Stories and Memories

Crowe and Stephenson Families

Summer, 2006

Cora Alice Stephenson and Robert William Crowe, 1915

Stories and Memories of the Crowe and Stephenson Families
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Crowe Family Group, ca. 1912

Memories and Stories
by Margaret Alice Crowe Kimball

Margaret, born September 12 1925, is the fifth and last child of Robert and Alice Crowe. Her maternal grandparents are John Stephenson and Cora Janes Stephenson. Her paternal grandparents are Abel Crowe and Mary Ann Morey Crowe.

The Place I Was Born

My childhood nuclear family included my grandfather and grandmother Crowe (Abel and Mary Ann Morey), my father and mother (Robert William Crowe and Cora Alice Stephenson) and my siblings: Gwendolyn Mary, Robert Stephenson, John Raymond, Cora Phyllis, and me, Margaret Alice, born in that order.

I was the only one to be born in what we called the Big House. My siblings were born at the farm house about a mile up the road. The Big House was built for a boarding house during the Sheldon boom (when people came for the spring waters). It was a square structure, three stories high, with large rooms and high ceilings. Each of the upper stories provided six large rooms, large hallways, and broad staircases and at the very top, a cupola.

The decision to leave the farm house was really a matter of necessity. My grandparents (Abel Crowe & Mary Ann Morey Crowe) were aging and needing care, and with a new baby coming, my mother was no longer able to carry on all the duties of life on the farm. So my father hired a tenant farmer and moved the family to the big house.

When I was born, the older children were sent to the homes of relatives because it was believed that children must be protected from any knowledge of birth or death. They were not even told that a new life was expected. My brothers were sent to Aunt Lena and Uncle Mark Stephenson, who lived in the village of Sheldon Creek. They stayed overnight and when Aunt Lena told them in the morning that they had a new baby sister, my six-year-old brother piped up, "Boy, won't my grandmother be mad when she hears about this!"

The Big House, Crowe Hill, ca. 1950

The Big House

The Big House was a great place for children to play because there was so much unused space. The third floor wasn't used for the family and we played up there through the warm months of the year.

We set up a store, a Post Office, and a telephone system. My mother saved cereal boxes, baking powder cans and all the boxes that came from the grocery to stock our store and we made paper money so we could buy and sell our wares. All these games were long on imagination and short on materials, especially the telephone, where making a call consisted of calling out ding-aling-aling and naming the person being called.

We pretended to be different people in town. The store keepers were popular roles; the post master, Miss Ruth Leach; the librarian, who had the Town library in her home; Bessie Beales who had a ladies' hat shop in her home; and Mrs. Trudeau, an elderly lady who always wore bright red fingernail polish. Teachers were also favorites.

Our playtime on the third floor came to an abrupt end one day when my mother went out to the mailbox to pick up the mail. She looked up and saw her children prancing around on the roof. They had climbed out the cupola window and were happily enjoying the knowledge of having found a new frontier. My mother hurried up the stairs as fast as she could run, all three flights, to the second, the third, and up to the cupola. She brought the children safely inside and it was decided then and there that the third floor was not a good place for a play area.

I don't know whether I was on the roof that day. I have no memory of that. If I were outside, I'm sure someone helped me to get out of the window. I don't think I could have climbed out by myself.

Memories of the Home Place in Lowell

I remember visiting the home place in Lowell where my mother, Alice (Stephenson) Crowe, was born and where she grew up. My sister Cora and I used to go there for two weeks every summer. I remember the sadness and lonely feeling I had as I saw my parents drive away and watched their car disappear over the hill. After the first night we really enjoyed the visit as we settled into the routine of their very structured lives. Aunt Helen was always there in the summer months. She taught school in Concord, N.H. but always spent her summers in Lowell.

My cousins, Blanche and Catherine, (Aunt Caddie and Uncle Dewey Knowles' children) were about the same ages as Cora and I, and John and Norma, (Uncle Pearl's and Aunt Mildred's children) lived next door.

I remember playing croquet on the spacious front lawn and swimming in the swimming hole just down the road. Sometimes we would quarrel and disagree and Aunt Helen would come out and talk to us about love and harmony.

The house was a large colonial type structure that is still standing in good shape. The entrance was a glassed in porch. Beyond that the kitchen was a large, rather dark room. There was a large wood range on one side of the kitchen and a round oak table and chairs on the other. The sink was on the opposite wall and it had both faucets and a pump on the left hand side. I don't remember seeing the pump used. I think it was there as a second water source from a well somewhere nearby if the spring should fail. There was a large pantry where food was prepared and on the west side, the dining room which was a bright pleasant room.

Mealtimes held an air of formality. Table manners were closely monitored and conversation was carried on among the adults.

Beyond the kitchen on the south side there was a summer kitchen. It was a large room with a sloping wooden floor. Aunt Caddie's washing machine was out there. Sometimes we would

roller-skate up and down that floor and sometimes we would take the garden hoses down from the hook where they were neatly coiled and string them out and talk and listen through the hoses. I remember how it tickled my ear when my cousins would yell through the hose. I must say that this was an activity which was not allowed and we soon learned we must leave the hoses in their place.

Beyond the summer kitchen there was a long narrow passageway which led to two carriage sheds and beyond that to a garage where Uncle Durry kept his Model T Ford. It was always kept in mint condition and looked shiny and new although he had driven it for many years.

At the end of the passageway there was a toilet. I remember it was painted bright yellow on the inside and it was used only by Grandpa. I don't know why Grandpa didn't like to use the bathroom but I guess that after using that toilet for the greater part of his life he wasn't about to change his habits.

Seated: Cora Janes Stephenson, Eva (had encephalitis) Standing: Helen, Lucy, Blanche at the Lowell Farmhouse, early 1900's

Above all the conglomeration of rooms, cubby-holes, and passageways, there was a chamber where all kinds of old and interesting relics of the past were stored. We were never allowed to explore that area. Everything was neatly packed in trunks and sometimes we would peer longingly into that room or up the stairway that led to it. I often wonder what happened to the things that were stored there. I'm sure it would be an antique dealer's dream to be let loose in that room.

The living room was a cozy comfortable room. Grandpa's easy chair occupied one corner of the room where he would sit and read the morning paper. Grandpa had a definite routine which he followed each day. He always worked about the farm early in the morning then promptly at 10:00 o'clock he would come in and listen to the news on his radio and read his paper.

My favorite room was the back parlor which was beyond the stairway and the door was always closed. I like to go there when I felt the need for solitude. There was a piano in that room and shelves filled with books and games. There were paper dolls that I like to play with. I remember a family of paper dolls – Father, Mother, Baby Cindy, a little girl named Dorothy and a little boy named Tommy. It was fun to make up stories about their lives and activities and act out stories. I loved that family of paper dolls. I remember thinking – what a nice name, "Tommy." If I ever have a little boy I'd like to name him Tommy.

Charles, son of Pearl (Alice's youngest brother) and Mildred (Bundy) Stephenson, died in 1932. He was 5 years old. He was a beautiful child with red hair that curled about his head and blue eyes. He had a ruptured appendix. His death brought such grief to the family especially to his mother and father, and brother John and sister Norma. We had a picture of him on his tricycle which was taken shortly before his illness and my mother always kept it on her dresser.

Norma was about seven years old when Charles died, and she told of a strange happening on the day of his funeral. She said she was entering the house after being outside and she saw a woman dressed in black standing by the doorway. As she approached the apparition disappeared. She was sure that this lady was our grandmother although she did not remember Grandma Stephenson who died in 1930 when Norma was only 3 years old. Her reporting of this event touched off quite a furor among the adults of the family who regarded any encounter with the supernatural as bunk and superstition. No one suggested that Norma lied about her experience. But they felt it was the result of an over-active imagination. I remember Aunt Helen speaking to her very sternly about it saying, "My child, you must realize and believe that you didn't see anything that day. You only imagined that you saw the lady dressed in black." Norma as resolutely insisted that she knew what she saw and that what she saw was real. I have never asked her in our adult lives if she still believes that she saw a ghost that day.

It was a year or two later when we were making our summer visit that we sang for them. My sister and I had been taught a few songs for a school entertainment. There was "Short'nin Bread", "Uncle Ned", and an old Irish melody that I don't recall and there was one song taken from a poem written by Eugene Field "Little Boy Blue". Of course we were always happy to show off and one day when we were visiting Aunt Mildred we sang all the songs for her. When we sang the song Little Boy Blue she became very quiet and when we were finished she suddenly left the room. Blanche, my cousin, said, "Don't sing that song to her. It makes her think of Charles."

However, that evening Uncle Pearl came over and he said to us, "I understand that you learned some songs at school this year. Will you sing them to me?" We went through all the songs that we had learned, carefully avoiding the Little Boy Blue song and when we were finished he asked, "Didn't you learn a song about a little boy?" So we sang the song for him and when we were finished he walked out without a word and closed the door.

We sang our songs many times during our visit and the last night that we were there, Uncle Pearl came over and asked us to sing the Little Boy Blue song once more. As children, we never thought about it but as I remember this visit at my age, knowing well the anguish of losing a beloved son, I wonder if it was given to us by God to be instruments in the healing of their hearts, wrenched by the sorrow of their loss. I like to believe that it may have been.

Over the Mountain

When we went to Lowell during the summer, we always went over the mountain through Hazen's Notch. How I dreaded the trip over the mountain! We rarely made it to the top of the mountain on the first try. Usually when we arrived at the steepest part of the hill, the engine would fail and we would begin to slip backwards. My father would have to back way down to the bottom again, and usually we would all get out and start walking up the hill. My father would get a good

fast start and whiz by us, hoping the mountain would carry him through the critical point. Usually he was successful. The rest of the way was all downhill. And we would all pile in the care with a big sigh of relief.

We went to the General Store (in Lowell) in Uncle Dewey's Model T Ford. It was the only store in town and was owned and run by Donald Naramore, whose wife was Louise Stephenson, Irwin Stephenson's daughter. Irwin was Grampa's brother. We always had pennies to spend on candy. Sometimes we had a whole dime and then we had to make a decision whether we would buy an ice cream cone that would be gone in five minutes or to buy penny candy that we could savor for days. Usually we opted for the penny candy.

Alice and Robert

Lucy Paine, Alice Stephenson's Grandmother

Lucy Paine (father, Amasa Paine, mother, Hope Ladd) was born December 12, 1841. She was married to a man named Hulbert F. Janes (born in Georgia, VT; parents, Chester and Eliza Janes) and they had one child, Cora Mariah Janes, who was born in 1861. Cora married John Stephenson and they had nine children: Helen, Blanche, Caddie, Eva, Marshall, Alice, Pearl, Mark, Lucy.

I have learned from stories told by my mother that when the Civil War broke out, Hulbert (born in Georgia VT to Chester and Eliza Janes) was called to service. He decided not to go himself and hired some one to replace him. I understand that it was a legal and acceptable thing to do in that time. However, Lucy, being a woman of strong convictions, and possibly influenced by her parents, believed it to be a cowardly and unpatriotic act and she refused to live with him after that. In a short time, he left the area going west and was not heard from for many years.

(Note: the above is the story as told by Alice. Uncle Pearl said that he wondered if it was too much parental control on the part of Lucy's parents that caused him to leave. Another version of the story comes from Shirleen Dolan. Lucy and Hulbert were living with Lucy's parents, who were quite strict and controlling, especially Amasa. Hulbert decided to leave to make his fortune and make a home for the family; he went out to California accompanied by one of the Stephensons. He soon wrote to Lucy with the news that he was doing well and that she and little Cora should come join him. But Lucy's parents would not allow her to go; eventually there was a divorce.)

Cora Janes Stephenson received word of his death years later, informing her that she was his only heir and inviting her to come and claim her inheritance. She wrote back, stating that she was unable to make the journey and asked the attorney to settle the estate, sending her whatever inheritance was due her. After a long period of time, Cora received a check for $80.00.

Cora Mariah Janes

After the war was over, Lucy Paine Janes married Dr. O.P. Sweet, a doctor who had served in the civil War. To them was born a son, Amasa.

Dr. O. P. Sweet died a short time later. I think he died of a war-related cause because I know that Lucy received a pension from the military. Some of the records he kept regarding his Civil War duties were passed on to my mother. She sent them to the Vermont Historical Society (we have copies).

From what I can piece together about Lucy's life, she lived with her father and mother after Dr. Sweet's death in 1872. Her father, Amasa Paine, died in 1890 and her mother, Hope Ladd Paine died in 1901.

My mother told me that she lived with her grandmother (Lucy) for six years. She went there to live when she was eight years old and lived with her until she was fourteen. I deduce that after Hope died in 1901 and Lucy was left alone, John and Cora sent Alice to be Lucy's companion until her death in 1907.

My mother also told me of the sharp contrast between living at home and living with her grandmother. When she would come home, her sisters would work on her hair which tended to have a curl and they would encourage the curls to cluster about her head. When she went back to her grandmother's, Lucy would pull her hair back in a bun or braid because she felt that curls were

a vanity which must not be tolerated. She also told me that her grandmother smoked a pipe. I think she began to smoke because she had a toothache and dental care was not available. The practice became a habit. She would go out to the woodshed to smoke her pipe and, to her chagrin, my mother often caught her in the act.

All of the Stephenson children of John and Cora went to Brigham Academy for their high school education. In this area, it was considered the best place to go. They worked for their board and many times were unable to go home for a long time. Often they worked for elderly and incapacitated people who needed much care. My mother Alice took care of a lady named Mrs. Stannard, who was crippled with arthritis. It was her duty to bathe and dress her as well as keep her company, prepare meals, and keep up her studies.

The Stephenson Family – Leg and Hip Injuries

One condition regarding the Stephenson family that has always mystified me is the injuries of their legs and hips. Blanche, the oldest of John's and Cora's children, suffered a leg injury in young adulthood. It was said that the injury came about as she was feeding her horse in the stall and the horse crowded her. As the resulting pain continued, she sought medical help and was treated for months, first with external applications and later with traction. She finally went to Montreal where cancer was diagnosed and the leg was amputated at the hip. However, by that time, the cancer was widespread and she died at the age of 25.

Caddie was the next member of the family to suffer a leg injury. She was in her early 40's when she fell on a patch of ice as she left the church following a practice for a Christmas program. She was taken to a hospital in Newport where the bone was set. After a period of time and prolonged suffering, it became apparent that the injury was not healing properly and she went to a hospital in New Hampshire for another operation. She was in and out of hospitals for a period of two years, but the bone never healed properly and she was confined to a crutch and a walker for the rest of her life.

Helen, Mark, and Lucy all suffered broken hips in their later years, a condition which is not rare with elderly people. They lived on for years in varying degrees of infirmity due to that condition.

My mother Alice never broke a bone but she suffered from crippling osteoporosis. The bone loss was so severe that her shoe had to be built up 4 inches. She was confined to a walker for the last years of her life.

Of the 7 siblings in the family who lived to adulthood, only Pearl escaped painful and debilitating hip or leg injury.

My Grandmother's Death

I was two and one-half years old when my grandmother (Mary Ann Morey Crowe) died very suddenly and unexpectedly. She had a cerebral hemorrhage. She and my mother were picking over strawberries that pleasant June day; a light breeze was blowing through the window when my grandmother suddenly rose from her chair and simply dropped to the floor.

My mother, who was always in calm control in any event, went to get a smelling concoction called aromatic spirits of ammonia, because she thought that Grandma had fainted. Realizing that it was much more serious than that, she gathered the children and sent them outdoors to play. She explained that Grandma was sick and needed care. Then she telephoned Dr. Brown who came as soon as he could with his horse and buggy. He pronounced that Grandma had probably died instantly and after helping my mother with necessary arrangements, he left. As he went out the

door, my brother approached him and asked, "How is Grandma?" The doctor replied, "John, your grandmother is dead." That prompted an anguished cry from John and my mother was upset because she felt that she should have been the one to explain to the children what had happened. She didn't hold it against the doctor because as she said, there is no way to sugar-coat death or make it less harsh. It is a stark reality that even children must sometimes face.

My grandmother's passing was a very traumatic event for all my family. The children who were old enough to understand were heart-broken, and my mother and father were in shock, but the one who suffered the greatest loss was Grandpa.

Grandfather Crowe

I don't really have any memories of my Grandmother Crowe, but I remember my Grandfather well. I remember the songs that he taught us. My sister (Cora) and I had little rocking chairs and Grandpa sat in a big one and we would rack back and forth and sing together. I remember Nellie Gray and Clementine but one of the songs I remember most is Marching Through Georgia. Grandpa had an uncle, Henry Crowe, who was a private in the Union Army. I expect that Grandpa knew his uncle well because he was about ten years old when Henry was mustered into the army. Henry did not return from the war. He died in Andersonville prison in 1864 and I have been told that he is buried in Arlington Cemetery. Grandpa loved to sing that song, and he taught us all the words, which I remember even to this day:

Bring the good old bugle, boys
We'll sing another song.
Sing it with a spirit that
Will start the world along,
Sing it as we used to sing it
Fifty thousand strong
While we were marching through Georgia.

Hurrah! Hurrah!
We'll ring the jubilee
Hurrah! Hurrah!
For the flag that sets us free,
So we sang the chorus from
Atlanta to the sea
While we were marching through Georgia.

Sherman's prancing Yankee boys
Will never reach the coast
Said the saucy Rebels and
It was a handsome boast
They found that they'd forgotten
To reckon with the host
When we came marching through Georgia.

A year or so after Grandpa died we had a new minister in town. The Waldo family came to us with four young children. I soon became very friendly with Priscilla who was close to my age and we spent a lot of time together. One day when I was visiting there we were sharing things that we had learned, and I sang that song to her. Mrs. Waldo appeared in the doorway and she called me

into the living room. Well, she sat me down and explained to me what a horrible thing that march on Georgia was, that resulted in the devastation of the South, the ruin of the beautiful plantations and the suffering of many innocent people. After that, I never wanted to hear that song again.

Grandpa's mind began to deteriorate in his old age. He always said he wanted to go home again. My sister and I had swings out in the front yards where we used to play outside of Grandpa's window. He would come and knock on the window and beckon us to come in to him. He would say, "You little girls go and get into the wagon. We're going home today. The horses are all hitched up and ready. You get in the wagon and I'll be right out to take you home." Sometimes I think that children have a wisdom that we completely lack as adults. We knew there was no wagon, we knew we weren't going anywhere. Yet we would always say, "Yes, Grandpa, we'll go and get in the wagon."

I have one last memory of my grandfather. It was my seventh birthday, the twelfth of September, 1932. I had received a toy. I don't really remember what it looked like; perhaps it was a tin soldier. It had a key on the back and when I wound it up it would walk across the floor. Grandpa and I played with the toy. I would wind it up and send it to him and he would wind it up and send it back. He seemed to be really well that day and I'm glad to have that last memory. Just one month later on the 18th of October, Grandpa died.

Mary Ann Morey Crowe and Abel Crowe

The Eclipse

One day when I was about six years old, I went out to the shed and found my father in an odd activity. He had a smudge pot burning and black smoke was issuing from it. He had some small squares of glass that he was holding over the smoke until they were coated with the black smoke. I didn't know what he was doing, but I had a feeling that something important was going to happen.

When he had finished with his work, he called us outside and gave each of us a square of the darkened glass. I stood on a little knoll just above the house and witnessed the most spectacular phenomenon of my entire life – a total eclipse of the sun.

Today we are warned that we must view an eclipse indirectly because neither smoked nor tinted glass can protect our eyes from the infra-red rays of the sun. In those days we didn't know any better and we watched it through our smoked glass.

I could see the round moon making its way across the sky. At the moment of totality, the sun was completely blocked out by the moon except for the edges where the light shone around it. The earth became dark around us, the chickens went to roost. It was strangely still. No birds sang, no breezes stirred. And although the sky was blue, stars became visible. It lasted no longer than three or four minutes and all seemed normal again, as the moon moved on in its orbit. After almost seventy-five years I am still awed by the memory of that event.

Memories of School

In September 1931 I reached the age of six and started school. Before I could begin I was sent to a clinic. I think it was my first visit to a doctor and it was held at the schoolhouse (in Sheldon Creek).

I remember standing naked on the teacher's desk while Dr. Brown looked at my throat, poked into my ears, tested my vision and hearing, and listened to my heart and lungs. After pronouncing that I was a healthy specimen, he sat me down to receive my first and only immunization, a vaccination to protect me from smallpox. I knew I was gong to have the vaccination and I was worried that it would hurt, but it wasn't bad at all. The doctor rubbed my arm vigorously with a cold feeling substance and then made some needle picks in my arm, just under the skin. In a few days my arm became sore and an ugly scab appeared. I was told that was good because it meant that the vaccination was working. After the scab fell off, a scar appeared. It was a round scar and the needle picks could always be seen.

We didn't have any other immunizations then. We did have the diseases measles, mumps and chicken pox and when that happened, Dr. Brown would come and put a sign on our door to inform people that we were a contaminated household and unless they had already suffered the disease, they should not come in.

We always walked to school. Transportation was provided only to students who lived two full miles from the schoolhouse. After Grandpa died we moved back to the farmhouse. I was seven years old then and in the second grade. We were about a mile and a half from the school then and our walk to school was a long one. In the winter when it was cold and snowy, my brothers would hitch our horse, Dolly, to a sleigh and we would ride to school. The Methodist Church used to have a row of carriage sheds in back of the church and we obtained permission to keep Dolly in one of the sheds while we were in school. We were quite crowded in the sleigh because we had to carry hay for Dolly to eat during the day. There were four of us to ride. Gwennie was in high school then and she stayed with Aunt Lucy and Uncle Frank in Bakersfield during the week and attended Brigham Academy.

Sheldon Creek First and Second Grade – 1931

Back Row: (unknown), Raymond Machia, (unknown), Herman Reynolds, Kenneth Hill, Elton Montgomery, Ruth Tanner, Hugh Gorton, Robert Greenwood, Beverly Conant. Middle Row: Margaret Crowe, Maurice Jutras, Isabelle Greenwood, Ruby Greenwood, Freddie Bergeron, (unknown), Helen Turner, Phyllis Sweet, Hortense Menard, Moses Jutras. Front Row: Jean Raymond, Jackie Coulomb, Hester Clapper, Ruth Machia, Irene Bergeron, (unknown - two brothers), Edith Burns, Edmond Desrosier.

When I was in the third grade a lady was hired by the school to come in and cook a soup for the children who carried their lunches. Her name was Mrs. Fairbanks. She cooked on an old smelly oil stove, one that had three wick burners that were unvented. I suppose it wasn't very safe but in those days we had to make do with whatever was available. The children who were receiving soup were asked to furnish the materials for it. Since our family had four children at school, we were asked to furnish two or three times each week. The food we were asked for was always produce from the farm. We brought milk, potatoes, onions and canned goods, usually tomatoes, carrots, and corn. We really enjoyed those hot soups. With the sandwich we brought from home, it made a healthy, satisfying meal.

That same year we were given cod liver oil at school. Every day at recess time we had to line up at the teacher's desk and receive a tablespoon of cod-liver oil. We hated the taste of it but we were told that it was good for us and would keep us from getting sick.

There is another incident that I remember from that year. One day just as the afternoon session began, my teacher called one of the boys to the front of the room. She was very angry. I never knew what that boy had done or said that caused her such wrath but she began to whack him with the blackboard pointer. As we cowered in our seats in fear, the beating did not stop until the pointer broke in two and part of it rolled across the floor. They say that one of the first and most poignant emotions a child feels is that of injustice and that is what I felt that day – both fear and a

strong feeling that my teacher was acting unjustly. I never spoke out about it. None of the children in my room talked about it. I guess we were afraid to mention it. I was one of the younger students. There were children in that room that were fifth graders. Perhaps some of them told their parents. I only know that teacher was not hired the next year. I am thankful that today corporal punishment in the school is not allowed. No child should be subjected to that kind of pain and humiliation.

Fred and Louise Mercy

I was just a small child when Fred came to work for us. Fred always said that my father asked him to help him out for a few days and the few days stretched out to ten years.

The first time I saw Fred I was afraid of him. I thought he had a stern looking face and I was filled with fear. My fears were soon allayed when I came to know this good and gentle man who had a special rapport with animals and unending patience with children like my sister and me. There was no one outside of my immediate family that had more influence on me during those early years than Fred.

When Fred came to work on the farm every animal was given a name and he seemed to think of all animals as individuals. He also had the patience to allow two little girls to trudge along after him as he performed his duties on the farm from mending fences to bringing the cows in for milking in the summer. We always went to the barn at milking time with our little tin cups and Fred would squirt out the milk directly from the cow and we would drink it. This ritual seems quite repugnant to me today and yet it is a good memory.

Fred was married to Louise, a very sweet lady who sometimes worked for my mother. They had two children, Marjorie and Calvin. They were older than I and I had little association with them.

Fred told us that he was married twice to the same woman. Louise was an ardent Catholic, very strong in her faith. Fred was not. In a period of reckless abandonment, she married Fred in a civil ceremony. After that, she was denied the sacraments of her church. Louise grieved over the loss of recognition as a member in good standing in her church so Fred went before the priest and married her again.

When Calvin and Marjorie were still small children, Louise was determined to prepare them for their first communion. She wanted Fred to play a part in teaching them. They would begin by learning the Lord's Prayer. Louise decided that she would teach Marjorie and she delegated Fred to teach Calvin. The prayer that Fred taught Calvin went like this:

Our Father, who has long hair,
Got tangled up in the kitchen chair
Then he began to curse and swear

I don't remember any more of this, if there was any more, but I can imagine the outrage that Louise felt when she listened to what Calvin had learned, to say nothing of the fear she must have had for Fred's immortal soul for committing such blasphemy.

I lost track of Marjorie when we grew up. I don't know where she spent her life, but I did know Calvin. He lived in the Enosburg area and worked for Blouin Bros. He often delivered our fuel oil. Louise's teaching really rubbed off on him. He was a devout Catholic and did a great deal for St. Jean Baptiste Church in Enosburg. I saw Calvin shortly before he died in a grocery store in Enosburg. He seemed glad to see me and I was happy to see him. We exchanged a few words of small talk.

I attended Calvin's funeral. It was largely attended by his friends and neighbors who held him in high esteem.

As for Fred, I don't know what his religion was. He never talked about it. But I do believe this. A good and honest man, who has true sensitive caring for creatures whether they walk on four legs or two, cannot be far from the kingdom of God.

The Sugar House

One morning in early spring I was awakened by a disturbance downstairs. I could hear excited voices and the sound of footsteps hurrying about. I went downstairs to see what was going on and soon learned the bad news. Our sugar house was on fire. I could see the flames shooting up over the tree tops. My brothers and the hired men hurried to the sugar house which was about a mile away, but it was too late. The sugar house burned to the ground with the evaporator, sap vat, and an amount of syrup that was there.

My father had been the last one to leave the place. The night before, he had worked long after dark boiling the syrup. He closed down the evaporator and left to prepare for work at the mill, the night shift beginning at eleven p.m. until seven in the morning. He couldn't remember what he may have done or neglected to do that resulted in that fire, but surely something was amiss. In those lean days of the mid-thirties, it was indeed a tragedy. We depended heavily on the maple products for income and we were then at the height of the maple season.

The insurance examiner came the next day, assessed the damage and made a prompt settlement. Lumber and materials were delivered and my family prepared to rebuild hastily in order to save some of the short season. The day of rebuilding arrived. I don't know whether my parents knew what was going to happen that day. It was a complete surprise to me. Early in the morning people began to arrive – men carrying tools, women laden with food and children in tow. Everyone set to work, the men building the sugar house and women helping my mother in the kitchen, preparing the quantities of food that would be consumed, and children running errands and playing together.

I thought everybody in town was there. Everyone was in a jovial mood and the day turned into a great party. By nightfall the sugar house was rebuilt and we were ready to carry on with the maple season. That night we were all tired and content as my parents gave thanks for a caring community that gave a generous hand to a neighbor in distress.

Food

Food on the farm was bountiful but we were all aware that it came as the result of hard work. There was always a good supply of milk. That was our business. There was also a large flock of chickens for meat and eggs. A huge vegetable garden planted every spring and my mother preserved hundreds of cans of vegetables to take us through the winter. Potatoes were an important staple for our family. An abundant supply was planted every spring to be sure there would be enough to last throughout the year.

We had very little fresh meat, because there was no refrigeration and meat could be kept for a short time. We kept two pigs and an animal for beef, but the meat had to be used in a short time, so when we had an animal we would sell what we couldn't use to neighboring farms, and when they had an excess of meat, they would sell to us.

Some of the foods that substituted the lack of fresh meat were creamed dried beef served on cornbread, macaroni and cheese, baked beans and creamed cod fish. Once in a while we had hot dogs. I didn't like them very well although I was always tempted to have one. It tasted so good when I ate it, but afterward it made my mouth and throat burn. Then I would drink a lot of water to ease the burning sensation and would not feel good.

My mother always believed that when meat was served it should be accompanied with a tart fruit. She said it aided digestion. Many nutritionists have pooh-poohed that theory as an old wives' tale, yet we still follow that practice today. We serve roast pork with applesauce, chicken or turkey with cranberries, ham with pineapples or raisins, fish with lemon juice and lamb with spicy mint jelly.

We had a good apple orchard and we went to the woods every summer to pick raspberries and blackberries. My mother would can them for pies during the winter. Our favorite cake was chocolate with a white frosting topped with a chocolate glaze. Gingersnaps and peanut butter cookies were always on hand.

Sunday was chicken and ice cream day. We would get ice from the ice house and chip it into manageable chunks, and then it was placed in the outer jacket of the ice cream maker along with a handful of coarse salt. My mother would pour the prepared custard in the inner section of the ice cream maker and we would take turns cranking it until it became ice cream. The chicken often came to the table as chicken pie, especially if we had company. Even though our chickens were big, we had to stretch a serving as far as it would go to satisfy a large gathering.

In mid-winter the men went to the river for ice. The ice was cut in large squares and extracted with large heavy tongs. The ice house was an odd looking building because the sides of the building were not straight. The sides of the ice house were built to slant inward to a small degree. I don't know why they were built that way. There must have been a reason for it. Many still are seen today on farms that have been around for a long time. On the inside there was a pit where the ice was stored in layers. Each layer of ice was covered with a layer of sawdust until it reached the top of the pit. The ice would last throughout the hot summer.

Eggs were in large supply during the summer but in the dark winter months the supply was short. My mother put down eggs in water glass to keep over the winter months. We didn't usually eat these eggs. They didn't taste as good as fresh eggs and were used mostly for cooking and baked goods. In the spring the hens hatched their eggs to provide the next crop of chickens.

We gathered butternuts from the woods in the fall. Butternuts had to be kept for a year or more to thoroughly dry before they could be eaten, so we always had a good supply on hand from years past. They had a soft flavorful meat and were especially good on a cake topped with a maple sugar frosting.

Mrs. Bosley

One of our most interesting neighbors on Crowe Hill was Mrs. Bosley. She was an elderly lady who lived alone in a little house beside of Fred and Louise Mercy. Mrs. Bosley had come to Sheldon from Chazy, NY with her husband John when she was a young woman. I don't know anything about John because he died long before I was born. Mrs. Bosley was a tiny woman, quick of movement and extremely active. She always wore a little black coat and a hat pulled down securely over her head when she went out. She walked to the store every day when weather permitted. She believed that the rays of the sun were harmful and she always warned my sister and me that we should always wear a hat in the summer so we would not suffer a sun stroke. If that happened, she predicted, we would surely die.

Everyone had an apple orchard in those days that produced fine apples, but my sister and I liked best the apples from a tree in Mrs. Bosley's orchard. We would often stop in for a visit with her, hoping she would offer us an apple. I guess she knew that we had apples on our minds because she always gave us a delicious apple. They were so juicy and tart, yet with just the right amount of sweetness.

Mrs. Bosley always called my father Cher-Robbie. My elder sister and brother picked up on that and started calling my father that name. I always resented that. I felt that a person as dignified

as my father should not be called by such a childish name. It was all right for Mrs. Bosley to call him Cher-Robbie because she had known him since he was a baby, but nobody else should ever use that name.

I know that my father and Mrs. Bosley shared a special relationship. He always felt a responsibility for her welfare. I remember one time when a blizzard brought all travel to a standstill and my father wallowed through the snow to bring kerosene for her stove. I wondered what she lived on in her later years. There was no evidence of an income. My parents always provided her with milk and produce from the farm and I suppose that the merchants in town helped her too.

She had a son, Walter, who probably did what he could for her, but he had a large family. Walter ran a milk route. In those days the milk was placed in hundred weight milk cans which had to be loaded on a truck and taken to the creamery where the cans were emptied, washed thoroughly, and returned to the farm. Most jobs of that time were back-breaking labor with small pay.

When the Roosevelt Administration was elected in 1932, many programs were brought about to help the people and to stimulate the economy. One of these was an old age assistance program, a fore-runner of Social Security. My father wrote to the City Clerk in Chazy, NY, where Mrs. Bosley was born, to establish her age and eligibility for this program and he filled out the paper work for her. I think after that, Mrs. Bosley received a small check each month.

When we moved from the farm, I lost track of Mrs. Bosley. Years later, a friend of mine told me a funny story about her. St. Anthony's Church was planning to have a Chicken Pie Supper as a fundraiser, and my friend was asked to solicit our area of town for money to buy the chickens. Mrs. Bosley was on her list. When she asked her if she would like to contribute, Mrs. Bosley replied, "Oh, my dear girl, I'd love to give something for the church dinner, but I'm poorer than piss". I had to laugh about that story, because it was so typical of the sort of remark that Mrs. Bosley would say. She was a woman of very direct and sometimes gutsy language.

One day about five years ago, I received a phone call from one of Mrs. Bosley's great-grandsons. He was writing a paper for a class assignment about his great-grandmother and asked if I had any memories of her that I could share. Of course I have memories. He told me that Mrs. Bosley finally went in the Sheldon Poor Farm and died there. She was one hundred years old.

Somber Thoughts

There was a time when I was a child that I thought a great deal about death. It may have been because at that time my four year old cousin died. He had a ruptured appendix. I think it is more likely that my thoughts may have arisen from a prayer we were taught to say at bedtime. It went like this:

> Now I say me down to sleep
> I pray the Lord my soul to keep
> If I should die before I wake
> I pray the Lord my soul to take

This was followed by, "God bless my mother and father, my sisters and brothers, my friend and all those who care for me and help me to grow up to be a good and loving person. Amen."

I think it was this prayer that planted the idea in my head that when I went to bed at night I might die before morning. My fantasies of death had nothing to do with fear, illness, or pain. I envisioned that I would awaken during the night, my normal, healthy self, to see an angel standing at my bedside. It was a beautiful angel, all enshrined in light. The angel would say, "come with me, I'm going to take you to heaven."

I sometimes wondered what would happen if I were to protest – if I were to say, "I'm happy here and all those that I know and love are here. I want to stay with them." Would God be offended if I didn't want to go with the angel? Maybe God would be angry and punish me for my impudence. I decided that if the angel should come I must go without a protest. I wondered how I would get out of my body but I decided that the angels must have a key to release me and then enfold me close and carry me safely to heaven.

I've never shared these thoughts before with anyone. I think that I felt I was just an oddball and no one else ever entertained such thoughts. I am sharing them now because I have come to believe that I was no different than any other child of my time. I'm sure that all children, with their limited knowledge and teaching from elders, struggle to find some reason and logic from the realities of life. I also believe that they never share these thoughts, even with the dearest and most trusted person in their lives. Perhaps Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was referring to such musing when he wrote, "The thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

My perceptions of life and death have changed a great deal over the years. Most of those whom I knew and loved as a child are now gone – a sister, a brother, and a few cousins are all that remain. I cherish their presence and the continuity they add to my life – the connection between the past and the present.

The loved ones that now light up my life are no less dear to me and they keep me vibrantly attuned to the here and now. Occasionally a new soul is entrusted to us, to love and guide into a life, the meaning of which none of us truly understand. I am now living through the eightieth year of my life and I still await the "Angel". I only pray that my passing may be as beautiful and as trustful as the fantasies of my childhood.

The Waters of Sheldon
Margaret Crowe Kimball

I remember well the Kimball or Missisquoi A Spring. It was one of the favorite haunts of my childhood. I remember how the waters bubbled out of the earth there to a height of about two to three inches. It was clear, cold, and soft, and it had a distinct sulfur-like taste. It was the Indians, first inhabitants of the area, who first discovered the Mineral Springs in the Town of Sheldon, and realized the water's medicinal uses. It was through them that the curative power of the water became known.

Although the Town of Sheldon can boast of no ponds, marshes or bogs within its boundaries, there are three principal streams that run through the town. They are the Missisquoi, the Black Creek, and the Tyler Branch. The Tyler Branch enters the town on the east and after running about a mile joins the Missisquoi. The Black Creek, whose source is Metcalf Pond, runs through Fairfield, enters the town on the south, and empties into the Missisquoi two miles below. The Indians gave the Missisquoi its name, which means, "Many Water Fowl". The waters of the river teemed with trout and the hills and valleys were a rich hunting ground for them. Their tribes lived and flourished here long before the first white man appeared. Although these original inhabitants have passed into history, except for the occasional finding of an arrowhead or a crude tool, their descendants still live among us and proudly preserve their identity. From the Vermont Historical Gazetteer comes this quote,

"But their name is on your waters,
You cannot wash it out".

Moses Kimball and Eleazer Draper rediscovered the most noted spring, or group of springs, situated near the banks of the Missisquoi. These springs, located on about one half acre of land, became known as "Kimball Springs" when Moses Kimball obtained a deed to them in 1817. Stories of the remarkable healing powers of the water began to spread and the sick from near and far began to come to avail themselves of the curative properties of the water. However, Moses Kimball never commercialized the springs. All were allowed to use the water free of charge.

It did not become a commercial enterprise until 1865 when C. Bainbridge Smith of New York City bought the Missisquoi Springs. Smith, a wealthy lawyer, claimed that he himself had been cured of advanced cancer of the mouth by drinking the water.

In 1868, there were a number of mineral springs in the town. The principal ones were:

- The Kimball or Missisquoi A spring as it had come to be known, property of C. Bainbridge Smith Esq. New York City
- The Sheldon Spring, property of Sheldon Spring Co., S.S.F. Carlisle, Agent
- The Central Spring, property of Green and Co.
- The Vermont Spring, Property of Saxe and Co.

At the time that the Vermont Historical Gazetteer was published in 1871, the Sheldon boom was in full swing. It was reported that the past two seasons had brought visitors from all parts of the country, very much over-crowding the accommodations. New buildings began to spring up, namely two stores and a grocery, a private hospital, (by N.R. Miller, M. D.), 10 private dwelling places, and six hotels. The hotels in town were the following: The New Missisquoi, near the Missisquoi Spring, the Sheldon, near the Sheldon spring, Goodspeed's and Langdon's near the Plank Road

Bridge on the north side of the river, the Vermont, and the Keith House in the village, the Central and the Mansion in the village, the Valley House on the south side of the river below the bridge, and Fish's at North Sheldon.

Of these, the Missisquoi was the largest, having 100 private rooms and furnished in the style of the first class city hotels. Water and gas were carried to every room. The cost of furnishing alone was $35,000.

The article goes on to boast the scenery of the town, the attractive landscape, the view of the Pinnacle, and Dunton Hill where carriages would take visitors to view the gorgeous panorama of the Adirondacks on one side and the most eastern ranges of the Green Mountain on the other. The city of Montreal was visible on that site and it was said that 70 or 80 church steeples could be counted. At that time, G.S. Simmons, Esq. of Boston, Mass., purchased land on Dunton Hill for the erection of an observatory.

At the same time, C. Bainbridge Smith was making plans for a playground near the banks of the Missisquoi for the enjoyment of the guests who came.

I don't believe that any of the plans materialized, since the Sheldon boom was so short-lived. We can only guess why it was over so quickly. Several disastrous fires destroyed some of the hotels that had catered to the many guests who summered here. The loss of these accommodations may have contributed to the boom's demise. Some say that the proprietors had become greedy and had begun to import water from other sources and that their indiscretion had been detected. Then, perhaps people may have realized that the healing powers of the springs had been overstated. Whatever the cause may have been, John Stephen Michaud deeded the Congress hall and property, which had probably become a "White Elephant", to the Roman Catholic Diocese of Burlington on March 26, 1907. The dining room was remodeled to create a chapel and Father Joseph Campeau held Mass there for a time. Then on the night of December 19, 1908 the Congress Hall burned to the ground and in 1911, St. Anthony's Catholic Church was built on the site. Mass was conducted for the first time at St. Anthony' January 1, 1912.

Today, Route 105 goes through so close to the site on one side, and on the other side the sewer treatment plant was built. It is regrettable that so many of our treasures are lost to us in the name of "progress". Now, in my old age, I wonder if that spring is still there. I'm sure that I will be one of the last to remember how the waters bubbled out of the earth like a miniature fountain. How sad that it has slipped into history as silently and unnoticed as did our earliest inhabitants, who were the first to discover the spring and the first to use its healing properties.

Sources for the article:

The Vermont Sunday News – November 2, 1958
The Sheldon Town Report, 1949
The Vermont Historical Gazetteer, 18712

Stories from the "Little Girls"
Cora Crowe Clark and Margaret Crowe Kimball

Carolyn Kimball Bronz

Yesterday (10/29/04) I stopped at Mom's and Aunt Cora was there. They had gone to the Berkshire Cemetery to look for some graves of some Crowe relatives but they didn't find them. (Daisy Crowe Turner and Cortez and Clara Jane Crowe Johnson; thought to be buried near the Lamondas and Casavants)

They started reminiscing about when they were little girls at the Big House and the farmhouse on Crowe Hill. At Christmas, a tree was brought in to the parlor, but no one could see it until Christmas Day. The door was kept closed. Presents were not wrapped, just put under the tree. Mom and Cora (the "little girls" they were always called) would hang their stockings in the kitchen where their two little rockers were, and Christmas morning they would open their stockings. They would receive such things as oranges, hand-made little dolls, etc. Later, after dinner, the rest of the family – Gram, Gramp, John, Robert and Gwennie – would go into the parlor for their Christmas with the tree, but the little girls were not allowed in there! They didn't know why that was, but they definitely felt the injustice of that. They remembered a beautiful doll with hair that Gwennie received and they yearned to play with that doll but were not allowed to, even though Gwennie was too old (15) to want to play with dolls. It sat up on a shelf, untouchable.

Margaret and Cora Crowe

Their own dolls were homemade with cloth bodies and bald heads. They had an old thing like a handlebar, and they called it "Little Lonenta". Their imagination made it into a baby. They would each take a handle and walk it along as if the child was walking between them. After Grandpa Abel Crowe died (he had lived with the family and developed dementia toward the end of his life), they had quite a few "funerals" and they would bury Little Lonenta and their other dolls and sometimes forget where they buried them. They found Little Lonenta months later in a pile of hay.

One time they climbed up on the counter for something and somehow spilled red pepper into a big bowl of fresh strawberries. They told their mother (Alice Stephenson Crowe), "Grandpa did it", but that didn't fool her. The standard punishment was to be sent to their room with no supper. They did not recall ever being spanked.

There was no electricity in rural Vermont then, so none at the farm, but the village had power. However, it was only for lights. They recalled that living conditions in some of the houses in the village were very bad – squalid. It was depression era and not much work to be had, so if you were not on a farm it was tough. The big brick house by the Episcopal Church (Albert and Sally Severy's now) was a tenement house, very dark and run down.

Crews of workers would come around to the farms for haying, putting up firewood, threshing, butchering, etc. They would all have to be fed. Gram Crowe had her cellar and pantry chock full of put-up food from her gardens. She kept chickens for eggs and meat. She could feed a large crowd and did, almost every day. The hired hands ate with the family.

A Conversation: Margaret (Crowe) Kimball and Cora (Crowe) Clark

4/7/05, Recorded by Carolyn Kimball Bronz

Margaret: I want to write about the Moreys, Uncle Cub and Aunt Agnes, who lived on Crowe Hill when we were just children. Uncle Cub never married and did not like children. He would chase children out of his yard with a stick. He had beautiful gardens.

The Moreys were mostly all short and stocky. They were superstitious people – "very odd". There were seven children and they said their names in a rhyme:

Bub, Cub, Sis, and Sam,
Nim, Tot, and Mary Ann.

(Bub: William Henry. Cub: Charles. Sis: Elizabeth. Nim: Carolyn. Tot: Agnes.)

Mary Ann was our ancestor. Her nickname was Nan. Her husband was Abel Crowe. He had married Eliza White and had seven children with her: Abby, Bessie, Fan, Hannah, Daisy, and two who died. Then Eliza died, and Abel hired Mary Ann Morey to come and care for the children. They married, and at past the age of forty, Mary Ann gave birth to Robert W. Crowe, her only child. It was a terribly difficult birth and he almost died; he was blue and the midwife put him in the oven to keep him warm. Mary Ann "spoiled him rotten". He wore dresses and had long curls until school age, when someone actually took him to get his hair cut. Robert W. ("Robby") had allergies and though he grew up on the farm on Crowe Hill, he could not work on it. Threshing and horses particularly bothered his allergies. He worked for the railroad, traveling from town to town and taxiing people from the train to hotels. He had a mail route. He was a strict Republican, the chairman of the party, and he ran for the Legislature and served there from 1920 – 21, at the age of 27. The Marshes, leaders in the town, promoted him for this. He had a car at a very young age, one of the few in town who did. Mary Ann apparently doted on him and gave him all the good things she could manage.

Mary Ann Morey Crowe, with Robert William

Robert at Three Years Old

"The Moreys were superstitious" (Cora)…Mary Ann Morey took many patent medicines. She had a drawer full that smelled very strong. She and Uncle Cub and Aunt Agnes would talk about coming back after death. Alice's attitude toward the Moreys was negative: "we never heard anything good about them". (Margaret)

When Alice Stephenson and Robert W. Crowe got married in 1915, the farm on Crowe Hill (Abel's farm) was given to them. The farmhouse was very small, and they built a large addition. The furniture was all Mary Ann's and Alice hated it. Abel still worked on the farm after Alice and Robert moved there, and he would stay for dinner, so finally he and Mary Ann just moved in with the young family. Alice's belongings were then moved out, and though it made her angry, she didn't make an issue of it. Mary Ann dominated the house and Robert. She wouldn't let him even pick up his own children. She was big – "immense" – and wore dark and gray clothes. She died suddenly (1928) while picking over strawberries with Alice.

The first four children, Gwendolyn, John, Robert, and Cora, were born at the farm. Then in 1925, the family moved to the Big House, which had been built as a hotel when the medicinal Springs were drawing so many people to the town. This house was built at the site where Bill still owns property, where Gwennie lived. Margaret was born at the Big House. "My mother was glad to be away from that farmhouse". (Cora) It was hard, hard work. Women came in to help with the work – Bessie Morey, a Trudeau, a Minckler. They did laundry, which all had to be ironed, cooking, etc. with no electricity.

They still kept the farm, hiring tenant farmers. During the Depression, Robert worked away at a mill in Leominster, MA. When Abel, his father, got sick, Robert came back. The story on Abel's sickness: He was out picking blackberries one day and wouldn't come home when John asked him. Finally John said, "My mother doesn't want those berries!" to try and get him to come home. Abel replied, "Alright, g.d. it, I'll eat them!" He ate them all, then he got sick and never really got over it. He took to his bed; Dr. Brown and Dr. Swizler came, but he died in November 1932.

Dr. Swizler was always the family doctor. He had gone to school in Sheldon Creek, and become headmaster there. Then he went away to school to become and doctor, came back and was Grandma's doctor until he died.

Some say that the stepsisters fought over the property after Abel died. Abel left no will, so the estate went into Probate Court, where Dr. Brown testified: "They couldn't have hired anyone who would have taken better care of Abel than Alice". Not much is known now about these court proceedings, except that the Big House property, where Robert and Alice had been living, went up for auction. Fan, Robert's step-sister, bid on it and bought it for the sugar woods. She must have paid off the other sisters. A lot of valuable old stuff was left in the attic of the Big House; Robert and Alice just didn't want to jump into the dispute over who got what. We don't know what happened to it all.

In spring 1933, presumably after Fan bought the place, the family moved from the Big House back to the farm. In October 1936, they moved to Sheldon Springs to one of the mill houses because Robert was working there. Their tenant farmers kept the farm going for another two years until the farmhouse burned down. This happened when Ken Waite was welding on the third floor water tank, which was the system that provided running water for the house, and he broke for lunch. When he came back the house was burning. The fire was seen from across town, but with no phones, help did not arrive in time to save the house.

"Our grandmothers on each side did not care for children; we didn't have a relationship with either grandmother." Grandma Stephenson had nine children. Whenever anyone got pregnant, she thought it was a terrible misfortune. "Our mother's (Alice's) upbringing was harsh." It was always her lot to do the menial housework: the dishes, the cooking. She was not taught to do needlework and always regretted it. She remembered that her mother laughed at her attempts to sew, and she said of all the daughters it was she who could have used the skill the most because she had five children. She was sent to take care of her grandmother, Lucy (Janes) Paine, at the age of eight until thirteen. Then she went to high school at Brigham Academy in Bakersfield

Amasa Sweet, Lucy's and O.P Sweet's son, married Erdine, who walked off with a lot of money (according to Norma Thomason), but Amasa was bankrupt when he died, after an overdose of alcohol and morphine (according to Uncle Pearl). O.P. Sweet was the Civil War surgeon, whose notes we have copies of.

Bessie Morey, who worked for Alice on the farm, married Morton Morey, who did not live long. She had 3 boys, Chester, Morris, and Leon, whose nickname was "Turkey". Ward Morey, her husband's grandfather, married Agnes and there is a window in the Sheldon Methodist Church with their names on it. Margaret wonders if he is related to our Moreys – probably, but we don't know the connection.

The Day Alice Stephenson and Robert W. Crowe Got Married

Margaret Crowe Kimball and Cora Crowe Clark; recorded by Carolyn Bronz

Cora Alice Stephenson and Robert William Crowe, ca. 1915

Alice and Robert decided to get married. They had met in Sheldon when Alice was visiting her sister-in-law, Lena, who was married to Mark Stephenson. (In later years, Mark's mind started to wander. Lena and Mark had only one child who died at birth).

Apparently, Robert had had his eye on Alice for a while. Robert was putting pressure on Alice, but she could not bring herself to tell her parents of their plans for marriage. They did set a day (1915 – Alice was 24 years old) and hired a minister to come to the Stephenson home in Lowell to perform the ceremony. The day arrived; the minister was there and so were Lena and Mark. Alice's sisters began to realize that something was up, so they started baking a cake. They went to the river and picked forget-me-nots.

When she realized what was going on, Grandma Stephenson was very upset, and said, "If you really cared about us, you wouldn't run off and marry him". But the ceremony went ahead, and afterwards, the young couple went to Lake Willoughby for their honeymoon. Then they came to Sheldon Creek to move into the Crowe family farm, which was deeded to them as a wedding present. This was a little tiny house with four rooms; they soon built a huge addition to it. They lived on the farm from 1914 – 1924.

Grandma Stephenson was strict and severe. Cora: "I never remember being picked up or held by a grandmother". Grandma Stephenson expected hard work out of her girls, and Alice did all the baking, the menial work, the dishes ever since she could stand on a stool to reach the sink. She was the household workhorse. Aunt Helen, who never married, did all the sewing for the family. Aunt Blanche died young in 1926. Aunt Lucy had two children.

"I don't know why they were so strict. We did enjoy visiting there as children, though we weren't allowed to sit at the table. We would go and stay for a couple of weeks every summer. We used to feel so bad when Mother and Dad drove away and left us there, but soon we got over it. We would swim and play croquet. Aunt Helen was the one who looked after us, not Grandma Stephenson."

Memories and Stories
by Cora Crowe Clark

Cora, born December 1 1923, is the fourth child of Robert and Alice Crowe. Her maternal grandparents are John Stephenson and Cora Janes Stephenson. Her paternal grandparents are Abel Crowe and Mary Ann Morey Crowe.

Robert Crow, my great-grandfather, came to Sheldon about 1837 to work for Joseph Fairbanks when he was fourteen years old. He married Joseph's daughter Betsy when he was 26 years old and the next year on Sept. 1, 1850, he became a naturalized citizen of the United States.

Robert Crow and Betsy Fairbanks Crowe

Joseph Fairbanks had built the Fairbanks house on Crowe Hill around 1804. He died Aug. 9, 1852 and his wife Abigail Smith died Feb. 19, 1854. Joseph's will provided a widow's corner for Abigail and also stipulated that Hannah, Betsy's sister, who never married, was to make her home there. Aside from those conditions, the property passed to Robert and Betsey. The original deed made by Samuel Sheldon to Joseph Fairbanks was for 100 acres. We do not know if more was added over the years but the farm was quite large because later it was divided into three properties. The farm included all the acreage on the left side of the road as far as the site where the Big House was built, and the original Fairbanks homestead with acreage, which was later sold to Albert Kittell.

Robert built the Big House in or about 1891 and it was called the Summer Boarding House. It was built as a boarding house for people who came to Sheldon to drink and bathe in the waters from the mineral springs. It was operated as such for several years, as long as the mineral springs boom lasted. It was a three story house with a mansard roof and a cupola at the top. There were twelve bedrooms on the two top floors with a stairway running from first floor and circling each floor to where the stairway narrowed to go up to the cupola. A two story ell was attached and that contained a summer kitchen and pantry, a utility room, and a wood shed. Beyond was the ice house, a chicken house and yard, the possum house (my father had a pet possum), and at the top of a rise, a barn. At one time there was a porch which went around three sides of the house. There was a large apple orchard on the west side of the house and one of the trees was a blue pearmane and those were the best apples of all. I have never heard of or seen any of those apples since.

My grandfather Abel Crowe spoke about sleeping in the cupola, where there was a built-in bunk bed, whenever the house was full. There was also a large carriage barn where the horses and carriages were kept to transport guests. This burned long before my memory. My grandfather lived in the Big House from the time he was 16 until he died. He lived there with his first wife Eliza (White) and seven girls were born to them in the Big House. Five girls lived to be adults. Two died shortly after birth. Eliza died at age 36 and Mary Ann Morey came to take care of the girls. Abel and Mary Ann were married Sept. 1891. Robert and Betsy were still living, so a large family occupied the Big House as was true for many years after.

It was a wonderful place to grow up. We had a large family – grandparents, parents, five children and elderly relatives who always spent a few months each year. That was how the elderly were cared for.

Robert and Alice

My father, Robert William, was born at the Big House on Oct. 16, 1892. It was a very difficult birth and he was not expected to live. He was a "blue baby" and the mid-wife wrapped him up and placed him in the oven. That was an early version of an incubator. He survived but was a sickly baby, having asthma or perhaps allergies. He couldn't work on the farm because horses and hay caused many problems. He was doted on by his mother. He had long curls and wore dresses until he was almost old enough to go to school, when his oldest stepsister had his hair cut and bought boys clothes. He attended Sheldon schools and went to Burlington Business College. He could play the piano and the violin and had a very good singing voice. He had a car at an early age, about 1910, and transported people from the train depot to Sheldon. He married my mother, Alice Stephenson, on July 14, 1914. They met when she came to Sheldon visit her brother, Mark Stephenson.

Robert served two terms in the Vermont House of Representatives, 1921 – 1922, and again in 1963 – 1965. My mother also served in the Vermont House in 1953 – 1955. My mother was a Democrat and my father a very active Republican. He worked for the Party for many years and was also Chairman of the Republican Party in Vermont. My father went to work at the Missisquoi paper Mill in 1923 in the laboratory. When the Depression came, he went to Leominster, Mass. and worked in a large paper mill. He returned home in 1931 because of the illness of his father. He went back to the Missisquoi Mill and in 1935 became Superintendent of the pulp and paper mills. After World War II, he became the purchasing agent. He worked there for about 43 years.

The farm was given to my parents when they were married but my father could not do the farm work so my grandfather Abel, with hired help, ran the farm. Four of us were born at the farm. It was a small house and after my grandmother got tired of being alone at the Big House most of the

time, my grandparents moved in. A large addition was built onto the original house. Sometime in the months before Margaret was born, we all moved back to the Big House and lived there until my grandfather died. We moved to Sheldon Springs in Nov. 1936. There, for the first time, we had electricity and modern conveniences.

Crowe Family Group

Margaret and I were always called the "little girls". We were two years apart in age and always played together. There were no other children nearby and except for our cousins whom we visited in the summer, we didn't know any other children until we went to school. I remember twice when some little girls came. We knew that two were our Aunt Fan's granddaughters, Ramona and Betty Reed. At another time, three little girls came with a woman and we were never told who they were. We were so taken by and curious about these little girls that we named a doll after one of them.

I have searched my mind for a very early memory and I think it was when we went to Aunt Alta and Uncle Dan Beeman's camp at St. Albans Bay. I remember sitting in the sand on the shore and the water washing over my feet. Aunt Alta and Uncle Dan visited at the Big House and brought us green gage plums. Margaret and I had a play area at the top of the stairs on the second floor of the house. We played with dolls and paper dolls. I remember one day when we went up to play and looking out the window and there we saw a field of dandelions in bloom. We were so excited and ran out to pick flowers.

Another time that stands out in my memory is helping my mother with laundry. She had a wringer washer but we didn't have electricity so I was trying to put clothes in the wringer and my arm got caught. Of course my mother released the rollers so they came apart and took my arm out. I wasn't hurt, just a little bruised but I didn't forget it.

Sicknesses stay in my memory too. I had pneumonia when I was in the 1st grade. My teacher was Margaret Tillotson Fairbanks and she brought me a sunshine box. There were little packages in it, so I could open one each day. They were all very simple little items like a comb, pencil, handkerchief, etc., because this was 1929 and Depression time. I also remember bringing the

measles home. When we were sick, my mother set up beds downstairs so it was easier to take care of us. About the time that I was better, the other four came down with the measles all at once. I was moved back upstairs to sleep. I have always remembered being alone on that big second floor and trying to call my mother and no words came out of my mouth because I was so scared.

Margaret and I played outdoors all of the good weather months. Our dolls were always with us. Some of them were named Petey Boy, Margaret Alice and "Little Lonenta", who really wasn't a doll, but the handle of a cart with a bar which we each held onto. The others were homemade dolls with embroidered faces and yarn for hair. Our aunts made these and they made clothes for our other dolls. We had dolls made with composition heads and cloth bodies, none ever had real hair. We would pick strawberries along the stone wall in the pasture and spend days playing house there. There was a ridge of rocks that ran across at the edge of the sugar woods. We called this place the Ledges and we played there day after day. We picked beech nuts, played house and visited imaginary people. Our imagination was our greatest resource for entertainment and play. We were never bored.

Old Fairbanks House, Crowe Hill, built 1804

I can't remember playing outdoors during the winter. After we moved to the farm when my grandfather died, we received a sled for Christmas. Then we would slide down a slope from the house to the barn. Once I ran into a tool shed and cut my hand on something. I remember that well and still have the scar on my right hand. I also remember riding in a sleigh to go to a Christmas Program at the church.

I remember making ice cream on summer Sundays. We would take turns turning the handle on the freezer. When it was done, my mother would remove the paddle and we would all have a taste of the ice cream. Then it was packed in ice from the ice house to keep frozen until supper time. On summer Sundays, we went with my father when he went trout fishing. My mother would pack a picnic and we could wade and splash in the brook while our father was off fishing. I remember watching the solar eclipse through smoked glass and the day turned dark as night. I also remember going to the Sheldon Fair and being lifted up to draw a number from a hat for a prize someone won. I think that I was either three or four years old. We stayed close to our parents as we were warned of gypsies who camped in tents along the riverside. My grandfather loved fairs and he went to many and stayed all week. Sheldon Fair, Essex Fair and one in New York State. He

had red and blue ribbons which he won at fairs. We were told that our grandparents served meals at the Sheldon Fair in the Floral Hall. There were ironstone dishes which we were told had been used at the fair and also when the Big House was the summer boarding house.

My grandfather Abel Crowe was the predominant figure in our young lives. He was a patient, quiet man who wore checked blue bib overalls and a frock coat. He worked hard, being in charge of the farm and supervising the work through the seasons. Tenant farmers lived there but others were hired during sugaring, haying, berry picking time and harvesting. There were also the men who came to do the butchering, the sawyers who prepared wood for two houses and two sugar woods, and the harvesters. Also ice was harvested every year. That was all at the farm. At the Big House, Grandpa had three cows, a horse and many chickens, a large garden, an orchard, currants, raspberries and blackberries. Grandpa named the animals at the Big House. Not much imagination in their names; the cows were white face cow, middle cow, and farther cow. That was their position in the stable. The horse was Dolly. The chickens weren't named and we didn't have a dog or a cat. At the farm, where we lived after my grandfather died, there was a dog and the barn cats. Fred Mercy, the hired man, took our grandfather's place and we followed at his heels asking questions. He was the same patient quiet man that our grandfather was. He told us some farfetched stories and we believed every word. We led such a sheltered life and knew nothing about the real world.

My grandfather taught Margaret and me some songs. In the evening he would tell us to bring our little rocking chairs on each side of him and we would sing. This was always in the kitchen. Margaret has written about learning the song "Marching Through Georgia", but the one I remember most was, "Grandfather's Clock". There was such a clock at the Big House and I thought that was the clock we were singing about. We learned My Darling Clementine too but I can't remember any others. During the winter on the farm, our brothers would read to us. My mother got books from the library and the ones I remember were the Edgar Rice Burroughs books about the forest animals. There was Reddy Fox and Jimmy Skunk and many others. Of course we had kerosene lamps so the light wasn't too good for reading.

We had a player piano. After we moved to the farm, we were old enough and our legs were long enough to reach the pedals so we could pump and play the records. The records were about 10 inches long and had paper with little holes wound around a reel. The records were in boxes and stacked on a table. The titles of the songs were on labels on one end of the box. We loved to play that piano. The keys would go up and down and the words to the songs were printed on the side of the paper so we could sing along. We would play those records for hours. There were many records to choose from. They were songs that were popular in the early 1900's. I have to ask Margaret the names of some.

My father was never a farmer because of his asthma. His father Abel and hired hands ran the farm. Fred Mercy told the story about my father asking him to help out for a few days at the farm and he worked there for twenty years. Dad was a fisherman and a hunter. He also did a lot of trapping at one time. There is a picture of Dad and Grandpa standing in front of the barn with all the hides on display.

My father went ice fishing in the winter, and traveled the trout streams in spring and early summer. He knew the best spots to find the native rainbow trout. In the summers at Metcalf Pond, he fished for bass and bull pout. All the grandsons went with him to learn how to work the streams and catch the fish. He made split bamboo fly rods for all the grandsons and son-in-laws. That was a hobby he thoroughly enjoyed and spent hours of time doing. He went deer hunting every year of his life. When we were young he went to Wenlock, Norton and Holland over in the Northeast Kingdom. After we had the camps at Metcalf Pond; that was his deer hunting place. In the years when he could no longer hunt, I would find him sitting in his chair wearing the red and black hunting jacket. He always knew when it was deer season.

Christmas

Margaret has written about our Christmas. I don't remember any preparations for Christmas nor any talk about Santa Claus. When we were little, we never saw anything until Christmas morning when our stockings were hanging in the kitchen. Our rocking chairs were placed near them and usually we had a doll sitting in our chairs. The doors to the parlor were opened before company arrived and that was the first we ever saw the tree. The company was always my father's relatives – step-sisters and my grandmother's sisters and brother. Dinner was served at noon and company left early afternoon. They had to ride home in sleighs, do chores and darkness came early.

The tree was for the adults except one year my Aunt Abbie sent a big box and Margaret and I received a book. I don't remember the name but I do remember this line: "The time has come the walrus said to talk of many things, of shoes and ships and sealing wax and cabbages and kings". It was at the farm when I remember first helping to decorate the Christmas tree. The tree was placed in the center of the room in the parlor. The decorations were all home made. There were chains made with strips of red and green crepe paper that were folded one over the other in a certain way. Of course Christmas wasn't celebrated as it is today. There was very little preparation ahead of time. Our aunts, my mother's sisters, made things for us and so boxes would arrive in the mail. We probably received clothes that we needed. One year, we got a sled which was for both of us to share. There were many homes where Christmas was like any other day because these were depression years and many people could barely buy food so they were lucky to have a good meal.

I never remember sitting at table for a Christmas or Thanksgiving dinner. My mother fed us in the kitchen while she prepared the food. I think we ate in the kitchen most of the time until we were ten and twelve years old. We were always kept quiet and told never to bother the adults. We were very happy, carefree children who accepted everything as normal. We never went to anyone's home except our cousins in Lowell and our Aunt Lena Stephenson's in Sheldon. All things there were the same as in our home. Children ate in the kitchen and were quiet in the presence of adults.

There is a mystery in our life and that is "Who was Uncle Lester"? Every now and then we ask each other and there is no one left who can tell us. Every year an older man came to live with us for a few months. He probably didn't have a home and stayed with several relatives, some very remotely related, through the years. We knew that our mother didn't like him very much. I remember that he always wiped the dishes and if we came near, he would snap the dish towel at us. That made our mother angry. I never knew his last name, so there was no way to trace him. Another lady lived with us for a time each year, but we knew who she was. Her name was Mary Ladue Crow and she was our great Uncle William's second wife. She was a help to our mother because she did all the mending.

Our Sister Gwennie (Gwendolyn Crowe Davies)

Gwennie was several years older, 9 years older than Margaret and 7 years older than me, so she didn't play a big part in our lives. She was closer to our grandmother, Mary Ann Morey Crowe, than we ever were. Our grandparents took her with them when they went anywhere and our grandmother taught her how to sew, do embroidery, quilt making, tatting and knitting. Gwen was a good student, a member of the 4-H, and exhibited her sewing and canned goods at the fair. She chaperoned our youth group when we went to the Missisquoi camp in the summer. Gwen went to high school at Brigham Academy in Bakersfield and lived with our Aunt Lucy, our mother's sister, and Uncle Frank Start. All the Stephensons went to Brigham Academy and they excelled in all studies. She lived up to all that was expected of her.

In the good weather times, she came home on weekends. She walked to East Fairfield and took the train to Sheldon. On Sunday night our father would take her back to Bakersfield and Margaret and I went too. This was a great treat for us because Uncle Frank had a radio and we

listened to Major Bowles Amateur Hour. We did not have a radio at home. This was in 1932 and rural Vermont did not have electricity until the late 1930's when George Aiken became governor.

Gwennie graduated in 1934 and entered the St. Albans Hospital School of Nursing in September. She was sent home in about six months because she had spots on her lungs that could have been tuberculosis. At that time, TB was rampant and our cousin, Helen Start Soule, did have it and spent a year or two in a sanitarium in New York State. Gwen recovered and the spots went away and she returned to training in 1935. She graduated in 1938 after spending six months in Boston City Hospital to complete her training.

Probably she looked at us as her biggest failures as we weren't good learners and certainly wouldn't sit still long enough to learn to sew and embroider or even dust and wipe dishes. Once she made Margaret a dress for school and of course the first time it was worn, Margaret came home with smudges of dirt, tears, and the belt hanging from one side. Gwen was very upset and said that the dress was new. Margaret said, "Well, it has to be old sometime"!

Gwendolyn Crowe

Death

Death came to our family when my grandmother (Mary Ann Morey) died in 1928. We were three and five years old. We were always sent to Aunt Lena's when anything happened that my mother felt we shouldn't see or hear about. I remember my grandmother's death and I'm sure I was there, but my mother said I was not and that I couldn't possibly remember anything. The day of the funeral Aunt Lena brought us home and entertained us in the kitchen while the funeral took place in the large front rooms. The undertaker came to the house to make preparations. She was a relative of my grandmother's and the funeral services were conducted at the house. Needless to say there were lots of people there. She was a Morey and had many relatives. Somehow between the services and getting ready to go to the cemetery, Margaret wandered away from Aunt Lena, got into a car, and went to the cemetery. My mother was very upset about this to say the least.

My grandfather died in October 1932. We were eight and ten years old. We were sent to Aunt Lena's directly from school and didn't go home until everything was over. We missed our grandfather. He played an important role in our lives. He was a gentle, patient, quiet man. He was a farmer all of his life – tending animals, his crops, chopping wood, boiling sap in the sugarhouse that went with the Big House, running the farm, picking berries, gathering eggs and patiently coming into the house to put wood in the stove whenever Grandma called him. There's a picture of him sitting with the berry pickers having lunch, looking as I always remember him. As he grew older, my father looked as I remember my grandfather. After Grandpa died, we moved to the farm. I think we moved in November 1932. We lived at the farm for four years and then moved to Sheldon Springs.

Sheldon Springs

We moved in October of 1936 and I was 12 years old. Our lives changed completely. Suddenly we lived in a modern house with electricity, a bathroom, running hot and cold water, radio, refrigerator and other appliances. I remember when we first were exploring the house, I went into the kitchen and found the new refrigerator had been moved in. I opened the door and music began to play. Of course I thought it came from the refrigerator as I didn't know that someone had turned on a radio that was also new. We lived in town and made many friends of our own age. The school, store and post office were just a short walk away. Friends lived right next door – Wayne Larnelle, Lorraine and Claire Bouthillier. Needless to say, we adjusted very quickly and life went on.

Trees and Dreams

Gwendolyn Crowe Davies

Gwendolyn, born 1916, is the oldest daughter of Robert William Crowe and Cora Alice Stephenson. This poem was written about the site of the Big House where she lived as a child.

The aged spruce trees sigh a whisper in the breeze from the south,
As though discussing happenings of long ago and wondering, perhaps, just who this woman is.
She, who stands beneath their waving branches,
Gazing up their trunks long stretch to blue sky above.
She, who touches them familiarly, as though a friend from the past,
A friend, indeed, her swing hung from the branch of one.
She seated her dollies between the roots and fed them dainties from her tiny tea table.
And, later on, lazy summer days, drifted by as she read and dreamed beneath waving boughs.
The old house, which stood near by, has been torn down
And on the ancient cellar hole, a marvel of the modern age, a mobile home now rests.
And she, who played here long ago, now lives again on her old hilltop, home once more.
Her play is over, now she strives to blend old and new in harmony,
Pausing now and then to look up at the old trees
And wonder if in years to come, they still will sigh
And whisper to her grandchildren
And, if they will hear the songs of their ancestral home.

REMEMBRANCES OF ROB AND ALICE

by Bill Davies

Son of Gwendolyn Crowe and Elwin Davies, grandson of Robert and Alice

THANKSGIVING AND CHRISTMAS

We would all gather at Grandpa and Grandma's house for Thanksgiving or Christmas dinner. I am thinking of the house on Mill Street in Sheldon Springs. How many remember the big black, wood and coal cook stove that Grandma had in the kitchen? There was a hot water tank on the left side and a warming oven on top. When we got there, the kitchen was about 90 or 100 degrees, so it seemed. Sometimes there would be an open window to cool it off a bit but not enough to affect the draft in the stove. You didn't want to mess with temperature with pies or a turkey in the oven. There would be mounds of potato and squash. Plates of pickles and salads. I think I can still smell all those wonderful foods. Of course, all the women would be helping to cook or set the table, men would be talking in the living room and all of the children would be in the way, regardless of where they were.

Sooner or later and it always seemed to be later to us kids, the meal would be ready. The table in the kitchen would be cleared and set for us. Mothers helped us with food and then retired to the dining room which was reserved for adults. Kids only went into the dining room to get more food or to tattle about some perceived slight by someone else. All in all, it was always a very happy day for everyone. At Christmas time, after we ate and the dishes were cleaned up, then there was another Christmas tree for us. Seems like this would usually be about one or two in the afternoon. Naturally, all of us youngsters tried to spend as much time near the tree during the day as we could. If we got too close, we were usually directed away. When it was time for presents everyone gathered in a big circle in the living room; adults in chairs and kids on the floor in the center. There was something for every one of us. Looking back I see that it was not the things that we received that were important. I really don't remember any one thing that I received. What I do remember is being together as a family and the love that was shown, that is what a holiday is all about. Being together with family is what makes a holiday so very special.

GOING TROUT FISHING

I don't think there was a more avid trout fisherman in the State of Vermont than Rob Crowe. He didn't rush out on opening day because he thought the water was still too cold for good fishing and the water was likely too high yet. But as the month of May neared its end, then he started to venture out. By June it was time to fish in earnest. I remember going out with just Gramp on some Saturdays.

We might go up into Enosburg or Bakersfield, usually to some small brook that he knew about. You would almost think it would be too small for anything other than minnows. We would open a gate or a fence into some pasture and park the car. Of course, the gate would be closed after us as we didn't want to be responsible for someone's cows getting loose. Poles would be retrieved from the trunk and put together, worms put in worm cans, boots put on and a creel slung over the shoulder. The only thing that was fancy was the pole. That was always one of Rob Crowe's handmade bamboo rods. These were the very best.

In my early years, I would fish one side of the stream and Gramp on the other. In later years each of us would take a section of brook by ourselves. This was a time of instruction. I would be shown what to and what not to do. I was taught where to cast, how to maneuver the bait into just the right part of the water and how to get to move and look natural. Just walking up to a stream was a whole lesson in itself. Don't shake the ground and don't cast a shadow on the water or be seen

against the sky. However, if lessons were forgotten in youthful exuberance, there were never any harsh words but a gentle reminder instead. I don't ever remember Gramp saying anything harsh to me.

Robert Crowe

Once a fish was caught it would be wrapped in moist ferns so that it wouldn't dry out and spoil. If it was too small, it was carefully removed from the hook and released. If only little fish were caught we would move on so as to not harm the little ones that would someday grow up into a decent size. There was never any competition to see who caught the most fish and that was a good thing because he always did the best.

Later it would be time for the picnic lunch that Grandma had sent. Sandwiches, coffee and milk and always a dessert. I think Rob Crowe liked dessert as well as any child. There would be more fishing in the afternoon though he didn't think we would catch much in mid-day. Fish fed early and late according to Gramp.

Trout fishing also included trips after Gramp's workday was finished. I would meet him at his house. Gramp, Grandma and I would go somewhere, usually one of those small brooks again and we would fish until nearly dark. Grandma seldom fished though she was a good fisherman. I think her leg bothered in trying to get around the streams. Supper was similar to the lunches that we took, perhaps a little more with meat such as ham and potato salad. These were very special times for a boy.

FISHING AT METCALF POND

Almost as important as trout fishing was fishing for bass or bullhead at camp. I think for all of us grandchildren, camp was only one place – Metcalf Pond. All of us have special memories of that place and time. I now seldom ever go there because the reality doesn't come close to the mind's pictures that are still so vivid. It was a world of endless possibility if a little imagination was used. There were woods and hills to explore, swimming, fishing, boating, trips to the spring for drinking water and to Flanders's Farm for fresh milk.

Fishing predominated those possibilities. We were started young. We got to go out in the boat with Gramp and Grandma for perch and bullhead after supper or with Gramp on a late afternoon for bass. He fished for bass and we for perch and pumpkinseed. Pumpkinseeds were not good for eating, according to Gramp, but they were good for teaching a youngster how to fish. Then we could fish off the dock with one of the steel rods that Gramp kept at camp just for such purposes. You could take a can with two or three worms, go to the end of the dock, a cast toward the lily pads just off to one side. There were always pumpkinseeds there, just waiting for us to feed them. It was an easy and engrossing way to spend an afternoon. Time was always made for swimming about an hour after lunch. Swimming didn't seem to bother the fish much.

Peter Crowe and Bill Davies on Metcalf Pond

When I got a little older, I was allowed to get in the big wooden rowboat. I could stand on one side, right up at the edge of the seat and that big boat wouldn't tip. Now there was a large cement circle out near the lily pads on the left side of the dock. In my memory it was huge. I tried to move it but couldn't budge it. I was perhaps seven or eight. The boat was hitched to the circle with 20-30 feet of rope, perhaps a little more. I could go anywhere I wanted to, as long as the rope was still hitched to the boat. When I got a little older, I could go around the South end of the pond. At the Wilcox camp at the foot of the hill below the spring there was a dock and across the end of the pond there was a dock on the other side. I couldn't go past those two docks. That was OK as it

opened up many places to row to and to fish. Of course in later years I got to go anywhere on the pond.

Back to bass fishing. Gramp knew that pond like the inside of his pocket. Depending on the time of day, the temperature, the time of year, the wind and any other secrets he knew about, he would fish in a particular spot. It came from experience and his knowledge of fish. He knew the right bait to use, just how to bait the hook and just where to cast it. Then he was patient. It was seldom that he wasn't rewarded. He brought home nice fish on most trips. He did have places of which he was more fond than others and I think that was because he was more successful at those places. You could catch fish at other places but not as consistently. There was a cardinal rule: If we caught fish, we ate fish. They were never taken to camp and thrown away. That was a waste of nature's bounty. You were not to bring them back and them leave then in a fish pan or bucket until they spoiled.

Camp, with Alice and Robert behind the trees

I think Gramp enjoyed fishing for bullhead almost as much as fishing for bass. His usual trip was after dark. We would slather on the citronella to ward off mosquitoes (It only sort of worked, but smelled bad enough that you thought it should). Then we would row out to the edge of the lily pads and weeds in front of the old dance hall. Pull a large night crawler on the hook and let it settle to the bottom. At some point you would feel the line start running out slowly. You reeled in slowly until you could feel the fish and then set the hook and reeled in your fish. The trick was to get the hook out of the fish without being stabbed by one of the fins. They were hard and sharp and made you itch in addition to the pain and blood. The fish was slippery and seldom cooperated. It would not be uncommon to come back in a couple of hours with 20 to 50 fish in the bucket. Gramp

had a fish-cleaning bench behind the bathhouse and a single light bulb overhead. Once into the rhythm, it didn't take too long and they would be done. The heads and entrails were then walked well back into the woods and left for the night creatures.

Gramp was a fly fisherman. He tried to teach me, but I was a poor student or else I didn't try hard enough. Live bait worked for me so why use flies? There were a couple of larger brooks that he would fish in Bakersfield and then the Lamoille River was good in late summer for rainbow and brown trout.

Of course all of us have heard the stories of his trips to northern Quebec for trout and salmon and seen the pictures of the huge fish that he caught. How I envied him for being able to go on those trips. I wonder if those places still exist. If they do they are probably so changed that even Gramp wouldn't recognize them.

STORIES FROM GWENDOLYN

by Bill Davies

Son of Gwendolyn Crowe (oldest child of Robert and Alice) and Elwyn Davies, grandson of Robert and Alice

Like everyone else, I suffer from a dim view of the past. So things stand out better than others but there are always things that I can't quite see as clearly as I would like. Usually those things less clear are the things that make stories interesting. That said, I hope I can add a few stories that I heard from and about my Mother, Gwendolyn Mary Crowe Davies.

Learning to Drive

All of the time that I was growing up, I never saw my mother behind the wheel of a car nor do I remember her expressing any interest in do so. She seemed to be content in letting my dad do the driving. Maybe there was more to it than that, but I never noticed if there was something else. I do remember her telling a story about one of her driving experiences when she was young. Apparently she did learn or attempt to learn to drive as a young woman. I have no idea how old she was. Her story was that she needed or wanted to go from Crowe Hill into the village. She drove and Fred Mercy was the adult and the driving instructor. They did whatever the errand was and were driving back to Crowe Hill. Somewhere near the Episcopal Church a pack (could have been two or three, but the story was a pack) of dogs ran out in front of the car. My mother got very nervous. The last dog in the group wasn't quite fast enough and he got clipped and rolled over. There was a lot of ki-yi-ing but the dog got up, shook itself off and went off after the rest of the dogs. Mom got the car stopped but was shook up herself by the incident. Fred in his own inimitable way calmed her down by saying the he supposed that dog would forever watch out for women drivers. Then they finished the drive home without further incident. I have no clue if that was the last time she drove or not.

Milk Thieves

Apparently milk thieves were a problem from time to time. My mother told two stories about milk thieves and the attempts made to foil them. Now her stories were about Grandpa. Maybe she said Grandfather, I don't remember the name she used. I have just come to realize, after hearing how my grandfather, Robert, could not be in the barn, that she was referring to her grandfather, Abel.

There first story concerning a very large bull that they kept. Apparently, it was a prize-winning bull. It was taken to the Sheldon Fair each year and brought home blue ribbons. However, it was not a gentle-tempered bull. When it was being lead at the fair or else where, two men had stout

sticks with a clip at the end that attached to the ring in the bull's nose. Where the ring went, the bull followed. This is also how the bull was kept in the barn. His stall had large timbers at the four corners, perhaps, eight by eights. Down each side there were two by fours, placed side by side, so that the wall was four inches thick. Of course, there was a manger in the front. A bolt went diagonally through the post at the front of the stall and there was a chain that attached to rings on the bolts. The chain went through the ring in the bulls nose. Another chain went behind the bull. I don't know just how the animal was lead in and out of the stall. If he was as evil tempered as reported, I doubt anyone walked in beside him. One morning, Grandpa Abel went to the barn and found the door open, several milk containers that were not his lying inside the door, and the bull's stall nearly completely destroyed. All that was left, were the two eight by eights at the front and the chain keeping the bull attached to them. The manger, the two by fours and the rear eight by eights had been smashed. It was thought at the time, that a thief got into the barn, upset the bull, and he just tore everything apart. The thief didn't even take time to take his belongings. There were no more attempts at thievery for a long time.

The second story is similar to the first. I think, on reflection, that I heard this story from my Grandfather, Rob. This time the hero is a mean dog instead of a mean bull. I have heard that Grandpa Abel had or had access to an Airedale. He was fine with family members but strangers needed to be careful. After a time of several thefts of milk from the barn, the dog was chained inside the barn. The chain allowed the dog to get almost to the barn door. While the dog was fine with family members, it was a wise person who spoke to him before trying to go in. Let's just say that the dog was possessive. The end result was again and open barn door in the morning with empty milk containers at the door and a large dog standing guard just inside. There were no more attempts to steal milk.

A Story About Piping

I think this story took place in the barn behind the Big House. I seem to remember that Robert and John were responsible for watering some animals in the barn. Whether they were cows, horses or chickens I don't remember. The point is that water was needed in the barn but there was no running water out there. I suspect the reason was it would have been unprotected in cold weather and would freeze. Robert and John were reported to have decided to remedy the situation and did so by laying some piping into the barn from a source outside. I suspect there may have been a water tank or trough that was fed by the spring up the hill from the house. Being enterprising young men, they deemed it would be good to surprise Grandpa, so they didn't ask first. They spent the whole day getting their job done. They were called to the house the get cleaned up for supper before they could display their good work. Grandpa Abel headed for the barn. Of course, it was after dark by this time. The story wouldn't be any good if it were still daylight. The door into the barn was one of those short ones. You had to step up and over the bottom part and duck for the top part. After all, if something large needed to be brought in, you opened the big doors, this door was just for people. That put Grandpa's head down so he couldn't really see where he was going. But that was important as he had been in and out that door so many times that he knew his way around, even in the dark. The only problem was that this new piping, about which he had yet to be told, ran across the doorway, just a few inches from the top. Naturally, there was a meeting of skull and pipe. I believe the piping came down the next day, by the very same people as installed it. There may have been other repercussions.

A Model "T" or "A"

My Uncle Robert was a very inventive person. I think this is well born out by the things that he did in his later life. This story may have been one of his early successes. At some point in the 1930's, before the family moved to Sheldon Springs, gasoline was in short supply on the farm. It was considered to be expensive and just wasn't wasted. There was an automobile but it was used for important things. It wasn't for just driving around on the farm. Robert, being a young man, wanted to get behind the wheel of the car in the worst way. He also knew that he couldn't waste the gasoline. Now, kerosene, on the other hand, was cheaper and available. Robert reasoned that he could fill the gas tank with kerosene and then he could drive to his heart's content with using up the gasoline. His concept was good but he lacked a little knowledge. The car wouldn't start. The technical side is that the kerosene wouldn't vaporize and thus there was no explosion in the cylinder and the engine just wouldn't start. Robert tried adding a little gasoline through the carburetor, and lo, he got it started. Once started the car would run. It smoked a lot, and didn't a great deal of power, but it ran. Trying to add a little gasoline through the carburetor was inconvenient, so Robert added a second tank to the car. He put gasoline in one and kerosene in the other with a valve so that he could switch from one to the other. After that he could easily start the car on gasoline and then switch to kerosene. Then he could drive without wasting precious gasoline. Very ingenious.

A Little Mischief

I think all of us have heard stories about Robert and John getting into something mischievous. This story involves milk cans. A standard milk can will hold 100 pounds of milk. That is about twelve and a half gallons of milk. Maple syrup weighs in at twelve and half pounds to the gallon. The very same milk can now hold over 150 pounds of product. Add to that the weight of the milk can itself and you are approaching 200 pounds for a milk can full of maple syrup. In the spring during sugaring, some syrup was sent out in bulk in drums. But I think the majority of it was packaged in smaller quantities and a lot of it was turned into sugar. Some sugar was made into quarter, half and full pound cakes. Some of the syrup was made into figures: men, leaves, etc. These were packaged and shipped all over the country. I remember my grandfather saying some was shipped as far as Japan. I digress from my story. This syrup that was going to be made into sugar had to go from the sugarhouse to the kitchen where Alice would make the sugar and put it into molds. Now this is springtime and the farm roads are dirt, little more than tracks. A wheeled vehicle is more than useless. It was brought by horse-drawn sled. The hired men would loaded the cans of syrup onto the sled, haul it to the house, and then onto the porch or into a back room where it could drawn or dipped to go onto the stove.

One day while watching the men load syrup, our young men hatched an idea. They slipped an empty can into the middle of the load, an then scampered to the house where they found a place to watch unobserved. When the sled arrived at the house the two men would each grab a handle and give a mighty heave to pick up the heavy can. However, when they did the same to the empty can, it nearly went into orbit. Of course, howls of laughter gave away the youngsters. Again, I believe there were repercussions.

I am sure that there are more stories that will come out of the mists of memory as I look for them.

Metcalf Pond Memories

Peter Crowe
Son of Robert Crowe and Marion, grandson of Robert and Alice

I have been thinking about my time spent with Grampa and Gramma at the cottage on Metcalf Pond. I have such fond memories of my summers spent with them. My folks would take me to the train station the day after school was let out for the summer and put me on the train to St. Albans, Vt. Gramma and Grampa, or if it was a week day, Gramma and someone would pick me up at the station. Once we got back to the camp I would bring my suitcase up to the loft where I had a nice feather bed. It was my own room for the summer. Just me and Gramma and Grampa.

Gramma would have a nice breakfast for me when I awoke in the morning. It could be eggs, bacon, juice or cereal, toast and jam. Grampa always had jam or jelly on his plate with breakfast and he would eat it with his bacon. I found myself doing this later on in life. I guess it cuts the grease from the bacon.

I would amuse myself during the day. Swim in the pond or meet up with some of the local kids that lived there for the summer. There was a family from Ohio that had two boys. There names were Peter and John Gover, I think. I would hang out with them along with others.

I remember the first fish pole that Grampa made and gave to me at the age of 9, I believe. I cherished that pole 'til this day. I still have it. I remember the evenings that Grampa and I would go bullhead fishing behind Shepard's Island. It was comical to watch him line up the bow and the stern of the boat with specific points on the shoreline so as to be in the right place to catch fish. We would go out right after supper and fish thru the evening returning at about 10 or 11 o'clock at which time Gramma would prepare toasted peanut butter sandwiches and a glass of milk which we had for a snack.

That brings me to another thought. The Milk. I remember walking to Flander's Farms and Parent's Farm to get our supply of milk which was fresh from the cows. I can still taste that milk today. It was so good. I also remember the trips to the spring to get drinking water. That was almost a daily chore. The spring was located up on a hill and the only way to it was to walk or by boat. And sometimes you'd spill the water coming down the hill and you'd have to go back and get more. I also remember Gramma and I would go berry picking. We'd pick blackberries, raspberries and blueberries (all wild). We would eat while we picked, me more than Gramma. She always had picked the most.

I recall times when we would be busy doing something and all of a sudden Grampa would be gone. I would ask "where did Grampa go" and I would hear, he's gone fishing. He would always sneak off without telling anyone to go trout fishing in the streams. I guess he didn't want any distractions while he was fly fishing in the streams.

On Saturdays Gramp would go to work in the morning and return around noon. He would have me catch frogs while he was at work and after lunch we would go bass fishing behind Shepard's Island. Again lining up the boat with specific points on the shore line so as to be in the precise spot to catch bass. It seems though he must have known what he was doing because we never came home without fish. I remember the plywood boat that Grampa built. That was the best little boat. It was so light and easy to row.

I remember the times that we would go shopping for groceries in either Jeffersonville or Cambridge. I don't think Gramps always wanted to go, but since he was the only one who could drive, he would have to give up a day and take us into town. I recall the '57 Chevy - green. There were times when we would have to go back to the house on Mill St. in the Springs (Sheldon Springs) to do our laundry and pick up supplies. During those times I would get together with Bill.

Thoughts of the dog are coming back to me. Was his name Bree or Irish - not sure. The dog would always know when Grampa's car turned the corner by Parent's farm and he'd make a mad dash up the hill to meet him. He was an Irish Setter.

I remember one birthday party that Gramma had for me and she made a cake that had a real fluffy maple frosting. I can taste that cake as I'm telling you about it. I've never had frosting like that again - I wish I had the recipe. I remember that I used to help (probably more hinder) Gramma while cooking dinner. I would almost every day help her in the kitchen, either frying fish or peeling vegetables for the evening meal. I wish now that I had purchased that camp when it was for sale. But you know how it goes --- hindsight is always 20/20.

Oh, I remember times that Gramp would go fishing in Canada and the stories that he would tell when he got home. He would talk about staying at Chateau Frontenac in Quebec City (I also stayed at the Chateau Frontenac on one of my fishing trips into northern Canada) and the celebrities that would be there to go fishing, like Ted Williams, Henry Ford, Winston Churchill, etc. He also talked about fish poles that he made and gave to some of those individuals. I could sit and listen to those stories for hours. Some of them were very comical. He used to go as a guest of the people that he used to buy pulp wood from for the Mill. The intrigue of his stories inspired several of my fishing trips to the Miramichi River and fly-in fishing trips into northern Canada.

I remember (laughing as I remember) Grampa had two ultra light fish poles that he made out of bamboo and cherished. Those poles were hung up in the rafters of the porch at camp and no one was to touch those poles under any circumstances. I remember one day when your brother Tommy was visiting the camp and took those poles out fishing. When Grampa returned he was a bit nervous about those poles being gone.

The summer would fly by and soon they would be taking me back to the train or my parents would come up to pick me up to go back to school. Those were the best summers of my life.

Metcalf Pond
Carolyn Bronz

Oldest child of Margaret Crowe Kimball and Norman, granddaughter of Robert and Alice.

I remember, at the age of nine, pausing in the middle of a sunny summer day at camp, and feeling so happy to be there that I wanted to save the moment. I was standing between the white clapboard camp and the new outhouse with running water that grandpa had built in the past year. The fragrant evergreens towering above seemed to be protecting the buildings. I looked out at the pond and then down at my own body, thinking about what it's like to be nine, and that next year I would be a two-digit age: ten, and that seemed so much more grown-up than nine. I thought about time and how it passes, how time is taking me along year by year. I was a little frightened of an unimaginable future in which someday I would be grown-up.

I remember being aware that right here, right now, I am happy; I wanted nothing more than being in this sun-dappled, pine-smelling place. I had a conscious, strong intention to save every sensation of this moment so that no matter how old I became I would always be able to recall it with clarity. And I do.

My grandparents' camp on Metcalf Pond was a place which gave me some of my happiest childhood memories. There is a smell I associate with this place which can instantly put me back there—a green woodsy smell. In fact, that smell of the woods was one of the attractions of the place I live now, up a dead-end road in the middle of woods. The camp had water piped in from the lake, but we couldn't drink that. We had to get our drinking water from a spring which was located up a steep hill. It was quite a good walk from the camp for a child. My grandmother and I each

took a pail, and walked past the neat little camps crowded between the road and the lake's edge. There was a path on the right which led up to the spring.

We climbed up the wooded hill and came to the spring which was capped with a big round wooden cover. it was a damp, mossy place populated with frogs. We dipped out the water to fill our pails, and sometimes caught a few little frogs to use for bait later on when we would go out fishing. Then came the hard work of bringing the water back to camp. One pail, not even full, was very difficult for me to carry, and after all the sloshing, I probably didn't bring too much back to camp.

My grandmother told little stories to take my mind off our work. These stories usually had some kind of moral, such as :"handsome is as handsome does", or "patience is a virtue, catch it if you can; seldom found in woman, and never found in man". In her gentle, soft-spoken way, she was giving me the best of her wisdom. I remember her good-natured spirit, though sometimes with a flash of fire: never toward us children, but sometimes toward Grandpa. She worked very hard to keep everything running smoothly, as we children thoughtlessly played and ate our way through the long summer days.

When we would finally arrive back at camp with our water, we filled the drinking pail near the corner of the middle room, right next to the candy dish that Grandma kept filled with pink Canada mints and butterscotch hard candies, and if we were lucky, some chocolate! There was an old-fashioned long handled tin dipper that we all share whenever we needed refreshment during the day. Just the memory of this water has been refreshing me all my life. Thank you, Gram and Gramp; I will never forget you!

Gram – Alice Stephenson Crowe – at Metcalf Pond

Out of the Past

by Pearl B. Stephenson, 1969

Pearl, born1897, is the youngest child of John Stephenson and Cora Maria Janes, and brother of Alice Stephenson Crowe. He is father to Norma Thomasson and Sandra Daigle.

In delving into the pages of the book of Memory, it seems to open first to the days of the early 1930's, because they were filled with so much trouble and deep sorrow. In my work as Sexton, in nine months I buried five members of our family: the first, my mother; the third, our beautiful red-headed son; the last, a cousin, whose dying at an early age left a strange vacuum in my life. As a child, my clothes were his cast-offs and being the object of his awful ridicule all through my youth had made me hate him intensely. Death left only an emotional emptiness. In less than a year I was an "almost" victim of the same killer, pneumonia. But a kind, or unkind, fate let me live, probably to teach me that the lessons of life are learned by having humility heaped on humility. The pages of the book go back a long way from there.

They start in the old home living room (the Stephenson farmhouse in Lowell), where from the cradle that anyone with busy hands could rock with a foot, I lay watching Blanche, Helen and Lucy sewing at the dining room table. Following were times when Papa, holding me on one arm and his paper in the other hand, rocked to the tune of Silver Threads Among the Gold, singing Dol, dol dol, dol dol dol, Dol dol dol dol, dol dol. The same words through all verses and chorus. It was an ambidextrous act that got the paper read and me to sleep.

Later, there were three of us in a bed, in Papa's and Mamma's bedroom – I never did know where they slept while we were ill – Eva, Alice and I, with scarlet fever. I knew nothing of fear of illness for I was not to know until years after that Marshall had died at five years old of the same dread disease before I was born. I measured our progress in getting well by the amount of medicine in the glasses on the bedside stand, but Alice and Eva disappeared from the bedroom while I stayed on with complications. I do remember that something called "sweet spirits of niter" was the remedy that finally made me well enough to go out to play again. The season of the year is beyond recall.

The chronology of a family is a matter of statistics but the chronology of the events of a lifetime is something else, for events of little or greater importance of influence on the course of one's life may be faintly in the background or conspicuously dominating in slowly rambling or swiftly passing years. So I find myself marking time by a long buggy ride to Tuckerville, to Frank Morgan's to get a buck-sheep with "Bub" Souther – I was about four years old and it was a 12-mile trip; by starting school and the break from Common (elementary) School to high school, that lasted only a year and a half; by illness and death in the family that I find, in retrospect, kept me from having a normal growing up.

A child accepts the abnormal in everyday living because he knows no criterion of normal life, so in growing up with an invalid mother and sister, the adjustments to their infirmities and unusual needs is normal. Massaging a bloated abdomen to stop the awful spasms of hydrocephalus, or wringing out cold cloths for a mother's or sister's aching head is all a part – to the child – of what everyone has to do. One would never know its effect on the child until, perhaps, a psychiatrist makes a diagnosis of unusual adult behavior. Again, I have gotten away from the marking of events.

The family, nine in number, was not considered large in those days, but Mother, married at 16, must have had a pretty busy time baby tending and before I came along as number nine she must have been willing to call the one before me "enough". Anyhow, I came and was shown as the "baby" until at seven I protested I had been called "Baby" too long. Eugene Curtis and his wife were the last to whom I was so introduced.

Pearl Bryant Stephenson

We were three boys and six girls: Blanche, Helen, Marshall, Lucy, Caddie, Mark, Alice, Eva and I, named Pearl, after a not so good citizen, Pearl Brigham, and Bryan, after an illustrious, losing candidate for President in the year of my birth, William Jennings Bryan. To my dying day, I protest being named with a girl's name and after a loser. Nicknames, as life progressed, of Pinkey (after Bill Patterson's cat with pink eyes), Amasa (after an uncle) and Steve, did little for one starting with two such handicaps. I realy hit the skids when called "Perley".

However, Peter Dyer's "Old Paine", after my great-grandfather, was complimentary. Peter usually just called me Paine". Our early years, on a small farm, were barren of most luxuries, for the farm income had to be supplemented by off-farm logging at Jay or where ever there might be a log job. Farm payments came first and store bills for food for the family table were not to be thought of.

With frosted cake on the table, when company came, there was always the hissed warning, "Don't you mention the frosted cake!" Frequently, I forgot and sag, "We got frosted cake. We got frosted cake". Papa's "YOUNG MAN, one more word and you leave the table", held me silent til I got my piece. Cleaning the frosting dish, which three of us shared after the cake was made, fixed the day of Company as a red-letter day.

"Papa" John Stephenson

The room called "The Buttery" really had meaning, for in it were racks on all one side that held the eight quart pans of milk, set there for the cream to rise for later skimming. Also involved was souring the milk after skimming off the cream; the heating on the stove until it wheyed off and the clobbered milk either dipped off for feeding the pigs and calves or made into cottage cheese for the family. Dipping out curd with a tablespoon and eating it after sprinkling with salt was a real treat. What a far cry from milking machines, milker pipelines, bulktanks and bulkhauling of sixty years later.

Butter making was an art. Keeping cream without refrigeration made a cool cellar essential for storage until churning day and the temperature had to be right if the butter came quickly. Washing, working it to retain the proper moisture content, and salting an ounce to the pound was a most painstaking job. Poorly worked, the butter had streaks and was called "Durham" butter. In later years state law allowed a 21% churn gain to creameries where cream was paid for on a butterfat content basis. On the farm, the butter was packed in boxes or tubs and shipped to Boston in the Fall of the year.

Papa told about a previous year when after shipping all the butter he learned that the dealer "had failed" and the year's production was a total loss. To meet the farm payment he went onto the Mountain and cut five hundred logs, drew them to the river bank in the winter and from there they went in the Spring log drive to the Buck and Stevens Mill, in Troy. They made the farm payment.

Mother's ingenuity kept food on the table for the family. Grocery purchases for a long time were limited to sugar, flour, and occasional gallon of blackstrap molasses, spices, of course, and kerosene. The pork barrel, filled from the winter's butchering, along with cow beef, allowed our

only fresh meat in the cold months. The hind quarters of beef were stripped, cured and dried for year round use. Canning came at a later date. Mother must have been a wonder in ways and means for she did not often buy meat from a passing meatcart because "He beats us on weight".

A small flock of hens provided eggs – some for the table and cooking but most of them were sold to buy groceries. There was also a yearly crop of roosters that went to Fall market. A few were kept for Thanksgiving and Christmas and Papa, regardless of the fact that we were poor, went to destitute families before Thanksgiving and Christmas with dressed chickens and fresh tenderloins for their Holiday dinners. Papa's Stephenson ears showed a relationship to the weakness of some members of the family who would give away their last shirt.

One of the Alsop brothers (news commentators) passed on some great philosopher's words about change. "Change is the one great unalterable constant". The Twentieth Century, in which I am privileged to live, has brought and continues to bring changes that without doubt are wonders of the world; the automobile, airplane, radio, television, the smashing of the atom and in its wake nuclear power and weapons and the miracle of space ships and space travel. Medical science has progressed at the same rapid rate with new anesthetics, antibiotics, and radical new methods in surgery, medical care and disease research. Science has never at any moment been static, but Vermont's basic industry, agriculture, has had an almost day to day molding of change.

Even before the turn of the century economics had forced changes in ways of life and providing daily bread, a part of it simply the adapting of people to the land – its clearing and turning its production into materials that were needed in building homes. Sawmills, brickyards, and sash and blind factories just naturally came into being; horses, cattle, sheep and poultry supplemented the whole when land was brought into the production of grains.

First casualties of agricultural production were beef cattle and Merino sheep when the West was opened up. Also potatoes raised for the production of starch gave way to the cornstarch which hit the market from the Midwest. The region turned to dairying, for cheese and butter production came as naturally as night following the day. The really dramatic change came in the 1930's when mechanical refrigeration made it possible for Vermont to take its place in supplying the Boston milkshed with fluid milk. The change from 45% to 96% of farms with electricity in 1939 was most dramatic of all. The Rural Electrification Administration made this change.

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There is something nostalgic in the name Kellyvale and the derivation dates back to 1791 when Governor John Chittenden made two Land Grants to one John Kelly Esq. of some 37,000 acres of land. The township that was organized as Kellyvale in 1812 and whose forward looking citizens were Caldwells, Kellys, Curtises, Butterfields, Hardings, Stewarts, Woods, Sanborns, Metcalfs, et al, became known as Lowell in the year 1832. That, by coincidence, was the year that the Stephensons, having, as Uncle John Told it in his shrill squeaky voice, "come all the way from Ireland in a vessel" (Tom Brahaney's comment was "We did not expect that you came in a rowboat") made the journey by way of Montreal and, in Vermont, Jay and Westfield. November was the month of their arrival. The Stephensons had embarked from Preston, England. They may have changed ship in Ireland. Many, many years later the Reverend Ralph Francis Cady called Lowell "A Chalice in the Hills". A cup in the hills, indeed. The most beautiful spot on God's footstool.

The settling in a new location in November leads to a guess that there must have been a house of some kind to move into and the 200 acres of land, astraddle of what was later known as the Troy Hill road, was purchased for $1000 for each 100 acres and was to be paid for $50 a year in cattle and $50 in cash.

Clearing the land of trees also produced a cash crop. The fallen trees were pulled into piles and burned, and potash was leached from the ashes. Grandfather, then 12 years old, told that the trunk of a tree cut with the axe he used was as high as his head. The potash went to market in Montreal, 80 miles away. Mutton tallow found a market there too.

From the days of Grandfather's boyhood, as repeated to Papa, there is a break in the family history, other than the recording of deaths and births, until the days of Papa's childhood, when as an eight year old he drew potatoes from the Dell Longley farm to the Irvin and Edward Stephenson Starch Factory in the village. A winding, log-bridged road made a long and rugged trip for a child so young. There were episodes connected with the operations of the factory: a stranger, curious about the scum on top of a vat of boiling starch, was told by Grandfather that "by stirring that in your hat I can make candy of it". The stranger finally surrendered his hat with the promise from Grandfather that if he fails he will give him 50 cents. Of course the attempt failed and the stranger got a badly soiled "plug" hat and 50 cents.

A part of Grandfather's duties as co-partner was to draw the starch to Hyde Park to the railroad for shipping. It was a tough trip for a team, about 46 miles round trip, and it meant six long days a week. One night when Grandfather had finished for the day, with the horses fed and cared for, he noticed on going to bed that the clock had stopped. On wakening at what he thought was the usual time, he took care of the horses, fed them, had breakfast, went to the factory, loaded and started out. Day was breaking just as he reached Hyde Park Street.

Before the closing chapter of the Irvin and Edward Stephenson partnership in the Starch Factory, a little of the family life of Papa's childhood seems apropos. This is all as I remember what he told. My Grandmother Stephenson died when Uncle Jim, Papa (John), Aunt Abby (Abigail), and Uncle Charlie were young and the step-mother who came into the home later left some of the things in childhood to be desired. Johnny Carroll, a cousin, made his home with Grandfather for a time and his deviltry seemed to add misery to Papa's life.

Step-Grandmother took snuff and was considered a little extravagant and not helpful to Grandfather's finances. She did, much to the children's distress, keep a lock on the buttery (where the food was kept) door. Johnny Carroll, after snitching the key and being caught as he was about to enter the buttery, threw the key away.

Pies, cooling in the window, could be stolen and Papa, as he was about to sample a custard pie, was interrupted by Johnny Carroll's "Give me some pie, give me some pie!" Remembering one of his stockings that Johnny had put into the barrel of soft-soap and another dropped down the house partition, papa scooped a handful of the warm custard and smacked it into Johnny's "puss" and said "Have some pie!" Step-Grandmother must have had a running battle to keep food to serve on the table.

With the potato starch market lost to mid-Western corn starch, the Stephenson Brothers' partnership was dissolved in a tragic way to Grandfather. Aunt Eliza (Fletcher), Irvin's wife, was a schemer and a hard-bitten business woman. During the years of the factory's operation she kept a book account of every day's work that Irvin had put in at the factory and made a charge against the Partnership for his wages. On liquidation of the business, she presented a bill for the accumulated wages that was greater than the total assets of the Partnership. It took everything Grandfather owned to pay the bill and as he had made no corresponding charge for his own time he was financially ruined. Uncle Irvin heard the last of the heinous bit of business when Grandfather in his dying delirium kept asking "where is my share? Where is my share?" In the transaction lies the explanation why the Irvin Stephenson branch of the family had money and the Edward Stephenson branch was very poor. Uncle Charlie used to say when passing Grandfather's old home (later Ralph Preston's and now a Sicotte's) "That is our house but it was stolen from us". I doubt if it ever gave Aunt Eliza a sleepless night. Her characteristics were inherited intact in her daughter Mary

Stephenson Patterson, who always placed having "her way" and material things before the love of people. A very unlovable trait!

In the passing years Uncle Irvin and Aunt Eliza set son Irvin up in business as a merchant in the village, after building a suitable place with quarters for a home overhead, and the home farm on the river a half mile from the Westfield line was later divided into two farms with suitable buildings. The girls, Mary and Sarah, had the farms. Mary, married to Tom Patterson, we knew most of her life as "May", and they had one child, Lelia Bernice. They owned another farm on West Hill and may conceived the idea that if the farm was given to Lelia, due to the fact that she was a minor, the property could not be taxed by the Town. May fought a hard and bitter battle before giving in that she was wrong, but she never forgave Papa, who was a Lister, for many years. The family bitterness, beneath the surface, was always thinly covered.

Sarah's farm had different tenants for some years while she lived in New York City. There she found a husband, Fred Bridges, a bricklayer who never was a number 1 farmer but the farm was sold to Sylvester England in 1906 or 1907; they moved into the old Stephenson home in the village and Fred became a sawmill worker. Fred and Sarah died without issue and their property was divided among Irvin Stephenson's four children.

I have said little thus far about Mother's side of the family, probably because there were fewer of them around to keep a younger generation aware that there are always two sides to the normal family but intimate relations of grandparents with grandchildren for kindly, or loving, remembrance is a help. One could consider something of aristocracy on Mother's side if one's forebears happened to be from Conant's Island, as was India Conant, wife of Jacob Paine, making their descendants eligible for membership in the Sons and Daughters of the American Revolution because a Conant, by accident of location happened to have fought against the British in the Revolutionary War. However, none of us ever presented credentials to seek the honors of such membership.

Records are non-existent, or incomplete, but a copy of a 1842 map shows the settling estate of Amasa Paine, of Troy, New York, division of his holding in the Town of Lowell, which was supposed to include the entire township, he being the owner by virtue of its disposal at a Tax Sale.

As the township had been granted to one John Kelly by John Chittenden, then Governor of the newly existing Commonwealth of Vermont, in 1791, one can only refer to early history to learn fully about where authority lay with the conflicts involving the New Hampshire Grants and New York. It is easy to assume that with the declared autonomy of Vermont, authority to dispose of Vermont lands to collect taxes was no longer existent and that any title to the Town of Lowell held by Amasa Paine of Troy, New York, was worthless. Anyhow the link was strong enough to make Jacob Paine a resident of Lowell and a younger Amasa Paine became prominent as a land owner, a usurer, a practicer of law as a Pettifogger and, later, a Circuit Judge. He also was a horseman with real ability.

All this background seemed to help little in marital bliss for Mother's mother, Lucy Paine, became wife of a Mr. Janes (I never knew his given name) and although he was still alive in my childhood I never heard mention of Grandfather janes. Grammie and Mr. Janes made their home with Grammie's parents (Amasa and Hope Paine) and had two children, Ben Butler Janes who died at two years, and Cora Janes (Pearl's and Alice's mother). Too much parental supervision seemed to have been the cause of Grandfather Janes' leaving for other parts; Grammie divorced and later married a Civil War surgeon, Dr. Sweet, the father of Amasa Paine Sweet. later an active citizen of Lowell and Mother's half-brother.

Grammie Sweet had two sisters and one brother: Minnie (Parsons), Metella (Pritchard), B. Frank Paine. B. Frank Paine seemed to have inherited his father's hardness on horses but none of his business acumen, for his venture in the business world with one Blaisdell in sawmill operations

in Jay was even more disastrous than Grandfather Stephenson's in the starch business with Uncle Irvin. He not only lost his own shirt, but also $75,000 of Grandfather Paine's. How this came about I have no source of information. Like Grandfather Stephenson and two wives, Grammie Sweet, after two husbands, was left in poverty.

I remember little of Minnie Parsons and Metella Pritchard. In my childhood both lived out of state; Metella in New Hampshire where my sister Helen occasionally visited. Minnie may have lived there too. As a small child I remember their visits to Grammie Sweet but was too shy to get acquainted. Notably after one of Metella's visits to our home Ma had me crate her Windsor chair to ship to Metella who begged it from her. It was not a happy giving because it was a prized possession from Grammie Paine.

The life-story of Amasa Paine Sweet, Mother's half-brother, could have been a very interesting story. It ended in his untimely death, at fifty-three, from an overdose of morphine after a bout with booze and asthma, the latter an inherited tendency from Grammie Sweet. Amasa was the prototype of "handsome is, handsome does": angelic in looks as a child and in youth, he seemed born with the tendency to take all the wrong roads to a good life. A talent for music never developed, due to lack of training, beyond a sweet singing voice and playing chord on the piano, perhaps with a dance orchestra or to accompany his own singing which was pleasantly entertaining. The chorus of Grammie Sweet's favorite song:

Oh, I long to be at home again
And feel the morning breeze:
As through those Village streets
I long to roam.
And I long to hear the mocking birds
A singing in the trees
That grow around my old Savannah home.

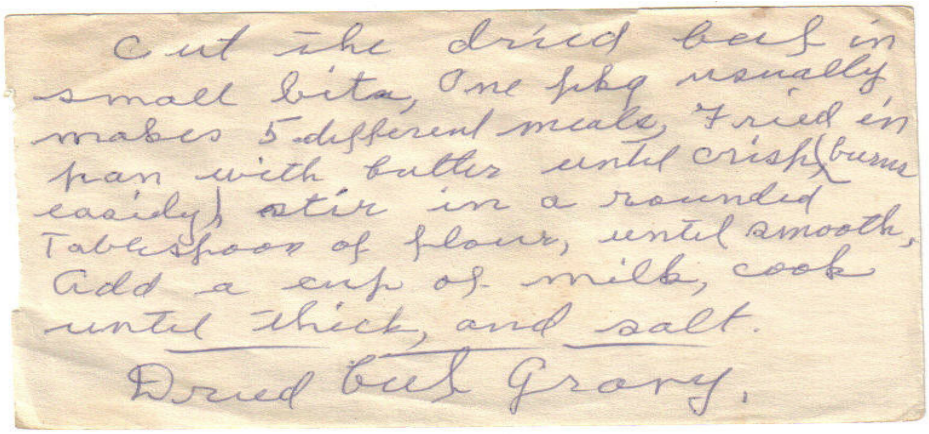
…words of a song still clear in memory even though it is sixty years since I last heard him sing it.

Anecdotes of his early days: playing bear and biting the heads and killing all of Widow Brown's goslings; playing with a candle flame and burning his fingers so that he cried all night; Grandfather Paine's admonition at the table, "lean over here young man, and let me tunk you" and Amasa had to lean and be tunked with the handle of grandfather's knife and later as a teenager, a fall with a wagonload of boards that shattered an arm enough to leave it partly crippled for life; but these were only incidents of the wild beginning of a spoiled child.

Note: the manuscript ends abruptly here….

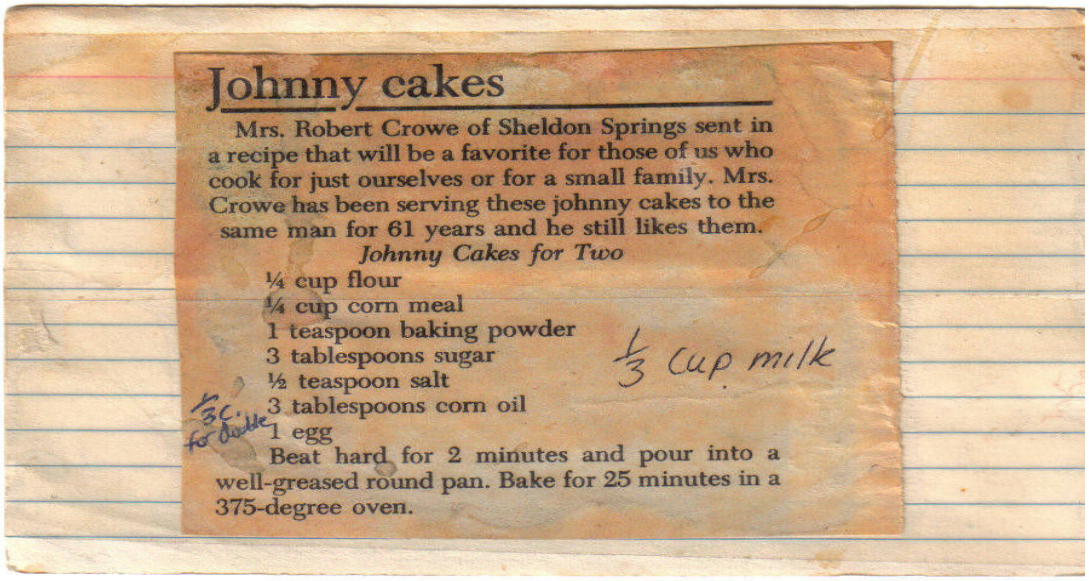
Recipes from Alice Stephenson Crowe

These are the two I have (Carolyn). She was an excellent cook and baker who almost never really used a recipe –" just a pinch of this and a handful of that". I've made the johnny cake many times – good!



Cut the dried beef in small bits, One pkg usually makes 5 different meals, Fried in pan with butter until crisp (burns easily) stir in a rounded Tablespoon of flour, until smooth, Add a cup of milk, cook until thick, and salt.

Dried Beef Gravy.



Johnny cakes

Mrs. Robert Crowe of Sheldon Springs sent in a recipe that will be a favorite for those of us who cook for just ourselves or for a small family. Mrs. Crowe has been serving these johnny cakes to the same man for 61 years and he still likes them.

Johnny Cakes for Two

¼ cup flour
¼ cup corn meal
1 teaspoon baking powder
3 tablespoons sugar
½ teaspoon salt
3 tablespoons corn oil
1 egg

⅓ cup milk

⅓ c. for batter

Beat hard for 2 minutes and pour into a well-greased round pan. Bake for 25 minutes in a 375-degree oven.