

and that's where the Payson family lives now. After that, Bubbles could do no wrong with me! Then as I got a little older some neighbor gave me a saddle horse and it made my herding cattle so much easier.

In the winter, they had a "Sugarbush" which it was called back then. It was where you tapped trees on the farm. We had roughly 500 taps and this was all done the old fashion way. First you had to manually drill the spicket holes, then drive in a spicket with a hook so as to attach the bucket to the tree. Some trees had up to 4 or maybe 5 buckets. Back then, it was the only way we knew. Plus the buckets had to be drawn out by the team of horses on a sled. And it was also gathered manually per pail full and dumped into the gathering tub which was also pulled by the horses. I loved to drive the horses and so I drove during gathering season. Me, being young and short, (I never got very tall, anyways), but driving the horses from the rear end of the tub and with the trails very bony and steep, I had lots of sap baths from the sloshing of cold sap, but because it involved the horses, (Tom and Jerry, were their names.) I always came back for more and enjoyed it.

After a few years they bought a Ford Tractor from Pete Bardin in Dalton and then the horses (and me) were partially retired (except for haying). They built a home-made 2-wheeled cart and put the tank on that for gathering sap, and was also used to bring in the buckets and spickets to be washed and stored. Then they bought a hay baler and there was no more pitching of hay up into the barn by hand.

Along with the making and selling of syrup, they had a second building where they made maple sugar cakes, soft sugar which you could spread on toast or whatever you chose and also had "wax on snow". This was a special thickness of cooked syrup spread over snow and eaten with a fork. It was yummy but very very sweet. They used to have a lot of visitors who would trudge up a very steep hill just to see the sap boiling and then go over to the next building to buy some sugar cakes, soft sugar or just to have some "wax on snow". We usually had some sour pickles around to help cut the sweetness.

Also, after my grandfather aged and had to cut down on the farmwork, my grandmother took in "Deerhunters" for the week of deer season in Dec. to help out with the income. She cooked their breakfast for 6 am, packed a lunch for all of them and had a full course for supper which included homemade baked pies for every supper, or some other type of home cooked dessert. And of course it was one of the old fashioned wood stoves and oven, with a hot water tank on the right side of the stove. Plus it had the warming compartments up over the stovetop. Some of the neighbors in town did the same thing. In fact when I was small, around 8, I had to sleep in the bathtub as all the beds and sofas were full, plus a single bed on the closed in porch was added too. That year she had a total of 10, which was 2 more than usual. But the hunters all loved it. A lot of the hunters lived down in the Worcester/Auburn area. I certainly never regretted being raised on my grandparents farm. I learned and experienced a lot.