the main business was to stores, eating places and

taverns or bars. The deliveries were made by a fellow named Francis Adams. He was also a member of the Guiding Star Grange in Greenfield, where I was installed, when I joined the Bernardston Grange, some years later. The delivery truck was an International, somewhat like Frank's Ford, only with two doors in the back for unloading. Smith also owned a Plymouth sedan, and a Willys-Knight roadster. It took me a while to figure the old cuss out, but I did after a while.

Seems like he would pop into the work place at odd times, I thought to check on things, but later I discovered the real reason. On these occasions he would want to know if I was too pushed to go out with him to make a special delivery, of course, if he wanted me to go with him for what ever reason that was up to him, he was the boss. These special deliveries were always to a tavern or a beer joint, and after making a trip into the place with towels or bar coat and bring out dirty ones, he would ask me to drive and usually a little ways on the road, he would say he had to check something in the trunk and to pull over in a convenient spot so he could. Wait right here, he would say, I'll be right back. Then he would spend some time rummaging in the trunk. When he would get back in, he was always munching on a dill pickle. We might make two or three stops, and one was usually a package store. The old boy liked his booze. The pickles were to cover the smell of liquor on his breath.

There was one good thing about working for him, I spoke about the Willys, he got so he would let me drive that for other things not connected with the business. One week end I had it and took Ruth and Albert and Albert's sisters, Adelia and Helen Cembalisty, up to climb Mt Monadnock. The roadster had a rumble seat or it would have been crowded. Another time I went to Milford to visit Cousins George and Flora, I think Ray was with me that time. It was one time when I was driving the Willys that I got stopped again. As I said, the room I had was near Jureks parking lot and I could park the Willys there and would be handy to get it over to the work place. This particular night I was returning to my room, perhaps having been over to Northfield, and I turned off Federal onto Ames, and then made a right onto School to go a couple hundred feet to the place to park. There was a stop sign on the corner of Ames and School, just as there is today, however, as no cars were about, I didn't come to a stop, but, a police whistle stopped me after I turned. He came over from somewhere, I have no idea where

he was, and checked my license and registration, maybe it helped that it was Smith's vehicle. I didn't get a ticket, but he informed me that the stop sign was just as good after midnight as it was before and let me go home to bed.

I don't remember exactly when I left Smith, but Stan had gone to work for Streeter and moved up to the Huckle Hill place. Streeter had expanded his dairy operation considerable, had a lot of milkers at the Cairns barn on Northfield road, it was most always referred to as the red barn. It was located were the north bound entrance to I-91 is now. He had also got his hands on our old place on Huckle Hill, and had a bunch of milkers there that Stan took care of, hard milkers, kickers or ones that wouldn't stand for machine milking. It took a lot of help at the red barn, so I went to work for H.S. there and lived with Stan and Elsie. The pay was a dollar a day and I'm not sure, but I think I paid a little board, or maybe H.S. made some arrangement with Elsie on that. Well, I had to have some way to get down to the red barn. Voila! another car. This time it was an Oakland, and I bought it from Wendell, H. S. 's oldest son, he was getting into the garage part of the business as H.S. was out around taking care of the farming end.

That had to have been 1938. Frank was killed in 1937, and then I had worked in Greenfield and I was working at the red barn at the time of the '38 hurricane. I must have started early in the year as I remember getting the land ready for planting corn, milking night and morning at the red barn and all summer haying in between milkings. H.S. was still buying hay all around the county, almost, the same as when father started with him. The difference was that H.S. had gotten into selling farm machinery, and had a tractor or two to do the mowing. Willis Hale was a bachelor living just off the Lampblack Rd. and had a horse which he used for odd jobs around town and H.S. persuaded him to work for him all the time, he even bought a horse to use beside his when a team was needed. Willis would mow places that a tractor couldn't go, and do some of the raking. His main job though, was to plant the corn with the one horse corn planter and then to cultivate during the growing season.

As I mentioned before, it took a lot of help to keep things moving. There was Charles Burrows, Clarence [Snuffy] Jillson, Ed Davis, Ernest [Itchie] Bardwell, Elmore [Jamie] Streeter, Jay Weimers, Milton Streeter during summer vacation, he was going to college at that time, Leonard Streeter some of the time and myself. Stan would come

down with his milk after he'd finished his chores and work with us 'till milking time again. Then he'd go back up to Huckle Hill and the rest of us would do the milking at the red barn.

Milton, one of Harold's sons was always tinkering with autos and made up what he called a 'doodle-bug' for doing a lot of the raking as the horse was not always available to pull the dump rake. This was before the side delivery rake was used to make windrows for the hayloader that H.S. had found to pull behind the truck so we didn't have to pitch it all on by hand. The doodle-bug was a Model A truck that Milton cut in two and added another transmission to make it slower with more pulling power and a bigger wheel for more traction. We also used it to mow with as it could get more done then horses, of course still used a horse mowing machine with the tongue cut off, tractor mowers came along about the time I went to work for Koch in Greenfield.

Now for the big hurricane. We didn't have a clue that anything out of the ordinary was happening, except that it was raining hard most of the day. This was in September and we had cut the corn into the silos, so we were already piling the manure from the stables at places on the corn field to be spread either later, or in the spring. It had rained for two or three days and we had got the truck stuck in the mud that day, but had managed to get it out to load again. We backed it up to the barn door and wheeled the manure up a plank onto the body and dumped it. When full, someone would drive it out to the field and shovel it off. Before the days of hydraulic lifts that was how it was done. The manure truck was an old Model T.

The cows were anxious to get to the barn and were crowding around the gate in the middle of the afternoon. We thought it was because of the heavy rain, but afterward we figured they sensed something about the weather and wanted to get where it was dry. We did get them in early to dry off a bit before milking time. H.S. had got into selling Surge milkers and each of us that milked had two milkers to use on our string, put them on and when ready take one off, go to another cow, put it on and go back and hand strip the last one and so on. We hadn't been at it too long when the power went off, so, to hand milking. Upstairs in what had been the stable when the barn was built, were some heifers under a year old, and Ernie Streeter, young Bryant Burrows and Bill Messer would come over after school and feed them. Not long after the power went off one of

them came running down the stairs to tell us the end of the barn, the east end, was going in and out from the high wind that had come up. Everybody wanted to see what was going on so started for the stairs. As you turned to go up the stairs, the door to go out to the milk house was there, one of us glanced out the window on the door and saw Jamie start from the milk house so pushed the door open for him and just as he stepped inside, the barn roof peeled off and landed where he had just passed. He was lucky. We milked by hand for almost a week before power was restored. The next day we found out we had had a hurricane. New England doesn't have many hurricanes and at that time there was no early warning system. Many towns around suffered a lot of damage, mostly trees down, some buildings, like the barn roof, damaged. Loggers were busy for a number of years after cleaning up and some were never got to. When I was hunting east of where I now live, I found hurricane pines still lying where they fell.

As I recall, that was the same year we had a blustery snow storm on Thanksgiving Day. Stanley and the family were invited over to mothers in Northfield for dinner and I was going along also. Stan was furnished a car to take the milk down to the red barn with, it was a 1927 Buick sedan, big enough for everyone. However, when he went to start it, it would not start. After trying for a while, he wondered if my Oakland would start, if so we'd go in that. I had put my car in the garage father built across the road and it started right up first try, so over to Northfield we went for dinner. On the way back we had to put chains on to get up Ledge Hill. I don't remember if I had to milk at the red barn that night, but I had to go down the next morning and the wind had drifted the roads full by the time I wanted to leave. In front of the house, with chains already on I started off alright, then just beyond the milk room door, the drift stopped me. I backed up and tried again but didn't get through it. Stan came out with a shovel and he'd make a path for me, I'd back a bit and give it all she had 'till the next one stopped me. We went that way until we got down to Polly Cummings shanty. There the woods came near to the edge of the road and prevented drifting, so Stan gave me the high sign and headed back for the barn while I made tracks for work. From that point to the foot of Ledge Hill is about a mile and another half mile or so to the red barn. I had to keep the car in first gear until I got to the top of the little hill, then I put it in second. A good share of the time I was driving blind, as the snow kept flying up from the bumper over the

windshield. It was actually worse in second, but I wanted to be sure to get through any drifts. After Frank Oakes place the road is fairly level to the Bald Mountain Road and then out to the Main road is a wide open flat and not a sign of the road. I tried to go where I thought the road was but, sure enough, I got off and when I saw a telephone pole right in front of me, I stopped, put the car in reverse, and let the clutch out ---- nothing moved. The axle broke. I forced the door open and walked or floundered the rest of the way to work. Never drove that car again.

I must have worked out a deal of some kind with Wendell, because, it wasn't too long before I was driving a 1928 Buick sedan. I did have to get to work every day some how.

I changed jobs again; I believe the next spring I went to work for Almon Flagg driving team again. I stayed boarding with Stan and Elsie, as work was just across the way, a short hike. One of the fun jobs was plowing gardens for Almon. He'd tell me in the morning where to plow that day and I'd hitch onto a wagon, throw a plow on and a harrow to smooth the garden for planting and head out. Most gardens would take an hour or so to plow and harrow, then on to another. I knew about every one in Bernardston, in those days, so I had no problem knowing where to go next after I finished one. Almon had a pretty good team and they were near enough matched that they would both do their job, not like the team father had. I remember he would say he had the most willing team he ever saw, one was willing to do all the work and the other was willing to let him. Almon sold wood, he had a saw rig at the home place mounted on an old auto frame with an old Star engine for power. All the wood was four foot and he would have it piled all over the place, most always so that the dry could be gotten to easily as most people wanted to burn dry wood.

Almon would hire wood choppers to cut and pile the wood in lots that Almon would dicker with the owner for the right to cut it for resale. My first experience with four foot wood had been with H.S. as he also sold wood, but that was only helping to saw and load it for delivery. With Almon I got right into the basics, hauling it out of the woods. One day he told me to hitch the team to the buggy, put in some oats and a couple bags of hay and drive up to the Haigis place on Couch Brook road. {I believe then it was referred to as the Haigis Road}The Couch Brook road is the road to the left

just before you get to where Edward built his new house on the hill across from the Cushman place, North Bernardston. He met me there and proceeded to show me around the woods, which were dotted with piles of cord wood. Most of the piles were accessible for the sled, but some had to be handled twice to get the wood onto the sled. As we were cruising the lot, he mentioned I should keep on the lookout for suitable small trees to make shoes for the sled. Then he asked me if I had ever shod a sled, of course I had to answer in the negative. I had used steel shod sleds and worked at home with them, a wood shod sled was something else. The sled for winter use needed to have steel on the runners to slip over the snow, but, to use the same sled on bare ground was too much for a team of horses. Steel would drag so hard on dirt that it was nearly impossible to move, but wood on the runners worked very well, the shoes wore out and then had to be replaced. When I would notice a shoe was getting thin, I would try to find a straight soft maple about four inches in diameter to replace it. On the way out of the woods with a load, I'd stop the team, grab the ax that I always carried on the sled and chop it down, limb it out and continue on down to where I unloaded the sled for transfer to the truck. Then, unhitch the team, flip the sled over and proceed to replace the worn out shoe. The runners on a wood shod were sawn from a log that would allow for a two part shoe. Each runner was eight or nine feet long, the rear bunk was about eighteen inches from the back end and the front bunk was about six feet from it to the front. Then the nose went up to form a skid to get over obstacles without digging in. The bunks had a large bolt to hold it to the runner and allowed the sled some flexibility to get around stumps and so forth. The team was hitched to a tongue, old timers always called it a nieppe, bolted to a spreader bar hitched to the front end of each runner with a stake iron. This was for steering, and the evener was hooked to a large ring in the center of a chain anchored at the front bunk. Each runner had five one inch holes to be used for pegs to hold the shoe to the runner. Two for the short nose piece and three for the long section. If the shoe was not already off, the first thing was to pull it off and then drive the wooden pins back out for new ones. Sometimes the nose piece was still good for another time and only the long piece had to be replaced. After skiving off one side of the new stick to fit flush against the runner, using the ax, it was then marked for the pin holes and, using a hand auger, drill the holes, put the shoe in place and drive the

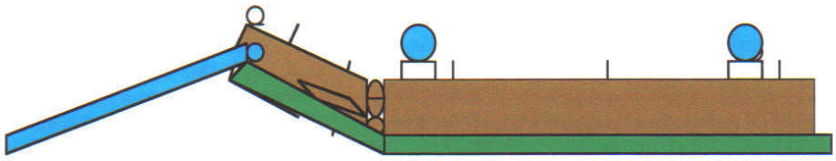
wooden pegs to hold it. These pegs were not sawn on a bench saw, as they would be now-a-days, but split from straight grained hard wood and had to be shaved to fit. Any excess that stuck out below the shoe was sawed off flush with the hand saw that we carried. It was hard to predict how long a shoeing would last, maybe the very next trip up in the woods the other one might come off or occasionally the pegs might break on the new one and have to be re-pegged. There was a rack that fit lengthwise of the scoot, as a wood shod was called, and the four foot wood piled crosswise, a couple stake chains about half way up the load would keep the load in place to the unloading spot, otherwise, the wood could rattle off, the chains kept it snug. On dry ground three-quarters of a cord made a fair load, unless the woods road was damp from rain, then a little more could be handled. We would leave the team in the barn there at the Haigis place, owned at that time by a Mr. Pease, and Almon would take me home or, if I had taken the truck in the morning, I'd throw on a load and drive back to Huckle Hill with it. For his wood business, Almon had a Model B Ford truck with a dump body, which was operated with a hand crank. This body would hold a cord of wood, thrown in, with the side boards on. With the side boards off, the steel body was great for hauling gravel, etc.

The last Model A Ford built was 1931, and in 1932, Ford built two models, first half of the model year, he manufactured a four cylinder engine known as the Model B, then the rest of the model year and for a lot of years after, he manufactured the V8 engine. The first of it's kind. It was also a gamble in some ways, as pistons laying on their side were supposed to wear on the lower side only. Ford proved the experts wrong on that one. Almon had the Model B truck; father had a Model B coupe that he built a box body in place of the trunk to transport his equipment for painting and paperhanging. The next car that I owned after the '28 Buick was a 1932 Ford V8 coupe that I bought from Spencer when I was working for H.S. after Stan went to work for Koch at Sheldegren Farm, I'll come to that in a bit.

Another place I hauled wood was off Tame Cat Mountain, across Fall River from Wildcat Mountain. Northwest of Walter Nelson's place, not too far from the bridge I mentioned earlier, where father nearly went into the river. I was drawing that wood

during deer season and had to put bells on the team, besides red rags so we wouldn't get shot. This was before the days of blaze orange.

Another job was hauling logs off the side hill back of Fred Plimpton's saw mill. Charlie Burrows was working for him in the mill and as he was a rugged fellow, he would help me load and unload. Charlie pointed out where a big oak nearly got him as he was helping saw it down. This was before chain saws were invented, what they were using was a two-man crosscut saw. Oak is a tricky tree to cut, sometimes it can be notched prefect to fall in a certain place and then it might fall too soon and go a different way or it could split prematurely and cause trouble. This one was close to four feet in diameter and it split before it was properly cut off, didn't go anywhere near where it was supposed to. When they heard the tree crack they dropped the saw and started to run away from where the tree was supposed to fall. I believe Garish was on the other end and he got clear, but Charles tripped and fell. The tree went the wrong direction and came down on top of him, he would have been killed if he hadn't fallen down in a hollow about ten feet from the stump. Shook him up some, but no injury.



This is a computer generated sketch of one side of a wood shod sled.

The platform to pile the wood crosswise rested lengthwise on the bunks, which are the two blue circles on the long runner. The green is the shoe, the blue is the neip and the black pegs are sticking through the runner.

During haying season we might have a lot of hay to get in late in the day and Almon would ask if I just as soon work late. I could have supper with them and we'd do some more haying after. I always consented to his offer as supper consisted of a little potato salad, then the younger kids having picked a few quarts of strawberries, Marion would bring out a big platter of biscuits, big bowl of crushed strawberries and fresh

whipped cream, skimmed off a milk can in the cooler. That kind of supper was hard to beat, and was well worth a couple hours extra work.

With all the years I had driven team mowing and other things, I sometimes would do a foolish thing. Across the road from the old place, Almon's land was just over the bank from the road. His line was the stone wall that started at his driveway where it branched off the Huckle Hill road, ran due east to the top of the bank that dropped down to the swale or swampy ground, then a ninety degree turn to the left following the bank north to the Purple Meadow road, then turned right to follow that road for quite ways, but I don't need to go farther now. From the ninety degree turn mentioned above, to the Purple Meadow road was a good sized open field. Not flat by any way of thinking, but good hay land. Over to the fence across from the road and from the Purple Meadow road to the south end at the afore mentioned swale was about three acres. I was mowing it that year, and the clover had lodged so that the cutter bar would plug quite often. I had gotten as far as mowing up the grade on the side across from the house. Stopped a few times to clear the bar, and then go a little more, plug again. This time I got off to unplug it, and though I carried a wooden whip to touch the team when necessary, instead of using it to scrape the grass away, I reached down and cleared it by hand, just barely touching a section, and cut a three cornered chunk on the end of my middle finger, left hand. Now-a-days a cut like that would have to be sewed up, but all I did was leave the team standing and hiked over to the house. Elsie had me clean it up with sylpho-nathol in hot water, then bandage it in good shape and back to mowing. That healed with a bump on the finger a quarter inch high, and nearly sixty years later there is still a slight bump there. I made sure I never pulled a stupid stunt like that again, use a stick or a pitch fork, and be on the safe side.

I'm not certain just when I got interested in square dancing, but I think it was around the time I joined the grange, some of the boys would go to the Friday night dance at the Greenfield Grange Hall on Chapman Street. I alluded to my joining the Bernardston Grange, earlier. I took the first degree in Greenfield, and there are seven degrees in all and I got to take them all within a few years. I had the 1928 Buick four door sedan when working for Almon, and there was room for several of the boys, so we would get to a few dances a week. We followed Louis Jillsons band, or I guess some

called it an orchestra, to different places, Vernon was a great hall, had a spring floor, Halifax was another place, if I remember right, it would alternate with Dummerston on Saturdays, Vernon was Friday, Sometimes we'd go up to Leyden, Louis didn't play at the Greenfield Grange Hall, so we didn't go there as often.

When I was working for Almon, a friend that I had been in school with, got married to a girl that was our neighbor before we moved to Northfield. Her name was Gertrude Clark and she married Harold Hale. There was a wing-ding of some kind at the town hall for them and Stan and Elsie went to it, I decided to check it out myself, and there was dancing and a good time for all. I had just begun to square dance a little and someone told me I should ask a certain young lady to do a square dance with me, they said she was a very good dancer. I was bashful in those days, but finally asked for a dance. We danced two or three more, and she was a good dancer. I wasn't looking for a steady then, but would see her at dances in Northfield, and also she was a grange member, and the Bernardston Grange sometimes would do things or have a joint meeting with another grange.

After a while I got courage enough to ask her out, however, her mother kept close tabs on her and hadn't even let me take her home from a dance. I decided to be devious, there was a Northfield girl, Esther Smolen, that Bill Fields was interested in, so one evening they were with me and I believe Norman Fields and Joe Smolen, and we stopped to see if Florence would go for a ride. Bill and his girl went to the door with me and her mother knew the girl real well and let her go with us. It's a good thing it was dark and her mother didn't see how many were in the car. I was beginning to think serious about a steady and along toward spring, I traded the Buick sedan for the 1932 Ford V8 coupe, couldn't take as many passengers with me. I got to seeing her quite regular, at grange meetings, functions at the grange hall and, if I remember right, we took the state grange degree at the same time and we went to Worcester and took the seventh and final degree together. Gov. Saltonstal took the seventh the same time.

I had a lot of fun with that Ford. I'd had fog lights on the Buick so I took them off and put them on the Ford. Then I got hold of a pair of electric horns and mounted them on the headlight cross bar. For something different I mounted a doorbell under the hood with a pushbutton on the dash. One Sunday I took Florence up to visit Grandpa and

Grandma Phelps in Keene. The driveway was alongside the house so I parked by the porch and rang the doorbell. Then we got out and went up on the porch and rapped on the door. Grandma opened it and said she heard the doorbell ring so went to the front door to answer it and there was no one there.

Back a ways I mentioned that Stanley went to work for Bill Koch at the Sheldegren Farm. This place was located where Greenfield, Deerfield and Shelburne meet, a good sized farm and with about equal land in each town, it was easy to name it Sheldegren. When Stan took that job H.S. needed someone to work the Huckle Hill place, so he asked me if I wanted to go back to work for him and live in the house. I was single but figured I could probably make it alright. I think H.S. brought a kitchen range up and I got a bed from somewhere, a table and a couple chairs. Mother gave me a few cooking utensils and some basic recipes, {I still have them}, after I got married my wife kept them with all her other recipes.

When I was cooking for myself, I had begun to see her more often and she offered to come over on Sunday afternoon and clean up the kitchen and cook some things for me to eat during the week. She baked a wonderful cake for me and that was when I made up my mind she would be the one for me. We went together for over three years before we married, her mother still liked to tell her what she should do. I wanted to give her a ring at graduation, but her mother wouldn't hear of it, and it was March of '42 before we were engaged.

While I was working for H.S. in 1940, electricity was put in at the old place. R.E.A., Rural Electrification Act finally got to our part of the country. The government said everyone was entitled to have electricity available, no matter where they lived. The bill had been passed by congress early in F. D. R's administration. Anyway, H.S. had Herman Weimers do the wiring. Herman was a plumber, mostly, but could do most anything. In those days an electrician's license was no big deal, not like today, when a license is necessary for most anything you want to do. There weren't any fancy chandeliers anywhere, just usable outlets and a light dangling from the ceiling in each room. Later he installed an electric pump to take the place of the pitcher pump in the kitchen, which was a big help. H.S. talked about having a bathroom in the little room between the living room and the big bedroom, but as far as he got was to bring up a

bathtub and set it in the room, no plumbing for it. I think after I got through he hired a fellow with two kids and finished it then.

That was the last of my life on Huckle Hill. The next few years were probably the most important time of my life. Got married, worked on farms in Greenfield, Avon, Connecticut, Southwick, Massachusetts and Vernon, Vermont. Then decided to try something different so went to work at Erving Paper Mill, Erving, Massachusetts.

Things Remembered

Married Life

I'm not positive when it was that I got through for HS. I didn't have anything lined up for work, so I went over to mothers with whatever I had and planned to look around from there. Florence's folks had had the clapboards replaced with some kind of siding and the trim needed to be painted, so her father had asked if I would like to do it until I found something else for work. I said I could and I'd planned to start on it the next day. Then in the morning Stan called to ask if I'd be interested in driving team for two weeks for Koch while the teamster went on vacation. I told him I was going to do some painting, but would see if I could put it off for a spell and come over and drive team. Russell Hale, Florence father, being a farmer himself, didn't try to dissuade me, so I went along over to Sheldegren to work for two weeks. Then when the regular teamster was ready to come back to work, he decided he was driving too far every day and wanted to work nearer home, which was Conway, MA. Then Stan and Harry Koch got together and offered me the job, I believe I got $35.00 a month, plus board and room. I was again living with Stan and Elsie. I never did get back to paint for Russell, but I kept dating Florence, a longer trip to see her than before.

I believe it was the first winter at Sheldegren that on a cold night returning from seeing Florence I had a flat tire and the spare in the trunk was also flat, so I just kept on driving with the right front wheel on the gravel. This was on route two between Erving and Turners Falls. After a while the tire came off the rim and then it was a slow trip home. I guess I woke everybody in the house when I pulled into the driveway as the steel rim on the frozen snow made a terrible racket.

Sheldegren Farm got it's name from being in three towns, Shelburne, Deerfield and Greenfield. Owned by William Koch of Greenfield, who also owned Koch Grocery, managed by his son Harry, who also operated a milk route in Greenfield, Stanley was the herdsman and boss of operations. Ralph Clifford was the three time milker, I was the teamster and helped with milking and other things, and Ray Hardy, kind of all around help, but couldn't drive on the highway as he had a drinking problem, also not too dependable, he might decide not to work for a while, but usually came back. .

Things Remembered

Time seemed to move right along after I had a steady job as a teamster again. It's hard to recall everything that first year, but a few things come to mind. Hauling sawdust was one job that took up a lot of time as Harry wanted the cows kept clean on account of the milk business. We had to drive to Dennisons sawmill in Colrain most of the time. Sometimes we found sawdust and shavings mixed over at Turners Falls which was a short trip. The farm truck was a Dodge ton and a half with high sideboards which probably held a couple cord of sawdust. Harry used that truck when he took cattle to a fair and one year in the fall there was a Guernsey sale at the Topsfield fair grounds and I got to drive them down. That was a kind of fun job even though I had to wash them and polish 'em up for the sale. Harry was down for the sale so I didn't have to worry about that. I had a load part way back as a buyer needed his purchases trucked.

The Rutland Fair always opened on Labor Day and I believe I had the day off so I took Florence up there to see how the cattle were doing. Harry's brother-in-law Jimmy Collinwood was helping with the show cattle and one of the cows had calved that day and Jimmy was having trouble milking her, so I sat down and milked her by hand for him. Didn't splash my britches too much either. That was the year that I bought something nice for Florence. Fairs are a great place for companies to show their wares and usually would have specially priced articles. As we were looking them all over we came across a booth that was demonstrating Singer electric sewing machines. That was likely the first electric I had seen, mother's was a treadle machine, anyway I bought it for her and she says we brought it back with us. I'd forgotten that.

I believe the next presents for her was a hope chest for Christmas and then a Bolivar wrist watch for her graduation in 1941. She still has it and it runs better then one I bought her in the '60s.

Sunday, December 7, 1941. I don't think I had to do afternoon chores that day, so drove over to Northfield Farms to see Florence. Might have gone up to visit mother in East Northfield, or maybe to see Ruth and Albert. Time wise, I can't remember if it was before or after I left Florence that I turned on the car radio and heard about the bombing of Pearl Harbor by the Japanese. Incidentally, I now had a different car, a 1936 Ford coupe. On the way home I stopped on Wells St. in Greenfield, to pick up Ray Hardy, the extra man at Sheldegren, who did the unskilled jobs around the place and

didn't have a drivers license. Someone would give him a ride to town, for whatever purpose he had in mind, and then someone would see that he got back on the hill, as I was out anyway I'd pick him up. One of his friends worked in a small bakery near the corner of Main and Wells and Ray would help him with making the bread for sale the next day. That was where he was that night and as it was getting near to midnight, I wanted to get home to bed; chores would be waiting, come daybreak.

Pearl Harbor was a sneak attack, and shocked the whole country. Many of our warships were sunk or badly damaged, and the loss of lives was terrible. FDR got on the radio spouted a lot of things to make it look as though it was a complete surprise to him. Many, many years later there were things that turned up that pretty much prove he was in favor of a war to get the country back to work. Admiral Nimitz, the commander at Pearl Harbor was the scapegoat for the attack, even though it came out later that there was ample evidence in advance of what the Japanese were planning.

Well, everything was in an uproar for a long time after. The war effort was the thing. A draft went into effect and all eligible men had to go in the service, one branch or another. I was fortunate in a way to be working on a farm. Farmers and farm help could be kept on the farm if it could be proven they would be of more service to the war effort than going into some branch of the military. Ralph the three time milker and I were deferred and Ray was 4F so that was the setup.

The herd was registered Guernsey's, and records were kept on all the animals. Milk from each cow was weighed and recorded on a chart; the grain was carefully measured according to milk produced. The three timers were a lot more work, and that was Ralph's job, they were in a section of the stable by themselves but not partitioned off and he had complete care of them. The two timers were cows that had been milking longer and some may not have even been milked three times a day if they were not high producers and usually the first lactation they wouldn't be three timers. Those were the ones Stan and I milked. The stable was laid out with two rows of stanchions facing a feed alley and a wide walk way behind each line.

The stanchions were separated into four areas, with a crossover walkway in the middle. The three time milkers were kept in the northwest quarter, easier for the milker to take care of them, as they didn't go out with the rest of the herd, there was another

barn yard on the west side of the stable with a cement wall six or eight feet high on two sides and the barn the other two, where Ralph would turn them out for exercise. Lots of windows on both outside walls, set with metal triangular side pieces to allow the window to tilt in at the top for good ventilation. The gutter was cleaned with a shovel, but there was a litter carrier to move the manure out to the pit. An overhead track was mounted over the walk way and was continuous by means of hand switches to get to each side of the stable and out into the original barn which had been made over for pens for calving and some for calves of different ages. The floors of the big pens were cemented, but there were several calf pens that were not over the barn cellar and had dirt bottoms. To make it easier cleaning and also more sanitary, Harry got a gas powered cement mixer and we set it up outside and wheeled the cement to the pens. The mixer had a removable hood over the engine to keep it dry but one day we were mixing and it was snowing and the snow had shorted it out so I held the side up to start it again. Had to use a short handled crank and it flew off the crankshaft and hit me in the mouth chipping a front tooth. I finished the day out and it didn't bother too much, but by the next morning anything hot or cold would hurt like the dickens, so Harry said I better have a dentist look at it. I went over to Dr. Sullivan in Turners and he pulled it out and said he'd make me a partial to fill the gap.

The milk was all pasteurized in a separate section to the south of the stable. Through a door into an alley way to the milk room, the pasteurizer was big enough to handle one or two milkings, and the milk was strained directly into it. Steam was necessary to operate the pasteurizer and the bottle washer, each bottle had to be washed by hand, a motor driven fiber brush mounted over the tub of hot water, was a big help. All bottles were glass in those days and had to be placed carefully into the tub. Broken bottles in the tub were no fun, dangerous, too. Harry did all of the milk room work, but we all got into it from time to time, except I never did learn to do the pasteurizing. There was a boiler at the end of the alley to generate the steam. The other end of the alley was open to the barnyard, and Harry parked the milk truck there for loading and unloading. Harry had traded milk trucks as the one he had was getting pretty well used and the milk route seemed to increase. One reason was the three time milkers which produced very well with the extra care. More on this subject later.

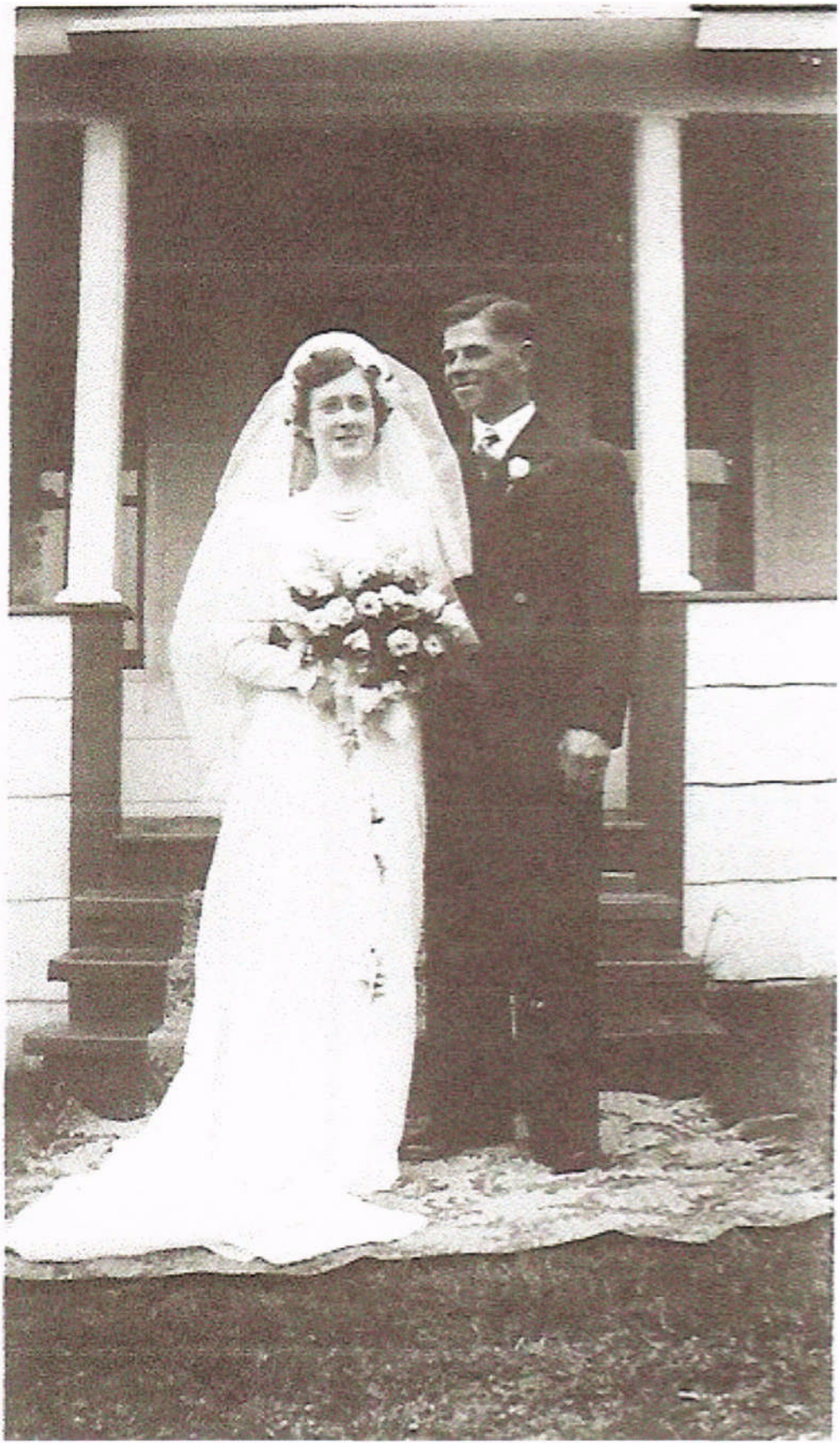
The new truck was a Chevrolet panel type, two doors in back to make for easy access loading and the passenger seat would fold forward and could be removed to be out of the way for setting the milk carriers, wire baskets, long enough to hold eight quart bottles, with a handle in the center.

Sheldegren Farm and Golden Guernsey Milk were lettered on each side of the truck. As the war broke out in ‘41, I think he got a 1942 vehicle. In those days new models didn’t come out in the fall, or even before, like now-a-days, it was the end of the year. There were no doors or covering for the truck so it set out in the weather in a corner, the sawdust bin was on the right and was higher than the stable as there was a driveway at that end of the barn and we’d drive in with the truck to unload sawdust. That way we could shovel down, instead of up. There was also a cement wall maybe ten feet high, which connected with the bull barn. This kind of set-up made for swirling currents when the wind was howling out of the northwest, and if it was during a snow storm, lots of snow would pile up in that corner. Harry liked to leave as early as possible to get the milk delivered for breakfast. One morning when we got out to the barn, Harry was all loaded, but couldn’t start the truck. Snow was piled up in front and on both sides and some even blew into the alley to the milk room. We had to shovel the snow away from the front and clear the wheels. So much snow you could hardly see the truck, Harry had tried to start it, but it wouldn’t even offer. He had me hitch up Jim the off horse of the team, and hitched him to the front end, he thought if I could pull him fast enough it would surely start as there was a good slope down out of the barnyard. All that happened was the truck would backfire. Jim didn’t like that at all and after two or three times, he would hardly pull at all. The grade began to rise then anyway and he couldn’t get enough bite with the steel shoes to pull the truck. Horses have to have special shoes, with drive caulks, to bite frozen ground or packed snow, and he had not been shod for it.

The road had been plowed, but was drifted quite a lot of the way out to the South Shelburne road, nearly a half mile, so Stan got the Farmall M out and was able to work his way out through the drifts and towed the truck all the way down to Greenfield to Jeffers, the Ford garage at the west end of Main St. which became Sweeney Ford in later years. The milk was frozen by then, as well as Stan, out there in the wind, no cab

or protection of any kind, I guess Harry wasn't much better off, no heat or anything. They left the truck there and used one of his father's grocery trucks to peddle the milk. When they got back to the garage the milk truck started first try. They told Harry the engine compartment was packed full of snow and shorted out the plugs. If we had opened the hood and cleaned out the snow, we probably could have started it, but nobody thought of it.

We got through that winter and the work for everyone kept getting heavier, no help available as the draft was taking all the able bodied young men. Harry was able to keep me working and out of the army as we were contributing to the war effort.



Things Remembered

June 21,1942.
Florence Alice Hale and Charles Austin Phelps
were married at the Hale residence in Northfield Farms.

Florence had graduated from Northfield High School in June of 1941. I wanted to ask her then, but her mother had made it quite clear I shouldn't, and Florence didn't want any argument with her, even though she was old enough to make her own decisions. She had a couple jobs in Northfield for a while then went to work for Ruth and Bill Allen in Bernardston, taking care of their three children during the week. Ruth was working in Greenfield, as was Bill, so she only worked during the week and had Saturday and Sunday off. Then in April, after the rough winter and extra work I made up my mind that I should have a partner to help me cope with doing enough or more to keep me on the farm, so I asked her to be my wife and she said yes.

Florence had her mind set on a June wedding and set the date of June 21,1942 as the big day. The next couple months were real busy, between working and making preparations. Harry figured they could spare me for a few days, the early haying should be well along, and we could have a short honeymoon. Florence was having her sister Esther for her maid-of-honor and I asked Ray if he would be my best man. Esther was at home, working in Northfield and Ray worked at Pratt & Whitney in Hartford. Florence mother worked at the Northfield Seminary and was hoping to have the use of the chapel for the ceremony, but there were school activities in June, or it was already spoken for. Neither of us were members at the time of any particular church, and we were able to get the services of Rev. Herbert Gale, a minister at the Seminary. The ceremony to take place at the family home in Northfield Farms. Sister Betty would play the piano and brother George the violin, and we asked June, Stan and Elsie's' youngest daughter, to be flower girl.

The 21st was a Sunday. Ray had come up from Hartford the night before and Sunday morning we went to Bernardston to get something to decorate the parlor. June is the month of roses, or was in those days, hybrids now have lengthened the season, and up on Huckle Hill at the Doolittle place there were old fashioned pink roses around the cellar hole. The house had burned several years before and the bushes had

survived, they just needed to be picked, and we did. Incidentally, it was a rainy day, not heavy but not completely dry either, the only bother of it was picture taking after, we had to find a rug to stand on to keep the gown dry. Outdoor pictures only, professionals used artificial lights, but we couldn't afford that. One of her cousins had a good camera for the times and took black and white pictures. Florence had a small box camera we took on our trip. The Phelps family was well represented, from Grandpa and Grandma Phelps right down the line. John was unable to attend as he had been inducted into the army in March of 1941, shortly after he and Gladys were married. There was a war in Europe at that time, but the U S had not yet been involved. Not as many of Florence' family as my side. Grandpa and Grandma Joslyn, Uncle Bill and Aunt Ruth Joslyn, the cousin mentioned above with the camera, with her mother and father. In 1942 gas rationing was in effect, as well as many other things, I lived on the job, and didn't have to drive to work so I had the lowest rating, an 'A' stamp, good for five gallons of gas. The book of stamps had to last for a certain length of time, say you had ten stamps and each was gas for a week, then you decided to go somewhere and used up half of them in a couple weeks, then you have five left for the next eight weeks. When we were planning, we thought it would be nice to go to Niagara Falls. I don't remember how many I had saved, not enough I'm sure. However, you might be talking with someone about rationing and they might mention someone they knew had been out to, say New York, and they bought gas but the station didn't ask for their stamp. That sounded like a chance to maybe get some extra mileage. We started off with high hopes and some stamps. Took the Mohawk Trail out of Greenfield, and on into New York. The cars then were not much for speed, besides; the roads were narrow and crooked. We left Northfield close to five o'clock and five hours later we found a small hotel in Esperance, New York, a short distance beyond Albany. I don't remember how much the room was, likely only a few dollars.

The next day we continued west on route twenty, rolling type farm land, not sharp hills like New England. We were not sure how far we could get in the time we had and until we had to get gas, we couldn't make a decision. Inevitably, we had to have some gas and then it didn't take long to decide we would not be getting to the other end of York State and back with the remaining stamps, the attendant took the required stamps

and we decided to leave route twenty and look for Otsego Lake, about ten miles or so south. We found there were many cottages along the shore for vacationers to rent, usually by the week, but we stopped at one place to see what we could do for two or three days. Likely it was in our favor that there was a war on or the cottages might have been full, as it was, we could have one down by the lake and even have a boat to use, and not too much money. As near as we can recall, we only had about a hundred dollars for the trip.

At the south end of the lake is Cooperstown, about a mile or more from our cottage. Cooperstown, Baseballs Hall of Fame, and James Fenimore Cooper, author of many Indian stories based on early times in the area. The Indians called the lake the "Glimmer Glass" and most of the time we were there I could see why, there were times that was exactly what it was. I'd read some of Coopers works and enjoyed them, so it was interesting to be in the area. In later years the buildings have been restored and a little village can be toured, much like Old Sturbridge Village. The Hall of Fame was quite small then, compared to what it is at the present time. There were neat little places to eat, some restaurants, but they cost more and we were not really into dining out, being used to home cooking.

As I think back, the figure twelve keeps coming to mind and I'm sure that must have been what the cottage cost us for the three days. Thursday we packed up and started for home. We figured our gas stamps were enough to get us there and should have one or two left to carry through to the next time of issue. We wouldn't need as many then anyway as we would be on the job all the time. Harry arranged my pay scale so the room I'd had, figured in as part of my pay and Florence could help Elsie with the boarders. We got back to Northfield before dark and stayed overnight at my mothers in East Northfield. Went back to work on Friday and was right back to haying again.

That winter was a busy one. Then I believe it was February that Ralph, the three time milker, decided that he didn't want Harry to keep getting him deferred, and enlisted in the branch of service he wanted. That shook up things in great shape. Harry didn't want to lose out on the extra milk from the three timers, so he asked Stan and I if we could work it out some way that we could split up the milking times between us and still do the other milking and chores. Ray Hardy was still with us but was not very

dependable as mentioned above. We decided we'd try it for a while, to see how it would work out. Stan would get up earlier than he usually did and milk the three timers, then when I got down to the barn, I'd get going on the two time string. When he'd finished the three timers, and grained the others, he would help on the regular milking and any fresh cow that needed hand milking. We'd try to be ready for breakfast by seven-thirty or so. Some of the young calves would get fed, especially if they needed special attention, the rest after breakfast. Elsie would have breakfast ready when we got in. Then it was back to the barn and finish feeding, they'd get silage before we went in, but hay would have to be pitched down to the feed alley and divided down the line. Hardy could handle that part OK. I'd help with feeding, then Hardy would start on stables, some times he might start on them before we went in to eat. I had the team to take care of, water, clean out the stalls and curry them. Didn't take all that long, but had to be done. Their stable was under the three story hay barn. Then help finish cleaning stables and pens, spread new bedding and, if lucky, have a couple hours to do other farm jobs. After dinner, either Stan or I would milk the three timers string and, as they were given extra treatment, exercise them in the inside barn yard, and brush them down. If I remember right, after a short time, some of the pampering had to be skipped. Anyhow, which one of us wasn't doing the midday milking, could get outside to work until time to milk the two timers again, about four-thirty or so. As I remember, we could only keep up with it for about a month, and then Harry had to figure out a different scheme.

We lived there at Sheldegren until the first of April 1943. We were expecting our first child and there wouldn't be enough room in the big house for another family.

We found a cottage in West Deerfield we could rent from Dr. Clark, not too much of a drive to work and during the summer, the old Albany road was passable and was a short trip to work. Then we had to furnish it and get ready for the baby. There was a fireplace in the biggest room, it smoked most every time we used it, wood stove in the kitchen for cooking, but that was what Florence was used to, another small room off the big room, make a good place to have the baby things. The only other room with any size was upstairs, so that was our bedroom. There was room enough for the baby too and would be near us at night. The doctor had figured her due date as April 25th, Easter Sunday. Saturday her mother and Esther were down to visit her and they took her to the

hospital when she began labor, however, Dr Freeman had more than one expectant mother all at the same time and must have given her something to slow things down. When I went in to see her after work, nothing was happening. She stayed over night and Sunday they had her walking to get things started again, but without results, so I brought her home again Sunday afternoon. Monday I went to work but didn't hear anything all day. When I got home about seven, I found she had tried to get me, but couldn't get through on the phone. She should have already been at the hospital, so I got her there as soon as I could. We were very fortunate there was not a bad complication with the birth. With all the fooling around, the baby had turned and had to be assisted to the proper position. A little before ten, Beverly Jean Phelps was born, April 26,1943. Not Easter Sunday, but the day after. We had names picked out, but had no idea which sex. Now-a-days people can find out early which it will be. We lived in the cottage until in the fall it began to be too hard to heat. Then we found a rent at 228 Chapman Street, just south of the Allen Street R.R. Bridge.

When I went to Sheldegren to work, my job was to fill in for two weeks for their teamster, then I stayed on as teamster and all around help, then the war changed a lot of things on the farm. Horses couldn't turn out as much in the way of upping crop production as tractors could, and Harry needed to get more out of the land without more help, which wasn't available anyway, and they bought a Ford-Ferguson tractor with the new three point hitch, and sold the team to Myron Barber. Molly had got to be nearly blind and would have had to be replaced, so it was better to sell the team and go to tractors. I'd mentioned before the Farmall `M' tractor, the biggest International built at that time. The Ferguson was more compact and was not supposed to tip over, front to back, like the old Fordsons did. This tractor came with steel wheels, rubber tires were all going to military then and not always available to the public buyer. We did get rubber tires later on and it made a lot of difference in the traction. The old Fordson had steel wheels all around, the drive wheels had inch and half cleats bolted on at an angle for traction, the new tractor had three inch square tapered lugs bolted to the steel rim in a staggered pattern around the rim, had a tendency to dig a hole if it started to spin, rubber would do it, but not as quickly. That summer we were haying over in Conway, the place Bill Weston, the teamster I replaced, lived and the land was quite soggy in a

lot of places, so to prevent rutting the fields and getting stuck, we took the steel rims over and put them on outside the tires to act as a flotation device, helped a lot. However, because of them I was laid up for a spell. The barn wouldn't hold all the hay and to haul it back to Sheldegren every day was too much, so we were unloading in the old tobacco barn. This was before the days of hay balers. We would set the wagon load at the end of the barn, and using a hay fork, as I remember, a small grapple fork, run the rope to a pulley at the other end and back to the tractor, instead of using a horse like we did on Huckle Hill, to drag the hay into the barn. I had just set the fork in the last load and went to get off the wagon to drive the tractor ahead. The wagon was not setting level and I stepped to the front to get onto the tractor, there was a lot of chaff and hay seeds on the body to make it slippery and I lost my balance and fell onto the tractor wheel. I was lucky, in a way, that I didn't get hurt any worse, I landed on one of the lugs just below my right eye and evidently jarred my partial plate loose and cut through my lip so I was bleeding some. We were nearly done for the day, so, cleaned up as much as possible, likely a bandage on the cut and went back to Sheldegren. Harry sent me to the doctor to make sure there wasn't anything else wrong. Went to Dr. Moran and he wanted to know if I'd ever had a tetanus shot. No I never had, so, he proceeded to give me the horse serum shot in the buttocks. Working around horses, lockjaw was a danger from an open injury. His instructions were to take a dose of Epsom salts after, I think it was five days, and that would clean everything out and I could go back to work. Guess what, I followed instructions and wound up in bed for almost a week. I think they called it automatic Arthritis and the hives, couldn't even lift an arm or any part of my body, every joint hurt. Also the itching was something fierce. At one point, before it finally broke, Florence could hardly get my mouth open enough to feed me ice cream, almost as if I had lockjaw. She took care of Beverly; she was about four months old, and me, as well as keeping everything else going around the house. At that time she didn't even have a drivers license so, had to depend on some one to run errands, etc. Once I started to get over it, I was soon able to get back to work and no after affects. No aching joints or anything.

While we were still living at Sheldegren I had a chance to buy a shotgun. I didn't have one of my own, always borrowed one, the first one I shot was John's and I got a

gray squirrel with the first shot, later I hunted Partridge with father's hair-trigger shotgun, never got used to it. The hired man over at the Raymond place near the farm, had a shotgun to sell, Harry's brother-in law thought he wanted five dollars for it. Sounded alright without seeing it, so I went over to have a look. Found out it was a Stevens-Browning, 12 gauge pump, long barrel, and he wanted more than five dollars. After some dickering, I got him to throw in all the shells he had and gave him $12.00 for it . Florence wasn't too pleased, but that gun paid for itself ten times over in the years I have owned it. Partridge, Pheasant, Deer, Rabbits just about everything. Had one flaw, I found after a while, a broken firing pin. Ruth's husband Albert was working at Millers Falls Tool Company and made me a new one, but it was soft and didn't hold up. Then Dick made one at G.T.D. and case hardened it, which is still in use. As I remember, it was the second year on Chapman Street that I hunted with Stan and Jimmy Collinwood, Harry's brother-in law, over west of the farm, and shot a nice buck that Stan chased right to me. That was the first of many that I got over the years.

We lived on Chapman Street two years, and then had a chance to buy a small house the other side of the tracks on Wells Street. We didn't have any more money then, but Russell, Florence' father offered us the down payment, as a loan of course. I still worked at Sheldegren and there wasn't any change in pay as I had been paying my own rent from what I earned, the difference was that I was putting money in more or less as rent, but building an equity and also establishing a line of credit. Paying rent is a lot like paying for a dead horse, no matter how long you pay, you'll never own the horse. We must have moved over there in the spring some time as I remember having a garden and raising some volunteer tomatoes, Italian style or what we'd now call paste tomatoes. World War II was finally ended, with the "A" bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Japanese called it quits. Germany had already had enough, so then it was a case of put things back together and getting on with life in the good ole U.S.A. No longer were ration stamps necessary, tires became more plentiful, some weren't the best, but at least you could buy them. Last, but not least, the draft was no longer a threat to holding a job.

Florence' father and mother had been separated at the time we were married, and a few years later had got back together. Russell worked for Perry Farms in

Bernardston, and they bought the house on Center Street between the Burks and the Methodist Church. I think it had been the parsonage but hadn't been used as such for years and the congregation had gone over to the Goodale Memorial Church on Church Street. The Perry Farm was operated by Louis Pratt and did a lot of trading, consequently, Russell knew a lot of dealers and when George Richardson, a cattle dealer in Greenfield, was looking for a man to work his place on Leyden Road, Russell suggested he talk with me.

This job offered a house as part of the pay and even though we had our own place, it wouldn't be feasible to live in town and drive to work. After studying all the angles we decided to give it a try. It would be more like the kind of job that Stan had at Sheldegren, except George would have the final say on how a cow would be pushed for production, etc. It was a start in the right direction, anyway. I believe it was the first part of November when we moved from Wells Street to the farm. Brother John had returned from the service and offered to help me. We got settled in before the cold weather set in. By spring, we'd got used to the routine, and figured we hadn't made a mistake to change jobs. The house on Wells Street we rented to the Petersons, and later sold it to the youngest Judd boy. This was the Judd family from Bernardston, so I had known the family since I was a kid. We paid the loan back to Russell and went on from there.

Then in June along came our first son. June 7, 1946, to be exact. Dr. Freeman was still our doctor in spite of the way he had treated us at Beverly's birth, but there wasn't much choice in those days. He had set her due date as June 7, I had checked on her a couple times and she was busy at something and declared the doc had the wrong date. About quarter to four I went to the pasture to bring the cows in for the night milking and had to go by the house, so I popped in to see how she was. She told me the same thing, must be the wrong day. I rounded up the herd and drove them back to the barn, tied them up and prepared for the night milking. George had a summer cottage just beyond our house and as I was getting ready to milk he popped in to see how things were going and was about to go back to the house when his daughter came in the barn with Beverly in tow and said that Florence wanted to see me right away. George took over the milking and I went to see what was wanted. Right off she said she had had a sharp pain, and called the Doctor and I had better take her to the hospital.

I went back to the barn and told George what was happening and he told me to get her there and he would finish the chores and his wife and daughter would keep an eye on Beverly. I got the car out and drove down to the house. Florence wasn't having pains at regular intervals, so wasn't hurrying at all, said she was going to be sure this time and not walk the halls like she did with Beverly. Just as we were ready to leave the house, she had another pain and I thought for sure we might never get to the hospital. That passed and we left for the drive to the hospital on Beacon Street. The clutch had never given me any trouble before, but twice on the way I wasn't sure I'd be able to get the car moving at a stop sign, one place was at Federal Street. I had to stop on the rise at the intersection and the car took forever to get rolling again to cross onto Beacon. Fortunately, no pains but we were both nervous. I pulled up to the door by the main entrance and we walked in. Then she had another pain. The head nurse was right there at once and told her to sit in a chair that was right handy, Florence said she couldn't sit but she was pushed into it and then whisked down the hall to the elevator to the maternity ward on the third floor and I was sent to the waiting room.

Didn't seem like any time at all before my sister Ruth came in to tell me I had a son. Norman Bruce Phelps was born on the date set by the doctor, June 7, 1946. The doctor never did get to the delivery room, but he billed me just the same. The nurses delivered the baby, although they said they had never done anything like that before. Ruth was working in the hospital and recognized Florence when she had the pain as she entered the hospital and had checked it out at her first opportunity and brought me the message.

I couldn't see Florence or the baby until evening visiting hours, which were at 8:00 PM, so I went back to the house. When I walked into the barn and told George we had a son, he couldn't believe it happened that fast. He was just about finishing the chores, so I had to make arrangements for Beverly and call the folks to let them know. I'm not too sure on some of the arrangements. My mother and her mother were working, they couldn't come to help, It seems like Grandma Joslyn helped out for a few days and Dorothy was there the Sunday I brought them home from the hospital. I remember that, because the strawberries were ripe and we had shortcake for dinner, maybe my mother was with her that day too.

I worked for Richardson about three years, and then we drew up an agreement that I would rent the cattle and land and pay a percentage of the milk check to cover rent and other things. It was a chance for me to get to know the inside workings of farming. We didn't do too bad the first year, but grain prices and other feeds didn't stay in line with the price of milk. In fact milk prices stayed the same and other costs seemed to go up all the time. When I finally turned it back to George, we were getting behind faster then getting ahead and we decided to get out and work for someone else again.

I found a job in Avon, Connecticut, the west side of the mountain from Hartford. This man was Frank Holloway and milked and processed all the milk to peddle in Hartford. He had a garage where the delivery trucks were kept and over the garage, but on another level were four or five apartments for the hired help. We had one in about the middle and there wasn't any problem waking up in the morning. When the overhead garage doors were opened right under your bed it was hard to sleep over. It was the best we could do at the time and as we were in debt to J. L. Dunnell in Bernardston and a few other small bills, it was a chance to get back on our feet. The milking herd was around a hundred ten or fifteen all the time and split amongst five or six milkers it went pretty fast, only had two times milking, he figured to get enough out of the herd so three timers were not necessary. We went down there in March so I got into all the spring work. That was where I learned to put up a straight fence and have the posts properly anchored to stay put. He and I worked together to make a new fence and the corner post was set and tamped into place before any other post was set. The soil was different there than what I was used to, being deep river bottom soil with hardly ever a stone. After the first post, I had to step off so many paces then place a bar where it would be in line with a point at the other side of the lot, Frank would sight out and have me move it one way or another until it suited him, sometimes only an inch or so, but it had to be perfect. He said that way it was a lot harder for the cows to push them over as a straight line of wire had less give than one that varied to allow a slack place. I don't remember having to chase stray cows all the time I worked for him.

Along into the summer Florence's Uncle Bill Joslyn, who lived in Westfield and worked at a paper mill in Woronoco, had been talking with a coworker and this fellow told Bill about a farmer in Southwick that was looking for a herdsman. Doug Cass was

his name and he drove to Avon to talk with me. I happened to be unloading grass into the blower for silage, but he asked Frank if he could talk with me, probably told him what he wanted. So we had a talk and he stated what he expected and what was furnished and the pay. I didn't make the decision right then, but went up to see the place and talk with him again. We decided the job sounded good so gave Frank a two week notice. He was reluctant to let me go, said I had been a very dependable man and he would recommend me any time if I ever needed a reference. About three or four years ago I went to Avon to find a covered bridge and went by where the farm was and discovered it is a huge mall.

Doug sent his truck to Avon to move us and the day we moved in we found that the folks that had just moved out left the house a mess. Doug had cleaned it up fairly well before we got there so it was livable. Chore time came about the time we'd got unloaded, so Doug asked if I would like to go over to the barn as they were tying the cattle up. The last cow had just been tied up when we heard Florence calling me to hurry over. When I got there she was sitting on the porch step holding Norman and a bloody towel to his forehead. Doug had come over too, and when he saw the situation rushed back to his house and got his car and took us up to the doctor in town. The waiting room was full, but when they saw what had happened, we were rushed right into the office. The wound was in the middle of his forehead and there is not much meat there and the doctor cleaned the cut and I held Normans head still and either Doug or Florence held him down while the doc put in some stitches, no anesthesia to take away the pain, just sewed it up. What happened was that the shade on the ceiling light was dirty, so they took it down and washed it. When they put it back the single nut that held it on wasn't put on properly and as the rooms were such that Norman could ride his tricycle all the way around from room to room and as he passed under the light the shade dropped and the edge caught him as he was looking up. Not too good a way to start a new job, but it happened. Doug was a good boss and got paint and paper to brighten the place up. The house was small but I've seen worse places to live in. The farm name was Glad-Ayr-Farm and all the cattle were registered Ayshires. Great learning experience to keep the records and improve the herd average.

Working here was my first experience with raising tobacco. My job was herdsman, but when extra help was needed, like when the tobacco was harvested, Doug would give me a bonus to help. I learned to chop and to load and help hang the lath of plants in the barn to cure. They wouldn't let me learn to spear as it was too dangerous and my hands had to be kept in good shape for milking, etc. The spearing was a job that took some doing to learn just how. The plant was chopped off below the bottom leaves and laid along the row, something like cutting corn, but we used a hatchet type chopper instead of the corn knife. The stalks were usually more than an inch an a half thick and required a good sound blow to cut. After they were wilted so the leaves wouldn't break off, a person that had learned to spear would pick up a lath, slide a sharp metal point onto it, and then pick up a stalk of tobacco by the butt and bring it down on the upright spear as near the center and just beyond his hand with enough force to go through the stalk and clear the point, slide it down the lath, pick up another stalk, do it again until there were five stalks spaced along a forty inch lath, leaving room on each end to hang the lath on the special rack on the truck body. There was help enough to pass the loaded lath to someone on the truck that placed them in position and when the rack was filled, the truck was driven to the tobacco barn and unloaded to hang to cure. Starting at the peak the lath was hung on poles spaced to hold them. As each bent was filled, move down to the next level and fill more poles until the barn was filled from end to end. A bent was the distance between the cross stringers, the barn being built with the post and beam system and usually about six bents of twelve feet. Doug raised ten acres and had, if I remember right, four barns. Tobacco barns are built for drying, the sides appear to be boarded solid, but all the boards are not nailed. Every other one or every third one may be hinged to allow them to be opened or closed, depending on the weather. If the day was fairly clear, and maybe a breeze, all the doors would be opened to allow air to circulate through the hanging tobacco. A rainy or lowry day, the doors were kept closed to keep out moisture. If a fog should roll in early in the morning, Doug or someone had to get them closed as soon as possible. Some of the big operators had begun to use gas to dry the tobacco, bottled gas or propane, but Doug did his drying the old fashioned way. Along about October the tobacco would be ready to strip. In this operation the stalks were taken down and the lath removed, then

the leaves were removed from the stalks and placed in hands, so called, and then packed into a wooden packing box that was first lined with heavy wrapping paper and the hands placed as flat as possible, as this tobacco was used for cigar wrappers. When the box was filled to the top a lid was brought over and pressed the leaves down, and then some more leaves could go in. When it was properly filled and packed, then the paper was folded over the top and twine tied in three places. This was for handling, when the crop was hauled to the center where the buyers would look it over and bid how much per pound they were willing to pay. Everyone got into the stripping job as it needed to be done early in the day and usually after a damp or foggy night when the leaves would hold their shape without cracking. Florence even got in on that and the extra pay didn't hurt. The first year I didn't get in on the start of the crop, but the next spring I had a chance to learn about it. Grandma Root, Doug's wives' Grandmother, would start the seed in the hot beds on the sunny slope below the barn. Then after the chance of frost and when the fields had been prepared, the plants were set with a transplanter pulled behind a Farmall 'A' tractor. In first gear it would move fairly slow and two setters sitting on a seat that just skimmed the ground, each with a box of plants on their lap, could place a plant in the groove opened in the soil at the point where a splash of water from the barrel mounted above dropped into the groove. At the speed the tractor moved, it worked out that the persons setting the plants would alternate each time the water dropped down. I got the job of driving the tractor and a straight row was in order, at the slow speed, this could get monotonous, and it was necessary to concentrate to keep awake, especially as the sun could get quite warm.

These jobs relieved the monotony of just being a herdsman. Haying and silo filling were also part of the job, but always the boss had in mind the I must not be doing anything to injure my hands and interfere with milking. While working there I got my first vacation since we were married. We took a trip into upper York State, leaving the two kids with Florence' folks in Bernardston and driving out to Utica, where we stayed one night. Then went north into the Adirondack Mountains, then east over to Tupper Lake and then Lake Placid before heading south again. At Tupper Lake the '38 Buick I had at that time decided to quit. We were nearly to the center of the town, so I left the car on the side of the street and hiked up around the corner and found a garage in a short

while. I told the owner my problem and where the car was and he said someone would be there shortly. His word was good and it wasn't very long before a truck came and towed me to the garage and right inside where he worked under the hood for a time then had me step on the starter and it started up. With a little more adjusting he said it should be fine the rest of the way. I asked what made it stall, and he told me the carburetor was not adjusted for the higher altitude where I was driving and that the car had what is called vapor-lock. He must have been right, because I had no more trouble on the trip. I don' remember just how much it cost me, but it wasn't too much for the times. Now-a-days there would have been a towing charge and then labor, and who knows what else. Times do change.

Another time on a Monday morning after chores, he wanted to know if I'd like to see a ball game in Boston. We had a radio in the barn and I could listen to games while I worked, but I'd never been anywhere near a major league ball game, in fact I'd never been to Boston that I could remember. Doug had listened to the Sunday game, and the Red Socks had beaten the Cleveland Indians after an exciting game, and they were playing again on Monday and Doug figured it would be no problem to get seats and if I'd like to go the milking would be taken care of. I jumped at the chance and another friend of Doug's and me took off for Boston in Doug's Ford convertible.

The game was to start at 1:00 and as we left Southwick about 10:00 Doug figured we could make it easy. We had trouble finding Fenway Park and the game had started before we were anywhere near the place. At one point Doug stopped to ask a fellow on the sidewalk were to find the park and he had no idea which way we should go. We did find it after a while and found the ticket window was closed as they were sold out on that side, however, we went around to a side ticket window and got tickets out in right field. Boston had one of their better pitchers going that day, but Bob Lemon was pitching for Cleveland. The game seesawed back and forth, Indians ahead, then Red Socks. Boston starter got knocked out of the game and another pitcher came in, then Lemon was knocked out, and Bobby Feller came in, so I got to see some great pitching. Ted Williams hit a home run out in our direction, but none of our crowd got it. Boston finally won the game, so we had a good time.

Doug also liked to hunt and I went with some of the boys to hunt up toward Otis Mass, but didn't even get a shot. Then one year he gave me time off to hunt with Stan in New Hampshire. Stan was working for R. N. Johnson up on top of the mountain out of Walpole. Tom Johnson, R. N.'s son was a great friend of Stan's and a great hunter. He also had a Jeep and we drove out into the wild country, on woods roads that would have been impassable to any other vehicle. I believe Dennis hunted with us that time and Tom dropped me off by an old cellar hole that had a fairly good view in three directions, with trees fairly thick on the fourth side to the west of my stand. They told me to wait there and the others would circle around and maybe I'd get to see a deer. I had my 38-55 as I could use a rifle in NH, and I'd been there for what seemed like a long time, and was thinking of moving around a bit to get the blood stirred up, when I looked out around the tree I was using for a stand, and there was a deer trotting across in front of me, maybe thirty yards away. To get a sight on her, I could see it was a doe, I had to bring the rifle up and to the left of the tree to get a bead on her. She had gotten to within ten feet of a fair sized pine tree when I squeezed off a shot and missed. The bullet must have struck the tree just ahead of her, because she went right up on her hind legs and did a 180 degree turn and started back the way she came. So, get the barrel back the other side of the tree and get a shot off before she got too far. This time I didn't miss and she stumbled a couple times and then went down. I could see her fine because all there was in that area was hardhack and short bushes. I held the gun ready in case she tried to get up and leave, but I'd delivered a fatal shot and only had to use the one shot. I field dressed her and dragged her over by my stand and continued to watch for deer, hoping to get another shot at one. Some time later, about two hundred yards across the field, or what used to be a field, I saw another deer sifting along the old stone wall, but I don't remember that I was able to get a shot at it. Then later on I happened to look over towards the road and saw a set of antlers peeking over the stone wall at me. It wasn't there long enough to have a real good look, but by the antlers it must have been a good sized buck. I waited quite a while before any of the others showed up, and non of them had seen a deer. That one was good eating and rode on the front fender of the Buick back to Southwick.

We stayed with that job for a few years, and then we decided to get nearer to the family, and got a job in Vernon, VT working for the Blodgett Farm. We had a bigger house than the one in Southwick and the pay was pretty good, every third Sunday off, as the two Blodgett boys, Harold and Earl had the other two and I was the only one not family. Blodgett had started with one farm and any time land or a farm that abutted his was for sale he managed to acquire it until his farm took in probably two hundred acres, all tied into one big farm. There were two big silos on the west side of the barn and another smaller one on the north end, also one at the barn beside where we lived. The milking herd was kept at the main barn and young stock was kept, at the barn beside us and some more at the barn next to Earl's house. Harold lived in a new house near the main farm house where Ernest and his wife lived and Ernestine, an unmarried daughter, with them.

The stable was laid out with five separate rows of milkers. The milk room was to the right of the hay barn which sat in a north-south configuration, originally about fifty feet long, and had been added to several times over the years. An ell was added at right angles to that, and the main barn had been extended another fifty feet or so to the south. The ell had two rows of milkers, facing out, some at the end of one row were on my string. The old barn had one row as you came in from the milk room. Then a crossover walk way and two rows facing in, the last ones on the east side were also on my string. I mention the layout as it was, in part, responsible for my leaving that job. More on that subject later.

I think I had to be a resident of the state for a year to get a resident hunting license. I'd hunted in VT before, having had a nonresident license, and Stan and I had hunted with Cecil Waite in Marlboro and West Brattleboro. Cecil was Elsie's brother and had a cabin on the road to Sunset Lake, just off the Molly Stark Trail. When I could get a resident license I asked for the first day of deer season off to hunt with Stan again. The road to the farm turned off route 142 and after a short ways pitched over a hill and passed by the barn I mentioned above that was next to the house we had. North of the barn was a strip of marsh land, grown up with soft maples and a few scattered pine and hemlock. East of that was a wide field that extended north for near a quarter mile, as far as the trees were. It was not unusual to look up the length of the field and see deer

grazing peacefully in the early evening. Stan was still buying a nonresident license and he liked the looks of the area for deer cover and he would come down from Walpole and we'd hunt there together. I kind of bragged a little to Harold and Earl that I'd have my buck hanging up by 7:30 the first day, not really expecting to, but it was something to talk about while doing the chores. Stan was down there early and we coordinated how we would hunt the area. He's a better shot at moving deer than I am, so he would circle to the left at the top of the bank and west of all the trees, and get into position close to the end of the woods where he could see anything I might move out of the swamp. Figuring any deer would stay in the wooded area as long as possible, and not cross the open field to the east. I was to give him ten minutes or so to get to where he wanted to be, and then I would start at the edge of the little pond by the barn and work my way up through and meet him. At that time of year there wasn't any wet spots, but the moss and decayed leaves were very quiet to move on. I'd probably moved slowly about fifty or seventy yards, gun at the ready, and checking all sides, when suddenly a deer was standing about twenty yards from me. As soon as I spotted it, of course, it turned to my right and in ten feet was behind an uprooted tree and stopped to size up the situation. I only caught a glimpse before it was behind the roots and didn't know if it was a buck or doe. Vermont had a buck law and does were not legal. However, there was a deer and if it was a doe, I was almost in my yard and just maybe It could be dragged to the shed after dark, and no one the wiser. This went through my mind in a flash and I was still holding the gun on what I could see, about the shoulder. I couldn't see the head at all. Then the deer took a step ahead and stopped again, and I touched off a shot. The deer dropped in it's tracks. Then I glanced around to see if, perchance, there was any one around, then proceeded to approach the deer. When I got to within a few feet of it, what do you know, it was a four point buck. I had it nearly field dressed when Stan gave a whistle to try and locate me. I whistled back, and he joined me in a minute or so, and was surprised to see me dressing out a buck. Then he told me he had seen deer moving out of the area, and not an antler in the lot. It didn't take us long to drag him over to the garage and he was hanging there before 7:30. I guess Harold was checking every so often and it wasn't but a few minutes before the boys waved to me.

It was so early in the day that Stan wanted to hunt some more, and as we had chased the deer out of that area, we headed for, west of West Brattleboro. We could have gone up to the basin as we knew the territory there pretty well, but, I'm quite sure it was West B. Didn't see any more deer where ever we went.

If I'm remembering correctly, it was 1952 when I went to work in Vernon. I worked for three years and two or three months. Then my feet were beginning to give me trouble. Earlier I spoke about the layout of the milking barn, and how my string was the farthest from the milk room. When we were doing the milking we didn't take the milk from each cow to the milk room, you didn't go 'till two milk pails were full. Day after day, carrying the heavy pails of milk and walking on cement floors, my heels would be so tender; it was painful to walk to the barn in the morning. After an hour or so it was better, but I decided to try some other line of work. Esther's husband, Clarence Webber, had been telling me for years that I could do better working where he worked, at Erving Paper Mills. I gave Blodgett my notice and found a rent on Meadow Street in Northfield. Bob Thompson had a truck and did moving, so I hired him and we moved to Northfield in July 1955.

Things Remembered

After Farming, Paper Mill

I hadn't even been to see about any other work before moving the family to Northfield, but I figured to give the paper mill a look see, so I drove to Erving the next morning and went to personnel to inquire about work.

Justin Waite was the personnel manager and he explained all the ins and outs of working in a paper mill as against farm work. One of the things that sounded good to me was an eight hour day, after so many years of daylight to dark for a fixed wage that sounded real good to me. Besides that, every Sunday off. After everything was explained, about joining the union, and working at a reduced hourly rate for six weeks, he said there was an opening in the yard and I could start working right away. Webber was a tow motor operator in the yard, so I would have the same boss. The starting pay for jobs at the bottom of the scale was $1.38 per hour. Yard work was mostly main strength and ignorance, all you had to do was follow orders, keep plugging and don't goof off. The yard boss was George Lyman and a good boss to work for, he would explain how to lift things so as not to cause an injury, and if the object was too heavy for one, don't be afraid to get some one to help.

Along about December a job was posted for a second helper in the beater room. There are three men on each shift, beater operator, first helper and second helper. This was new to me as on the farm all the work had to be done and there was no one trying to get ahead of you or to get seniority, because there wasn't any. The mill was different, all job openings had to be posted on the bulletin board beside the time clock so everyone could see it and decide if they are interested in bidding on it. For some reason I decided to bid on the job. Webber said I wouldn't like it, and a couple of my coworkers said try it, you can always come back to the yard if you don't like it. Seniority is the rule for getting a posted job, and I got the second helper job over another applicant only because I started working at Erving six hours ahead of the other fellow. We both applied for work the same day, I went to work after the interview and he started working on the second shift in shipping.

The beater room was a whole new ball game. In the yard we worked five and a half days, Sunday off. In the beater room, as the machines operated seven days a

week, the schedule was seven days a week. As the beater room supplied stock to the machines, the shifts were the same for each department and a rotating shift schedule was used. The way that worked, each shift moved up weekly, 7 to 3 this week, 3 to 11 next week, 11 to 7 the third week. So that everyone would have a day off every week, the shift was set up for 56 hours. This made two twelve hour shifts each week for each crew. This was what I was getting into, and it would depend on how well I could handle it. I was willing to give it a try.

When I went to work at Erving I rode with Webber. Then when I went to work in the beater room I had to drive myself. I'd traded my '38 Buick to a fellow in West Brattleboro who needed a bigger car, for a tudor hard top Chevrolet, I think it was a 1950. Didn't like it in the winter very well for climbing the snow covered road over the hill from Northfield to Erving, and traded with Frank Podlenski for a Ford sedan. Later then the Chevy, maybe '53 or '54. That seemed to work pretty good on the hills.

Early in 1958, we were thinking about buying a house we could call our own. On my day off we'd have a line on something, and go look into it. Pioneer Valley High School was in the building process, and Beverly wanted us to stay in the union so she could continue with friends she had been going to the Northfield school with. Florence didn't want to live in Bernardston, and it would also be a long drive for me, so we tried to find something in Northfield, but had no luck. Then we looked at a place just over the line in Winchester that was handled by the Jennings Agency in Winchester. That one wasn't anything we wanted, but they had another property in Warwick, would we like to see that. Warwick is in the union, so we looked it over. The nearest neighbor was down the hill a thousand feet or so, and we stopped to inquire about the water supply, which was a spring, and they said it had never gone dry as long as anyone could remember. That was good news, and she said that she was the school bus driver, so we would be okay in that respect.

The place had some open land and some woods, so I'd be able to raise things, I couldn't really get away from trying to be a farmer in my spare time. Anyway, we were able to get a mortgage from a bank in Orange, and moved to Warwick in July 1958.

Things Remembered

I worked at Erving for twenty-seven years, all in the beater room, except for the first four months in the yard, and retired in 1982. I think I was able to adapt to the work schedule successfully.

During those years, along with working the regular shifts each week, I got into making syrup in the spring, small at first, then bought a two and half by eight foot evaporator, got to using tubing for collection, along with buckets. Bought a Farmall A tractor to plow and cultivate with. Later on, a Ford 9N that needed work, built a small barn and had some beef animals. Five and a couple calves at one time. Had haying equipment to cut on some of the neighbor's property. Sold the Farmall and a few years later bought a Ford 8N, as it was more efficient to work with, but kept the 9N to mow and rake with and also had a set of half-tracks for it that helped in collecting sap. None of these things could have been accomplished without the help of my wife, Florence.

Beverly went to Keene Teachers College, with help of a scholarship from Erving and working her way through. While the boys were home they helped, Norman did most of the digging under the house so we could have an oil fired furnace installed to replace the kerosene floor furnace that was here when we bought. Then after he graduated from Pioneer he found other work and rented a room in Northfield. Malcolm was around for a few more years to give me a hand with things then he had work outside and was on his own. Then in 1970 we added ten feet to the east side of the house, having a backhoe dig a cellar. This gave us a bigger dining room, kitchen, a full bath and a laundry room. Brother Robert figured the lumber needed and got it for me at a reasonable cost. Then he did the cabinets, counters and the breakfast counter. Most everything else I was able to do myself, with help from friends and family.

Early on I mentioned the fact that when we were growing up father or mother were the only doctor we saw and I never went to the hospital until I had to have the last of my teeth pulled for dentures. Then working in the mill there was a company doctor to keep track of the workers health. Then we decided to have our own family doctor and Florence and I settled on one in Greenfield. That was likely a good decision as in 1980 I had to go to the hospital with a case of phlebitis. I'd had a couple attacks before then but was able to take medication to dissolve the clot and after a few days could go back to work. This time was a different story. I went to the E R first and then was admitted

and spent the next four weeks with my feet higher then my head. The third day there the clot started to break up, so my doctor got a surgeon to operate and put a filter in the vena cava, the blood vessel that carries the blood from the lower body back to the heart. I was fortunate to have the piece hit the lungs instead of the heart or brain or I wouldn't be writing about it. I was on sick leave from the mill until May and then had to work shorter time for a while, but I was able to get back to normal shifts after a while and didn't retire until 1982.

I've had a couple of embolisms since but nothing serious with the filter doing its job. Usually it was from not sticking to my salt free diet that the surgeon put me on after the operation. Florence keeps me in line at home but when we get to Florida it's hard to get meals separate from the rest of the family and they use a lot of prepared foods that are loaded with sodium but we do the best we can.

After I retired from the Paper Mill I added a closed in porch to the north end of the house, double hung Pella windows with mini blinds between the glass. Insulated as much as possible and now have almost a spare room.

The Historical Society persuaded me to take the job of president and Florence is a trustee so we keep busy with that. Then we got interested in covered bridges and have visited and photographed over four hundred and fifty of the more then eight hundred plus in the U. S. We had slide shows that we put on for Senior centers, churches, Historical societies or anyone interested. Now that I'm on oxygen we have had to cut out a lot of our activities and travel, no more maple tours although we keep in touch with a lot of our maple friends.

We've always had a garden to tend to and usually a bunch of vegetables to freeze, taters to store in the cellar and squashes to last the winter through. Have had to cut down quite a bit as it isn't as easy to work in the garden tethered to an oxygen tank, but we still try to raise enough to have fresh vegetables to eat and a few to freeze.

I guess what I'm trying to convey with this story is the fact that I was raised at a time when there wasn't any money to speak of and everyone had to pitch in to get everyday jobs done. As far back as I can remember nothing was ever free, if you wanted to survive you had to work for it and that's likely the reason I'm still doing what I

can on a daily basis. Even though I don’t accomplish as much as I would like to, at least I’m keeping busy.

Things Remembered

Things Remembered

about 2 years

Charles-1919

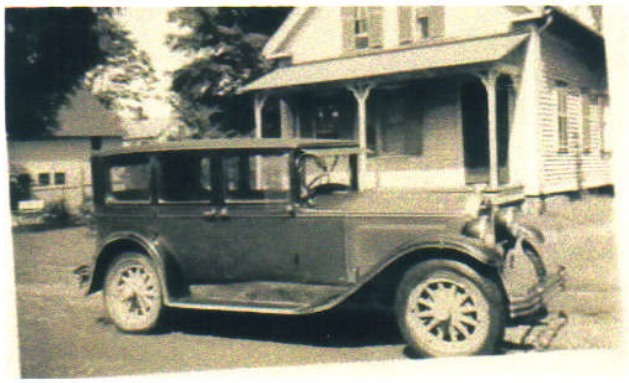
Pictures from mothers collection

The milk wagon like father had on Fox Hill

My second car, 1927 Nash.
Picture taken in Ellington, CT

My fourth car, 1930 Oakland.

1938 when I worked at the red barn and Stan worked at the old place. The barn that father built, but the silo was added on this end of the barn after we moved to Northfield. The door by the silo was where the rope for the hay fork came out and usually we used Jerry and lead him up the path toward the house.



Fifth car, 1928 Buick after the axle broke on the Oakland the day after Thanksgiving.

1932 Ford V8 followed the Buick. I wanted a smaller vehicle

Huckle Hill place in 1940 when I was working for H.S.Streeter and electricity was first put in. New meter on the wall by the porch.

Before the days of trucks with snow plows the roads were opened like this photo shows This photo was scanned from an old covered bridge magazine to show how I remember the roads were opened up when I was a child.

This was how father hauled his logs to the sawmill in Bernardston. But no covered bridge

These photos copied from an old calender.

Things Remembered

Getting alfalfa at Sheldegren in 1941, nigh horse is Molly and the off horse is Jim, the team I was driving working for Bill Koch

using the hayloader on the wagon, 1944 I'm quite sure this was after we switched to the tractor as I'm the only one on the load.

June 21, 1942

Charles and Florence Phelps

This photo of the house I grew up in was taken about 1998 and shows a lot of improvement over the years. The 1940 photo would be at the edge of the white under the roof.