STONE WALLS

History and Folklore

FALL, 1992

As the cover of *Stone Walls* attests, the editors of this magazine focus mainly on the history and folklore of our area, namely the Berkshire hill towns and related communities. It is with great interest, therefore, that we note the current observance of the town of Russell's two hundredth anniversary. Our cover picture depicts a scene from that town. History buffs among our readers will be particularly interested in Doris Hayden's article in this issue which details the steps leading up to the incorporation of Russell into the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Doris has researched carefully the ancient documents which explain this series of events and has set them forth, along with her own explanations, for us all to observe. This is a true examination of our roots, one of the chief objectives of our magazine, and, we hope, one of the main reasons for our readers to enjoy *Stone Walls*. We hope to be able to celebrate other such significant events in our future issues.

Barbara Brainerd

Stone Walls Magazine

Annual Report, July 1, 1992

FY 1992 - July 1, 1991 - June 30, 1992

	BALANCE - July 1, 1991		**$1,932.16**
Income	Subscription	$2,115.00	
	Interest	70.46	
	Sales	1,614.85	
	Ads	224.00	
	Gifts	587.00	
	Total Income		**4,611.31**
	TOTAL ASSETS		**$6,543.47**
Expense	Printing	$4,679.71	
	Postage	130.71	
	Permits & Fees	124.40	
	Misc.	50.00	
	Total Expense		**$4,984.82**
	BALANCE July 1, 1992		**$1,558.65**

Louise H. Mason, Treasurer

Cover photo of Woronoco by Frank Miller, 1905, courtesy of Edward (Dick) Miller

CONTENTS

Genesis of Woronoco

From the Village of Salmon Falls to a Milltown

By Doris H. Wackerbarth

Woronoco, 1907

Edward "Dick" Miller, 94, a native of the town of Russell, has in his collection of photos the picture (above) of the first house on Valley View Avenue, Woronoco, taken in 1907. It took hours of heavy lifting at the Hampden County Hall of Records to discover who built the house. In the process of my search, I discovered that old records are not as sacrosanct as I had believed them to be. Where land areas are involved, the names of the persons involved are exact, with variations in spelling of names or signatures noted, but where large areas of land are concerned, measurements are given as "more or less". Names of persons on maps who are not the principals involved are only "more or less" accurate, also, which is very misleading.

The 1874, Vernon Bros. & Co. map of the village of Salmon Falls is not an official Hampden County Atlas map by county surveyors. On it, the Valley View Avenue area east of the Westfield River is mislabeled the Bishop Lot, which led to hours of frustrating search. There were pages of Bishops listed, many of them in Russell. Finally, by process of elimination, the area was revealed to be

"the Old Cowles Place", the key to checking the land transfers. Examples of other misleading information on that map list Couch family holdings, which were vast, as Crouch, and the name Cosby changed over time to Crosby.

In 1874, when Vernon Bros & Co. acquired the paper mill at Salmon Falls from Jessup & Laflin of Westfield there was no Main Road or village; nor was there a post office, a bridge over the Westfield River, or housing on the east side of the river. (There was a family ferry about a mile north of town at the rapids, where the river narrows and the water is not deep.)

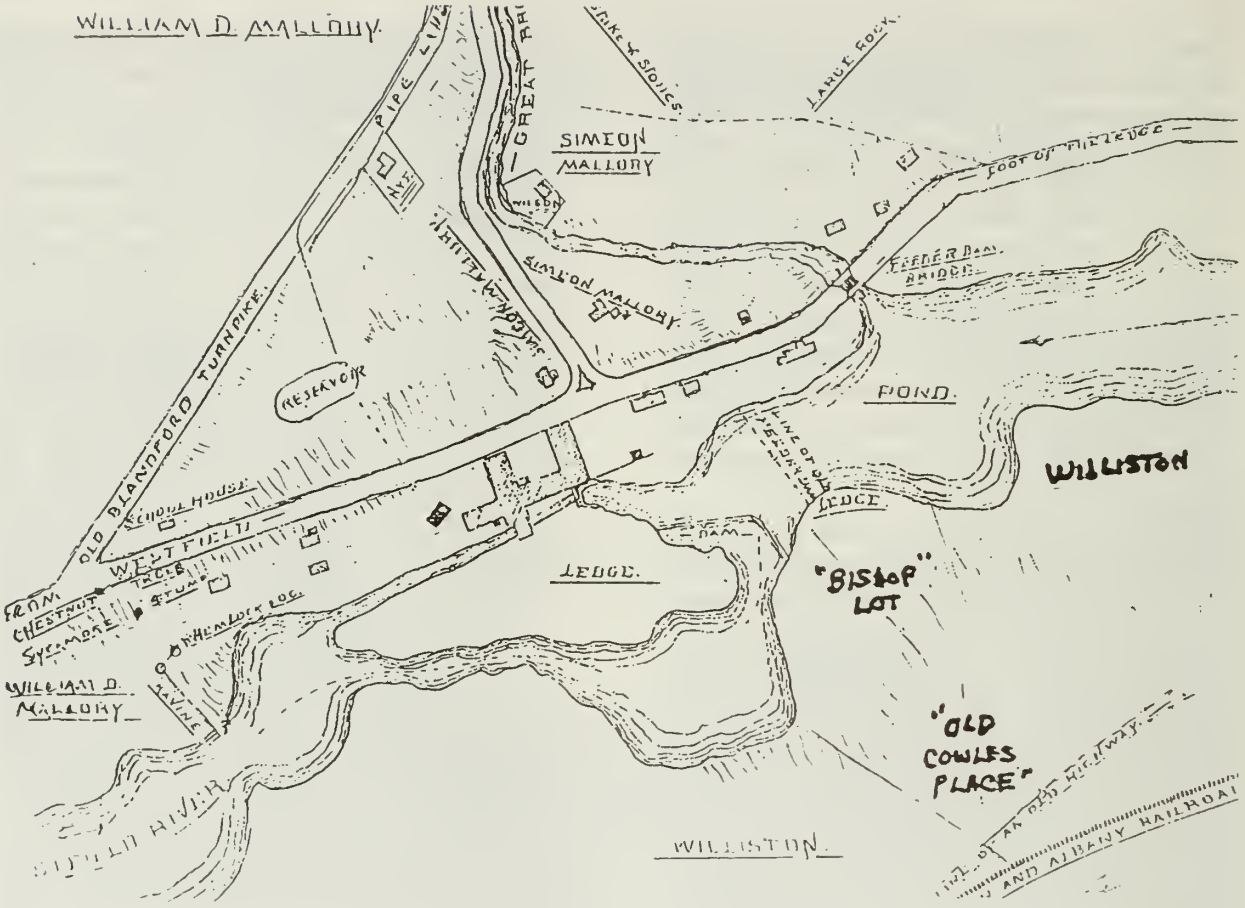
Russell, by comparison, was a metropolis. It had a railroad depot and a post office; two stores; a hotel; whip companies operated by J. W. Gibbs and R. W. Parks; S. Steele, Carriage and Sleighmaker; E. B. Hull & Co. Tannery, which had two large buildings, one labeled office; and both a Baptist and a Methodist church. Charcoal kilns were part of the Blandford Brick and Tile Co. The homes along Main Street in Russell were then very much as they are today, with the few additions or changes having been made where the tannery operated.

In 1888, Vernon Bros Company sold the paper mill and property in Salmon Falls to Roswell Fairfield, of Holyoke. When transportation was by horse and wagon, hills were a first hazard to be avoided. The 1894 map of Fairfield shows that one of the first improvements made in the village was construction of a level Main Street into town from Westfield. The new road saved climbing a sharp hill about a mile south of the village, then coming down a long incline that began above the school and ended in the village, opposite the mill. In addition to the new road, an iron bridge had been built across the river, and the Fairfield Paper Co. had telephone and telegraph service at the mill and, in case of emergency, for others about town. (An operator would have handled the telephone calls and the telegraph did not print out a tape — only Morse code dots and dashes clicked away, needing to be interpreted.) There was also a post office and store at the corner of the new road and the old, which even Dick Miller does not remember. Farther south along the new Main Street Fairfield Company built a hall for public gatherings. In the 20's it was called "the Casino". (It was later converted to storage for the store.) In addition to serving every kind of meeting and also basketball games, both Protestant and Catholic church services were held there on Sundays until in 1923 Strathmore Paper Company built the Memorial Hall across the river (the first section of the Strathmore Community Building.) Both denominations continued to use the same facility until Catholic services were moved to the new Holy Rosary Church in Russell, after which only Protestant services continued to be held in Memorial Hall.

Records reveal a foot note to history that is a bit of a mystery and illustrates how towns and townsfolk operated a hundred years ago. Hampden County Records list the sale of the school house in Salmon Falls to the Fairfield Company, May 3, 1889, for $400, yet the school continued in that capacity until Strathmore built the village of Woronoco a school on land presented to the town December 23, 1914 for $1.00.

From the scanty and secretive town report of 1889, it appears that the Fairfield Company established the precedent of more or less endowing the local school. Article 15 of the Russell Town meeting, February 1, 1889, reads, "To see if the town will vote to purchase the interest of the Fairfield Paper Company in the hall and school house at Fairfield, and raise and appropriate such a sum of money as may be necessary for the same." At the time, Russell had five schools, five teachers, and 131 pupils, four of whom were under five years of age and six over fifteen.

There is no record of how the town meeting voted, but the bare-bones education report which was not signed by anyone and probably was written by a selectman rather than by a superintendent, (perhaps then there were only county supervisors,) explains that the two schools in section three of the town had been combined in order to save expense. One teacher was paid $15.00 for teaching the com-



Village of Salmon Falls, 1874

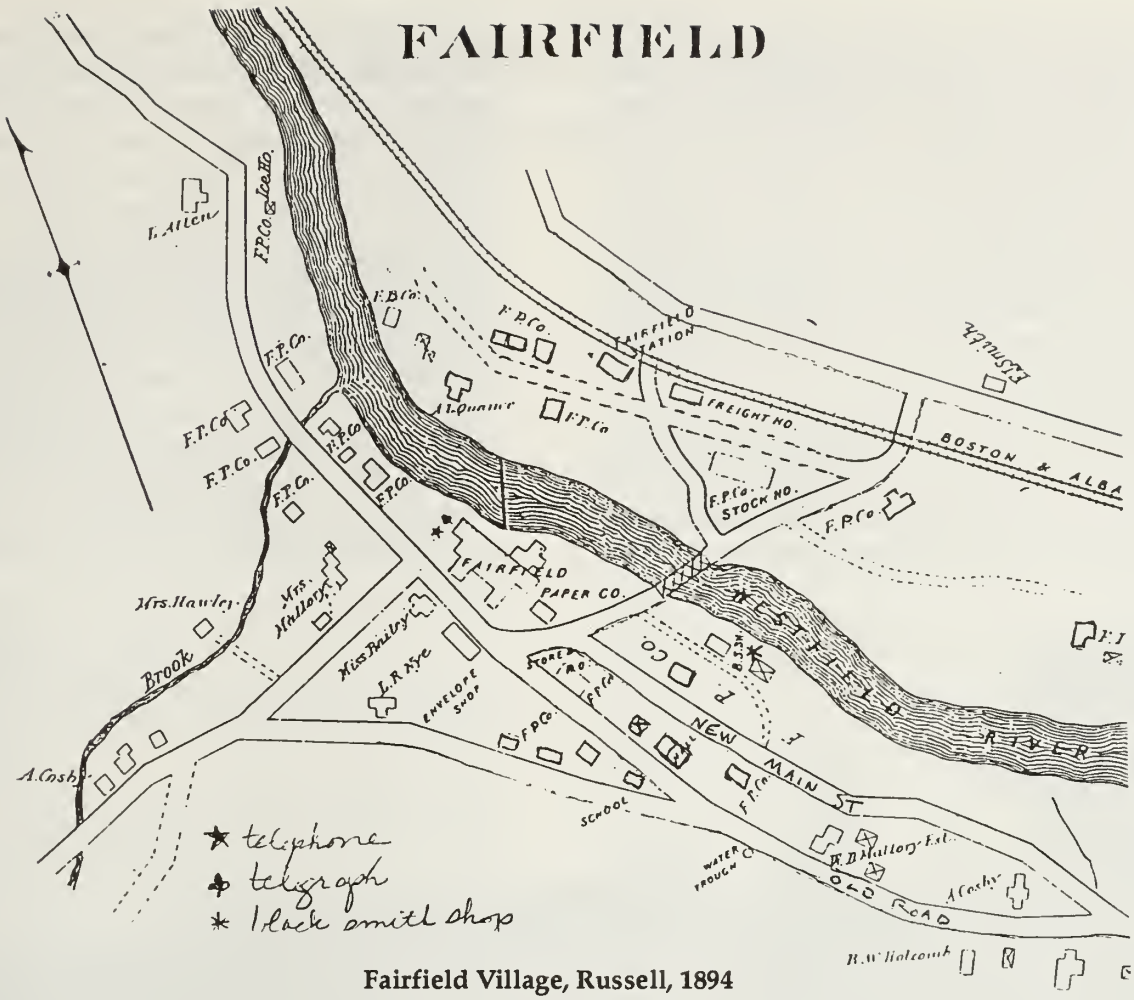
bined group rather than two teachers, being paid $9.00 each to teach two smaller groups. The parents objected, however — evidently strenuously — and after a month the system reverted to two schools again. Someone in the era also was agitating against the schools on Russell Mountain not being in session for four months during the winter. The consensus was that it just was not feasible.

The report complained about conditions in all the schools, and advocated having maps and globes for the benefit of older pupils, as if there was no possibility whatever that that could be achieved. Following sale of the school to the Fairfield Company, which was **not** what Article 15 proposed the year before, and which is only recorded in the county records, the town report states ambiguously, "the hall for the accommodation of larger pupils (situated over the schoolroom) has been purchased in the village of Fairfield."

The accompanying report does not acknowledge a $400 windfall, or how it was spent. It merely states that **all** the classrooms now have maps and globes, and that expenses for other school materials are available through the town treasurer.

With but one mill, the families who lived on the west side of the river and on the farms along Blandford Road and on Russell Mountain supplied all the labor that was needed, but the Fairfield Company was flourishing and there was as yet no trolley to offer daily transportation of labor from outside of town. So, in 1889, the Fairfield Company bought the 291 acre tract on the east side of the river from Thomas and Almeda Williston and Began to provide housing.

The Williston's house was on the north rim of the property, and Thomas Williston



Fairfield Village, Russell, 1894

reserved the right for their neighbor, Warren Chapman, "to get water in pails for family use, from the tub near my house, where water now runs." Chapman soon afterward bought the place where he lived for $65.00. He later transferred it to the Fairfield Company for $1.00 and other considerations — which could have included the right to continue to live in the house the rest of his life, and/or to be employed by the company as long as he was able to work.

Such contracts were not uncommon at the time. Liza McMahon and Annie Cary had such an "understanding" with Strathmore Paper Co. They lived in a little saltbox house that was the W. D. Mallory house on the Old Road, which Strathmore bought in 1912. It had a cavernous fireplace and must have dated from Revolutionary days. When they grew too old to work in the mills, they lived out their days there. After the death of Liza McMahon, who lived until 1937, the house was demolished. Dick Miller related that, as a Strathmore electrician, he wired the house at the direction of H. A. Moses, Founder of Strathmore.

For years, the two little Irish ladies faithfully set up and removed the portable altars and furnished the linens used at the Casino and Memorial Hall for Catholic services. Since they were very reclusive, and always dressed in black, as did all old ladies of their generation, and because of their devotion and the pleasure they took in serving their church, they were known as "the Nuns".

Fairfield Company construction of houses on Valley View Avenue began along the "line of an old highway". Probably when the rail-

road was put through the valley, it crossed the roadway on the east side of the river, which served the hard-scrabble farms between Westfield and Russell. True to form, it would have followed along the bank of the river. Rather than require the railroad to build two grade crossings, and since the part of the road that circled west of the railroad served no purpose, it was discontinued and the original road was rerouted straight ahead, parallel to the railroad.

In the picture of the first houses built on Valley Avenue are three single family houses and outbuildings that had been built by the Fairfield Paper Company. Fields across the railroad tracks, along the old straightened road, served Fairfield Village and Woronoco as a baseball park until Strathmore Park was opened north of town, by which time everyone had autos and could get there. By then, more that a dozen and a half multi-unit houses had been built along Valley View Avenue and more than forty families lived there. There were maple trees along the paved street, and sidewalks that made it possible to roller skate from the north end of Valley View Avenue, across the new cement bridge, past both the new and the old paper mills, to the north side of the bridge over Great Brook without once needing to stop.

The changes that have taken place are what is known as Progress.

Russell Baptist Church

A Town is Born

Compiled by Doris W. Hayden and Jean H. York

Most of the available printed accounts of early Russell are not very specific. The following references may be dull to some, but they are the actual records leading up to the incorporation of Russell in 1792. Rather than put our own interpretation on these events here it has seemed best to use the original records in the order in which they occurred. Occasional notes are interspersed for clarification. All italics throughout are mine.

DWH

Province Laws (Resolves, etc.) Vol. XII Chapter 161 - p. 79

Order impowering the heirs of James Taylor dec'ed to survey and lay out 500 acres of land

A petition of William Taylor and others, heirs of Mr. James Taylor, dec'ed, late Treasurer of this Province, Shewing that the said treasurer, Taylor, quitted his private business, which was very profitable, to Serve that Province in that office, which he did very Faithfully for many Years, and advanced Several Thousand of pounds for the government, for which he was never allowed any interest—that he laid out Seventy Odd pounds for Mathematical Instruments for the Province, for which he was never paid; By all which means his Estate was lesend; And therefore *praying for a grant of some of the unappropriated Lands of the Province.*

Read &

Voted that there be and hereby is Granted to the Heirs and Legal Representa of James Taylor Esqr, late Treasurer of this Province, Deced, Five hundred acres of the Unappropriated Lands of this Province in consideration of the Services mentioned in the petition, and that the Grantees be allowed and impowered by a Surveyr and Chainmen on Oath, to survey and layout the said lands next Adjoyning to some Township, or former Grant, & return a plat thereof to this court within twelve Months, for Confirmation, to them their heirs and asines Respetivly forever.

Passed December 31, 1734

Province Laws (Resolves, etc.) Vol XII - Chapter 175 - p. 200

Order granting to the heirs of James Tailor further time to perfect a plat

A Petition of Christopher Jacob Lawton in behalf of the heirs of James Tailor Esqr, deced, Shewing that pursuant to a Grant made by this Court to the heirs of Mr. Tailor, they returned a plat of five hundred acres of Land to the Court, which was accepted by the House, but Rejected by the Council, and therefore praying that they may be Allowed time till the next May Session for bringing a perfect plat.

Read &

Ordered that the prayer of the petition be Granted, and the petrs are Accordingly Allowed time till nex May Session to bring in a Plat of said Grant for Confirmation.

Passed December 29, 1735

Note: - Christopher Jacob Lawton was one of the proprietors of Suffield Equivalent. (Now Blandford)

He had married for a second time to Sarah Taylor, daughter of James Taylor. As the daughter had an interest in the above grant, he was representing her.

DWH

Province Laws (Resolves, etc.) Vol. XII Chapter 272 - p. 245

Order for a grant of land to Housatonuck Indians

A Report of a Conferrence held by Ebenezer Pomroy and Thomas Ingersol Esqr by order of this Court, with the Housatanuck Indians; relating to a purchase of Lands for their Settlement.

Read, and the same being fully considered

Voted that the Honourable John Stoddard Esqr. Ebenezer Pomroy and Thomas Ingersole Esqrs be a Committee fully authorized and impowered *to Lay out a township not exceeding the quantity of six miles square.* unto the Housatonnoc Tribe of Indians in upper Housatonnoc, lying and being above the Mountain, & upon Housatonnoc River, said Indians to be subject to the Law of the Province make & passed in the thirteenth Year of King William 3d CAP XXI, with respect to said Lands, and that the said Committee be hereby impowered to lay out unto the Reverend Mr. John Sargent, their Minister, and Mr. Timothy Woodbridge, their School Master, One sixtieth part of the said township, to Each of them to accomodate them in a Settlememt of Land, to be to each of them and their heirs & assigns, and that said Committee lay out a sufficient quantity of Land within said township to accommodate four English Families, that shall Settle upon the same, to be under the direction and disposition of the Committee, by and with the advice of Mr. Sargeant and Mr. Woodbridge; And the committee are hereby further impowered to dispose of ye Lands that are reserved to said Indians in the town of Sheffield & mentioned in the Committee report, in order to make Satisfaction, so far as the same will go, to the proprietors and owners of the land hereby granted.

And the Committee are further impowered to give the proprietors of Upper Housatonnuc, that live below the Mountain, an equivalent in some of the unappropriated Land of the province next adjacent to Upper Housatonnuc, Sheffield, said granted town;

And the Committee are hereby further impowered *to make the proprietors of Upper Houssatonnoc, above the Mountain, and equivalent in some of the unappropriated Lands of the Province* in different places; provided the same, in the Judgment of the Committee, shall not prejudice any township that may hereafter be granted; *the same to be in full satisfaction of their Lands as are hereby granted to the Houssatannoc Tribe.*

March 25, 1736

Note: The above is included to clarify a statement in the "History of Western Massachusetts" by Pitoniak. On page 19 under "First Settling of Russell" it is said, "One would never realize the it was first intended to be a settlement of Indians." *How the above record could be interpreted in such a way cannot now be determined. The province order certainly puts the Indian town in the Housatonic area, and nowhere else.*

DWH

Province Laws (Resolves, etc.) Vol. XII Chapter 141 - p. 323

A Petition of Mr. Thomas Ingersol, Representa of the Town of Westfield, praying for a Grant to the proprietors of the said town of a tract of about Six Thousand Acres of Land, lying between Westfield West boundary and the township granted to the proprietors of Suffield.

Read &

Ordered that the prayer of the Petition be granted, and the Lands therein Delineated and Described be and hereby are Accordingly given and granted to the proprietors of the Town of Westfield, their heirs and assignes respectively; provided they do forthwith, or as soon as may be, Open and Constantly keep in Repair hereafter, a Good and Safe Cartway over the premises in the Road that leads from Westfield to Housatonock, commonly call the Albany Road; *provided also this Grant does not prejudice the Grant lately laid out to the heirs of the late Treasurer Mr. James Taylour, at the pond called the Ten Mile Pond, the said Grantees concluding not to hold the same, but it is to be Esteemed & looked upon as among the Upper Housatanuck Equivalents;*

** And also that part of the Grant of Seven Hundred Acres of Land to the Heirs of the late Rev Mr. Williams of Deerfield, Deced. which may or does fall within the lines of the prayed for premises, According to the plat lately passed and Confirmed by this Court.

And also that this Grant does not exceed the quantity of Six Thousand Acres of Land, Exclusive of the said Provisoes, & does not interfere with any former Grant;

*** Provided also that the Grantees, as soon as may be, lay out two hundred Acres of the granted premises for the present minister of the said town; Two Hundred Acres of the ministry; and one hundred Acres for the school forever;

And return a plat of the premised & Sequestrations afore mentioned to this Court, within twelve months, for Confirmation.

Passed January 12, 1736

Note:

**Suffield Equivalent, which became Blandford*

***The original north line of the New Addition seems to have extended into what became Murrayfield, now Huntington. The 700 acre grant to Rev. John Williams may or may not have been in the New Addition. However the Court was playing safe and excluded it if it was. It was never a part of present Russell.*

**** "Footprints in Montgomery" on page 5 describes three such lots which were in the original New Addition area, but not in the present town of Russell*

DWH

Province Laws (Resolves, etc.) Vol. XII - Chapter 17 - p. 367

* A plat of land, laid out by Oliver Partridge, Surveyr and Chainman on Oath, Containing Five Thousand Eight hundred and Seventy-Nine Acres, Lying between Westfield and Suffield Equivalent, *Exclusive of five hundred Acres Reserved for Housatanock Equivalent and a Pond of One hundred Acres.*

Read &

Ordered that the plat be accepted and the Lands therein delineated & described by and are hereby confirmed to the proprietors of the Town of Westfield & their Assignes respectively,

** Excepting the Five Hundred Acres reserved for Housatonnoc Equivalent as within mentioned, and Three Farms delineated in the plat at A. B. & C., which are to be and remain respectively for the ministerial use - the present Ministers farm to be to him in fee, and the farm for the use of the school agreeable to the Grant of the Lands to said proprietors) provided the plat exceeds not the quantity of Five Thousand Eight Hundred & Seventy-Nine Acres of Land, inclusive of the said Farms at A. B. & C., and *exclusive of the said Housatonnoc Equivalent and pond;* and does not interfere with any other grant.

Passed June 10, 1738

Note::

** this was the original grant of January 12, 1736, which was later called the New Addition. It then included what is now a part of Montgomery, as well as what became Russell.*

*** The original 500 acre Taylor grant which the Taylor heirs chose not to hold and was reserved for a Housatonic Equivalent.*

**** The locations of the three farms are listed in "Footprints in Montgomery", p. 5.*

DWH

Springfield Registry of Deeds Book M - p. 155

John Stoddard, Ebenezer Pomeroy of Northampton

& Thos. Ingersole of Westfield, Esqr

to Chr. Jacob Lawton of Leicester

That on March ye 26 AD 1736 were by the General Court Assembly of Province aforesaid specifically authorized and commisioned amongst other things, *to purchase rights of lands of ye proprietors of Upper Housatonnock Township,* so called in said township, *and to give Equivalent Therefore in some of ye unappropriated Land of ye Province to Proprietors,* of whom they should purchase after the order of the said Court of Assembly, reference thereto has willfully appear.

Now we the above said have purchased of Chr. Lawton of Leicester * *two rights of land in Housantonnock, and have agreed to give it him and equivalent,* to whom the right belongs, from the Government, for ye aforesaid rights.

To Wit: a Tract of land scituated a lying and being on Housatonnock Road, at a certain place called 10 Mile Pond, and includes the pond, which land with pond, includes 600 acres.

Is butted and bounded as follows:

Beginning at ye Brook where it runs into the outside of 10 Mile Pond, and runs W 10 M - 70 Rods

Thence runs S 30 30 " W - 212 Rods
Thence runs W to the E line of the township called Glasgow
Then runs up Ye Township Line N'ward - 196 Rods
Then runs E 34 N - 166 Rods
Then runs N 40 E - 76 Rods
Jonathan Old, John Huston
Samuel Worthington
John Stoddard, Thomas Ingersole

August 29, 1739

** Note: One right was at 10 Mile Pond in the New Addition, and part of it was the original Taylor Grant, which was given up and called the Housatonic Equivalent.*

The other right was in what became Otis and does not relate to the New Addition.

The "History of Western Mass." by Josiah G. Holland states that the first settlers in the New Addition were two brothers of the name Barber and A Mr. Gray.

Mathew Barber was a first settler, but his brother, Robert Barber of Worcester, was not. However, he probably assisted Mathew financially and held a mortgage on the New Addition property.

Robert's wife Sarah Gray, sister to Mathew Barber's wife Mary, so there was a close connection on both sides.

Mathew Barber was certainly in the New Addition before Jan. 31, 1740-1, according to his deed form Christopher Jacob Lawton. Just when cannot be determined.

The Barbers and Grays were descendants of immigrants from Northern Ireland - probably Scotch-Irish.

Mathew's inventory, in Northampton Probate Court, includes a fulling mill and a sawmill. Sumner Wood in "Taverns and Turnpikes" says he has a tavern License in
Henry Lee
January 31, 1749-1

Note:

John Gray was of a later generation than Mathew Barber, but related to Mathew's wife. His land lay south of 10 Mile Pond.. (See map) The property lately owned by Howland Smith was a part of it.

Thence runs E - 252 Rods
Thence runs S - 278 Rods
Thence W - 160 Rods
Thence runs N - 118 Rods
Thence runs W - 78 Rods to the Corner first mentioned.

John Stoddard
Ebenezer Pomeroy

Thos. Ingersole
1742, "in his house." Since he died in 1742 he could not have operated it very long.

Fulling was process for shrinking and thickening woolen cloth by moistening, heating and pressing.

DWH

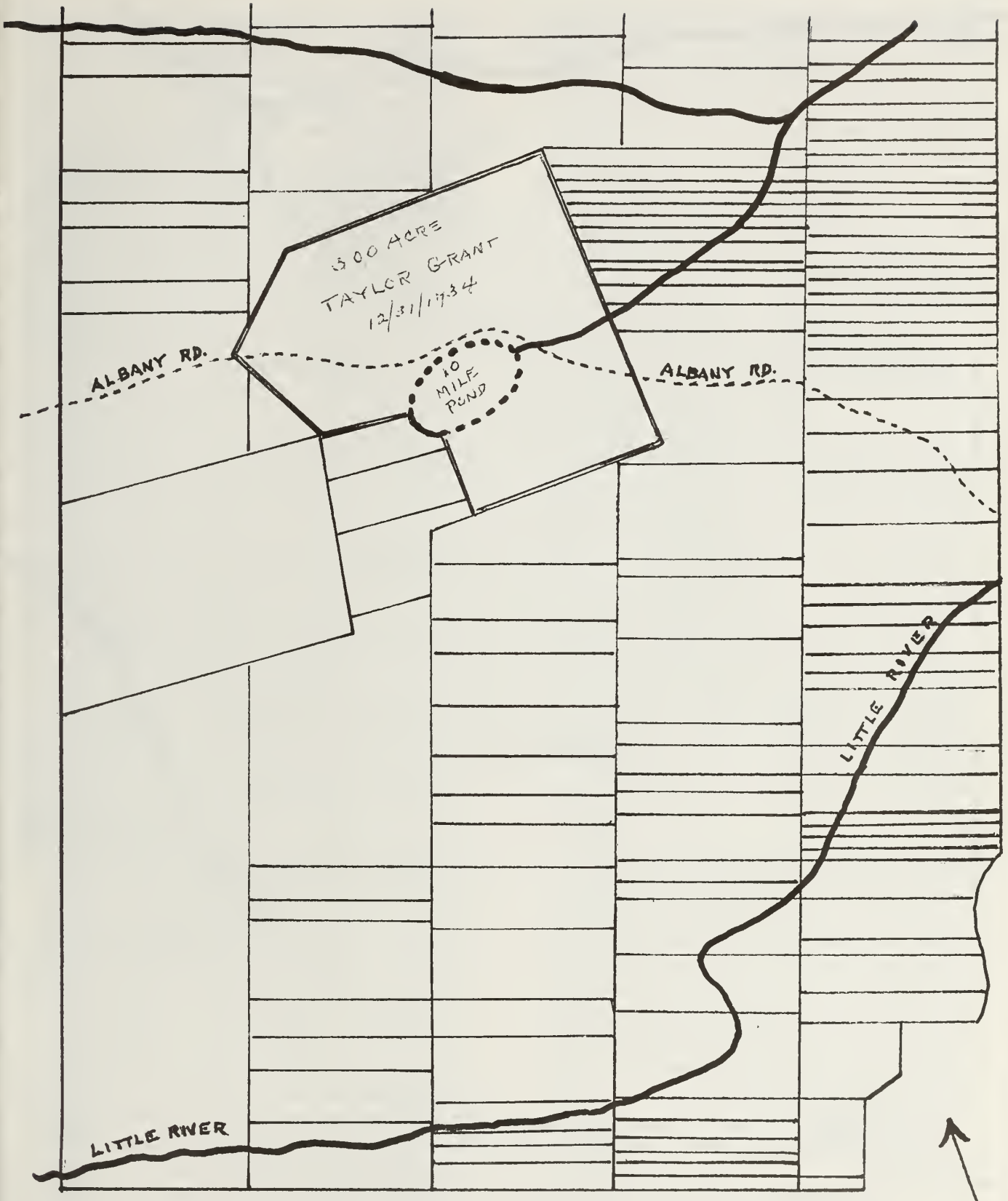
Springfield Registry of Deeds Book M - p. 203

Chr. Jacob Lawton, Gentleman of Leiscester
& Dame Sarah Lawton, his wife
to Mathew Barber, husbandman, living at a place known by ye name of Ten Mile Pond ye Township of Westfield 200 Acres of Land adjoyning to Ten Mile Pond in Westfield and bounded as follows:

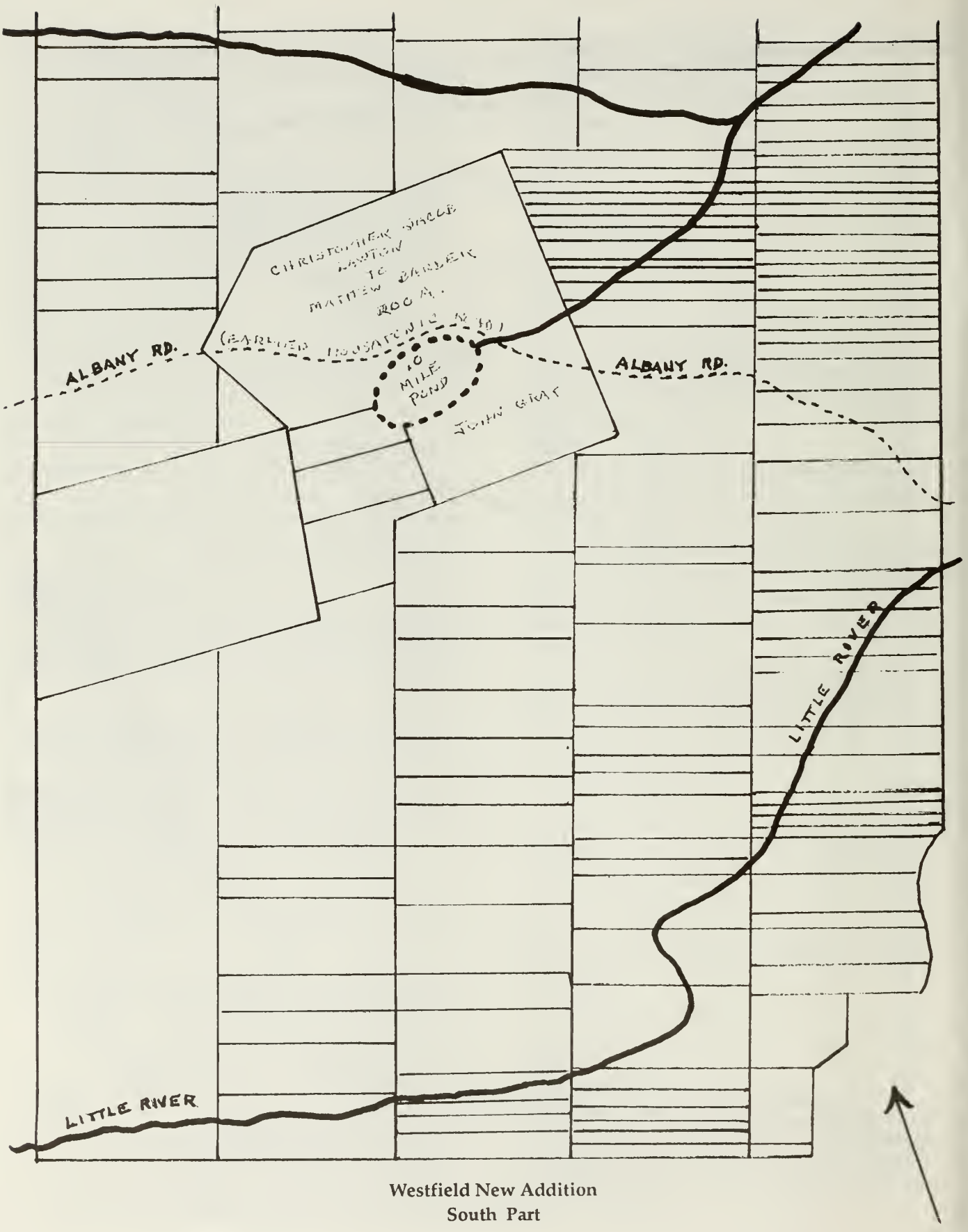
Beginning at a stake and stones on the N side of a brook running **into** said Pond
From thence runs W 10 N 70 Perch
thence N 23 W - 104 Perch
Then N 30 E 76 Perch
Thence E 252 Perch
Thence S 150 Perch to the brook issuing **out** of said Pond, at the East Side of the Pond
Thence bounds on said Pond & brook to the corner first mentioned
With one-half the liberty of Pondage and Streama for making Dam, or Dams, for a Mill, or Mills, forever.
Witness:

Chr. Jacob Lawton
Sarah Lawton

Aside from the Barbers and Grays, there is another early family of interest — the Hazards. Stewart Hazard and Robert Hazard, a clothier, both of Farmington, Conn., purchased the Barber land - 1769 - 1771.



Westfield New Addition
South Part



Westfield New Addition
South Part

They were in the New Addition until some years after Russell was incorporated, later going to New York State. This explains the name, Hazard Pond.

There were many lots "laid out" to various residents of Westfield in the New Addition before the incorporation. Without a doubt many lived in the area before 1792. These lot descriptions are so scanty that it would be like putting a huge jig-saw puzzle together. Someone with the patience of Job may do it some day.

Acts & Resolves 1790-1 Chapter 30 - p. 323

Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives in General court assembled and by the authority of the same, that the northwesterly part of Westfield, Called the new Addition, on the westerly side of Westfield River, and the south westerly part of Montgomery included between the heights of Shatterack Mountain, Teko Mountain, and Westfield River a foresaid, & bounded as follows: viz. Beginning at Blanford line where it crosses Westfield River, then running down said river 'till it comes to a turn in the river near the foot of Shatterack Mountain at the northwesterly part thereof, then crossing said river to a maple tree marked with stones about it standing at highwater mark on the eastern bank, then running south thirty-two degrees east one hundred and sixty rods to a pine staddle marked with stones about it on the height of Shatterack Mountain, then running south twenty eight degrees and fifty minutes east eight hundred and ninety-four rods, partly along the ridge of Teko Mountain, to a black oak staddle marked with stones about it toward the southerly end of said Teko Mountain, then running south four degrees east two hundred and twenty rods to a small flat rock marked I S 41 by the highway, a few rods easterly of the river, and near the south end of said Teko Mountain, then running south thirty-eight degrees west, crossing said river and continuing a strait line to a little river near the foot of the west mountain, then westerly upon said river to the line between the third and fourth tier of lots, then southerly upon said line to Granville town line, then running west twenty-two degrees north on Granville line to the south east corner of the town of Blanford, then running north twenty degrees east on Blanford line to the first mentioned bounds, *be and hereby is incorporated into a town by (the) name of Russell*; and the said town shall be and hereby is invested with all the privileges and immunities that towns in the commonwealth do, or may enjoy by the Constitution, or laws of the same.

And be it further enacted the Samuel Fowler Esquire be and he is hereby impowered to issue his warrant directed to some suitable inhabitants of said town to meet at such time and place as he shall appoint, to choose such Officers as other towns are impowered to choose at their annual meeting in the month of March or April.

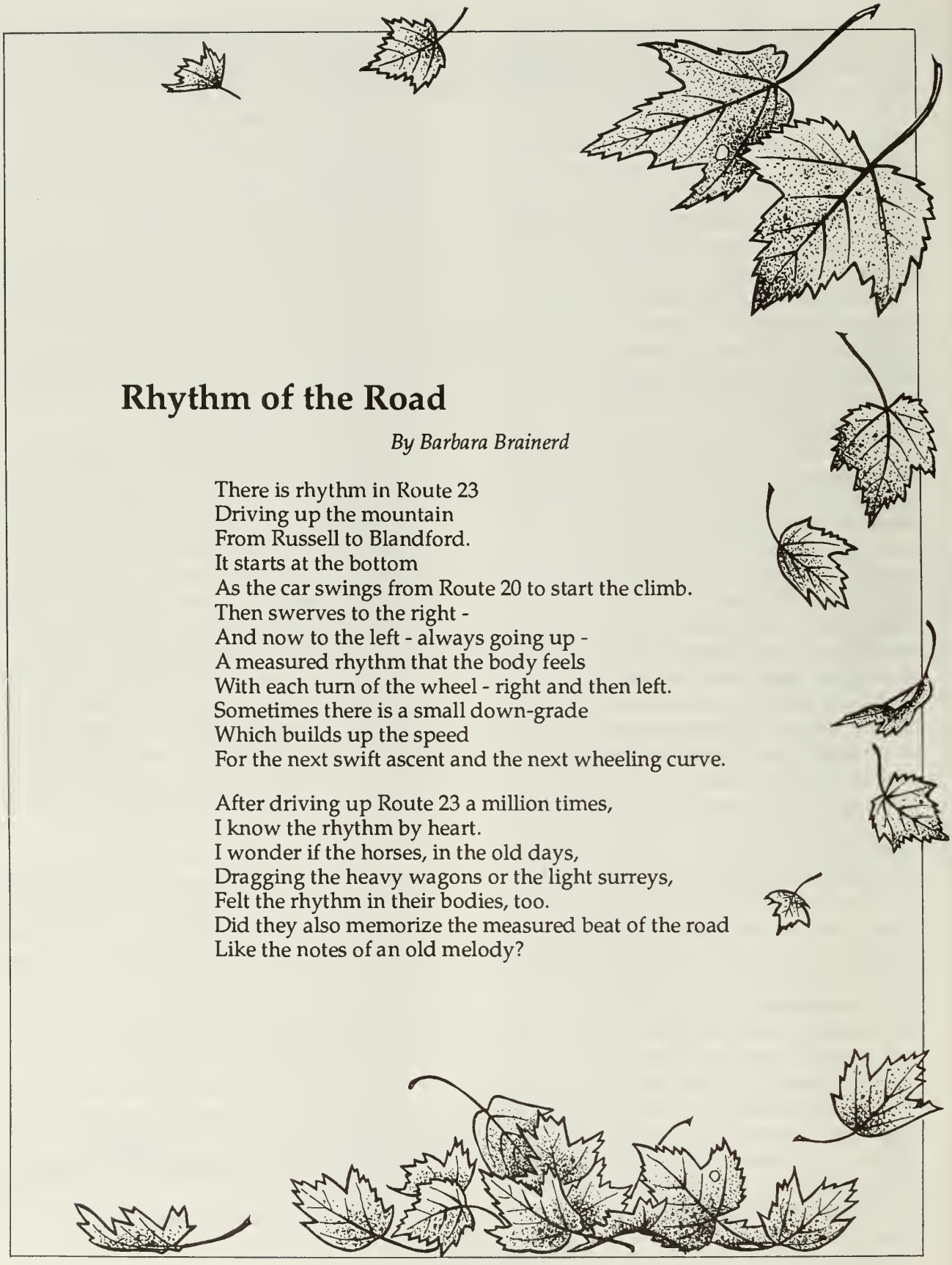
Provided nevertheless, the inhabitants of said town shall pay all such town, State, county and other taxes as are already assessed upon them by the said towns to which they have belonged, until a new valuation shall be taken & no longer; and the inhabitants aforesaid shall pay their proportion of all public debts which are now due from the said town to which they respectively belonged.

And be it further enacted that the inhabitants of the said town of Russell do and shall forever hereafter make and keep in good repair all such roads and cartway through the said town of Russell, as the town of Westfield ought or by law is now obliged to make and maintain there.

And be it further enacted that the inhabitants of the said town of Russell shall be chargeable with their proportionable part of the expense of supporting the poor which at the time of passing this Act were the charge of the towns of which the said inhabitants respectively belonged, and that the said town of Russell shall be held to support all poor persons which may hereafter be returned to the town of Westfield and Montgomery, who had gained a settlement in that part of the town of Westfield or Montgomery, which is now incorporated into the town of Russell.

February 25, 1792

Happy 200th Celebration, Russell!



Rhythm of the Road

By Barbara Brainerd

There is rhythm in Route 23
Driving up the mountain
From Russell to Blandford.
It starts at the bottom
As the car swings from Route 20 to start the climb.
Then swerves to the right -
And now to the left - always going up -
A measured rhythm that the body feels
With each turn of the wheel - right and then left.
Sometimes there is a small down-grade
Which builds up the speed
For the next swift ascent and the next wheeling curve.

After driving up Route 23 a million times,
I know the rhythm by heart.
I wonder if the horses, in the old days,
Dragging the heavy wagons or the light surreys,
Felt the rhythm in their bodies, too.
Did they also memorize the measured beat of the road
Like the notes of an old melody?

The Granville Public Library

by Wilhelmena Tryon

Granville, Massachusetts approached the turn of the century with a small, scattered population and no library. An education-minded woman decided that the limited number of books available through the Sunday Schools was not enough, and vowed to correct the situation.

Scanty Scattered Population

Like many New England towns in the hill districts, the scanty population was scattered over an area of about forty square miles with three small villages as centers. Granville, Granville Center and West Granville each had its own schoolhouse, store, post office, church, and a farming population living along the outlying country roads. The two western communities were farming communities, but Granville, called the Corners, was a manufacturing community, although it was fifteen miles from the nearest railroad.

Some of the families were well-to-do and able to send their children away to school; others completed their education here and went on to schools of higher learning, becoming professional people. The majority remained at home going to work in the factory, on the farm, or doing odd jobs.

Woman of Ideals

These conditions existed in 1896, when the wife of one of the leading businessmen, a woman of ideals, saw the needs of the young people. The library grew out of her efforts to help them.

Mrs. Ralph B. Cooley was the moving force behind the library movement. The town, in compliance with Library Act of 1890, had ap-

Mrs. Ralph Cooley

propriated a small amount of money and then had received one hundred dollars worth of books from the state. All were placed in the chapels in Granville and Granville Center, in charge of the minister or some other interested person. The buildings were open one day a week and, since accommodations were insufficient, neither books nor people could be carefully cared for.

In February 1896, Mrs. Cooley invited to her home twelve women and laid before them her hopes. The Granville Library Club, with Mrs. Cooley as its President, was immediately organized and its purpose distinctly stated: *To erect a library building containing a library and reading room and also a room provided with suitable attractions and amusement for both young men and young women.*

The original members were: Mrs. Ralph B. Cooley, President; Miss Nellie C. Noble, Vice President; Miss Cora A. Noble, Secretary and Treasurer; Mrs. Orville R. Noble, Mrs. Silas B. Root, Miss Cettie Huddleston (name was Lucetta), Mrs. Mary Gill, Mrs. Emma Barlow, Mrs. Milo Seymour, Mrs. E.N. Henry, Mrs. Neil Gibbons, Mrs. Alice Carpenter, and Mrs. Clara E. Wilcox.

Each Lady to Raise Huge Sum of Ten Dollars

Next came the all important question of finances, now "How *should* it be done?", but "How *could* it be done?" The members were not chosen for their financial or literary qualifications, but for their personal qualities. Some were women of independent means; others earned their living by working in the factory; there were some whose husbands had an average daily wage, one whose husband received only one dollar a day; and one who had no pin money to call her own. Each member pledged $10.00, or more if possible, which she must earn each year.

With the exception of two generous gifts, practically all the money was raised in the one, small village of Granville in five yars. In November 1901, the building was completed at a total cost of more than $13,000, a tribute to the zeal and self-denial with which these few women worked.

To realize how large a sum of $10 was, remember at that time a pound of cheese cost 16 cents; a quart of milk 5 cents; an excellent three course dinner at one of Westfield's best restaurants cost only 25 cents.

These enterprising ladies chose to make money in several ways. One lady lived on a farm where arbutus grew in abundance so she sent enough to a nearby city to raise six of her ten dollars. She also picked fruit and in the evenings knitted pairs of mittens. This was Mrs. Alice Carpenter.

Mrs. Clara Wilcox had boys collect blueflag, which she cleaned and sweetened and sold in packets for 5 cts. This proved very profitable. She also knitted bed socks and mittens.

The president, Mrs. Ralph B. Cooley, who raised strawberries, sold the extra berries. She also exchanged one of her husband's overcoats for a neighbor's crop of crab apples.

These she sent to New York and realized over thirteen dollars for the project.

Miss Ann Noble and Mrs. Neil Gibbons sold ice cream every Saturday afternoon. They also made lemonade for the local ball games.

Mrs. Cettie Huddleston made popcorn balls to the delight of all the little boys.

Mrs. Silas Root had an unused field plowed and planted to turnips which she sold. The yield more than covered her pledge. She also made and sold doughnuts.

Mrs. Nellie Noble, a talented painter, took orders for calendars to raise her $10. Her sister, Miss Cora Noble, laundered fine lace curtains and made jellies.

Mrs. Emma Barlow made money doing housework for a neighbor.

Mrs. Hattie Oysler, who joined soon after the Library Club started, made carpenter's aprons. She also made and sold clam chowder to the men who worked at the factory.

Mrs. Emma Holcomb, another woman who was not a charter member, made money by doing her own washing and ironing and by "going without things." That was the key to the whole situation. It meant self-denial for future general good.

The club as a whole was also busy. In November 1896 a fair was held, the first of 25 years, which brought in $500. The president gave a beautifully dressed French doll for which a great number of tickets were sold to guess the doll's name. The name proved to be "Celia" (the president's mother's name) and fortunately the doll was given back to the sold at auction. Three times it was sent back to be sold again and it netted $112.

After trying various ways to raise money, they concentrated on the November fair and for many years they were famous for their November Fair and Chicken Pie Supper. With the coming of World War II the Chicken Pie Suppers were discontinued.

Large Donation Offered

At the end of three years, the club had banked nearly $3000. Then Mr. Milton B. Whitney of Westfield, a native of Granville, offered to give $5000 for the library if the town would give a like amount, which would assure that the entire amount for the building and its furnishings would be available.

The ladies decided to raise as much money as possible from subscriptions from citizens. They also contacted former residents and their descendants. The library was at last a possibility.

Two houses and various buildings had to be removed so that the library might be built on its present location. The building was started in 1900, construction finished in November 1901, and it was furnished, stocked with books, and opened on February 22, 1902.

In June, 1950, the club celebrated the anniversary of the start of the actual building of the library by an "Open House" for the town. The same year the club and the town joined

Members of the Library Club

in a celebration at the library, honoring Mrs. Mable Root Henry for fifty years of devoted and efficient service as Librarian. She began her service when the building opened. Later, the historical room, located in the library, was named the Mable Root Henry Historical Room in her honor.

Bibliography:

The Story of a Village Library, by Lavinia Rose Wilson

The History of Granville, by Albion B. Wilson

Note: This story was previously printed in Southwoods Magazine Volume IX, issue 111, September 1989.

More from the Journal of Rev. Hutchinson

Oct. 11

Died, Mr. Charles K. Phelps of Huntington at the house of Mr. Wm. Branly of Russell. This poor man had destroyed himself by drinking. He has three children, two lovely daughters 15 and 17 and a little son 10 yrs. of age.

Nov. 7

Nina Maria Lezen, daughter of Joel Lezen, Russell, aged 6 years.

1865

Ettie Kendall, congestion of the lungs, aged 4 yrs.

May 3

Henry Parks, fever, aged 43

Oct. 17

Hattie Jane Kingsley, aged 1 yr., died Springfield 1864, daughter of Wm. Kingsley and Emily.

Oct. 1865

A Mr. Leonard in Hanson, funeral at house and the manner of commitment of the Old Colony Baptist Association.

Oct. 1865

Middleboro, a man whose name is forgotten.

Nov. 19 (Sunday)

Dr. David Hall died of old age, 81, Bridgewater.

Mrs. Charles Pratt, aged 64, congestion of lungs, Bridgewater.

Marriages performed by Rev. Joseph Hutchinson while minister of the Baptist Church at Russell, Massachusetts in 1863 and 1864 as listed in his diary and copied by F.A. Hutchinson.

Feb. 28, 1863

Married Mr. John Clark and Miss Frances Miller, both of Russell. Were married at my house.

March 1, 1863

Sunday evening, married Mr. Chester W. Clark and Miss Alice Parks both of Russell. They were married in the Meeting House. A large number of people were present.

April 12, 1863

Sunday evening, I married Rev. J.D. Pulis of N.Y. City to Miss Sarah Jane Dukensan of Russell, oldest daughter of Deacon Wm. L. Dukensan. They were married in the Meeting House. Brother Dukensan and family together with Mr. Pulis are going tomorrow to the state of Illinois. Mr. Pulis is going as agent of the Travel Society.

Feb. 18, 1864

Married this evening Mr. Eli A. Cross and Miss Emily A. Nye at the house of the father of the bride, Mr. Clark Nye of Blandford. The bride and groom were both of Blandford.

June 11, 1864

Mr. Horace Larramee and Miss Margaret Carnier, both of Becket. French Canadians.

Aug. 31, 1864

Mr. George W. Frost and Mrs. Clarice Hamlin married. Both of Russell.

Sept. 25, 1864

Married Mr. John M. Cannon and Alletta A. King, both of Russell.

Oct. 16, 1864

Married Mr. Elihui Lloyd and Miss Delia Holcomb, both of Montgomery.

May 15, 1865

Edward A. Allen and Miss Joseptha M. Standars, both of Huntington.

April 18, 1865

Mr. J. W. Gibbs and Miss Olive Parks, both of Russell.

July 5, 1865

Mr. Wilber S. Sampson and Miss Caroline Allen, both of Huntington, Mass.

Jan. 1, 1865

C.B. Hutchinson and Miss Laura Holcomb of Russell (J.H.'s own son)

Oldtime Westfield Verse Vignettes

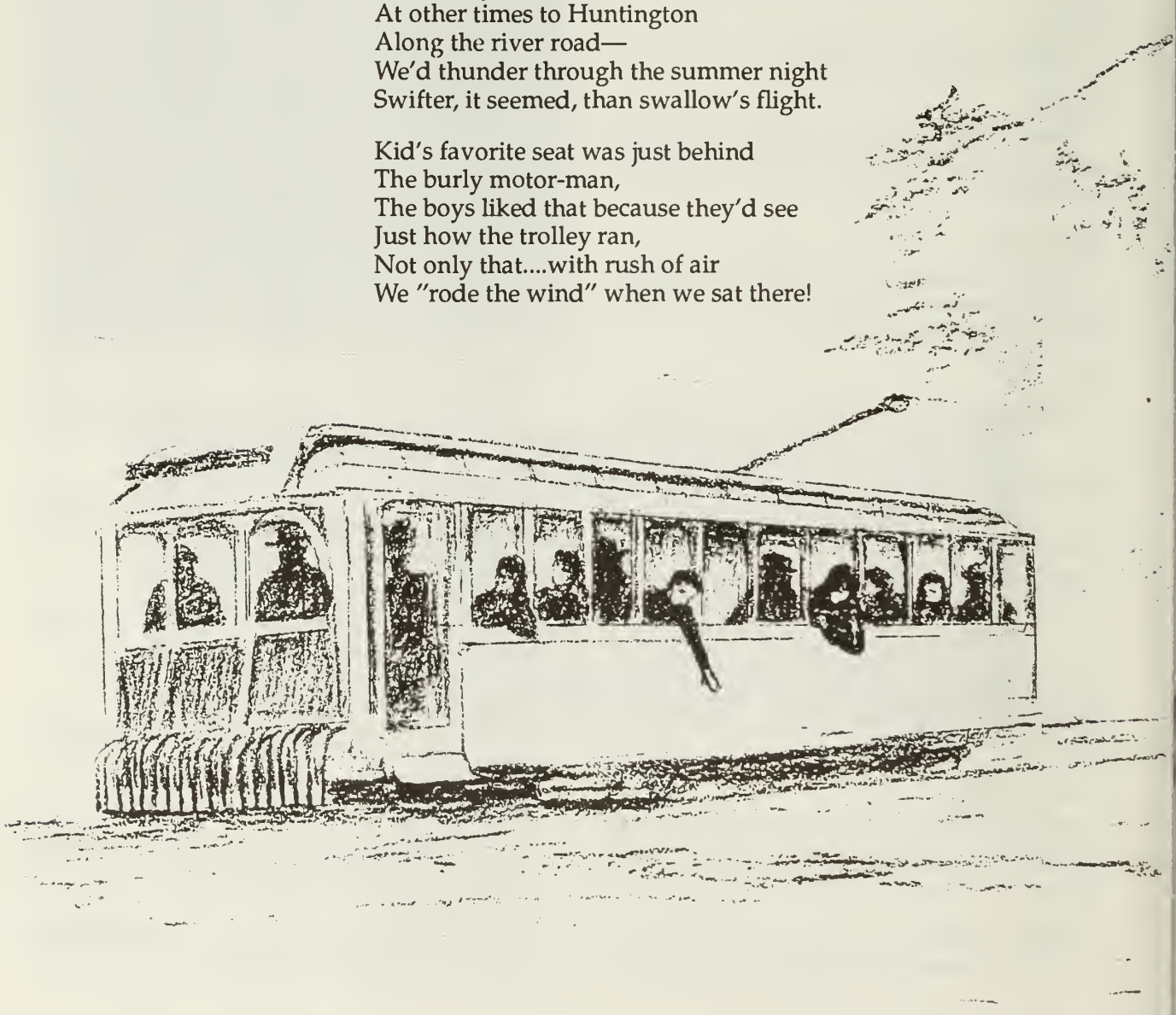
The Family Trolley Rides

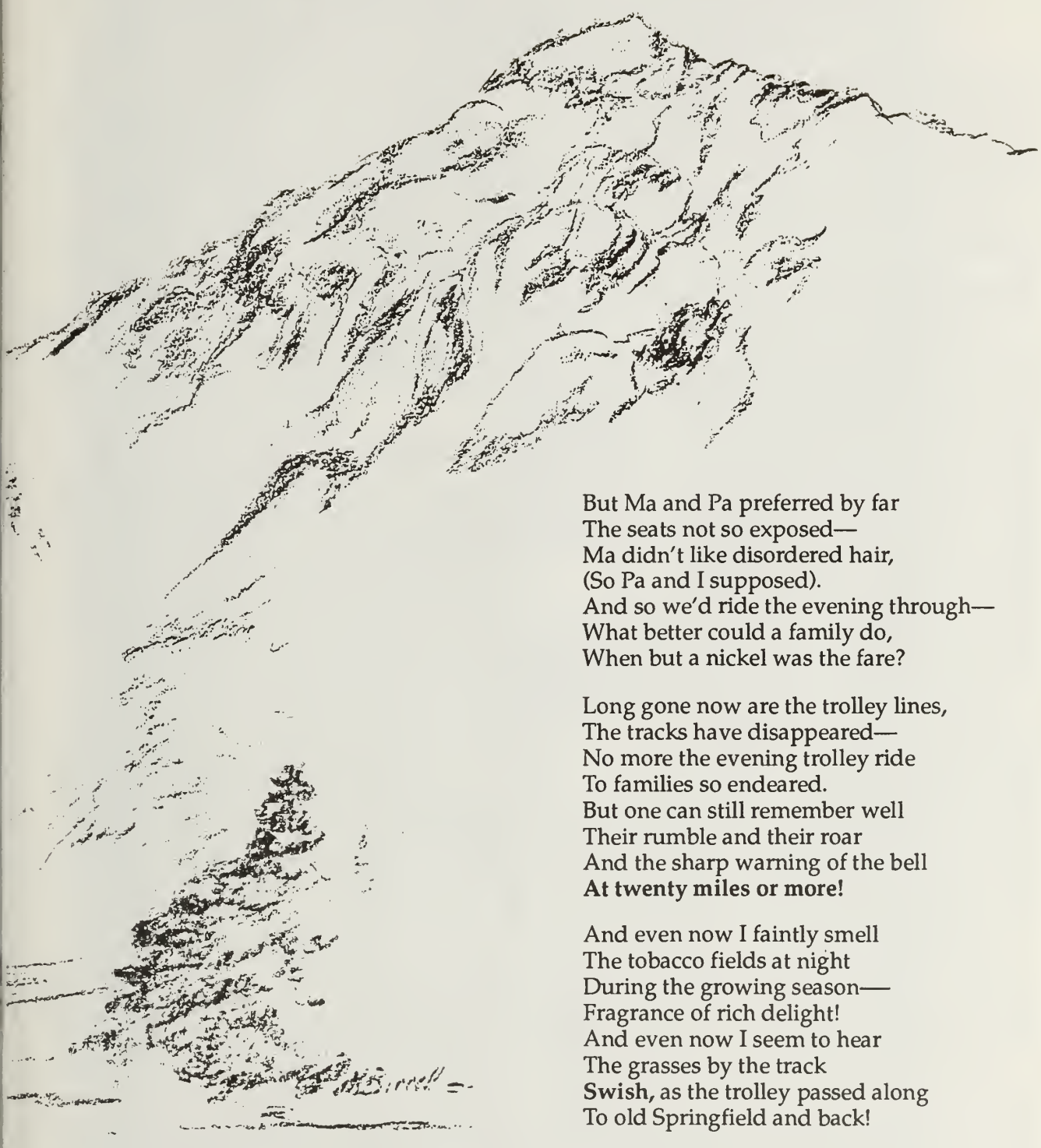
By Gordon Hawkins

Oftentimes in summer
When the heat was bearing down,
We'd take a family trolley ride
And leave the sultry town,
To "get a breath" of evening air—
And just a nickel for the fare!

Sometimes up to Pequot Park
The trolley bore its load,
At other times to Huntington
Along the river road—
We'd thunder through the summer night
Swifter, it seemed, than swallow's flight.

Kid's favorite seat was just behind
The burly motor-man,
The boys liked that because they'd see
Just how the trolley ran,
Not only that....with rush of air
We "rode the wind" when we sat there!





But Ma and Pa preferred by far
The seats not so exposed—
Ma didn't like disordered hair,
(So Pa and I supposed).
And so we'd ride the evening through—
What better could a family do,
When but a nickel was the fare?

Long gone now are the trolley lines,
The tracks have disappeared—
No more the evening trolley ride
To families so endeared.
But one can still remember well
Their rumble and their roar
And the sharp warning of the bell
At twenty miles or more!

And even now I faintly smell
The tobacco fields at night
During the growing season—
Fragrance of rich delight!
And even now I seem to hear
The grasses by the track
Swish, as the trolley passed along
To old Springfield and back!

Growing Up On a Farm

(An interview with Ralph Pomeroy, who was born Feb. 2, 1903 in Westfield)

I was born on the old Pomeroy homestead in Owen District, which is located in the northeast corner of Westfield. Now it is called East Mountain Rd.

Father farmed there the first three years after he married. The place was sold to settle the estate.

West Suffield, Conn.

We then moved to West Suffield, Conn., where may father was going to get rich growing tobacco. Our place was only a short distance from the village store, and the first I remember was walking to the store with Mother, and Mrs. Brigbee gave me a lollipop. She was my first girlfriend, for I am sure she gave me something every time I went there after that. The next thing I remember in Suffield was Uncle Frank moved in with us for the winter. His place down the road had been sold. So, with the help of an old-fashioned wheel barrow, he stored his belongings in our back room till he could find another place.

Next, I remember having to stay in bed with a flatiron tied to my foot. My brother Russell and I were scrapping over who would have the swing. I got pushed out and got a broken leg. The Horse Doctor, as my father called him, patched it up with splints, and told my folks, "Keep him in bed two weeks," with the flatiron tied to my foot and hanging over the end of the bed, to keep my leg from shrinking.

The last I remember of Suffield was when my dad was trying to choke me with a towel with some terrible smelling stuff (ether) on it. That's all I remember. Mother told me the rest.

In those days - no telephones. If you wanted a doctor, you rode a horse or bike or walked to the store, post office, or whatever, and listed the call on a billboard. The Horse Doctor, making his rounds by horse and buggy, would show up before night.

The doctor came and said that I had to have an operation. He said that he would go home and read up on it and be back in the morning - that I had appendix trouble. He came back the next morning. "Mother, clear the table - get boiling water - rip up an old petticoat." "Father, boil up knives and scissors. Stand right there - hand me what I need." Busted appendix - gangrene! Four inches of intestines taken out and whatever. No drugs like today. They got the job done! Doctor said, "I don't think he'll live, but he may." Oh yes! I made it!

To Westfield

The next year we moved back to Westfield. Mother said, "Was I ever glad to leave that place!" Dad hired a small place next to Grandfather Higgins in East Mountain. What I remember there: runaway horses, forest fires, and rattlesnakes! I started school - first grade at the Hill School.

Runaway Horses

First Runaway: Father raised vegetables for market. I went with him to Holyoke with a load of vegetables on a high-seat business wagon - one horse. We sold our vegetables and were on the way home. The horse was a new one and afraid of everything. A car, the first one I had ever seen, came up behind us and blasted on an old type horn. The horse jumped side-ways first, swerved into the ditch, throwing Father off the high seat. Then it ran with lines dragging on the ground and little me hanging onto the seat and wondering what was going to happen next. There were three men in the car that had passed us. One of them looked out the back window after about a quarter of a mile and decided something was wrong. So they stopped - got out and spread out just in time to stop the horse.

Higgins family reunion, August, 1910, at Mt. Tom. Ralph Pomeroy is seated at the far right, first row.

We went back - got Father down to a little brook to wash the blood off his face so he could see, and we took off for home. Mother thought Father had been fighting!

The Next Runaway

The following winter Mother was driving School Bus. This was a two-horse bob-sled with a built-on box for cover. There was room for six on each side and two up front. We were coming from Hill School down Notre Dame St. hill over the railroad bridge just as a train was going under. The engineer blasted on his whistle as loud as possible, just to scare the horses, my mother said. Well, Rob and Bill took off down the hill in a dead run. At the corner of Notre Dame and North Elm they cut the corner too short. The left front corner of the sled collided with a telephone pole. The front "bob" let go, and the horses took off for Frog Hole with the bob a-bobbing behind them. I was sitting beside my mother up front and didn't get hurt. Some of the kids in back were banged up quite a bit. A farmer down Union St. came bringing the horses back after a while. I don't remember how we got home. The sled was all beat up.

The Next Runaway: Rob and Bill were on the hay wagon, haying in Gramp Higgins lower mowing. I was riding on the hay wagon. We had a full load of hay and started for the barn. I have no idea what happened. All of a sudden the horses were on a dead run headed for the barn. Someone yelled to slide off the back, and they didn't have to yell a second time. Hay was scattered all the way to the barnyard. I don't know where the horses ended up.

The Last Runaway: Mother was driving the one-horse wagon School Bus just before summer vacation. I was sitting beside Mother up front, going up Clay Hill. The whiffle-tree broke! Billy took off! Mother, hanging onto the lines, took off with him and was dragged quite a ways on her stomach around a corner and out of sight! It was some time before they got the horse rounded up. That was the last time Mother drove School Bus!

Forest Fires

In a dry season, the wood-burning engines on the railroad between Westfield and Holyoke were always starting fires. It must have been dry in 1908 and 1909. Both years we lived in Owen District (what it was called then). Everyone seemed to be worrying about fires and rattlesnakes. When the fires got going, they seemed to let them go up and burn out, unless they got too close to the farms; then they took plows and plowed around their places and set backfires. There was very little timber on the East Mountain Range at that time, just scrub and "burn-out" as they called it.

Rattlesnakes! Yes!!

They came off the mountain in dry hot summers. The farmers still cut hay by hand, and each year there were casualties: a horse here, a cow there, a dog down the road, and sometimes, a man. My dad was more afraid of rattlers than Mother was. She killed a number while picking blueberries. There were a lot of blueberries, due to the fires. Dad had had more close calls while growing up.

When Dad was a boy, he had the experience of seeing two men die because of snake bite. In those days, there were what they called "drifters," men of all ages, but mostly young, who traveled around the country, working wherever they could find work - in the summer months or longer. The Pomeroys had a large farm at that time, so they always hired extra help. One year one of the boys got bitten by a rattler through his cow-hide boot and died from the bite. Later that fall, the boys were getting out wood for winter supply. It came up a heavy storm, and before they got out of the woods, they got soaked. There was a pair of boots sitting in the back room, not being used, so one of the boys put them on while his dried out. Within a few days he died of snake bite. The fang of the snake had gone through the boot of the first boy and broken off, which poisoned the second fellow.

My father, when he was older and farming on his own, had a dog that would hunt out a

snake and bay at it. When working in the fields, they felt safer with him around.

East Mountain, 1909: First fishing on my own

Opening day of trout fishing! I had fished with Father from a boat, but never trout fishing. I got up early and went to the barn at Gramp's. He was milking cows. I had a can of worms and a fishpole, the kind you cut and tie a string onto. I got Gramp to bait my hook. I was not sure I could do it right to catch a trout. The brook was just a short way down the hill. There was a nice pool where the water came under the old bridge. That's where I caught my first trout. I tried to take it off the hook. He had swallowed it. I ran back to the barn and had Gramp take it off. Now bait the hook again, and back to the brook again. Same hole -another trout, not quite so big. Boy, this is something! I got this one off and baited the hook myself this time. I figured there might be a bigger one down below. I went down a ways - found a good looking spot. I threw my line in. Oh, oh! A stump! That's where I lost my first hook. I had no spare.

The Up and Down Sawmill

One day my grandfather took me down to see the old Up and Down Saw Mill he had run most of his life. It washed out from a flood a few years back and it is out of working order now. But Gramp explained to me how it worked. The water fed from a dug canal along a sluice-way. A large paddle wheel was set at the end of the sluice. As I remember, it sat lower than ground level. The water flowing into the paddle wheel turned a large shaft, which turned another large wheel with a big saw. It was the largest I ever saw, and was attached to this wheel on a swivel, so as not to bind it as it turned. The carriage which carried the log along was hooked up somehow to move slowly as the saw bit into the log. Gramp's words, "The old saw goes up and down - up and down - and by and by a board falls off."

Over to Middle Farms, April 1910

Dad and I were on a two-horse wagon with a load of furniture. We stopped for a drink of water at the little brook just this side of the railroad tracks. I asked Dad, "How much farther do we got to go?" I was in a hurry to see the old place they had been telling about. Dad said, "It won't be long now, only another mile." We got there, and I started exploring. Dad said, "Watch your step. There are nails everywhere." I was barefoot, as I remember.

I explored the house, two woodsheds, hay barn (later made into a horse barn), blacksmith shop. All were falling in. Next was a horse stable with barn floor to drive in with hay. The hay went up over on each side, above the stables. On the east side was a cow stable. A gap, then a real big barn used for storage of feed of all kinds. In those days they raised a lot of grain crops to grind for flour. So much for that. We had to take down the old buildings before we could start building.

Going to School

I started school in the third grade. It was not far to walk, just down around the corner. One room, one teacher, and eight grades! Thirty or more kids! The younger ones sat up front, worked back according to age, with the older ones up back.

Our first teacher was a young, stocky lady; that's all I remember about her. She didn't stay long, not over two years. She couldn't take it. Next we had Mrs. Coe. Next, Mrs. Coe-Williams, who was an older lady who could handle the older kids a little better. It was still a problem. By today's standards, they couldn't learn much. But as I look back over the four years I was there, the ones that wanted to learn, did, and those that didn't give a darn, didn't.

At East Mountain we never learned to swim on account of rattlesnakes. My first experience: I *had* to learn to swim! We went to the river. Two older boys threw me in and yelled, "Paddle with your hands and kick

with your feet!" I leaned quick!

To Hill School

In 1915 Russell and I switched over to Prospect Hill School in Westfield, "to get a better education," as Mother said. Russ was in the eighth grade and I was in the seventh. It must have been tough for both of us. I'm sure it was for me! We were farmers. We knew it, and the other boys knew it and didn't let us forget it. The principal stopped the only "near fight." That made me mad and I lit into him. After that they seemed to lay off pestering me. I managed to get through that first year and passed into the eighth grade. Russell had his troubles, too. You asked, "How did we get back and forth to school?" We rode bikes in good weather and drove a horse in winter months. There was an old horse barn right north of the school yard. We got permission to hitch the horse there. In 1916, the next year, Russell dropped out to help out on the farm.

I'm now in eighth grade. I rode bike fall months. Over to Gramp Higgins winter months. There was a one-horse school bus that picked up what kids there were in East Mountain at the time, probably six or eight. (There was no schoolhouse in that section then.) I rode the bus to the foot of Clay Hill, got out there, walked up the hill to Hill School, as that is where I had been going, The bus went to Abner Gibbs School. After school I walked back to North Elm Street to catch my bus. Things went a lot better this year for me. There was an attic, or loft, on the top floor. The principal let a few of us boys from out of town play basketball there noon hours. I had never had a chance to play with a basketball. This was something!

Come spring and baseball! They had a town league for grade schools. I made the team, so I was late home from school about one day a week when we had a game to play. I was back home from Grandfather's then, riding my bike.

I finished up eighth grade in fine shape! I stood third in class on graduation. The last two months of school, Mrs. Strong, our teacher, place us according to our standing. There were two girls in front and one in back of me. I got kidded, sitting with the girls.

Building the tobacco barn

After Hill School was out for the summer, we were home to draw logs to Southampton. At age fourteen years Russell and I drew logs to Southampton Saw Mill about every day all summer. Father and one hired man tended crops. Another man, Ed Drake, worked all simmer building the barn, with help from others part time. Russell and I drew the logs with two pair of horses and two old farm wagons. Always something broke down.

We were two kids, you might say, with no previous experience logging. We learned fast! I don't know why we didn't get killed. We left home in the morning at seven o'clock to East Mountain. We loaded our two loads of logs after a fashion and drove to Southampton. Unload the logs. Load two loads of lumber and bring it home. Home around seven o'clock in the evening. The barn had to be ready in early fall for tobacco.

High School

I went three months. Rode bike. No way in sight to get boarded in town for the winter. Father took sick — had worked too hard all year. I dropped out of school to keep things going. Russ had taken a job working for Uncle Herb Higgins. After Christmas work, Russell was back home from Higgins'. Russ said he was going to get work at the brickyard. I told him to get a job for me, too. He got back — said he got a job. The boss said that I was too young, but I could come and give it a try. I worked there all winter digging clay. It was my first job for money — fifty cents per hour.

1918

When I was fifteen in 1918, the Army Camp came to Westfield. Tent City, or Camp Bartlett — where the airport is now. Horses, mules and soldiers by the thousands!! Father lined up a few hundred horses to keep the manure cleaned away for the summer. Had to be there by eight o'clock and cleaned away by noon.

He built a high box body on our best wagon, and Dad and I pitched manure, two loads a day. One load we would unload at the Duffey place (later the Townsend place), then we would bring the next load home.

Afternoons we tended to farm work. Russell had taken a job working at the Baggage Station that summer.

After fall and Christmas wreath work, I carted milk to Holyoke with horses. No roads were kept open for cars or trucks those years. We had a long express wagon when the ground was bare. And a double bob-sled when snow was on the ground. I collected milk in Russellville: Clark's, Moores', Russells', Graves', and our own. In the Brickyard area: Goodwins',Campbells', and Franks'. I would leave at eight in the morning and get home at eight at night.

One day in January I started out early with the wagon. I had gotten only half-way to Holyoke when is started snowing — a Northeaster, they called it. I got there, unloaded my milk, loaded up my empties, and took off for home. The horses knew the way — no traffic — so I got under the seat. It was snowing and blowing so hard, I could hardly see! I got across Route 10, coming toward the brickyard just before dark. Snow drifts were so deep the horses could barely drag the wagon. Just before Dolinskies' one horse fell down. They were just done in, so I unhitched them from the wagon. I had to hitch one horse to the other to get him up. I left the wagon and cans sitting there right in the middle of the road. I got on the best horse, leading the other, and came home. My dad was pretty mad because I didn't get the wagon home. It took us most of the next day to get the wagon dug out.

Mud Season

Mud season in the spring could be the worst. Slow going and terrible rough roads. In one way I liked it the best. A few of the Red Speed wagons and cars would try to make it from Holyoke to Westfield. But quite a few got stuck in the mud. I would get a chance to earn a little spending money pulling them out. Only one time I broke my set of eveners. I had to borrow a set from a nearby farm to get home. My dad was real mad. The man promised to get a new set made up for me and bring them over. My dad said, "You're crazy! He'll never do it!" But he did, and all was well.

1919

When I was sixteen my father gave me a half-acre to grow tobacco, so I would have some spending money. I was thrilled. It was a good growing year — best crop ever! Some years buyers came around early, before harvest, to pick out farms with better tobacco. Well, that's what happened this year. Father sold for fifty cents a pound in the field, which was top price. Soon after we started cutting, the worst hailstorm ever hit us — ruined the crop. We had to take five cents a pound.

After Christmas work was over, I carted milk again during the winter months.

1920-1921

I think the tobacco did better this year.

Uncle Arthur, a trustee at the college, got me enrolled in the Dairy Course at Mass Aggie for the winter. Requirements? Being eighteen years old and a high school graduate. Well, I was eighteen in three months. When I was asked where I attended high school, I told the truth: Westfield High School! I had a great winter. Spent a lot of time in the gym playing basketball. Got through with high marks. Lined up a job working for the state, testing cattle. I was on the farm that next summer. After Christmas work, I took a job testing cattle all winter. I bought a new Model T the spring (1922) for 625.00 dollars.

On the farm

Summer and fall of 1922, I was nineteen. In late fall, Father had a good hired man. I got a call from the state — testing. Things seemed to be going fine until January. I was testing down in Marlboro. I got a call from Mother January 6. Father was bad. I got home the next day on a Saturday. Dad died the next day. So it was back to the farm for good. You asked about Norman. He had one more year of high

school. Then he was home. We kept the farm going for Mother until she remarried. Norman was with me one more year until Mother left.

The Grange

In 1923 we all joined the Grange — the best thing for all. We got out and met people; all three of us worked up through the offices and Master. The best experience ever for farm boys! That's when, as you say, we started going out — always something going on.

No one had money in those days to spend on entertainment and such. In the Grange we made our own. We had plays, minstrel shows, outings of all kinds in the summer. We had trips with two or three cars to the seashore, Riverside, the Mohawk Trail. CARS made this possible. All of a sudden everyone had cars, and that was the fad, to go places.

Of course we had a new Grange Hall to build. We used the old schoolhouse on South Maple Street, a three room school. I worked all one winter taking out partitions, a large chimney in the center, ripping up flooring. In fact, it was large brick shell when we started rebuilding from the bottom up. Mixed cement by hand for the cellar. New floors, walls, and ceilings. I started in the fall with Harry Belden, ripping things out, then building. Then Bill Townsend helped plastering in spring months. Of course, I milked the cows night and morning. Enough on Grange! I could go on.

You asked about working a lot when young. You don't realize, in those days farm folks had to grow a family as well as crops to make a "go" of farming. Without young folks to help out, they would never make it. I knew of no farm in our neighborhood that was making a living farming without young folks to help out.

I begged my dad to learn to milk at eight years. From then on — into everything. To harness a horse, I had to have a stool to stand on. I worked with horses for thirty-five years until we got our first tractor.

All farm work at that time was mostly hard work. The same as our grandfathers did; cutting ice, chopping wood, digging potatoes, hoeing corn and others; picking potato bugs off potatoes — I didn't like that (no sprays). After the World War they started coming out with better farm equipment, if you had the money to buy.

Ralph Pomeroy,
Blandford Fox Hunt, 1926

Sunday school at Wyben Chapel was a *must* if Mother had her way.

Hunting

I went with brothers some, but I hunted more by myself. Russ and Norman went to fox hunts and hunted deer mostly. I started coon hunting with Dad at eight years old. I had coon dogs for two years: Reuben and Ted. VanDuzen poisoned them. We had no more coon dogs while Father lived.

I had had just enough of it. I had to have a coon dog. So the first money I got together after Dad died, I went to Tennessee for a coon dog: Old Rock. I was never without a coon dog from then on until the last five years. During the 20's and 30's coon hides paid taxes at times when no other money was available.

Later on I took up wildcat hunting, the most interesting of all.

Training good hounds was my ambition. I had the best for many years, and sold many hounds for good money.

Sports

Marion, to try and answer your question, I always liked sports, baseball probably first, from the time I could throw a ball. I remember my first "boughten" glove. It was a hard thing, not much better than the old mitten I'd been using.

After I got back from Amherst (spring of 1921) I took our horses and dumpcart to Southampton and, with the help of a number of ball players, drew clay for the first ballfield in Southampton. It was up just this side of where the school is now on Pomeroy Meadow Road. We lined up the base-paths, dug them out, and filled in with clay. We built a backstop and were in business. I played there many years, mostly on Sundays. Dad would let me take off if there was no hay to get in.

Basketball in Southampton started about the same time. They had never had basketball there before. Stanley Howlett and I with a few others talked the town fathers into letting us build shields or whatever to protect the windows in the old town hall for basketball. With the promise we would pay for any damage, that was the beginning of the Church League: Southampton, Easthampton, Westhampton, and two or three teams from Northampton. That lasted two years; we then went to the Valley League. That lasted a number of years. We got in college boys from other towns — Southampton, Easthampton — and came up with good teams.

After baseball in Southampton, I switched to Westfield in the old Valley League, playing with the First Church team. We never did win the championship there but had a lot of fun. Softball after that!

Going out when young

You don't get very far on foot, and that's how it was until I got my Ford in 1922. Then I was on wheels. I started, as I said, with Grange. Next came square dancing (First Church), the First, in Southampton. The first few times I would sit up in the old balcony and watch. I learned all the dancing by watching until I got up the nerve to ask anyone to dance. An older lady asked me if I would care to dance. That got me started. For the next eight years — *you* know — we wore out a lot of shoe leather!! I loved to dance!

Well, Marion, that's all for now. You can take over from here. You liked to dance, too!

Deer Hunting in West Granville 1924-1934

I am thankful that I never shot a deer in West Granville. Herd control would not excuse the guilt feelings coming from killing one of these beautiful animals. As a matter of fact, there were not many deer in this area during the 1920s. Never-the-less, deer hunting brought me to the home of Charles and Mrs. Sheets, and these two people are the reason for my wishing to have the readers of Stonewalls know them through a boy's eyes, and then reflecting on their lives as an older man.

The first week of December was "Deer Week"; open season on both bucks and does. I never knew how the Sheets' farm became "the place to be" during that exciting seven days. I came there with my father, Lew Gridley, a well known sportsman and state champion trapshooter. Other friends from the Springfield area were always with us. I remember the ride, first to Westfield, then Southwick and finally the long upgrade ride to the Granvilles. The Sheets farm was on a dead end road leading off from the Tolland Road which lead toward the Hubbard river.

Usually there were from six to twelve men staying for all or part of the week. I'm certain now that the evenings of sociability and the home cooked food, not the promise of a deer, kept the men coming year after year. A few names that I remember: George Rice, City Treasurer of Springfield, Charles Vining from Longmeadow who was reputed to be an heir to the Absorbine fortune, Eddie Olds from Southampton, whose talent for converting apple cider into something stronger was well known during this period of National Prohibition, and Bob Doolittle, who operated the Puritan restaurant on Winchester Square in Springfield. He owned one of the first automobiles in the city, a Knox, manufactured not far from his place of business. Sue Hobbs, my uncle whose story of association with the famous madam from Holyoke can never be told. There was also another restaurant owner, whose name I can't recall, but whom I do not want to overlook. His restaurant was located near the corner of State and Main Streets in Springfield and called The Handy Lunch. No one will ever know of the gifts of meals he gave to former customers who became jobless during the depression. His son became an attorney and hopefully will learn of this tribute to his dad. Then there were Mel and Mull, two characters from Holyoke, whose stories of hunting with their bird dog Nellie gave us many an interesting evening. For years I believed their tale of hand feeding ducks at Forest Park in Springfield. As the ducks came close, Mel or Mull would feed with one hand and grab the ducks neck with the other. Their graphic description of the "catch" seemed so simple that I wondered why we ever bought chicken when ducks were so easily available. Many years after I had the opportunity to test a wild duck's reaction and found it far quicker than the human hand.

Bed time was seldom later than nine o'clock. The bed rooms were cold but never mind; we had three resources found in most country homes of that era. They were a feather bed, a quilted comforter and a "Thunder Jug" under the bed.

Breakfast was on the table by six o'clock and it was food good for a long day in the woods: meat, potato, eggs, homemade bread, and homemade doughnuts. Then, as we were ready to leave, a generous lunch would be ready.

As for the hunting part of my recollections, I'm sure that I expected to see a deer over every stone wall and behind every juniper bush. Sadly, I never did, but I do remember enjoying the hike along the road past the Sheets' farm and leading toward Otis. Today

it must be a favorite ride for cross country vehicles.

Also, time has brought into true perspective the enormous amount of preparation and hard work that went into feeding and housing a dozen or more men. In those days there were no short cuts like store bought food or disposable dishes. How well I remember the meals, but I have no recollection of the after meal clean up duties. I know that Mr. Sheets helped in the house but he had barn chores to take care of, so the burden of after meal work was mostly the responsibility of Mrs. Sheets. At that time I would estimate that she was more than sixty years old. I have always marveled at her capacity for hard work.

A final event marks the end of my association with Mr. and Mrs. Sheets and will indicate the compassionate side of their character. One summer, perhaps 1933 or 1934, I was without work and I asked Mrs. Sheets if I could come and stay and pick blueberries for my board and room. They agreed and for several weeks I was their guest, but doubt if I every picked enough berries to make my visit worthwhile as an employee. A granddaughter of the Sheets' often came to help with the picking. I remember her as a pretty teenager and a far better berry picker than I. Also, there was another girl named Leona who I recognize as the sister in the article on page 22 of the fall issue of Stone Walls. There was a visiting student minister mentioned in the same article. Some years ago I met a brother of the Sheets girl mentioned above. He had a camp in New Hampshire where I resided at the time.

All of us are now seniors and some are no longer with us. If at times during our lives we found ourselves working harder without complaining, then perhaps in our subconscious minds there was the example of this kindly couple.

Kenneth C. Gridley
Little River, So. Carolina

Family Values

By David Pierce

When people ask me why I like trains, often just stare blankly, not for lack of an answer, but because so many feelings and memories come flooding in that I find it very hard to sort; to say what one thing triggered my enduring interest in this particular form of transport. It;s almost a family tradition, positively Pavlovian; love of the railroad is as close to genetic among the Pierce family as can be achieved in the natural course of things.

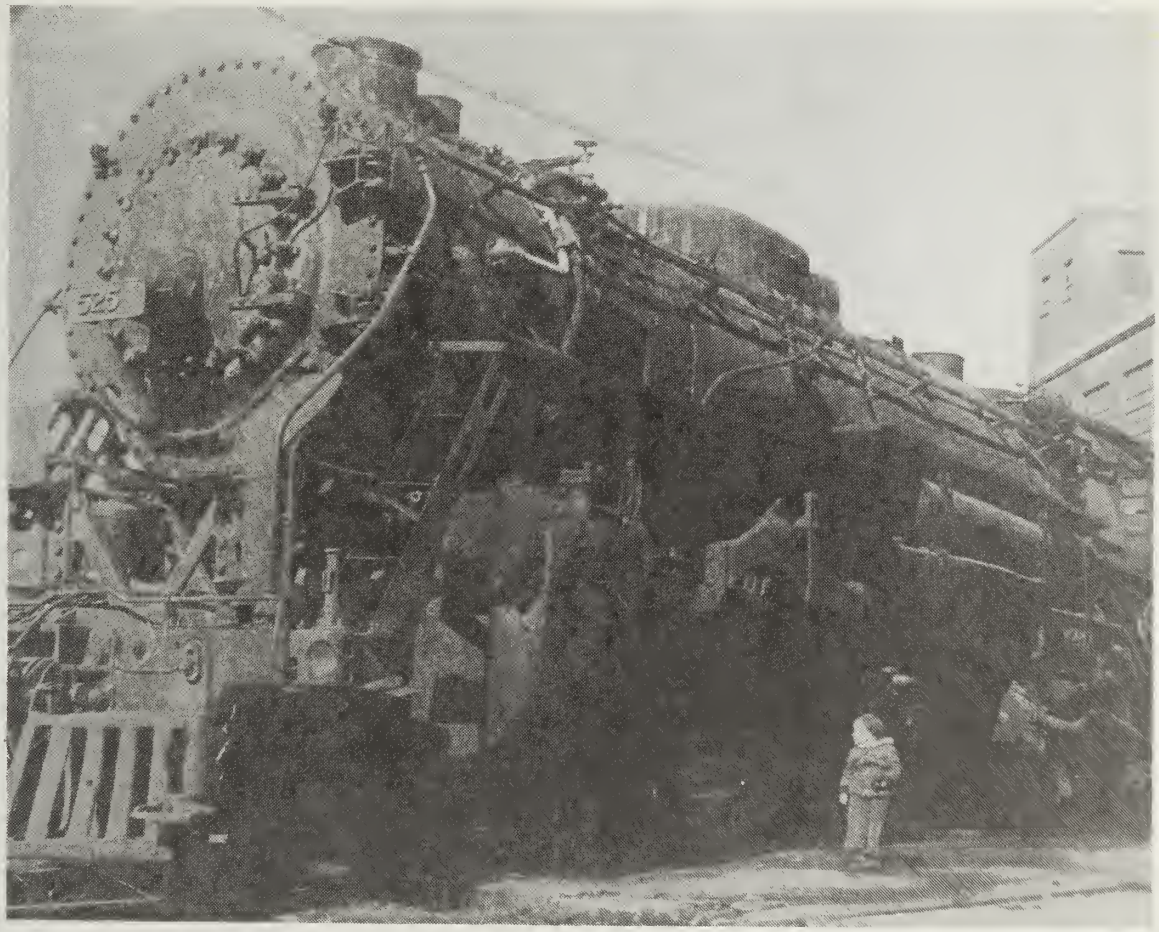
My great-grandfather Carlton, died a peaceful death at the age of 83 in the foyer to his back porch on his way to watch the passage of train 40, as he did each evening to wave at Nelson Earle, Railway Post Office Clerk, and his son-in-law. He never made it, as Nelson had reported not seeing him at his post that evening.

My grandfather, Carl Pierce, ran a coal and feed outlet across the tracks from his father's home in Hinsdale where trains were a large part of the daily routine of business. Coal and bulk grains arrived by rail, as well as postal cars, which Carl held the contract for loading and unloading. Of course, Carl knew all the trainmen, and when he had his sons, Wadsworth, later to be my father, and Dough in Pittsfield to help him load supplies, he would arrange for them to hitch a ride on a pusher engine to Hinsdale, where they would stand in awe on the swaying deck of the engine cab, surveying a dizzying array of valves and gauges as the fireman labored to shovel nearly a ton of coal through the 'butterfly doors' during the six-mile climb up the mountain shoving hard on the rear of a wooden caboose. The pushers would come off in Hinsdale, near the top of the Boston & Albany profile. The ride took about 30 minutes, the same amount of time needed to ply the roads of the day (15 mins. in 1992) in a Model A Ford as Carl would travel to meet the boys when the pusher was taken off outside his store. How could you not be enamored of these beasts when such close encounters were part of your everyday existence?

Carl Pierce met his death at the age of 60 right outside his store when he was struck by a train during a blizzard on Feb. 8, 1945. Adding to the irony was the fact that his daughter, Janet was riding that very train, scheduled to stop in Pittsfield, returning home from Wheaton College. These events, however, did not seem to diminish the interest in and love of the railroad among his children and succeeding generations. To the contrary, his was an heroic exit; unloading the mail during a raging snowstorm; a vital link in the solemn duties of the U. S. Post Office. Three workers on the tracks in Hinsdale that night had in fact been struck by the off-schedule passenger train. Yet, to this day I can't imagine a member of the family not pointing out the passage of a train to a child.

The first photo, while staged (the boys didn't really hand-shovel carloads of coal) shows a lot of the time. Besides the now-gone array of railroad structures in the background, the leather aviator helmets and the flights jackets on the coal pile at left,show these lads were also enthusiastic about a mode of travel new to the scene, the aeroplane. While we spent a lot of time watching trains, I don't recall my father ever taking me to an airport to watch planes.

The next generational recording of involvement with the railroad is in the West Springfield yards in 1953. This one is of me. The locomotive has been condemned to scrap, evidenced by the missing headlight, as had thousands of sisters nationwide during this period. As the decline of steam began to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creep into my father's consciousness during these busy years of starting a family, he wanted to seek out the last of this disappearing breed. He hoped to have me experience the magic of these wondrous machines, but the magic had been drained away with the last of the boiler water, and final dumping of ashes. I found plenty to fascinate me, however, out on the mainline, as the newly acquired and elegantly painted streamlined trains raced by. These 'new' diesels are now as much objects of wistful nostalgia as their steam ancestors, having been replaced 25 years ago with today's boxy-looking locomotives. During this period, my father, as had his father before him, would arrange cab rides for me. Using in these instances his press card rather than business contacts to elicit the hoped-for engineer's-eye-view, he has written many pieces sympathetic to the railroads over the years. A 1955 trip dow the New Haven Railroad's 'inland route' from Springfield to Grand Central Station in New York City began a series of father-son train trips 'just for the ride' which continues to this day.

Now, while I have no children of my own, there are occasions when I find myself trackside with a member of the 'next' generation. I haven't developed a technique to get cab rides, but we always note the passage of trains. In this instance, about 4 years ago, my cousin Steve, and his son Tom, exuberantly hailed the presence of Amtrak's Lake Shore Limited just west of Boulard's Crossing bridge which marks the highest point (1495 ft.) on the B&A line. This is also in Hinsdale, about three miles from the former location of Carl A. Pierce & Sons fuel and feed company. Tom's excitement when he sees a train leads me to believe he'll be watching them for many years into the future, no matter what technological changes my take place in the meantime.

Unlike many families with a rich lineage of railroaders, we've not a one; it's perhaps because of the disassociation that we've always been fans.

Once again we delve into the files of Wadsworth R. Pierce of Hinsdale, for this 1967 Springfield Republican account:

Hinsdale Gold Rush

Hoax Of 1897 Kept County Agog For 2 Hectic Years

HINSDALE— This central Berkshire community has had more than its share of strange occurrences during its up-down-and-up again history, but none more melodramatic, unbelievable and still mysterious than the "gold rush," which started out with rumors and whispers in 1896.

It exploded into full bloom the following year with the organization of a gold mining company, the sale of $30,000 worth of stock, the construction of mining buildings and the installation of machinery. Hundreds of people, including generally-suspicious newsmen, were among those who lost their savings.

Amazingly enough, the company's "boom" lasted more than two years on sheer promises. None of the stockholders ever received a dividend. A few oldtimers, still living in the area, recall the excitement, but are vague on details. Their versions of what happened conflict somewhat.

A definite hoax was perpetrated, but the records, old newspapers along with word of mouth reports, differ regarding the identity of the guilty parties and their degree of involvement. It is a matter of record, however, that all but two or three persons involved were sincere residents who poured out everything they owned, certain their money would be multiplied many times.

The lid was slammed shut on the "gold mining project" in 1900 with the dramatic death-bed confession of Prof. John E. Sutphen of Glens Falls, N.Y., one of the principals. Sutphen, who made many gold assays, admitted at the end of his life that his estimates were false. His assays ranged from $15 to $100 worth of gold and even some silver in each ton of ore.

An unsolved mystery remains, however, for although Sutphen admitted being part of a hoax, most evidence indicates he profited little by the maneuver. It was through his insistence, however, that the golden ball kept rolling for so long.

Other participants who were in on the ground floor include an apparently wealthy couple from Springfield, Mr. and Mrs. George H. Page, and an itinerant oil man named Davis, who was known in Hinsdale as "Rattlesnake Bill."

Page, who was apparently a victim of the elaborate scheme rather than a perpetrator, went on to become president of the Alpha Mining Co., which set up operations on the property of the late George M. French on East Washington Rd. Buildings were constructed, machinery installed and $30,000 worth of stock was sold at $5 a share. About the time the actual mining began, Sutphen, who had fled from town, made his last-minute confession.

Public confidence in the operation remained unshakable during the first quarter of 1899, for on March 16 of that year the old *Pittsfield Sun* referred to the mine as "a sure, safe and thorough business project with sufficient stock to enable the management to erect a large well-constructed building."

A letter to the editor of that newspaper about the same time says that eight tons of material was put through the test plant of Prof. Sutphen of Glens Falls, N.Y., and that George H. Page, president of the Alpha Mining Co., was present when the tests were made.

"The Alpha Mining Co. has unlimited quantities of this material, thus guaranteeing absolute and long-continued success to the project and satisfaction to the fortunate stockholders."

"This writer has had the pleasure to see with his own eyes and handle with his own

hands the beautiful samples of gold and silver which Mr. Page brought back from Glens Falls. The management is earnest and confident." The letter, printed on the paper's editorial page, was signed "A Well Wisher."

Soon after Sutphen's death-bed confession that he was part of a hoax, the bitter stockholders disbanded, the company folded and the land was sold for taxes.

Word of gold in Hinsdale began as early as 1896, for in a bulletin of the U.S. Geological Survey, an item dated Aug. 15, 1896 stated: "George M. French has a number of men excavating on his gold find preparatory to final examination by Prof. Southpen of Albany. (Southpen is an apparent misspelling of Sutphen.) Mr. French still has hopes and flattering offers as well."

According to a report from *The Berkshire Traveller*, "Near the Alpha Mine a Brooklyn lady owns a 100 acre farm, which also had a stream. After the professor's assay, she formed the River Bend Mining Company and was said to have turned down an offer of $100,000 for it. Her property was so highly regarded that even the canny West Pittsfield Shakers invested $6,000 in the project."

Oldtimers also recall that there were diggings about the same time on Tully Mountain Rd. between Hinsdale and Pittsfield - venture which Rattlesnake Bill set up and which attracted many investors. There too, a building was started before the truth was known.

The *Berkshire Traveller* account of what happened is - "Page organized the Hinsdale Mining and Milling Company, brought in the mysterious Professor Sutphen, and named Rattlesnake Bill as mine superintendent and promoter. To bolster the gold rush when interest seemed to flag, he called on a kind of off-stage voice he identified as 'California Jack O'Brien, a world famous authority.' His Hinsdale lode was called the Alpha Mine, and profits of $1,000 a day were predicted from the workings.

"All at once, people began finding gold on every side. Prof. Sutphen assayed it for them, quoting impressive figures. A Pittsfield native, while fishing in a brook in Peru, picked up a rock, which the Prof. assayed conservatively at $40 a ton, so a company was formed to mine it."

Entering the gold rush spirit, a *Sunday Morning Call* reporter wrote of the Hinsdale gold fields, "You are shown lumps of rock so rich you might walk away with a fortune in your pockets. When you 'wash' your hands in the sand they become gold plated."

At the Berkshire Athenaeum there is a letter from Prof. W.V. Crosby of Massachusetts Institute of Technology dated as early as Feb. 28, 1898, which exposed the whole operation as worthless. Crosby said that a sample he had examined contained no gold and was probably "of no economic interest." This letter was apparently not circulated.

The boom continued until after the turn of the century, and for two years farmers forgot to farm, believing their east pastures rested on 24 karat mine fields and gold bearing sand lay in their barnyards.

Although Prof. Sutphen died just before the operation crumbled, Rattlesnake Bill and Mr. and Mrs. Page just disappeared. There are no written accounts of where the Pages went from Hinsdale, but it appears they put all their money into the mines. About 30 years later a resident contacted the Pages in New Mexico.

Most Hinsdale residents today are vaguely aware that the community was once the scene of a gold rush, and only a few oldtimers have any idea what part of the community was involved.

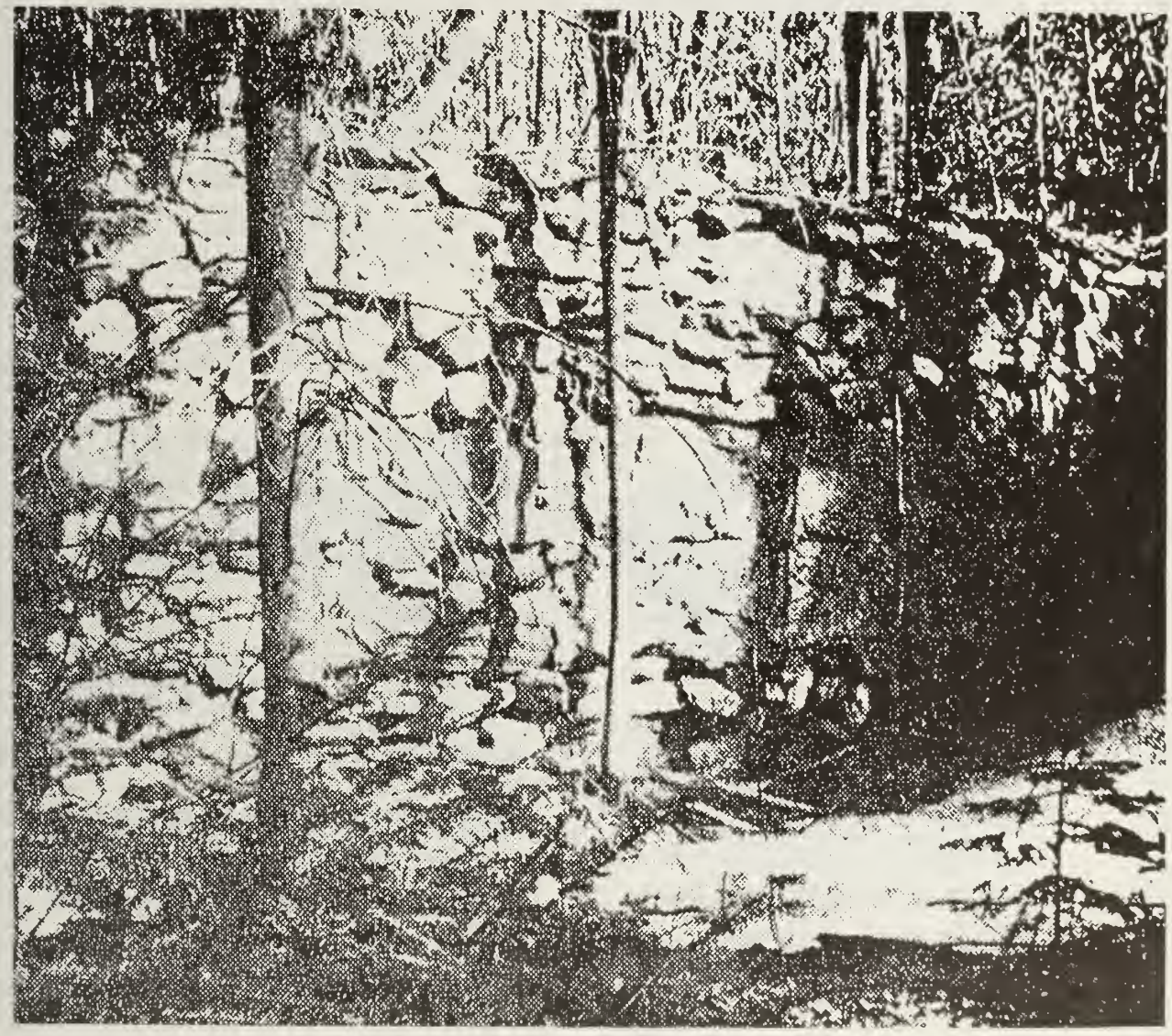
Despite the fact it is rough walking from the road into the mine shaft, 82-year-old Munroe F. Watkins, who has lived in Hinsdale since he was three, accompanied this reporter through brush and trees and over fences to the Alpha remains. In its heyday the mining firm constructed a large "L" shaped frame refining building near the shaft behind the now-boarded up French home. The terrain was then an open meadow, Watkins recalled, but it has since been reclaimed by the forest. Trees nearly a foot thick grow inside the stone foundations. These stones and bits of rusted machinery hide the evidence of a most

elaborate confidence game.

Watkins and other residents nearby say there truly is a trace of gold on the land; in fact its shiny flecks can readily be seen in the sunshine. Appraisals made since Alpha collapsed, however, reveal there is only about $3 or $4 worth in a ton of ore, a figure that would not cover the cost of mining and refining.

Watkins, who has been a dairy farmer most of his life, was about 12 or 14 years old during the get-rich-quick years, but he vividly recalls the excitement. The names Page, Rattlesnake Bill and Prof. Sutphen are as familiar to him as Babe Ruth. He says that Sutphen collected money from the operation, but he feels the Pages were honest victims.

Another veteran Hinsdale native is William Doherty, who will be 80 in July and now lives at 39 Fairfield St., Pittsfield. He particularly recalls the Tully Mountain mining operation because that was near his home which was then on Hinsdale's Curtis St. He, too, recalls the names of the principals, the excitement of it all, but is somewhat vague on the details.



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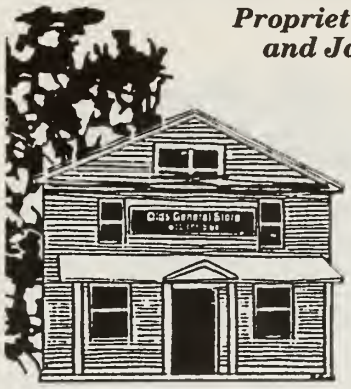

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