

GRACE ELLEN BATES STRONG

I REMEMBER : THE GOOD DAYS

I was born in a house in Ringville; Worthington, Mass., March 16, 1900. The village of Ringville had six houses. The mail was brought by the stage and the Post Lady took the mail and stamped it in her kitchen and read each card. At the age of seven I went to a little school house to a man teacher Mr. Capen. He came early and started a fire in a woodstove. He was a very good teacher but we had to mind him.

My father was a Buttermaker. All the farmers brought their sour cream and put it in a large round vat, six foot high. He built a fire under it, (Steam Churn) round and round it churned until it turned to butter.

My father Milo Bates was a direct descendent from the Mayflower which landed the Pilgrims in 1620 at Plymouth. His father Edward Bates met his wife in Northampton. She came from Scotland.

Grace Elder and Edward Bates lived in a little house in Swift River; Cummington, Mass. Milo was the oldest, then Ceylon, Lillie, Lucy, and Rollin. Milo learned to make butter in Cummington Creamery where the farmers brought their cream and it was made into butter and sold.

Milo moved to Worthington where he met Inda Agnes Brooks, they were married Jan. 5, 1899, they lived in Ringville where Milo was a buttermaker. I, Grace Ellen was their first child maned for both my Grandmothers. Robert Brooks Bates was the second child. They lived there 10 years.

While in Worthington my dad drove us three miles to Church each Sunday. My parents also belonged to the Grange.

Mother drove our pony Dotty everywhere. One day we were going to Cummington and the new four-wheel Ford honked and scared the pony we landed in the creek. Mother drove her out of the water and after that stopped each time the Fliver went by, we held on to Pony Dotty so she would not be scared. Cars came about two cars an hour. First car we saw going up the hill "Everybody look, Four-Wheels going by" Everyone called their neighbors "Get on the phone , Four-wheels going by!" That was 1908.

Everybody was on the same telephone line, everybody listened to the gossip. "Hang up Mary I hear your clock, coo, coo."

In June 1909 we moved to Sikes Ave. West Springfield where we have lived ever since. Aunt Nellie and I went by trolley car but my father drove a hay wagon with furniture. He put his Bee Hives on top of the chickens whose wings were stuck down all summer. I had three ducks (Shadrach, Mechach, and Abednego) and grandpa Brooks who lived with us got a barrel of cider. It stood on the lawn and the ducks pulled out the plug, when we woke up the cider was all over the lawn and the ducks were swimming around in the cider; they did not get drunk, it was sweet cider; grandpa Brooks had to get more apples and make more cider. One day one of the ducks got lost we found him swimming around in the well, we had to pull him out.

Grandma Brooks died in 1910, Worthington, Mass. so grandpa Brooks sold his farm and came to live with us. Then Aunt Nellie (Mary Ellen) came to live with us she went to Westfield to school to be a Librarian. She went to New Hampshire to work in a Library and met Herbert May and married him. I went to see them after graduating from West Springfield High as they were living near Boston. They went to Canada with three babies and then to California. I never saw Aunt Nellie again until I visited her in 1963. We were always in touch because of the circle letter.

In 1909 Bob my brother and I walked a mile to Tatham School, a red brick one room school house. When I was in forth grade and Bob in third I remember we put our lunch in a lard pail, one day we opened it and found lard, I cried and Bob ran home to get the right pail.

I went to Tatham School three years then to Mittineague for one year; then four years to high school, two years in the old town hall and two years in the new high school built in 1916. I graduated in 1918.

I worked one year in Mass. Mutual and then one year in Springfield Girls Club.

In 1923 I went to Gordon College for four years.

I rember <sup>on</sup> my bloomers: Father sold milk in lqt. bottles for 10¢ a qt. he went house to house in horse and buggy, I helped him wearing my bloomers. We washed bottles and filled them with milk.

I wore my bloomers they filled with air when I swam in Bear Hole Brook and I learned to as bloomers held me up when filled with Air. So I learned to swim and then swam the Westfield River every night and later taught swimming to kids.

I also worked in Girls Club in Spfld. and went visiting girls at noon as Mother's could not speak English only Spanish, in North End Springfield.

I went to Northfield School for Girls and saw a Missionary who she said went to Gordon College. So I wrote to them and was Admitted to Gordon College in 1923. I worked in Baker's Extract Co. summers putting vanilla in bottles while in school. We had fun on Sat. after doing our Sat. cleaning, I remember washing glass chimneys on lamps covered with smoke. In the summer we went swimming, winter it was sliding and skiing. In the spring we climbed the hill and picked arbutus, violets and other spring flowers. We filled May Baskets in May and hung them on doors.

I loved Gordon College on the Fenway, started by Adariram J. Gordon in a church and then Gordon College moved to the Fenway and became a College of Missions. I worked as a nursery school teacher two years. We graduated in an old famous Congregational Church.

I worked in the Springfield Armory till the war was over.

In 1923 while at Gordon College I worked in a boys school and two years in Bapt. Home Mission, Boston, teaching Nursery School.

I worked several summers in a Camp for Poor Children. Edwards Camp across the Westfield River from us. Then I worked in Bapt. Home Mission Nusery School one year in New York.

I met my future mate sweeping the floor in the Y. M. C. A. Mittineague I thought he would make a good husband but after we were married he never used a broom again. We had eight children, in 1936 we had a little boy who only lived one month. (Robert Bates Strong b. April 16, 1936 - d. May 17, 1936)

Our seven children were all well and happy, I hope. We raised them during the Great Depression. We had a large garden of peas, beans, carrots, beets, squash and pumpkins. We canned them all and put them down cellar for winter. We ate well and also had milk and honey.

Arthur worked for the town of West Springfield at Bear Hole Reservoir. I will never forget after a hard rain the dam at Bear Hole gave way and the flood washed out the station and he had to work at Southwick for two years till they built a new dam. Then he went back to Bear Hole to work.

Bear Hole was a park where they kept a Bear in a cage in a Hole in the ground. We never saw the bear again he just disappeared. The children all grew up and married. Dorothy Inda, Irma Louise, Esther Grace, Arthur Harvey, Gordon Eugene, Barbara Ellen and Norma Christine, so I now have 19 grandchildren and 1 great grand-child who lives in Ark.



Arthur and I had a good marriage. We always went somewhere on vacation; to Congamond Lakes or East Otis. We visited relatives in Ohio and Ruth in Scotia New York. We also went to Penn. We went to see Irma in Winslow, Ark. and Harvey took us to Calif. We stopped on the way to see Grand Canyon. Arthur had to fly home and loved flying. I have been flying ever since. I have gone to Calif. three times by bus. I also took Norma by bus after Arthur died and we saw Grand Canyon and Painted Dessert. Norma has been in Calif. since she married Dennis Hopper and now has 3 girls. I have flown to Calif. many times. I love Calif. but always go back to New England in the spring.

I remember once when Mother made cookies and burned them she threw them out and they landed in a tree. The next day as we went to school we saw cookies in a tree. We called it the Cooky Tree. I remember Grandpa Brooks and his birthday cake with 80 candles. I remember the funny things. Children say the funnest things. The little girl asked me "How old are you?" I said, "I was born in 1900!" "Oh!" she said, "You are 1900 years old!"

My grandson saw me brushing my teeth. He said, "I wish I could take my teeth out. I would put them under my pillow and get 10¢ a tooth and I'd be rich."

My Uncle James went to Calif. in 1906 by train, six day. He drove muleteam near Fresno. Uncle Alpha and Aunt Esther, also Aunt Alice who married Phil Davis and then my Aunt Nellie May. Feb. 1978 I went to Reedley to visit her daughter Ruth Rhodes and we; Ruth, her husband Bill, her son David and his family my son Harvey and his family and myself went up to their cabin in the mountians for a weekend. Had a fine time.

But I always go East in the spring.