

I am Richard Warren Plummer and was born in Windsor, Vermont, on May 20, 1932. My Mother was Doris (Shepard) Plummer; my Father was Stephen Francis Plummer. I have an older brother, Stephen Junior, and two younger sisters, Pauline and Gail. My siblings and I were all raised and schooled through the eighth grade in Plainfield. Steve and I then went to Kimball Union Academy, but Polly and Gail went to Windsor High since KUA was all male then. Steve went on (after WW I I) to the Conservatory of Music and later The School of Contemporary Music, both in Boston. I attended Dartmouth College, while Polly went to the University of Vermont and Gail to the University of New Hampshire and later McGill University. We lived in the apartment over the general store in Plainfield which my folks owned and operated. I had the good fortune to woo and marry Gloria Barber (a Vermonter) in 1958, and we have had a good life, similar, I think, to the one my folks enjoyed.

The following remembrances are intended for my children, grand children and progeny in the hope that it would give them some idea of what earlier life was like in Plainfield, and how it was to grow up in a time when the world was a different place. My Dad did a similar thing a few years before he passed away, and I was impressed at how much things had changed in his lifetime. He concluded that he had lived in the best of times, and I think that says a lot about what kind of life he and Mother had together

Upon reflection, the Twentieth Century a good time to live, but only if you were fortunate enough to be born at the right time and in the right place as two world wars, nuclear bombs and several police actions have caused untold suffering and death in many parts of the world and has carried on into the Twenty First Century seemingly undiminished, with terrorism the latest worry. Our family has been blessed so far in escaping actual warfare or terrorism, and it is my fervent hope that future generations of Plummers may live in a world of peace, living out their lives and raising their children without the constant threat of war and disruption

CHAPTER ONE

GROWING UP IN PLAINFIELD

One of my earliest recollections of my childhood in Plainfield is riding my tricycle on a warm, sunny, summer day at the corner of my father's store, the same store that still stands today in the center of the village. I must have been four or five years old. The sun streamed down on the street side of the store, while I, on my trike, was in shadow on the north side. For some reason, that scene, as I pedaled out into the sunlight, is indelibly inscribed in my memory. The day was warm, my feet were bare (we never wore shoes in summer) and all was well with the world

Our home on the second floor over the store had a kitchen and pantry at the top of the long stairs from a rear outside door, a dining room and living room on the south side beyond, and two bedrooms on the north side separated by what had been a small closet but later converted to a half-bath. There was an old cast iron sink in the pantry off the kitchen with a unique second story, hand operated water pump to lift water from the cellar where the well was located. A long iron shaft extended down through the floor, the store below, and then down through the cellar into the well to a pump mechanism below the water. A long handle on the pump moved the iron

shaft up and down, forcing water up and out the spout. Hot water was heated in a sump on the side of the oil-fired range or later by a coil around one of the oil burners that was connected to a large tank. Cooking was all done on the kerosene range, fed by a large glass bottle turned upside down in a sump at the rear, but later an electric stove was installed on the opposite side of the kitchen, and this made food preparation much easier. As a small boy I remember lying under the kitchen range where it was warm (the rest of the house was always cold on winter mornings) and looking up at the rest of the family getting ready for work or school. There was a wood/coal furnace in the cellar which heated the store, and, to a small degree, the living room, but the bedrooms were unheated. In winter, Mother would warm several soap stones in the oven of the range, wrap them with flannel before we went to bed, and slip them between our sheets. We slept under several blankets and a quilt, in flannel pajamas between flannel sheets and put our feet on the 'freeze stone' until we went to sleep. There would be thick frost on the inside of the windows in the morning

Bath night was Saturday. Water was pumped, heated and dumped into a folding rubber bath tub in the pantry. The tub was like a folding camp cot that opened up on a low platform, high enough so a drain could let out the water after baths. I can barely recall taking baths in this old tub as it must have been in the thirties, depression years when anything better could not be afforded. Later, a real tub plus a new lavatory and stool were installed in what was the pantry, and a double bowl sink was put in the kitchen. A new electric water pump brought water from the well, and a small oil-fired hot water heater was added next to the stove for warmer weather when the range was shut down. What a luxury it must have been for Mother to have running hot and cold water and a real kitchen sink and bath

Since there were but two bedrooms, I slept in the same double bed as my brother for awhile, but things got crowded when Polly was born in 1937, and in the late thirties, two new bedrooms were added in the third floor attic. Much of the work was done by Grampa (Herman) Plummer who was a skilled carpenter. A new stairway was built from the dining room to the attic and rooms added in the front on both sides. A double bed for guests was set up in the north room, but built-in bunks on either side were installed in the south room for Steve and I, with a built-in desk between. And it was a great room! I slept and studied there until I left for the Marines in 1954. I helped move the folks into their new house in 1957, when I returned, but I missed that room more than I missed the old store apartment.

Grammie (Elizabeth) and Grampa Plummer lived several doors down across the street next to the Grange Hall. There is a large porch on the front of the house facing the street, and I recall sitting in Grampa's lap on warm summer evenings, watching the few cars go by while Gramp read his paper. (They called the porch a "piazza" for some reason; maybe it was the influence of those summer folk from the Cornish Art Colony.) Grampa would light up his pipe and puff contentedly. Vines covered the entire front of the porch, making it cool and kind of private. Sometimes I would ask Grammie for a snack, and she would make me a butter and brown sugar sandwich. (Wow! The calories! Almost as good as peanut butter!)

Grampa drove a big four door car, a Buick I think, with yellow wire wheels. He mowed his lawns with a push-type reel mower, and as I got older I helped with this chore, since we had no lawn at

home. After work or on weekends he also cut the hair of many of the men and kids in town. He used squeeze-type hand clippers, of course, and would often yank out a few hairs on each pass, causing us kids to flinch. (Grampa would always say we had "pitchpine" in our hair.) He was killed, tragically, in an accident in the machine shop where he worked in Windsor in 1945. As I remember the story, he was leading a group of workmen on the roof, cutting a hole for a large new chimney. A guide wire had to be cut to access the area, and Grampa reached up, cut it and flung it back over his shoulder. Unfortunately, it wrapped around an uninsulated high voltage electric line and he was electrocuted. It was a sad time for Grammie and all of us.

Grammie Plummer lived on for years in the same house. Uncle Max, Dad's younger brother, lived there with her and watched over her until she passed away. She had a heart condition for many years but lived into her eighties. Dad also had an older brother named Gordon; he was married to Dorothy (Dagle), and they had two children, Dotty and Gordon Jr. While I was growing up, Grampa's house had no inside plumbing or central heat. There was a privy in the rear el beyond the kitchen and woodshed that extended back towards the garage, and water was drawn by hand from a well built into the side porch outside the kitchen. The well was open on top but enclosed by wooden sides to keep anything from falling into it. There were two wooden buckets connected by a rope hung from a pulley centered over the well. To get water, you allowed the lower bucket to fill with water, then pulled on the rope, dropping the other bucket down the well as you did, until the full bucket came up. Then repeated the procedure for additional buckets. The water from Grampa's well was sweet and cold, and we kids would go there for a cool drink in summer, drinking from the same glass that Grammie would give us

Wash Day was each Monday. This was an arduous, day-long chore; consequently, one didn't change his clothes as often as today. Grammie would get out a large copper tub, fill it with water on the wood stove and open the draft. As the water heated, clothes would be put in and stirred with a large wooden forked paddle. A two-sided wash stand would be set up nearby with a round wash tub on each side. There was a hand operated wringer in the middle, and after the clothes had been soaked and scrubbed on a wash board, they would be run through the wringer into rinse water, then wrung again. White clothes had bluing added to make them whiter. The clothes were then hung out on a clothesline to dry, winter or summer.

Mother had an early electric washer when I was quite young that was the latest thing. It consisted of a large, round copper tub sitting on three legs, with a perforated enclosed washtub inside that could be electrically rotated either vertically or horizontally. Mother would fill the large tub with hot water, put the clothes in the inside tub and latch the door. Then she would lift the tub so it rotated vertically and throw a switch. The tub would then rotate in the water and tumble the clothes against the interior vanes. Once washed, she would throw another switch to pump the was water into the sink, then fill again with rinse water and repeat. Finally, she would pump out it again, turn the interior tub to the horizontal and set the tub spinning rapidly to throw out excess water, setting the entire house into motion. Later, Mother had the first Bendix automatic washer in town. This device was so poorly designed that it had to be bolted to the floor with large steel plates or it would jiggle a hole right through the floor.

Dad's store was always open six days a week from 6:30 AM to 9 PM, and was kind of the center of all in-town activity. Since he also had the Post Office, a lot of politics and town gossip was discussed when people came to get their mail or buy groceries. Whenever there was a fire in town, the first call came to the store where someone would grab a key to the neighboring church and run to ring the bell to summon help. For awhile there would be all kinds of activity as the men of the town assembled to battle the flames. It was Dad's delivery truck that went to pick up the large wheeled chemical extinguisher that was housed in a shed next to the Town Hall and deliver it to the fire. Social events in town were forewarned by posters in the store windows for all to see, and many of these were made up on scrap cardboard Dad would save, Steve, and later me, would use colored pens or pencils to complete these posters from the information we had received. (These were very well done, of course; especially Steve's.) Even the clock that turned on and off the town street lights was mounted and maintained by Dad, along with maintaining the town's emergency supplies (a large first aid kit, a stretcher, etc.). The only pay phone in town was located beside the door to the "back room". No booth, just the phone, so anyone using it could be heard all over the store.

The old store had another unique feature that bears mentioning. It had a two story privy! By the time I came along it had been discontinued except for emergencies, but the way it was built is kind of interesting. The privy on the second floor was directly over the privy on the first, except, of course, offset from the back wall by the front to back width of the two-holer seat. In other words second floor waste fell behind you if you were using the first floor facility. Splat, splat!!

Uncle Max clerked in the store for many years until Dad sold it. Steve and I helped out, too, of course, stocking shelves, cleaning up, and waiting on customers. As soon as I got my driver's license, I shopped the wholesale dealers in White River Junction after attending classes at KUA and Dartmouth. Wednesdays were delivery days. People in the more remote sections of town would call their orders in early, and one of us would "put up" the order, packing the goods into an apple crate and loading them into the truck, a 1939 Ford Delivery Van with a V-8 engine. Sometimes the orders included five gallons of kerosene, and this had to be transferred to the customer's storage container, a tough trick I mastered after a few minor spills. I looked forward to these trips even before I could drive myself as I got to know many great characters who always loved to see me coming and had lots to talk about. Some of them had not seen another soul, I think, since my last visit. Forrest Reed, who ran the sawmill in Mill Village, would sometimes forget to call in, and we would just fill a box with his usual stuff, like orange juice, molasses, beans, etc, and he would cheerfully pay for it when we dropped it off. (He had a house keeper named Hazel who was mentally deficient and kept an incredibly dirty house, but that's another story.)

Packaging of food was not the way it is today. Most commodities were bought in bulk and sold that way using graduated measuring scoops or weighing on scales. Flour, sugar, beans, vinegar, molasses, oysters, tripe, cold meats, salted cod, potatoes and even cookies were weighed or counted out and placed in brown paper bags or appropriate containers. For the most part customers stood at a central counter and named the things they wanted, and we would go find them. Coffee was always ground to order and returned to the same bag. I can barely remember an orange colored coffee grinder with a huge wheel and crank located in the

back room, abandoned except for emergencies and replaced by an electric grinder that I had fun operating as a small boy. We sold gasoline, which I pumped if I was around, and kerosene, which we pumped by hand from a tank in the cellar. The Post Office was set off to one side, and we kids learned how to sort mail, sell stamps and write money orders. It was Dad's only steady income

Peddlers were more common then. Many essentials were sold door to door. Milkmen were common right up into the '60s, but in earlier years I recall that hulled corn, Tetley Tea, bread products, Fuller Brushes, Raleigh Products, meat and other commodities were sold out of the back of carriages and automobiles. And, of course, the Ice Man came periodically to replenish the blocks of ice at homes that still didn't have electricity.

People ate differently, too. Without reliable refrigeration leftovers were a problem and avoided if possible. Perishables were bought only when they could be used right away. Some people had racks that they loaded with perishables and lowered into a well to keep cool. Most also had root cellars (a walled area in a cold part of the cellar) where potatoes, squash, onions, beans, and carrots were kept successfully all winter. Most had chicken houses where a few hens were kept for eggs and meat. Some had a pig or two and even a cow that would be butchered in the Fall and the meat hung away and smoked or canned. Breakfasts were usually hot cereal in winter and cold in summer. Soups and stews were popular as the kitchen range was usually going and a simmering pot was no problem. Beans with salt pork was a Saturday night staple, often sweetened with maple syrup. At our house, Dad always had crackers and milk with a pinch of salt every Sunday night instead of supper. The crackers were the hard shelled, buttery ones that are hard to find today. He also popped corn that he raised himself on many a cold evening. Seasonal vegetables like dandelions and fiddlehead ferns were also gathered in the wild and eaten with vinegar or salted down in crocks for later. Wild berries and fruits were picked and made into jellies and jams, enough to last all winter. Cider mills were located around the area and many families gathered wild apples to carry there and be crushed into cider. Any surplus was "put down" in barrels in the cellar as a source of "hard" cider, a slightly alcoholic drink that shortened the winters. At our house we grabbed what we could for lunch since Mother was always busy with the mail at that time of day, but supper was always a complete sit down meal. Boiled New England dinners were one of Mom's specialties. She also had to use and make palatable all the "aged" meat and other products that didn't sell in the store. Chop Suey with lots of roast pork was my favorite.

In those days nearly everyone in town raised a garden. The '30s were depression years, and if you wanted to eat well, you had a garden. Dad always had a prize winning garden behind the church next door where the tennis courts are now. He raised everything he could, and Mother canned what we didn't eat. Several varieties of beans were harvested, some to eat as soon as ripe and others to shell and store for the winter. We raised regular corn, pop corn, asparagus, rhubarb, peas, squash, all the root vegetables, cukes, pumpkins, and even muskmelons. Dad saved the seed from the best melons every year and over time had developed excellent specimens with thick, juicy meat, Mother would put in a few seeds of dill each year, too, and put down delicious pickles. Canning was done in glass jars with clamp on lids. Prepared vegetables and sometimes meat were packed into sterile jars, the lids laid on top with rubber

rings to seal them, then boiled for a specified length of time to get all the air out and seal the contents. While cooling, the lids were then clamped down and the jars stored in the cellar where they wouldn't freeze. (The rubber jar rings were later used by all the kids in town to fasten their skis to their boots. Real ski bindings came later,) Mother acquired a pressure canner at one time, the latest thing to shorten the time it took to properly can things, and I remember her fears of its blowing up and killing us all. It never did, of course, and Mother used it for years, never getting over her fear.

Dad and Mother never took many vacations together. I can barely recall spending a few days at Hampton beach once at a very early age. In 1938, though, the folks purchased the camp on Crystal Lake where we spent many happy times. Mother would sometimes spend several days at camp with us kids, with Dad commuting to run the store each day. In later years, Steve and I pitched in and took turns running the store so Dad could stay at camp for a day or two. On Sunday afternoon sometimes it seems half the town would show up with their kids to go swimming off our dock and use the boats. The folks welcomed them all, but the neighbors must have hated all the noise. Two families from New York City that Dad had met when he worked there in the early 1920s, the Montgomerys and the Volbergs, usually came to the lake for a week or two, renting camps nearby and enjoying good times with our family.

There were only two schools in town, one in Plainfield and one in Meriden. (In earlier times, there were many small schools because traveling, often with horses, was so slow and difficult.) Every kid started first grade at the age of six and went through the eighth grade. Kindergarten was unknown. High School was not required, but we could go to Windsor High or other local schools, with approval, and also to KUA if we planned to go on to college. In the grammar school, each room had one teacher for four grades. I think we had about twenty-five to thirty students in each room. We learned the three Rs plus geography, history and even music. A professional music teacher came about once a week to instruct and encourage us. (Our music teacher was Mr. Lowe, who at one point had a crush on our teacher, Miss Desmond. He always brought her candy or flowers which caused the older kids to talk.) Everyone who came in buses brought a lunch, but we town kids went home to eat lunch during noon recess. Discipline was often a problem, particularly in the higher grades with some of the boys who had been held back and were older. Some of the teachers were quite young and weren't able to handle them. We lived in mortal fear of Mr. English, the area principle. When he came, everyone shaped up fast as a leather strap across the bottom was sometimes used in serious cases. This was administered in the hall just outside the door for maximum effect.

CHAPTER TWO

VILLAGE LIFE

Life in Plainfield was quite different from what it is today. It was the Thirties and the middle of the great depression. Work was scarce; money hard to come by. Families lived close to the poverty level, except not many knew it. Sheep farming, strong in the late 1800s and early 1900s was slowly withering as cheap southern labor and foreign wool enticed many local mills to move south. Sheep farms in Plainfield cut back their herds, and open land slowly began returning to forest again. Small dairy farms found it hard to compete, too. Milk from dairies had

to be picked up daily then because it couldn't be properly refrigerated. The raw milk was stored in forty quart, insulated cans, set out near the road in a sheltered box and picked up each day to rush the milk to an area processing plant. After the war, when electricity came in, coolers were used to keep the milk cool, and it was picked up less often. Many men and a few women started new careers by going to work in the war-related shops that proliferated in Windsor and Claremont in the late 30s/early 40s. Cone Automatic, Goodyear, Sullivan and Joy were larger industrial shops, but I also remember a small chemical shop in Windsor that turned out a product called "SCAT" during the war, a mosquito repellent used by the troops. Logging, too, became common, particularly after the 1938 hurricane.

We lived over the store on Main Street, an apartment on two floors, with two bedrooms on the second, and two on the third. Dad had owned the store from the early '20s, purchasing it from the previous owner (Bridgeman) while he (Dad) was working in a bank in New York City. Dad had grown up in Plainfield at the house south of the Grange Hall. His father was Herman Plummer and his mother Elizabeth (Westgate). Both were raised in Plainfield, Grampa Plummer at the house on Plummer Road in Cooney Hollow, and Grandmother in a house about a half mile up on the hill west of the intersection of Route 12A and the Stage Road. Both houses are long gone, but the cellar holes remain; I could take you there. My Mother was born and raised in New London, N.H. and came to Plainfield to teach school. Mother had had a tough life, as I think of it, having lost her mother when she was a very young girl, then her father (killed by a train), after he had remarried and had had several more children. She was raised by the stepmother, one of eight poor, hard working children.

Many of the hills in town that are heavily wooded today were still quite bare then, having been cleared many years before and turned into sheep pasture. At one time I can recall being able to stand in Plainfield Village and see farm animals grazing on Sugar Hill (west) and at the Atwood's Farm on Lang Road (east). Black Hill near our home here on Old County Road was completely bare, too, and we had picnics on top with the Daniels family, enjoying the view of the countryside in all directions.

Events in the Town Hall, the Church and at the Grange Hall played a big part in my early life. There were many social events which we kids could attend. Card parties featuring Whist, 500 and later Canasta were held in the Grange. Max Morse and I, as a team, won many games and a few prizes for awhile. Our teachers, at what is now an auction barn, took great delight in celebrating every holiday with some kind of a performance in the Town Hall. The Christmas Show required weeks of practice. We acted and sung our songs to full houses and waited for Santa to pass out a few presents. Memorial Day saw another production and a march to the cemetery to change the flags on veteran's graves. Seventh and eighth grade kids were turned loose to run all the lights and scenery at the Town Hall for those productions, throwing knife switches in the big electric panel, operating the huge manual dimmers which threw sparks all over the place, and climbing ladders to change bulbs and belay the scenery ropes. Why none of us got hurt or shocked, I'll never know. One year, we even had a cantata (Hiawatha) in the open air theater behind the old Adams Place (now the Hermitage) on Stage Road. This was a holdover from earlier times when the summer folk delighted in such things, having nothing else to do. I recall transporting the town fire pump up into the woods nearby and pumping water to

the theater where it gushed across the stage like the original design intended. The patrons were impressed, and we were proud of our achievement. Most also acted in the production.

Of course, we Plummer kids went to church every Sunday if we were in town. Mom saw to that. While I was in grammar school church attendance was not that great; sometimes I would be the only male in the congregation, and the minister would ask me to pass the collection box. (I remember once, just as the service was ending that hail the size of golf balls started striking the windows, cracking a few, We all jumped up and ran outside, not knowing what was happening. Later, we picked up buckets full of huge hailstones covering the ground.) In my teens we had a strong choir at church, and I learned all the favorite hymns and sung alto or tenor. Weekly choir practice was often at our house with Mrs. Hodgeman leading us on the piano. The church was always full of hornets in the summer and as the service progressed they would sometimes dive bomb us in the choir loft, causing ripples of laughter in the congregation as we ducked. At about the same time we formed a choral group under Mrs. Hodgeman's direction, and often performed at town activities. I remember that we were really pretty good, but that probably is stretching

Out behind the church and backing up to what is now Cory Taber Field there were still a line of old sheds that were used to shelter horses and carriages in earlier times. There must have been five or six left, still sheltering whatever someone had left there. Dad kept his ice chutes overhead in several stalls; these were used to slide ice up onto the second floor of the store to dump into the huge ice house that kept the meat cool all summer. (This was a favorite hideout for a few of us kids. No one could find us when we climbed up there and hid.) There was no refrigeration as we know it today. I mentioned previously that some people lowered their perishables into their wells to keep them cool, but most had ice boxes near their kitchen and purchased blocks of ice that were inserted into a top section, lowering the temperature in the bottom. Ice boxes looked like the refrigerators of today except the top door opened to the compartment that held the ice. As the ice melted, water was drained to the bottom and collected in a large pan, and shame on the housewife who forgot to empty the pan as water crawled across the floor. Ice would be harvested from local ponds during the coldest part of the winter, using ice saws, tongs and lots of muscle, then stored in barns under tons of sawdust and dug up during the warmer months to use. We kids would follow the ice truck as it traversed the street and grab slivers of ice and suck on it. The iceman was always a brawny person with a large leather cape over his back to shield him from the ice cakes that he would grab with tongs and sling over his shoulder.

I don't ever remember having an icebox at our house in Plainfield, but we had one at camp for many years, even after we had power out there. We bought ice for camp from Forrest Reed in Mill Village, or later at a facility in Lebanon. Ice was used, however, in the store right up and into the thirties. The huge ice house encompassed about a third of the area at the rear of the store, and meat could be stored either in small room in the entry, behind a heavy insulated door, or in a large oak ice box in front where it could be more readily viewed and selected. The walls of the ice house were filled to the brim with sawdust and it would keep ice right into Fall. At some point, probably in the mid-thirties, Dad purchased a large refrigerated showcase for the

store, and we kept our everyday fare in that until we finally bought a refrigerator for the kitchen upstairs, ending the requirement of running up and down stairs each time to get our perishables.

The telephone system was similar to now except at first we had two piece phones. You held the receiver to your ear with one hand and talked into a speaker attached to the wall. Later, a one handed phone was introduced similar to today with both speaker and receiver in the same instrument. Everyone was on a party line, with a special ring for each customer. To place a call, one would lift the speaker, wait for an operator to ask for the number of the person you were calling, and after you stated the number would manually ring it for you while you waited for an answer. Our number was 397-W3, so anyone calling us would require the operator to make our phone ring three consecutive times. Other people on the line would have more or fewer "rings" (up to five) to make calls. There were even more customers on the other side of the line with another battery of "rings" which could be heard only by the people on that side; however, anyone listening in could hear people talking on both sides of the line, a popular way of obtaining gossip if one were inclined. The ringing of the phone, though, was a nuisance, particularly in the middle of the night, and the switch to private lines was a welcome change when it came

Most of the old saw mills and grist mills in town had been closed before I came along, but the water powered saw mill in Mill Village was still operated by Forrest Read, and it still has many of the old appurtenances inside, and the dam is still holding water. I recall seeing Forrest go below, throw open the flume and the huge saw would slowly start turning. There was a delightful maze of machinery and slapping leather belts under the floor, and their noise drowned out the swish of the water as it turned the turbine far below. Another old mill which ground grain was still partially standing just beyond where the brook crosses on Daniels Road. Water to power the mill came down a dike all the way from a dam in Blow-Me-Down brook just off Stage Road beyond Hewes Field. There is still a deep hole in the brook there that we knew as Hart's Swimming Hole. There were many saw mills operating as the demand for boards increased and the downed pines were available. After the hurricane, lumbering was big as landowners struggled to harvest their trees before they rotted. A lot were never moved from where they fell, however, and walking the woods for years after required many detours. Some jobbers set up temporary mills near the source of their logs using large diesel engines that roared while the saw screamed as it ripped into the wood. Large cherry picker equipped trucks hadn't been invented at that time, so logs had to be skidded by horses or crawler tractors to a "skidway". These were cribs of logs notched into each other and built up high enough on one end to allow logs to be rolled with canthooks up and onto a truck equipped with vertical bunkers to hold the pile. The logs were then bound with chains to make the haul to the mill. It was hard, dangerous work. Even driving the logs to mill was difficult without power steering as the trucks tended to very top heavy and prone to rolling over on sharp corners.

There were no chain saws either until after the war. Trees were felled with axes or crosscut saws and cut up to length the same way. Rob Gibson took a group of us one day on a 4H project to cut a cord of wood. We marched up Westgate Road to a hardwood stand beyond where the horse barn is now, cut down several hardwood trees with axes and then used crosscut saws to make a pile of wood four feet wide, four feet high and eight feet long (one

cord). We all left for home that day with a greater appreciation of the amount of work it took to be a lumberjack. (Later, of course, I used a chain saw and splitting maul to produce up to five cords a year for my wood furnace. Some of this came from my own property but later a truck would come and unload a huge pile of logs to be processed.)

Radio was king for news and entertainment. We listened to it in the evening just the way we now watch TV, tuning in the world, or at least KDKA Pittsburgh or WGY Schenectady. Dad had been one of the first radio dealers around the area selling Atwater Kent sets, and the old attic over the store was full of old radio tubes (transistors hadn't been invented), antennas and strange steel boxes with lots of dials. The first local radio station, I think, was WTSV in Claremont. We kids listened to serials every night with such names as Jack Armstrong (All American Boy), Terry and the Pirates, Tom Mix, and others. Later in the evening there was Jack Benny, Fibber McGee and Molly, One Man's Family (a serial), Phil Allen and The Shadow to name some. With few daily newspapers folks got most of their news at six PM every night, usually while eating their supper (not dinner; that was served at noon). During the thirties Franklin D. Roosevelt, then President, had frequent reports on radio he called "fireside chats", and he would tell how the programs he had started were helping the economy and promising better days. When the war finally came in 1941, it was the radio that spread the news

Most boys had bicycles as soon as they could reach the pedals. Hand-me-downs and junkers were the rule until money could be found for better wheels. Bicycles then were balloon tired and had no shifting ability. Brakes were on the rear tire only and operated by reversing the pedals. These worked well but steep hills were hard. I remember my first good bike. I think it was a Peerless, and I saw it one day stashed beside the steps to Ami's barber shop in West Lebanon when I was there to get a haircut. It was red and had a light on the front fender. It was owned by one of Ami's patrons who had seen me looking at it, and he told me that he was willing to sell it or trade it for a calf or pig or some other farm animal. When I saw Dad later, he called the fellow and stuck a deal and the bike was mine. I rode it for years, and don't recall ever having much trouble with it except for getting new tires occasionally.

I can't remember what kind of car Dad had in the thirties, but I remember a 1940 Ford Sedan that lasted us through the war years. Also, he had the 1939 Ford delivery van which had replaced the earlier Dodge van. There were no new cars during the war and for a couple of years after. Dad traded the sedan for a 1942 Chevrolet that had a vacuum shift on the steering column, the latest thing, but one could easily drop the gears into reverse when shifting from first to second if you weren't careful. This brought you to a grinding stop rather quickly. The old Ford truck was eventually traded for a second hand Chevy Suburban for the store, and the car was traded for a new 1947 Plymouth sedan that would go ninety miles an hour across the flat by Pizza Hut. I know; I did it. It had a speedometer that turned from green to yellow at thirty-five miles per hour, then to red at fifty. A new 1950 Ford V-8 sedan replaced the Plymouth, and this became my dating car. It had a three speed shifter on the steering column plus an "overdrive" that operated automatically at any speed over 35 miles per hour when you let up on the throttle. It was supposed to be used only in high gear, of course, but when I was out with the boys, I could accelerate up to forty in second, let up the throttle, and it would drop into "second overdrive". Then we could really take off, or so it seemed as the engine roared until I shifted to

high. Sometimes, also, to really impress, I would dump denatured alcohol into the gas tank to give it an extra boost. It had a great AM radio (FM came much later) and a good heater which made my dating days enjoyable. The first automatic shifts became available in the fifties, with Oldsmobile having one of the earliest really successful ones. Bill Jenney's "88 Olds" was the fastest car around, and how Bill loved to show off with it when he pulled out of the store driveway and headed for home. It had a great sound that I can still remember today. Dave Stone, John Gibson and Ralph Scruton all had identical "66 Oldsmobiles", a smaller model and a popular car

If I might digress a little, the automobiles we had when I was growing up were primarily made in the United States, and there were many more manufacturers than there are today. Beside the same big three, Ford, Chevrolet and Chrysler, there were many smaller companies which made cars for awhile. There was Nash that made a sedan with a bed that folded out of the rear seat; Studebaker, that built one of the first sedans with no visible fenders and with glass windows all the way around so you couldn't tell if it was coming or going; Hudson, that had an early automatic shift; Packard, that built luxury sedans; Jeep came out after the war with the first four wheel drive vehicles; International Harvester also started building the four wheel drive Scout; and there was Kaiser, the company that built thousands of "liberty ships" during the war. There were others. The big three also expanded their lines. Ford built the Mercury and Lincoln; Chevrolet, the Buick, Pontiac, Oldsmobile and Cadillac, and Chrysler the Plymouth and Dodge. After the war foreign manufacturers also started competing with the French Renault, the German Mercedes and Volkswagen, the British Austin and many others. We kids knew all the different cars and argued as to which one was best. Miles-per-gallon meant little as the cost of gasoline was less than

Smoking was probably more common then than it is today, except that fewer women smoked, I think. Kids learned early from their folks or other kids because cigarettes were abundant and cheap. During the war cigarette smoking was encouraged when manufacturers gave cigarettes away with rations, even shipping them overseas to be distributed free. When I was in service in the mid-fifties, smoke breaks were given to the smokers while those who didn't smoke had to work extra. It's no wonder that people became "hooked". Neither Dad nor Mom smoked cigarettes, although Dad did smoke a pipe and an occasional cigar. When we would go ice fishing, Dad and Roy (Morse) would often light up cigars, and since there was no ventilation in the car, they would have to stop somewhere en route and let me out to be sick. The smell of cigar smoke still makes me ill. When I was about ten years old and visiting their farm, Ed Daniels would sometimes lift a few Chesterfields from his mother's purse, and we would sneak down to the woods and smoke them. Helen King would sometimes join us as we puffed away. At the swimming pool on Daniel's Road we would smoke Elm roots, drawing hard to pull the smoke through the porous wood. We smoked corn silk, too, in season, usually in a pipe. Of course, we didn't inhale the smoke, but I do think these escapades carried over to some kids and led to their additive smoking in later life. I ended up smoking a little in college and later in the service, but quit cold turkey when the first warnings were made public, about 1963.

I have described previously the automobiles we had before and after the war, but I should also mention how important the trains were in those days, and that trains were everywhere and were

the driving force to our whole economy. The steam locomotive had been invented and became abundant in mid-1800s, and tracks had been laid all over the country by the early 1900s. Our area here was served by two main lines, one traversing the banks of the Connecticut River, north and south, and the other connecting Montreal to Boston through White River Junction. Travel to anywhere in the world started out and usually ended via the train, and virtually all freight came in by train, as large trailer trucks (and better roads) had yet to be. At one time, I am told, there were up to thirty-five trains a day passing through or originating in White River Junction, including both passenger and freight. Sometimes the noise and smoke from the engines was overwhelming, especially during the summer months. Homes and businesses all around the area (White River and West Lebanon) were covered in black soot for many years until, gradually, diesel engines replaced steam. One of the first replaced was the yard engine which chugged to and fro making up trains and switching cars here and there. I remember how the sound of the train yard all changed from the clang of bells and heavy iron wheels to the rumble of engine noise and a whistling sound.

This country has made a huge mistake in allowing train service to go downhill to what it is today. A few railroad lines still operate, carrying freight for the most part, and out west one can still see long trains of coal headed east with their cargo; however, in most of the country freight now moves via truck, eating up far, far greater quantities of energy than a train would, and passenger service also has been dramatically reduced in spite of a few lame attempts at saving it with Amtrack. In the future, as the world's oil reserves run out, the use of trains to carry freight and passengers may well return again; already, old tracks along the coast of New Hampshire and Maine are carrying passengers again, and there is talk of adding high speed passenger service from Concord to Boston and from Boston to New York. Wouldn't it be great to hop on a train in White River and travel down through central New Hampshire through the old towns and cities that thrived there and then on into Boston, maybe to shop or attend a sporting contest, then returning the same way in the evening? No worries about traffic, parking, tolls, etc. Maybe there would even be a snack bar and a cocktail lounge where one could relax with a Martini after a hard day. Who knows

CHAPTER THREE

THINGS WE DID

During the winter months we kids would skate on the local ponds and slide on the roads when conditions permitted. We would often skate on ice so thin (on shallow ponds) that it would depress perceptibly as we skated over it. We would often build a fire to keep warm and maybe roast some hot dogs when we could beg them. For several years we tried to have a real skating rink on Cory Taber Field. We obtained a quantity of inch and one-half steel pipe that we laid from the top of the bank down to the pond in the brook and hooked up the Town's portable fire pump to it. Bill Jenny plowed off a large area with his big John Deere tractor, and we pumped water up and onto the field, but due to the weather or our ineptitude we never were able to obtain a good skating surface for more than a day or two. A thaw would usually come and wipe us out. Sliding was done on small sleds (usually Flexible Fliers) with runners that steered with a lever across the front. These would go very fast on icy dirt roads that were seldom sanded, and

we walked up Lang Road, among others, and came down like the wind, watching out for the occasional cars. It was safer at night as we could see the headlights, and on weekends there often many sledders, including many adults. One year the town plowed the deep snow on Peterson Road, leaving high, flat sided snow banks on both sides, and this became a playground for weeks. A winter rain iced the road and the sides so we could ride up high on the corners like a bobsled and really fly for over a half mile. Other years, an icy crust would be formed all over the pastures, allowing us to ride across fields for miles, avoiding the fences as we skimmed along. I recall some close encounters with barbed wire a few times, but don't recall anyone getting badly hurt.

We also used a "traverse" for sliding whenever conditions were right, and we could borrow one. Grampa (Herman) built several in his time and had two in his barn when I was about twelve years old. (I bought his last one at auction, and it's stored over Annette's patio.) A traverse consisted of a long, stout board to sit on and a pair wooden sleds, one fixed to the rear and the other fastened with a centered single bolt on the front for steering. The wooden runners on the front sled stuck out far enough forward so a rope could be tied to each side and wrapped outside the feet of the steersman who sat with his boots against a narrow board across the front. Loaded with four to eight people, all sitting between the legs of the person behind, these sleds would really go fast! However, a high center of gravity made them extremely tippy, and we often came to grief on the corners. Night traversing was usually the rule, in the moonlight if possible. I guess my love for sliding in my early days led later to my love for snowmobiling now.

Skiing was not the big sport it is today. There was a few ski tows using a single rope running up the slope, but chairs and platter pull lifts were still being developed. Cross country skiing had not caught on either around Plainfield, although places like Berlin, N.H. with its large Scandinavian population, were well into it. We kids would strap on skis whenever the snow was right (not too deep) and make trails on the nearby hills. I had a pair of skis once that had leather bindings similar to the snowshoe bindings of the time, but they didn't hold the foot securely and couldn't be steered. Many used jar rubbers from their mother's canning to hold their regular boots under the ski strap. In the forties a rope tow on Ascutney Mountain in Brownsville was opened, and I went there a few times. Steve skied at KUA on the old potato patch tow with real skis and steel bindings, and later Dad bought me modern skis and bindings, but I never could ski as well as Steve and some of the other kids.

Snowshoes were the winter conveyance of choice for the kids I palled around with. After the war there were surplus ski boots and snowshoes available that we could afford, and we all saved enough to buy a pair and put them to good use. The long "trapper" models (56" X 10") were preferred as they could go uphill and down with ease, and we soon learned how to manage them in all conditions. We could even use them like skis going downhill, dodging trees and sliding to the bottom. We would often go out for the day, looking for game tracks and enjoying the solitude, stopping at some point and building a fire to cook hot dogs.

During late winter many of us helped with tapping the maples and gathering sap to make maple syrup. Dad obtained permission annually from Etta True, the owner of the land across the brook behind Annette and Jeff's house, to tap about a dozen trees. Using a hand auger he

would drill holes, install one or more wooden “spiles” and hang a bucket to catch the sap. We (usually me) would then collect the accumulation each day using five gallon cans hung from a wooden yoke across our shoulders, carrying it along a trail in the snow back to our house where Mother kept two pans on the oil-fired range to “boil it down”. We would make several gallons of syrup in this way during the several weeks of the season, and at the end Mom would make sugar-on-snow and sugar cakes for us and any kids around we could find. Delicious! Many people made small quantities of syrup in this way, but there were also several real sugar houses in town that I can remember, Abe Read had one beside the road where he lived and farmed where Sara and Gordy Gillen live, and the (Otis) Jordan’s had one on their land near the road that goes down to Mill Village from their farm. Also, Tracy Spalding had one just off Peterson Road at one time, but it was before my time. I expect there were many others at different times. Supplying sap to these operations was a major endeavor that required hundreds of taps, a large gathering tank on skids with a team of horses or oxen to pull it, a sugaring pan for boiling and lots of wood to fire it. Stoking the fire and tending the pan required close attention, often far into the night, and this went on without let up for several weeks in good years.

For several years in the forties we had a basketball team. This was a holdover from some very successful town teams in the past, I am sure, having seen pictures of teams that Dad played on in the twenties. The teams were well organized and were played in the Town Hall where the floor is about one half regulation. This never mattered to us, though, since it gave us a big advantage over visiting teams. We were called the “CUBS” and had our own uniforms, a big deal then when funds were scarce.

In summer, we swam whenever we could find or make a hole in Bow-Me-Down Brook deep enough. A favorite spot was just south of what was the first bridge on Daniel’s Road, In those days and up until a few years ago the brook split a short way up the brook, requiring two bridges. Most of the water came down the right branch and under the bridge, then turned to the left and flowed east into the left branch at the second bridge, and then on down across the meadow. A large deep hole before the left turn was our closest swimming hole and over the years we worked to make it deeper, bigger and better. I can think of at least three dams we built at different times and at least one diving platform just below the bridge where we could show off our stuff. The meadow owner, however, fearing erosion, would tear out our dams as fast as we could build them and then complain to our fathers, who usually ignored him. Other places we swam were at True’s Ledges in West Lebanon, still there today and a popular place on warm summer days; Hart’s, just beyond Hewe’s Field where there once a dam; and the best place of all, at Thrasher’s, at the Town Line by the first bridge on the road that carries it’s name. There was a rope swing there with a platform mounted high on the side of a large oak at the waters edge, and from it one could swing out over the water and cannonball with a big splash. Some kids became quite proficient at flipping at the end of the swing and diving into the water. We became excellent swimmers, if I do say so, and would swim all day if we were allowed. This was particularly true at camp where we had the whole lake. By the time we were called in our skin and hands would be all shriveled up and puckered.

When school was keeping we played baseball every recess. Sometimes we played other schools, but mostly we chose up sides or played “scrub”. The latter was a game that could

accommodate any number of players and skill levels. Whenever any two of us came together we played "toss and catch" which helped develop our throwing and catching abilities. Girls that were interested were allowed to play, too, and some did. Helen King from Black Hill was a very good left fielder if I recall, and she could hit, too. Football was not played at all. We didn't even know the rules. We did have footballs, though, and passed them back and forth, and we also played a game called "Driveback" where opposing teams would face off and try to kick the ball over the opponents head. If someone caught it on the other team, they could then return the favor until one team was pushed back against the fence. (I don't recall how this game was won.) We also played a variation of soccer called "Speedball" that one of our male teachers taught us. The rules were similar to soccer and had the same ball and objective.

Other games we played were horseshoes, croquet, badminton and "cops and robbers" (never "cowboys and indians"). Horseshoes were a favorite of the men in the village, and many had courts in their back yards. Almost every warm summer evening one could hear the clank of the shoes hitting the posts somewhere in town. I recall that Rob Gibson and Harvey Gray were the best players, although on any given night there were others who got lucky. Lights over the pits were often installed so the playing could go into the night, especially on weekends. We kids played on a court the Morse's had beside their house opposite the store.

Croquet and badminton were games the girls could come and play, and during croquet games we took great delight in split knocking their balls as far as we could, often into the next yard. The equipment we used rapidly deteriorated with our hard use, though, and we often had to search around to find enough mallets or racquets to have a game. Kite flying was fun in the Spring when the winds were strong enough. We made our own kites, of course, out of a couple of crossed sticks and heavy wrapping paper with a string stretched around the outside to hold it firmly. We would use old fishing lines (from our father's reels when they weren't looking) to fly the kites, running them higher and higher until nearly out of sight. My brother Steve built a large box kite once out of wood and brown cloth. It flew very well, I recall, but the strain on the string was too much, and when it broke, the kite was lost far away behind Bill Jenney's in the woods and smashed beyond repair.

Hunting and fishing were, of course, a big part of our lives. Dad loved to be out on the water or in the woods whenever he could take time from the store. I was introduced to fishing at an early age, and soon as Spring came, I would be out with a friend or by myself, tramping through the alders beside Clay Brook, the small stream west of the village, or at Blow-Me-Down on the other side. I remember one year that Allen Peterson, from his father's farm on Peterson Road, and I, caught forty-five trout by the end of the school year. Most were the typical small brook trout of six or seven inches, but sometimes we caught larger ones in Blow-Me-Down. We used worms exclusively, threading them on hooks from telescoping steel rods and rusty reels, which weren't pretty but passed through the alders easily and couldn't be easily broken. Later in the year, the State would stock the larger brook, making it easy to bring home your "limit". None of the trout we caught were wasted. We ate every one, even after they had been kept in our creels or hung on a stick for hours in the heat. Mother would shake them up with flour, no matter their condition, and fry them up for me for breakfast, probably why today I can't look a fried trout in the face anymore.

We also went lake fishing, both by boat and through the ice. Dad had two close friends, Roy Morse and Charlie Crary, who also loved fishing, and they would usually let us kids tag along. They had a bob house for ice fishing and would haul it to Newfound Lake, Tarleton or Stinson when the ice was thick enough, sliding it out on the ice to a spot they favored. We would fish for Lake Trout, primarily, and sometimes Smelt in the deeper lakes. Dad and others would fish Blow-Me-Down in the late Fall and hook large suckers which they kept alive in a wire cage placed in a wooden box sunk into a small brook behind Corey Taber Field. The bait for the trout was cut up pieces of sucker, and it usually worked well. Fishing trips began with one of us tramping through the snow down Peterson Road and over to the box, fishing out a sucker or two with freezing hands and re-joining the group waiting to make the trip to the bob house. Successful fishing would sometimes result in numerous fish laying on the ice or swimming around in an ice pond we kids had made to contain them. Catching them was done by either bobbing, with the line wrapped around a forked stick "bobber", or by using one of the spring-type devices attached to the wall of the bob house. I was never very proficient at bobbing but caught a few on the spring lines when I had the patience, which was essential. As the season closed Dad would enlist extra help to slide the heavy bob house to shore and store it nearby or load it for the trip to the woods behind the camp at Crystal Lake.

When the ice was bare with little or no snow on top, we kids would put on skates and skate all day. By the time we picked up to go home our ankles would be so tired that the skate blades would be almost parallel to the ice, making us look like a bunch of ducks flapping around. I also learned to drive a car while we were fishing on Crystal Lake. The ice was very thick that year, perhaps as much as four feet, and wind had blown off all the snow. Dad had the 1942 Chevie then and drove it right out onto the ice to our fishing spot. We hitched a rope to the rear bumper and took turns driving up and down the lake, pulling each other like water skiers. Driving alone, I learned how to control skids, something we all should learn, but it was also fun to just turn the wheel, step on the throttle and let the car go round and round down the ice.

Ski joring behind cars was something a few of the older boys did in town. This was done on the side roads for the most part and required only some new snow, a pair of old skis, a long rope and someone with a car who was willing to risk a traffic ticket. It was usually done at night when the headlights of approaching cars could be seen, but the results could be clearly seen the next day as ski tracks could be seen traversing the snowbanks and even beyond when the terrain allowed. Stage Road was popular, and I recall seeing tracks high on the bank near the Gilkey Cemetery where some brave soul had steered the night before. I don't remember anyone ever getting hurt doing this, and it must have been fun but was certainly dangerous.

Dad and his friends also used motor boats to troll for salmon and Lake Trout on the bigger lakes, but since the boats were small, we kids couldn't go very often. Dad and Roy did rent a big boat on Newfound Lake for my sixteenth birthday, though, and Max and John, Roy's sons, went, too, and we had a great day to remember. "Carrying out" was spring fishing for the whole family, and it was done as soon as the ice went out. Mothers, fathers and all the kids participated and loved it, spending the day outside and enjoying a picnic lunch near the water. At that time of year, of course, there were few people around, and we could just move in and take over a stretch of shoreline for the day. Fishing was done with long rods and heavy reels

full of silk fish line. A boat would be launched, and a person on shore with the fish pole would swing out to the boat a baited hook. The boat would then be rowed or motored out into the lake, aiming at a landmark somewhere on the opposite shore until the person on shore signaled that nearly all the line had paid out, at which point the person in the boat would throw the bait over the side. As the line sunk slowly to the bottom, the pole would be propped up near a tree on in the rocks, and a match threaded into the line to tell when a fish was biting. Several other rods were set up the same way across the waterfront, then we just waited until one of the lines showed movement, at which point one of us would grab the rod, set the hook and either be rowed out to net the fish or reel the fish into shore. The latter method was exhausting for a little kid as it required pumping the pole and reeling as fast as possible to keep the fish from wrapping around an obstruction. It was a thrill to be standing on shore and seeing a large Lake Trout swimming in towards the pole in water only a few inches deep. (Lake Trout, being bottom dwellers, were somewhat stunned by being suddenly drawn into shallow water and didn't usually put up much fight.) This way of fishing became against the law for one reason or another some years later, but it was fun while it lasted.

Another spring sport, just as the ice was going out, was fishing for Smelt in the brooks that ran into certain lakes. Mascoma Lake was the best and closest, and many participated in the annual ritual. Smelt are small forage fish (four to seven inches) that live in the deeper water most of the year, but in the spring they form schools just outside the mouth's of the brooks where they were hatched (like Salmon do) and make "runs" up those streams under cover of darkness to spawn (lay their eggs, etc.). Large round nets on long poles are used by the fisherman standing on the banks of the brooks to sweep downstream and "net" the smelt as they swim upstream. There is a limit as to how many can be caught each night in this way, and as the demand increased, the smelt population decreased, until this way of fishing was discontinued in Mascoma.

On nights when the smelt were running, the inlet to Mascoma at Crescent Beach would be a circus of men with their long handled nets and flash lights, lining the banks and sweeping their nets, retrieving and dumping their catch into pails, all while avoiding both the men on the near bank and the nets and poles on the opposite bank. Often there was heavy drinking and loud talk, and fights would break out as those upstream demanded that dipping be halted so the fish could get up to them. I remember one year when I was quite young and being there with Dad and Ned Waite. The fish were running well that night, but a few loud mouths across the brook were very vocal on when we could dip and when we shouldn't. Ned answered their demands with more than a few words that I had never heard before, shocking me to hear such language from such a gentle person as Ned was. On another night, when there were several of us boys along, we heard a loud crash out on the highway nearby and ran to see what had happened. As we ran across the field, we heard a strange noise in the grass near us, and there in the light of our flashlights a set of huge dual wheels and axle were rolling along in the opposite direction, barely missing us. It seems a truck had gone off the road and sheared off its entire rear end as neatly as you please, hurting no one but making a close call for us.

As soon as I was big enough to carry a gun, at first a BB gun and later a .410 shotgun, I followed Dad into the woods to hunt. We hunted partridge in the early Fall, then deer as

November came around. With Charlie Crary's dogs we also hunted rabbits, raccoons at night and bobcats after deer season and with snow on the ground. There were two varieties of rabbits in those days, the "Coony" and the "Jack". Coonies were smaller, didn't run very far and didn't turn white in winter, instead remaining brown and easy to spot on snow. Jacks were larger, turned white in winter and ranged in much larger areas. (Today, the Coony has disappeared from the Plainfield area and from most of the State.) Fox hunting was also done by some of the local hunters, and I participated a few times before it gradually died out as fox fur lost its favor. Dad loved partridge hunting the most, I think, and was a crack shot with his side-by-side 12 gauge Stevens shotgun. We would look for flocks of birds in the old pastures he was so familiar with and would go back week after week to flush and shoot at them. I became so confident of his "kills" that when he fired I could count on partridge for supper.

Deer hunting took more time and required a lot more work. Shooting a deer meant meat on the table, and for many this was the main reason to hunt. There was no "buck law" then, so you could shoot any deer you saw, even the spring fawns. The latter, of course, were easier to kill and provided less meat but were very tender. Where deer had been scarce in the early 1900s, they gradually became more plentiful. Hunting was done by stalking through the woods, by sitting and waiting for a deer to come by, or by driving. Some would sit for hours near deer crossings, but that never appealed to us. (No one I ever climbed trees to wait for deer; this came later when bow and arrows came into use. The use of camouflage clothing also had not appeared; this came in after the war.) Dad and I hunted primarily by separating and walking slowly through the woods, occasionally having others doing the same thing, or standing, in the same general area. I developed early a distain for the large "drives" that groups would organize, particularly after being placed on a stand for several hours in near zero temperatures one day, in snow a couple feet deep. (In those days deer season was the first twenty-one days of December when it could get very cold.)

I shot my first deer standing near our car south of the village on Route 12A. I was fifteen. Dad and I were were passing by the old Berlin place when we saw a deer bounding towards us from far out in the field. We both jumped out, loaded and fired two shots each, and the deer fell in the road with four holes in the chest area, a quick kill. Dad was proud of me and let me tag the deer, although two of the shots were his. A couple years earlier I had been in on a kill in the same area (behind the Platt Estate) when Joe Gibson shot a small deer that Dad pushed out to him using our 16 gauge shotgun loaded with shells Dad had converted to buck shot by opening the top, replacing the bird shot with small lead sinkers and sealing it with wax. Deer loads were unavailable at that time, during the war, and we had to "make do" . I recall that Joe was very proud of his success, and I'm sure the deer was welcome in the large Gibson family since his father wasn't a hunter.

Bobcat hunting was big for awhile after the hurricane when rabbits were plentiful. Charlie Crary had an outstanding beagle dog, old Pete, and he chased rabbits whether anyone was with him or not. I even recall hearing him barking while we were at school and rushing home to get a shotgun to go and shoot the rabbit as soon as classes were over. Charlie would also use Pete to chase bobcats after snow came, but since cats had a much larger range, he would keep him on leash until the critical moment so as not to tire him unnecessarily. One day, in deep snow

and on snowshoes, we took a track headed north from Peterson Road up over Oak Hill (west of Home Hill) and down into Lewis' Swale, a swampy area behind the beaver ponds on Route 12A. Pete was still on his leash and we followed the cat track visually until it disappeared under some fallen trees lying in all directions. A quick check revealed no tracks leaving the area so we took positions, some standing with their snowshoes bridging the logs, and Charlie turned Pete loose. We could hear him barking under the snow for a few seconds, then the cat burst from under one of the logs, several shotguns fired and the hunt was over. We hiked out to 12A with each taking turns carrying the large cat over his shoulder (it hung nearly to the ground) until someone caught a ride home to get a car to pick up the rest of us. It was a fun day, and a long one on snow shoes. If I recall correctly, Charlie and Pete got over twenty bobcats that winter. The bounty was \$20 each.

Some of us also hunted hedgehogs for sport and bounty. The forests were full of the little beasties in those days, another direct result of the hurricane. Fisher cats, the natural enemy of hedgehogs, had not been re-introduced into New Hampshire and wouldn't be for a number of years later, so to control the population the state paid \$.50 for each pig, requiring the nose (and later the whole head) as proof. That was worth going for to us boys, and we would go out in winter to find them, following their paths to the den. One day, when the snow was really deep, John and Max Morse, Jim Crary and I, on our snowshoes, hunted the area between Prospect Hill and Shipman's Swamp with great success. John had a long pole with a large hook on the end, I brought Dad's .22 caliber Woodsman and someone else brought a large flashlight. (We weren't old enough to have hunting licenses or to carry a firearm, but no one much cared then.) Dens might be in hollow trees, but more likely they were in holes under uprooted trees, and sometimes it was necessary to crawl into the den, spot them with the light, shoot them and drag them out. I recall that Jimmy did most of the den work, being the smallest, and at one den he dragged out several before suddenly screaming and dancing around in the snow, tearing his clothes off. It seems a loose quill had slid up under his coat and turned sideways under his arm. Very painful until we found and pulled it out.

We tracked and killed 32 hogs that day, or maybe it was only 22, I can't recall exactly. Each one had to be beheaded with one of our hatchets and threaded onto long sticks we carried. We came struggling out of the woods long after dark, dragging the heads along in the snow. The next day someone drove us to one of the selectman's offices and collected our bounty money. I'll bet he was happy to see us coming. He didn't take a count but took our word for the total we gave him. (At one time you had only to cut off the hedgehogs nose to turn in, but some of the more wily bounty hunters learned how to make "noses" out of foot pads and other parts, so the State changed their strategy. Another popular trick was to let the noses ripen for a week or two before tuning them in. The Selectman would always take your word then as to the count.)

Raccoon hunting in the Fall was also fun when someone had a good dog. The usual procedure was to take the dog(s) to a cornfield, turn them loose and wait for a "strike". If a 'coon had been there, the dogs would start barking and the chase began. The object was to get the 'coon to climb a tree somewhere within earshot, and once that happened (we could tell by listening to the tone of the barking when it was "treed"), we would hustle to the tree and shoot the 'coon. Charlie had a good dog (Trig, if I recall) at one time that would run in front of the car. Cruising

the back roads, we would let the dog out and he would run ahead in the headlights, smelling for an unlucky 'coon who might have crossed. This was fun because you could watch the dog while he ran with his nose in the air, sniffing and smelling, until he identified a scent, turned in midair and dove into the woods, barking furiously. I suppose there was some value to 'coon skin, but the hunting was done mostly for sport, and sometimes after treeing we just collected the dog and went home.

Crows and starlings were a great nuisance in those days. Neither were protected by law and therefore were fair game for aspiring youngsters with nothing else to do. We hunted crows by calling them in. This was tricky as crows are wily and catch on quickly after being fooled a few times. The Read boys, Abe and Junior, helped us get started by taking us with them a few times. Starlings could be shot in their roosts, usually on public buildings. I had a favorite spot for years, lying on the floor of our top floor north bedroom and aiming out the window at the top ball on the church steeple next door. I used a .22 target rifle sighted for that distance and could pop them off one by one as they landed. After a few years the starling population dropped off in Plainfield, and I think I had a lot to do about it. (Many years later, when the steeple was removed to the ground for repairs, I had the opportunity to examine the top ball for bullet holes. I found none, so I guess my aim was pretty good.)

CHAPTER FOUR

BIG EVENTS

World War I was the war to end all wars, or so we thought. Even though I was only six years old, there was no escaping the politics the big folks were talking. Everyone read the daily newspapers and glued themselves to the radio to listen to the news and to President Roosevelt's reports in his "fireside chats" about what was happening in Europe and in the eastern Pacific. Ship sinkings by the hundreds (yes, by the hundreds!) right off our east coast were followed by stories about fighting in countries we kids had never heard of. It all seemed far away until the attack by Japan on Pearl Harbor on December 7th, 1941. It was a Sunday, and Dad, Mom, Uncle Ted (Daniels) and Aunt Lucia had gone somewhere (maybe fishing) leaving us with a sitter at the farm on Black Hill (now Mogeilnicki's). Word came by radio as to what had happened and soon the folks returned, snatched up us kids and home we went. No one said much. We were in shock. Soon, however, nearly everything we did was associated with the war in some way. Many of the young men in town enlisted (volunteered) or were drafted (required by the government to serve) and left for training in the Army, Navy or Marines (the Air Force was then a part of the Army). Most would soon find themselves manning ships, flying planes or serving with the infantry in Europe, since the government had decided that fighting on two fronts would be impossible, so precedence would be given to Europe first and Japan would be taken on after. This led to the sacrificing of many Army and Marine units stationed on Islands in the Pacific and in the Philippines, as they had little help in holding off the Japanese hoards and were either wiped out or taken prisoner (and tortured). Very sad!

Back in Plainfield Mom and Dad became deeply involved with keeping the store stocked while at the same time handling the extra chore of universal rationing. Gasoline, tires, and commodities like sugar and meat were rationed according to family size and need, and people

had to apply for special ration books in order to buy these things. Whenever one of the rationed products was requested in the store, the customer had to present his ration book and tear out a stamp that authorized the purchase and then pay the cost. These stamps, or coupons, were then bundled and turned in when Dad shopped at the wholesalers for more of the same product. It was all very time consuming but necessary to prevent shortages. Mother would read and re-read the instructions, check with the ration board in our area and call other grocers nearby to learn how to do it correctly. To help with the war effort there were bond drives (buy a war bond for \$18.75 and get \$25.00 at maturity in ten years) and scrap metal, rubber and paper drives where we kids helped. Piles of stuff were stored beside the driveway to the school house, waiting for transport. The Morse boys and I somehow acquired an old wagon in decent shape and built a body on it with pine slabs, leaving the back open. This was used to collect scrap and powered by one or two of us pushing on the rear, taking turns while one up front steered with ropes. We went a long way on push power, struggling up the hills and then enjoying a fast ride down. We even had an ah-oo-gah horn from an old Model T to warn the few pedestrians of our approach.

As the war progressed, I began to follow the Boston Globe faithfully (before it became radically left), reading about the happenings from across the oceans and thinking about the time when Steve and I would have to serve. Steve finished KUA in 1945, was drafted immediately into the Army and left for training. Soon after, though, we were out ringing the church bell to announce V-J Day, victory in Japan. (Earlier, the Germans had also surrendered.) Two atomic bombs had been dropped a week apart on two separate cities in Japan to convince them to surrender, killing tens of thousands of innocent civilians. History has shown, however, that had we not dropped these bombs and effected a quick surrender, the war would have been prolonged for years, resulting in the deaths of many more civilians and hundreds of thousands of our own men as they battled the fanatical "Japs" on their home territory. I know this to be true as I saw with my own eyes the extent they had gone to defend their homeland to the last man. It would have been a bloody mess!

I recall V-J day very well. It was a hot summer day and we sweated as we pulled the rope for what seemed like hours to ring the church bell. A friend of Dad's came to pick up Dad and I and a couple others in his car and drive to White River to buy fireworks. We went to an old hardware store on South Main Street and bucked a long line of people ahead of us to get a bag of five inch firecrackers which we set off in a sandpit in Hartland, one after another. Feelings were high that day. Millions had died in five awful years, unspeakable things had been revealed and everyone had suffered enough. It was time to celebrate

The Hurricane of 1938

The hurricane of thirty-eight was really big in Plainfield as it was in nearly all of New England. It came up the coast without warning, at least as far as we were concerned, slammed into Long Island, then bisected Connecticut and came up the river valley, striking with high winds and torrential rain. No storm before or since in New England did as much damage as this one did. I was but six years old, but I remember it well. It was September and it had rained for a week, soaking the ground and filling all streams and rivers. After lunch it was very dark, the air was

heavy, and then the winds came, gusty at first then sustained. Even at that point there was no warnings by radio or by any authorities, thus it was too late to take precautions or evade the path it was taking. Dad and Harold Stone noted the winds, though, and became worried about potential damage at the camp on Crystal Lake (just recently acquired) where the docks and boats were still moored, and at some point grabbed up gear and started north on Route 12A by automobile to batten down what they could. However, they got only a few miles before trees started falling all around them and into the road, and they barely made in back. It was a good thing they turned around, as all roads on the way to camp were closed for days, and they would have had to walk.

I remember looking out the window of our second floor apartment over the store and seeing the row of Black Locus trees between our house and Spalding's blow flat, one after the other, across the field. Most trees were simply tipped over rather than broken as their roots ripped out of the soft ground. The awnings of our house started flapping wildly and at least one broke and came crashing through the glass. The whole house, with three floors exposed to the wind, rocked back and forth with each gust, until finally, as darkness came, the folks bundled us all up and drove us down the street to Grampa's house, thinking we would be safer there. The wind howled for hours as the rain beat against the windows, keeping us awake in one of Grammie's upstairs bedrooms. We spent the night safely, though, and returned home in the morning, staring at all the damage. In the aftermath all normal activities were put on hold, and everyone turned out to clean up. There was plenty of help, since most people couldn't get to their jobs anyway, but with no electricity life went on a whole lot slower. A few people had gas or wood stoves and could cook, but many more had electric stoves and cold meals were the rule for quite some time. Phone service was also interrupted, too, and the few who had battery operated radios brought the only news we could get. For a few days the village could have been on another planet for all the rest of the world knew. Dad sold all the food stock he had, keeping open into the evening by using some large kerosene lamps which used glowing mantles over the flame to make them brighter. There was no resupply for several days until all the roads could be cleared. Pumping gasoline was a problem with no power until Dad thought of a way to do it. He removed the rear tire from an old bicycle, turned it over, and wrapped a rope around both the wheel and the pump pulley on the side of the gas pump. Then, by operating the pedals by hand as hard as one could, gas would be drawn up and pushed through the hose and into a vehicle. It worked pretty good but was hard work. In desperate times one must do what one has to.

Roads were finally opened after a week or more, the power came on and things returned to normal. The forests were another matter. East facing hillsides and hilltops were literally flattened. Logging started at once, but there was so many trees down that the wood market collapsed. Government money became available to recover the lumber that was just lying there, but most rotted before it could be salvaged. Many logs were cut and dumped into the nearest pond to preserve them, but most sunk before they could be used, cluttering the lake bottom and creating a fishing hazard. I remember well how the trees behind camp were flattened, and how we played among the uprooted trunks and limbs all fall and the next summer. It was like a jungle. Many years passed before one could traverse the forests without detouring around rotting piles of logs and roots.

Many people developed a real fear of high winds after this storm. My father was one of them. He had purchased a barometer a few years before the hurricane hit and referred to it in order to plan hunting or fishing trips, but after the storm, when he had observed the needle go below 28 (inches of mercury), he put the barometer into his dresser drawer and never looked at it again.

The “Gummint” Pond

During the depression the government under President Roosevelt sponsored numerous programs to put people back to work, as many had no jobs and were suffering. One of these was the Works Progress Administration (WPA) which employed millions of (mostly) men at basic wages on public projects all over the country, and one of these was right in Plainfield, and I remember it well. Where all the men came from and where they stayed at night I have no idea, but every day for weeks one summer a number would show up daily with shovels and picks, and work on constructing a fire protection pond on Peterson Road where Clay Brook crosses. It was called The Government Pond and where the idea came from I don't know, but it worked out fine, as the dam that was installed created a vast pond area behind it that served for swimming in summer (although not very deep) and a skating pond in winter. A large log cribbing was built across the brook, then backfilled with earth and a spillway installed. Concrete was poured across the face to a point above the high water mark. This dam served for many years and remnants of it are probably still visible if one looks hard enough. Before they left the men also installed a wire fence around what is now Corey Taber Field.

The Rifle Club

Few things have had as much influence in my early life as the Plainfield Rifle Club. It was organized about 1947, with Charlie Cray, Wallace Pickering, Bud Stone and my Dad the chief instigators. There were probably others, too, as rifle clubs were popular before, during and after the war, and it was possible to get funding, target rifles and ammunition from the government by just applying. An indoor range was the first order of business, and after looking around the town for possibilities, somehow the above four were able to convince the selectmen it would be all right to set up a portable fifty foot range in the Town Hall, shooting from a point near the door, across the old basketball floor, then across the stage and into bullet traps placed in front of the Maxfield Parrish backdrop. And that's what we did. Charlie Cray had the traps made, the club built high tables for prone shooting so the bullets would go over the stage and practices began. At first, of course, most of the rifles were of inferior quality, but soon many purchased competition grade rifles and regular matches began in the Twin State Gallery Rifle League which was composed of several teams up and down the valley. It was a happy day for Charlie, our coach, when we won the league trophy several years later, for up to that time a Springfield Vermont Team had been the perennial winners. (Some time in the '90s, the old Maxfield Parrish back drop was restored to its original condition, and I am proud to say that only a few holes were found in that masterpiece, and they were easily patched. I guess that's testimony to our accuracy for those several years we used this range when there were many shots fired directly at the backdrop, then caught without doing damage.)

After several years in the Town Hall, the Club decided that a permanent range was needed, one with a separate waiting room where those who were not competing could relax, prepare their

gear and enjoy refreshment when the match was over. The building chosen was an old school house that originally sat next to the Mother's and Daughter's Club (now the Historical Society), and where my mother taught when she came to Plainfield in the 1920s. The structure had been moved at some later date to the right rear of the old Kingsbury Tavern (now Mrs. Atwater's) and sat unused for many years. Don and Vera MacLeay, who then owned the property, agreed to rent the building and allow it to be converted, and club members began planning and constructing. The north cellar wall was jack hammered to a point about three feet from the floor, and the ground behind it removed to the same depth, making a fifty foot long cellar counting both levels. The tables we used at the Town Hall were re-used at the new range for prone shooting, and a new continuous backstop was installed on the north wall to catch the bullets. Upstairs on the main floor the old school room served as a waiting area and club house. I believe the membership at that time numbered as many as twenty-five people, and most had a hand at some point with construction. Our first competition there was a banner day, and we were proud of our efforts.

A number of club members were juniors. There was Max and John Morse, Jim and Stan Crary and me, of course, but there was also several from other towns who came and competed, and the club fielded a junior team that was very successful. For several years before we outgrew our junior ranking we competed in sectional matches at Northfield, Vermont, and won many individual medals and the team trophy. We also fired in our league on the senior team and helped bring home several championships. The old school house was the site of many good times until the club finally folded in the mid-1970s as membership fell off. Most members then joined the Grafton County Fish and Game Club where they continued to compete in riflery. What I learned about shooting, mostly from Charlie Crary, served me well in later years at college and in the Marines. Shooting has been a big part of my life.

The Rifle Club also built and operated an outdoor range in the fields south of the bridge on Daniels road. Smallbore competitions were held for several years in the early 1950s, often attracting 75 to 100 shooters from the New England area. Later, a bench rest range was added that attracted shooters for a few years. A two position military style, big bore range was also added at some point, and the club obtained several M-1 Garand rifles to use along with ammunition. All the junior members qualified on these rifles, giving us all a leg up when we served later in the Korean War. In my case this early training resulted in my setting a qualifying record for officer candidates at Quantico, and later it got me into full time rifle competition where I also made my mark. (Things have changed pretty dramatically today regarding the use of firearms. Whereas, then the government encouraged firearm competition and even supplied rifles and ammunition, today it threatens to make the ownership of guns illegal altogether. If this is the way the country is headed, I can only be thankful I lived when I did.)

Big Fires

Since it had no fire department and no hydrants then, Plainfield relied on Windsor to respond to serious structure fires. It did have a small chemical extinguisher mounted on large spoked wheels which was stored in a shed next to the Town Hall. To operate it one whacked a device on top which released a chemical that caused a rapid buildup of pressure, enough to push what

water was in the tank out a long hose attached to the side. This device may have put out a few fires, but I can't remember ever saving anything, and I drove it to a number of fires when I was in my teens. Once a fire had established itself in a building, about the only thing townsfolk could do was carry out the furniture and valuables and watch it burn. Forest fires were another matter. Men were organized under June Read to fight such fires, and as Fire Warden he had tools such as shovels, mattocks, and axes to work with. He also had water container backpacks with hand operated squirting handles to douse the flames. Efforts to extinguish forest fires were often successful if they could be attacked early enough, and I participated in several over the years. The Sunapee Mountain Fire in 1944 was huge, and because there so many men away serving in the war, I was allowed to go and fight this fire so long as I stayed with Dad (I was twelve), and we went to the mountain several times, climbing up to the fire lines and using tools to scrape the leaves and duff away to stop the spread of flames. When I was in college (1953), we all fought the Corbins Park Fire east of Meriden. I recall traveling to the north end of the park and over the top of the mountain to Lily Pond where there were pumps set up to push water up onto the mountain to the fire lines several miles away. Conditions had been very dry before both these fires, and they burned all summer across the tops of the mountains, destroying the thin topsoil and exposing the granite beneath. Other large house fires I recall were at the Winston Churchill Estate off 12A where President Woodrow Wilson once summered, the Freeman Place on Freeman Road, Lucy Bishop's house on Thrasher Road, the Nash Place where the Crary's lived then on Hayward Road, the Lang Mansion off Lang Road, and the old Butler House on 12A across from Freeman Road. Fred Sweet was "sitting" Steve and I when the Freeman house burned and fielded calls from around town while Steve and I looked out the windows to watch the flames above the trees. All these houses were complete loses, and much later, the main house at the Maxfield Parrish Estate burned to the ground with many fire departments in attendance.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE SCHOOL YEARS

In 1938, at the age of six, I entered the first grade at the Plainfield Plain School. Kindergarten was unknown in those depression days, and some kids didn't even know their ABCs when they stepped off the bus on opening day. There were two grammar schools in town at that time, the Plain School, which had two rooms and the Meriden School which was nearly identical. Both schools were enlarged at a later date by adding two additional rooms, one on each end. The old building on the plain is still in use as Bill Smith's auction barn. There were four grades and one teacher in each room. Grades were arranged in columns of desks from the teacher's left to right. Early on, many of the desks were the old style, designed for rows, with each unit having a desk in the back and a folding seat in the front. This promoted close spacing front to back, but there were no lids on the desks and keeping things neat was a problem. Later on, most were converted to the conventional type, with a desk and attached chair in one unit. School started at 9 AM and ended at 3:30 PM, if I remember correctly. Town kids walked to and from class, but those more than a mile or so away were bused. I remember the "orange crate" bus (Horatio Hendrick), a Chevy Suburban, which picked up the kids on Stage Road, Hell Hollow, and vicinity; the "lemon crate", a Ford Woody (Mrs. King) that covered Black Hill, the River Road,

etc. and there was others. Bused kids all carried their lunches, but us townies walked home at noon and then back again for the afternoon session. There was a free hot lunch program from time to time, but with no cooking facilities it was not very successful. I don't think some of the kids got much to eat.

By the time I was 10 years old (1942), the Second World War was well underway. Older kids would be drafted and sent off to war, and many of the older folk got new jobs in one of the shops in Windsor or Claremont, making war material. We kids helped in the various paper, metal and rubber drives that were organized to recycle for the war effort. We had an old four wheel carriage that we fitted with pine slab sideboards, and we pushed it for miles up and down the streets, collecting material. We took turns steering with the ropes tied to either side of the front axle. We even had an "ah-oo-ga" horn run by an old battery to announce our coming. My brother Steve was drafted into the Army as soon as he graduated from KUA, along with Dave Stone, Bobby Gray and many others. Some joined the Navy. Steve went to Camp Dix in New Jersey for training, then was sent overseas to Germany where the war was over and the occupation in full effect. Fred Fleming and Hiram Stone were killed in the war and several were wounded.

Holidays were always a fun time. The Fourth of July was the best as we all saved and scrimped for as many fire crackers, roman candles, ski rockets, etc. as we could afford. Dad sold the fireworks, and we kids and many adults fired them off. Once in awhile someone would get his fingers burned, but we learned how to be careful and never had anything serious happen. We always saved a good display for the camp at Crystal Lake where we set them off over the water from the dock. Halloween was another time when we had fun. There was often a party to attend and dress up for. It was the practice in Plainfield for the older boys to play some serious pranks on people, by carrying off anything not tied down, throwing toilet paper up into trees, and writing on windows with soap or candles. The next morning people would be out surveying the damage or looking for their front steps. Of course, Christmas, Memorial Day, Washington's Birthday meant that the school would have "exercises" at the Town Hall, putting on plays, singing, etc. A town Christmas Tree was always erected in the Hall and a few gifts exchanged. Dad and Mother arranged to have a bag full of oranges and a box of hard candy for each child. A few of us kids got together to pack all the stuff and carry it to the Hall. Someone would dress up as Santa and pass it out. On Memorial Day we put on an appropriate program and then marched to the cemetery to install new US Flags on the graves of the fallen soldiers.

Dad bought the camp at Crystal Lake in 1938 when I was six. We used to spend a few days at Hampton Beach prior to that, but once we had the camp, that became our vacation headquarters. In those days Crystal Lake was quiet and peaceful with only a few motor boats. Most camps had a canoe or rowboat, but when the war ended that all changed. Larger and larger outboard engines became available from numerous manufacturers, and Fiberglass was discovered. Boats became cheaper, fancier and faster. The country had geared up big time to supply all of the guns, planes and ships and the associated war material, and with the end of the war companies were searching for new products to build and sell. Dad sold Evinrude Outboard Motors for many years, and I recall a 1928 Elto that he used both on the Connecticut River and at camp. This was a twin cylinder, four horse power monster with a large open flywheel on top

that you wrapped a rope around to start. There was a separate spark handle, a manual choke and a throttle lever, plus a unique reversing feature where the entire lower unit rotated so the propeller faced forward under the boat. It was also equipped with a light by the throttle and an electric jack to run clearance lights on the boat, really quite a marvel for the times. Starting the thing, though, was quite a task for us kids and really more than we could handle, but that didn't stop us from doing it anyway and away we would go. Lots better than rowing! From the old 1928 Elto with rope starter, we soon had a 1.8 HP Sportsman; then a 5.4 HP, 4 cylinder Zephyr (it ran like a clock), and later a 15 HP Lightwin. The old open Penn Yan fourteen footer was joined by another Penn Yan, a canvas covered wooden decked runabout with remote controls. Boy, was I living! I guess I wore out both of those motors. I would start one in the morning and go all day. Not at full throttle, of course, but to and fro around the lake. (It wasn't until I bought my own boat and a 35 horsepower motor that I could water ski, about 1958.) And there was Juanita, too, although when Dad owned her she wasn't in very good shape. Juanita was a 1920s vintage inboard aluminum lapstrake boat with a marine two stroke, single cylinder engine with an exposed fly wheel mounted midships. The drive shaft came directly off the motor and ran through a gear box to a rather large propeller under the stern. Steering was accomplished with a rope running around the gunwales from a huge rudder behind the propeller to a spoke steering wheel in the front. There were short decks both fore and aft and seats on the side. Juanita was kept in the boat house where it could be driven right in and pulled up out of the water by pulleys. I believe it was Harold Stone who first succeeded in getting it running, with the help of an old Model T Ford magneto and a six volt battery, but for several years in the late 1940s we boys (usually John and Max Morse and I) would take it out and putt-putt around the lake. The old marine engine could be started by twisting the flywheel in either direction and then adjusting the shifting lever accordingly. Operating the spark and throttle, the steering wheel and the gear shift became a three kid job, and we loved it. Unfortunately, Juanita had a habit of running smoothly for awhile, then stopping for no apparent reason. And then you couldn't start it no matter what. And Juanita couldn't be rowed, so we twisted the flywheel until it started no matter how long it took. After awhile we didn't use her anymore, mostly because she leaked badly, so Dad finally sold her to a fellow on the lake, and he ran it around for a few more years. I never did hear what happened to her, but my guess is she's probably lying at the bottom of Crystal somewhere. May she rest in peace.

Eighth grade graduation came in 1946. We had quite a large class for Plainfield, about 12 or 13 if I recall correctly. We had a graduation ceremony in the Town Hall, marching up to the stage to Pomp and Circumstance and then reading our class will and prophesy, etc. There was also an essay contest where I won second prize with an essay on the Golden Gate bridge. After awhile we got our diplomas. Most of the kids went on to Windsor High, but "Hoogie" Wilder and I entered Kimball Union Academy in the hope that we would go on to college. KUA had some arrangement with the town in those days and the tuition cost was minimal. (Hoogie only lasted two years at KUA and then switched to Windsor.) As a day student at KUA, I was expected to go out for athletics in the afternoon and did the first year, but getting to and from Meriden turned out to be quite difficult until I got my drivers license, and finding a ride became a chore. Getting there wasn't the problem, it was returning that was difficult, consequently, we had to grab a ride whenever we could, sometimes walking for several miles carrying all our books before catching

a hitch or someone coming to pick us up. During mud season in the Spring, we had to go down through Cornish on Route 120 and back on 12A to avoid the mud holes. Stage Road wasn't tarred all the way then, and the part between Hell Hollow and Route 120 could be impassable. There was no such thing as four wheel drive cars, and some used chains on the rear wheels from fall to the end of the school season. These were a pain because they often became loose and clanked on the fenders, or fell off and had to be retrieved. I rode with Larry Taylor my first year, and he ran chains nearly all winter on his 1936 Plymouth. Another year I rode with the Berwicks.

Classes at KUA were held six days a week until noon or one o'clock. We usually took four subjects and the homework was significant. I had to spend hours every afternoon or night pouring over my books. Later, when I could drive, I took Dad's car or truck to school and after classes went on to White River Junction to shop for the store. I had chores at the store, too, stocking shelves, delivering groceries over the hills on Wednesdays, and waiting on customers. The mid-week deliveries were fun, though, and I looked forward to them. There was probably only a half dozen stops, more or less, and the customers were usually old folk who lived back on the farms. They would call in their orders in the morning, and when I got home I would scurry around and put up the orders in wooden apple boxes. Some customers wanted kerosene which I transferred from five gallon cans. By mid-afternoon all was loaded into the old 1939 panel delivery Ford V8 (later a Chevy Suburban) and over the hills I'd go. Some of the folk hadn't seen another person since I'd been there last, so I carried news about happenings around town. Some of the characters I delivered to were: Mrs. Watson, Bessie Hill, Otis Jordan, the Kenyons, Will French, the Burrs, Forrest Read, and a few others from time to time.

I studied hard at KUA and got good marks. I was always first or second in my class and won the Two Year Math prize. I was elected to the Cum Laude Society my Junior year, which was fortunate, I guess, because my marks fell off in the first part of my senior year due to troubles in French. By that time I had had three years of it, and my instructor was an old Frenchman named Guy Moulton. He was quite deaf and wore a hearing aid which he would turn on and off with great fanfare. I guess he could clearly see that I wasn't taking French very seriously, and he gave me only average grades. (I was somewhat handicapped as no one I knew spoke French, and I had no one to study with. Mother tried to help but there was never time.) When I applied to Dartmouth for early acceptance, I had dropped down from the top spots in the class, and they told me to have KUA submit my final grades for reconsideration. However, KUA forgot to do this until I reminded them well into the summer, and when they did, I was immediately accepted. Lucky for me, as I hadn't even applied anywhere else and might have missed a whole year. I learned to drive a car on the frozen ice of Crystal Lake. After the war Dad had traded our old 1940 Ford 4-door for a 1942 Chevy Sedan. New cars were still not available and good used cars were hard to get. At the age of sixteen I got my license and was soon allowed to go most anywhere I wanted. Gas was only \$.20 a gallon, and there were movie theaters in Windsor, Claremont and White River. Kids would often take turns with their parent's cars until they could get a car of their own. (I didn't buy a car until I went into the Marines; there just wasn't time during the summer to earn the money.)

As I write this, I have just enjoyed my 50th Reunion at KUA, the first reunion that I have attended in all those years. As a day student ("townie"), I never cultivated the close friendships that many of the other kids did (same at Dartmouth), and living so close it was never attractive to me to come back to the campus and relive old times. At the reunion I heard many stories from my classmates about pranks they pulled and things they did, and it did bring back some fond memories. I was surprised to find that many of the group live fairly nearby, and that several had been in the Marines at the same time I was. Seven of my class went to Dartmouth, too, something I didn't know because some did their military service first. It was fun to see how individuals had changed. I knew some as soon as I saw them, but others were not familiar. Large name tags helped in this regard. Our class set records for the number returning for the 50th and for giving to the school. Several of the class are very wealthy and have served the school over the years as trustees.

In late summer of 1950 I received the call from Dartmouth that I could matriculate in the fall. Happy day! I was assigned to a tiny single room in Richardson Hall (it was later made into a broom closet, I think), and began classes, signing up for all the swimming classes I could to pass the physical education requirement. Classes were held six days a week. I would often come home by hitching rides, which was more successful in those days than it is today. I had no idea what to major in, but gradually I turned to mathematics again as my strong subject, ignoring French as much as I could. (I finally passed the language requirement by taking a test.) I also took many science courses and the prerequisite courses for engineering school and did quite well. During winter semesters I went out for the rifle team, captaining the freshman team and, later, the varsity, and winning my numeral and letter sweaters. After practice at Dartmouth with iron sights, three position, I would go home and shoot on the Plainfield team with a telescope, two position. At Dartmouth, our Marine Sergeant-coached teams won the majority of the matches we had with other college teams, and at the Plainfield club the Charlie Cray coached team did well in the league. Competitive shooting had become a big part of my life.

Meanwhile, at Dartmouth I was plodding along in my courses, getting mostly average grades but learning a lot. My courses were not as easy as many taken by my classmates, as I was majoring in both math and engineering, but I managed to take a few widely different courses each year to get properly "rounded". Some of the more technical engineering studies were extremely difficult for me, particularly since I had to do everything on my own. I still had classes six days a week and had to study for hours every day. It was only in the last semester of my senior year that I was able to arrange to have Saturdays free, and this was a relief. It meant I could spend a little more time relaxing on the weekends and spend more time fishing. Summers were spent working at different jobs and living at home. I chauffeured for a grand old lady in Cornish a couple of summers, taking care of the grounds, etc. One year I had a 1940 Packard to drive. It was a fine car with a hood nearly as long as some of the cars today, and a straight eight cylinder engine that ran as smoothly as a clock. Another summer I did research for a psychology professor, manipulating numbers for empathy tests he had given to students. It was boring work but paid well for the times.

CHAPTER SIX

OFF TO WAR

The Korean War was raging between the years of 1950 and 1953 in what we called Indochina in those days, and the draft board was slowly picking off all 1A classified men over eighteen years of age. (The war was the result of Communist North Korea's invading South Korea in 1950. The North Koreans had quickly overrun South Korea until the United Nations [spell that the United States] entered the war, and then the tide was turned. It would have been over quickly except that China came in to help the North and made a real war of it.) After two more years of static battle lines and over 50,000 casualties, a truce was called that is still in effect at the 38th Parallel. Those attending college were given deferments providing their marks were high enough, but only for the four years of a normal college career, and engineering school at Dartmouth required five years, three at the liberal arts college and then two more full time at Thayer School. The Newport Draft Board as much as told me that I would "get my notice" upon graduation, and I began to understand that serving my two years in the Army as a PFC could be better spent as an officer. This fact was made particularly plain by the Marine sergeant that was coaching the rifle team then, a man whom I came to greatly respect. It thus came to pass that as I entered my senior year I signed up for Officer Candidate School in the Marines Corps Reserve, passed the physical in Boston, and was sworn in by the Commanding Officer (Navy) of the Naval ROTC Unit at Dartmouth. This was probably one of the best decisions of my life, and I have never regretted my Marine Corps experience. I graduated with an A.B. degree in math in June of 1954 and was assigned to the 12th Marine Corps Officer Candidate Course at Quantico, Virginia.

After a short summer, in early August I packed a few "civies" in a suitcase and headed for Quantico, VA. I rode the train to Washington, then boarded a "local" with other recruits and headed south to Quantico, and there was greeted by a drill instructor who began our indoctrination as soon as we disembarked. It was 12 weeks of hell from that point, as the Korean War was stalemated and could break out again at any time. Officer Candidates lived on the top two floors of a three story barracks at the south end of the Marine Base on the Potomac River. All of us were college graduates and could handle the books, but the physical part was difficult. We endured forced marches over the nearby hills and were required to run the obstacle course nearly every day, even after we had returned from long field exercises. We also learned to march; and march; and march some more. We marched everywhere, and practiced for hours every day. Some of us had two left feet, I think, but we slowly learned, and by the time we did our final parade, we managed to hold a fairly straight line when executing "Pass in Review". We were rewarded at the end of twelve weeks with a ceremony where we received our shiny new Second Lieutenant bars. Mother and Dad came down to the commissioning ceremony, and Mother pinned on my bars. It was a proud day for all of us. After a short leave I returned to Virginia and reported to Camp Upshur in the boondocks west of Quantico where Basic School was conducted for six months. It was here we learned the proper way to conduct ourselves as Marine Officers and the then current ways to conduct ground warfare. We studied hard and resumed our physical training during the week, but had the weekends to play. And play we did, either in Washington or New York, leaving on Friday night

and returning to base Monday morning in time for reveille. Sometimes I even came all the way home, arriving after noon on Saturday and catching the train after noon on Sunday. One of my close friends was Jim Rienthal, a Jewish boy who lived in New Rochelle, N.Y. He knew New York well, and sometimes we wore our uniforms downtown and tried to get into some of the Broadway shows. We would stand near the ticket booth and wait for a cancellation. New Yorkers loved men in uniform, and we made connections often, even getting treated to free tickets sometimes and free drinks in the bars.

When the time came to go out to the rifle range to qualify, I found my place. Having already had shooting experience, and being familiar with the Garand rifle, I was a step up on everybody else, and after a week of serious practice, and with an excellent rifle, I shot the highest score that an Officer Candidate had ever fired and immediately gained a good deal of respect. I didn't do as well with the .45 caliber ACP pistol but did achieve expert status. These scores would help me immeasurably later in my Marine career. I also found that my background in civil engineering helped as I was able to solve some of the field problems with ease, often leading my team to a completion well ahead of the rest and earning points with the instructors.

After six months of training, we were ready for graduation again and assignment to active forces. We were all anxious as the orders were posted, and we saw what the future held. I was assigned temporarily to the El Toro Marine Corps Air Station in Irvine, CA (later the site of the University of Southern California), and was then ordered to join the replacement draft in August, 1955, for assignment overseas. I took a short leave and then joined Jim Rienthal for the drive west in his Pontiac convertible. Jim had been assigned to Camp Pendleton, CA, only a short way from El Toro, so it worked out well. We took our time driving out (no super highways in those days), stopping in Salt Lake City for mail and enjoying the mountains. When we got to Los Angeles, I was so sun burned that all the skin had peeled off my head. Jim, who was darker, fared better though, and was as brown as a bear. I reported into El Toro, was assigned to the maintenance office, and found a place to stay with two other Marine officers at Laguna Beach, only a short drive down a canyon. My roommates were "Ring" Lardner (a supply officer) and Ray Bright, a jet fighter pilot. Our apartment overlooked one of the biggest beaches I had ever seen. At the base I followed a young First Lieutenant around, learning the ropes, and nights and weekends I tried to keep up with the antics at Laguna. It was quite a place, even in those days. Beaches, bars, drinks (screw drivers), and short nights were the rule, and I played the game. The time passed quickly, however, and soon I was waiting to be called to join the far east replacements draft aboard an aircraft carrier to sail the Pacific. We were building a road to the base golf course at the time, however, and I pleaded with the adjutant to let me stay and finish it, so when the draft left, I had missed it, and two weeks later I received orders to be flown to Japan via Moffett Field near San Francisco. I was pleased with this maneuver at the time, but in retrospect it would have been a great experience to have gone across the Pacific on a carrier. I never did get to sail on a real fighting ship.

I waited several days at Moffett for a MATS (Military Air Transport Service) plane which gave me time to see the sights of the city. I had met two older "China Marines" who were also awaiting transport to the Western Pacific, and they knew where to go and what to do. We dined and wined the city, taking cocktails at the "Top of the Mark" every night, then caught a plane to

Hawaii and did the same there. Another delay allowed us to see the whole island of Oahu over several days (we rented a car) until our connection was ready, and we proceeded on to Midway Island and then to Atsugi, Japan. Each leg of this trip was a full day over the water in a four engine Boeing Constellation, one of the most beautiful planes ever built. At Midway, the planes come in over the water until touchdown, and the same when taking off. It's one big runway and that's all, except for the gooney birds, and showed no effects of the decisive naval and air battle that took place there early in WW I I. It would have been a poor place to be stationed for very long.

At Atsugi, I was met by a helicopter which flew me down to Oppoma, Japan, to Marine Air Base Squadron 16, Marine Air Group (HR) 16, 1st Marine Air Wing. The base consisted of two HRS helicopter squadrons (large transport type that would hold six Marines plus the pilot and co-pilot), and an observation squadron of OE-2s (Super Cub fixed wing craft; pilot and one passenger in tandem seats), and, later, a squadron of tiny Bell two place choppers. Oppoma had been part of a Japanese naval and air design facility, with large, three story buildings, several with wind tunnel installations for aircraft design, and underground tunnels that connected to defensive pill boxes on the hilltops. It was located just across the bay from Yokosuka, a large Japanese Naval base. The area was heavily populated from where the bases were located all the way to Yokohama and Tokyo. The first weekend I was there I joined a group of enlisted men and officers in a climb of Mt. Fuji, paying a few yen for a place to sleep far up on the side so as to reach the top as the sun came up. It certainly was beautiful. It's nearly 13,000 feet high and still has a cone in the top where it last erupted. My assignment at MABS was to take over the maintenance department for the several large three story buildings and surrounding areas that the Marines occupied, plus the landing strip and hangers where the planes were kept. We shared the base with the Navy, who had a repair and transfer facility for amphibious planes, and with the Army, who had a supply depot. I had about thirty-five marines representing a variety of mechanical trades, plus several sergeants who managed the crews. We even had a Marine stationed at an Army depot in Gifu near Nagoya who scrounged stuff (from the Army) that our base could use. I lived in the three story BOQ (bachelor officers quarters) with a Navy dining hall on the first floor and an air conditioned officers club on the third. Being an air facility we were top heavy with young officers, and there was a lot of drinking and partying. Often, several would get promoted at the same time and "buy" the bar for a few days. It's a wonder we didn't all become alcoholics.

One day, one of my sergeants suggested that I should fly over to the Army supply depot and check on the young corporal that we had stationed there, to give him more leverage with the Army personnel and incentive to scrounge even more nice "stuff" that was just laying around. We wanted some more heavy equipment to help maintain the strip, and the Army was disposing of hundreds of units, many in first class condition. They were even selling some of it to the Japanese for little or nothing. My pilot, I don't recall his name but his "handle" was "HORNS", written on the back of his helmet, met me at our helipad with a tiny Bell chopper, and we flew south to a small landing strip, skimming low over the rice paddies, where we switched to a Super Cub. We took off flying west and circled Mt. Fuji from right in close. It was beautiful, all snow covered with plumes of snow drifting off its top; however, about half way around the north side we experienced a serious downdraft and fell like a stone for several long minutes. I felt like

would we hit the mountain any second, but "Horns" said over the intercom not to worry, as he would simply increase power, hold the nose up and soon we would enter the opposing updraft and go right back up again. And that's what happened, and soon we were off to the west side and approaching Nagoya in the distance. We landed at Kamocki Field, I completed my business successfully, and we returned that same afternoon. On the way back, "Horns" took a more southerly route following the shoreline and let me fly for awhile while he did some navigating. I learned how to make simple turns and hold a course. Great fun.

Things went well at Oppoma for about eight months, when I was asked one day if I would like to try out for the First Marine Air Wing rifle team that would be returning to the States to compete in the division matches at Camp Pendleton. I was having such a good time that, at first, I hesitated; however, a trip to the U.S. sounded interesting and I gave my assent. I was issued an M1 Garand and went out with other candidates to try out. There was a Marine Officer in charge (Captain Fees), who drove a 1950 Ford Convertible and had a beautiful blonde girl friend that he treated poorly (I thought). I never knew where she came from, as "round eyed" girls in Japan were a rarity those days. I soon proved I could shoot, though, by beating the Captain at all distances and making the team in the top spot, and we left Atsugi soon after in a huge four-engine MATS C-97 transport with passengers in the top section and cargo in the bottom, reversing the route I had taken nine months earlier and putting down in California three days later. I were assigned quarters at the BOQ at Camp Pendleton, along with other rifle and pistol shooters from the Far East, where I met Warrant Officer Harry Bullock, a pistol shooter from Albuquerque, NM, and we became good friends in the short time we were together practicing and competing. When the matches were completed a couple of weeks later, I had received a bronze medal, the first "leg" towards Distinguished, and was ordered to stay on and compete in the Marine Corps Matches a couple of weeks later, also at Camp Pendleton. I didn't do as well in these competitions, but well enough to be ordered on to Parris Island Recruit Depot, SC, where the Marine Corps Rifle Team was forming to prepare for the National Matches at Camp Perry, Ohio. Harry was assigned to the pistol team and was also assigned to Parris Island, so we bought a 1940 Buick Roadmaster together for \$50 apiece, and he left for home before I did to be with his (new, young) wife for as long as possible, and then on to P.I. In the meantime, I flew home on leave and then flew to P.I. where we resumed training. Harry was later reassigned when the pistol team moved to Quantico, so I bought out his share of the Buick and later traded it for a 1952 Ford Coupe.

Parris Island in summer is brutal. It's off the coast of South Carolina, a flat island only a few feet above sea level, and joined to the mainland by a long causeway. We had the second floor of an old wooden barracks with a dining hall nearby and an air conditioned Officers Club across the bay. There was a high tower at the south end of the ranges where we practiced, and when the temperature and humidity went above 90, a red flag would be raised. This required all recruits to be taken into the shade or indoors, but didn't apply to us. Of course, we weren't exercising very strenuously, but we took our salt pills to sweat, and sweat we did. Nights were cooler, though, with a breeze off the ocean making sleep possible. We practiced for several weeks and fired in several competitions. One of these matches was at Camp Curtis Guild in Wakefield, MA, and I was lucky enough to get picked to go. I was going to drive my (new) Ford Coupe, but the garage was still having problems repairing the transmission (part of the deal), so they gave

me a practically new 1956 Pontiac Hardtop to drive, and another shooter, a Sergeant Kochan, left with me for points north. We competed in the matches where we swept most of the medals, then I went home for a few days, and he went to his mother's house near Springfield, MA, where I picked him up later for the return trip. There was no charge from the garage for the use of their car. A good deal !

We left in private cars for Camp Perry, Ohio, on Lake Erie, in August. I had become friendly with two other rifle shooters, Mike Warholak and Waddy Brown, both temporary First Lieutenants (battlefield commissions), and when we arrived in camp we shared one of the tar paper shacks they called housing on the edge of the ranges. Brownie had a beautiful Shepard dog named Duke, and on the way he had fallen from Brown's convertible and rolled over the side of the road into a swamp. He survived, though, lying in a corner of the shack for several days nursing his aches and pains. Camp Perry was an interesting place, and since we had arrived early, we watched the muzzle loader competition where all of the participants dressed in period costume, along with their wives and kids. We also watched the small bore competition which was even bigger in the number of shooters than the large bore matches. Finally, the big bore competition started, and we competed nearly every day in different matches, both as individuals and on teams. We each had been issued three Garands to select from, and had determined in practice our No. 1, 2 and 3 rifles. We filled out individual score books on each piece, identifying the "zeros" and the number of "clicks" that each set of sights required for each of the distances we fired; 200, 300, 600 and 1000 yards. We even determined the "dope" for different holds; 6 o'clock, center, and bracket. This was in case the targets were obscured by weather or darkness. Our main competition at these matches were the Army and Navy teams. There were also Air Force and numerous National Guard shooters along with hundreds of civilians. There were two classes for big bore; the service rifle shooters and the bolt rifle competitors. Most of the service rifles were M1s, although there were still a few Springfield 1903 A3s in use; the bolt guns were mostly Winchester Model 70s. Ammunition was supplied at no charge to the service rifle shooters so that no one would have an advantage. This was .30 caliber ball ammunition in 1956 with a 150 grain bullet. These were OK at the shorter ranges but not too good at the 600, and terrible at 1000 yards. We would often experience misses at the longer ranges, right in the middle of a string, without a wind change. In 1957, much better ammunition was supplied, using a 172 grain boat tailed bullet, and scores soared accordingly. I was on the M1 squad and was selected to shoot on one of the two teams for the National Team Trophies. I also fired many individual matches and won a number of medals. In the National Individual "Daniel Boone Trophy" Match I went clean at the 200, dropped three at 300 and three more at the 600 for a total of 244 out of 250. This put me in first place for most of the day until late in the afternoon when a fellow teammate, in the still, late afternoon air, did one point better. Then a Navy shooter did that one better as evening closed in. I received a gold medal though, the second "leg" towards my Distinguished Marksman Badge. My team also placed high in the team matches with silver and bronze medals. In all, the Marines cleaned the Army again that year, taking nearly all of the team trophies in both pistol and rifle, an outstanding achievement considering that the Army was many times larger and fielded numerous teams.

After the completion of the matches, I was able to return home for a few days, then received orders to report to the west coast to a new organization to be called the Marksmanship Training

Unit. I left home in my '52 Ford early on a fall morning, waving goodbye to Grammie Plummer on her porch, who had gotten up early to see me off. I headed southwest on various routes, crossing the Mississippi at St. Louis at the end of the second day, driving straight through and stopping only for gas and refreshment. From there, I took famous Route 66 west, turning south at Flagstaff on Alternate 89 down through Oak Creek Canyon to Route 80. The '52 Ford, which had a rebuilt transmission when I bought it, was groaning louder every time I started off from a dead stop, and when I took another turn south at Indio to go over the mountains towards San Diego, the radiator boiled when I was only half way to the top. I coasted back to a filling station at the bottom, filled the radiator plus several containers with water, and tried again. I think it took three tries before I made it over the top, but once on the other side there was no more trouble. I reported in at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego, and was informed that the new MTU was setting up at Camp Mathews (the recruit rifle range) which is north of the city close to famous Torrey Pines. This was a beautiful spot overlooking the Pacific Ocean from high bluffs. Sail planes would be catapulted off the bluffs and would go back and forth for hours, riding the updrafts formed by the winds hitting the near vertical cliffs. The Navy has its huge Miramar Air Station just a few miles away to the east.

Camp Mathews was a fine place to be stationed. The weather was clear and sunny most all the time, with temperatures ranging from 60 to 75 degrees. After several days in the BOQ at MCRD I made contact with a Marine Captain (Darling) who had an apartment in Del Mar, the next town north. I also hurried to trade in the '52 Ford for a 1955 Mercury Tudor Hardtop and wasn't surprised to learn that the transmission of the Ford had given out a few days after I closed the deal. Lucky me! Later, I lived with Mike Warholak and Waddy Brown in a duplex on Route 101, just across the railroad tracks from the famous Del Mar Race Track. We had a nice place with a swimming pool (shared with the other apartment) at the end of a dead end street. No one knew what to expect at Camp Mathews, but gradually our senior officers started to put together a program. In the meantime, we were issued replacement Garands if we wished and fired over the National Match Course almost daily. In the afternoon, we checked out pistols and practiced slow, timed and rapid fire. I became proficient with all three guns; .22, .38 and .45, qualifying high expert; however, I never achieved top gun status with the pistol, perhaps because I had to use my left eye even though I'm right handed. This was slightly awkward and caused all kinds of comments from observers.

The National Match Course I mentioned above was the standard course of fire for large bore rifle competition. In those days it called for 10 shots standing at 200 yards, slow fire; 10 shots standing-to-sitting at 200 yards, rapid fire (10 shots in 50 seconds); 10 shots standing-to-prone, 300 yards, timed fire (10 shots in 60 seconds); and 20 shots prone at 600 yards, slow fire. Scoring was on the basis of five, and the five ring at 200 and 300 yards was 12 inches across; 20 inches at 600. Thus the possible total was 250 points, with a tie breaker being the number of shots within a smaller circle. We often trained with a 10 inch bulls eye at 200 and 300 yards to sharpen our ability.

We competed in a number of matches while we were training. Both years while I was on the team we made a trip to the Nevada State Rifle Matches in Reno, one year by plane (an old DC-3), stopping by Las Vegas on the way for a night on the town. (I particularly remember

McCarran Field at Las Vegas because in those days there was no commercial air service and the field was primarily for private planes. While we were either landing or taking off one time, there was an emergency and the "fire truck" turned out to be a red Ford Thunderbird with two very large fire extinguishers attached to the side. It tore down the runway to assist a small plane that was smoking.) We also competed at the West Coast Club outside San Diego, at both Marine Camps Lejeune and Pendleton, and at other civilian ranges. We drove our private cars if we couldn't get a plane and were reimbursed for mileage. (I was on Temporary Active Duty from the time I left Japan until I was assigned to the MTU in San Diego, entitling me to collect extra pay for room and board.) Reno was a fun place to visit when we weren't competing. We stayed in the Mapes Hotel downtown, and it was strange in the morning when we came downstairs to leave for the range to see people still lined up at the slot machines. There we were in our utility uniforms with our rifles and camp stools slung over our shoulders, pushing our way by well dressed men and women playing the machines, many of them drunk. We must have looked equally strange to them. One night Waddy Brown stayed up all night playing blackjack, returning to our room just before we were due to leave for the range. He was half in the bag but had won big and had hundreds of silver dollars stuck in his pockets. We got him changed and headed to the range, but he did badly shooting, and the coaches knew why.

A couple of matches where I was very successful was one at Camp Mathews, put on by our own unit, and another at the West Coast Club where I won the 1000 Yard Wimbledon. The match at our range was fired over two days, and I was leading for the biggest trophy right up to the end. I had won several of the preliminary matches and was in a good position; however, when I came to shoot my 600 yard stage on the last relay, a fog had rolled in and the targets could hardly be seen. I struggled mightily, using a bracket hold and all the time allowed, and managed to keep all the shots on target, but I still dropped enough to lose the top prize, a Winchester Model 70. I did win a telescope, a gas camp stove and other merchandise, though. In the team match the same day I was on the winning four man team where we set a new national record. I have an 8X10 photo somewhere showing the trophy being presented. At a Wimbledon match on another day I fired the top score even though my front sight had fallen off right in the middle of my string. When I realized it, I crawled forward far enough to reach down in front of the berm and found the sight, jammed it back into the dovetail on the front of the barrel and tightened the allen screw, hoping it was in the right place. When I fired my next shot, I saw that I had scored a bulls eye while many of the others had 4s and 3s. It seems the wind had changed, and my loose front sight had compensated when I stuck it back on

After a few weeks we learned that we were to become not only the official marksmanship team for the whole Marine Corps, but we were also going to run all of the annual competitions among the three divisions and air wings. Each was assigned a particular area of expertise in marksmanship and told to develop instructional material and training aids to teach it. Many of us were sent to MCRD, San Diego, to take public speaking courses given by the Navy. These were very helpful as we delved into our subjects and put together our programs. I became an instructor in "sighting and aiming" and demonstrated my syllabus to the senior officers during the late winter of 1956-57. When spring came, the unit was broken up into segments and sent out to the various divisions to instruct the assigned marksmen in the finer points of competitive shooting. I was originally chosen to go to Camp Pendleton, but being single wanted in the worst

way to go to Hawaii, and as luck would have it, one of the people assigned there had a death in the family so I was substituted at the last moment. What luck! Our group arrived in Hawaii in early May, 1957, and moved into small cabins at the rifle range at Ewa near the mouth of Pearl Harbor, and within a few days had more than a hundred aspiring marksmen to instruct over a two week period, culminating in the Pacific Division Matches. We instructors had all brought with us, of course, our several M1 rifles and continued to practice, and when the final results were posted for the matches I had won a gold medal and my third and final leg for Distinguished Marksman. The latter medal was awarded in a special ceremony before the commanding officer of the Hawaiian Marine Base, who turned out to be none other than the Colonel who had sworn me in at Dartmouth two years earlier, an amazing coincidence. Few competitive shooters have become "Distinguished" in one year in three consecutive qualifying matches.

Life was good in Hawaii where the weather was fair all the time and temperature a constant 72 degrees. It rained briefly every afternoon in downtown Honolulu but not out at the range. We were limited as to how much we could partake of the Island but managed to get downtown a number of times to sample the city's offerings. There was still a beautiful officer's club at Fort Derussy near Waikiki Beach where we could relax and watch the tourists. The only hotel there then was the pink Royal Hawaiian. There were pineapple and sugar cane fields on the way out to the range where we could buy food to supplement the "chow" served by the Marine field cooks. One day I discovered that one of the pistol shooters who had been flown back from Japan was a New Hampshire native, the only person I ever met while in the Marines from this state. His name was George Bourassa, from Pittsburg, and he flew Douglas AD fighter/bombers, one of the most powerful, single engine prop driven planes ever built. George had been in the Far East for many months and looked forward to "medaling" at Hawaii and coming back to the States for the Marine Corps Matches. Alas, he missed his chance by one point and had to return to Japan and finish out his commitment. I waved goodbye to him standing on the deck of the Essex as that huge carrier steamed out of Pearl, signaling "Maggie's Drawers" (a miss of the target while shooting) with a red flag, as he waved back and cursed at us good naturedly. He was killed a few months later when he crashed on a hillside back in Japan. Fate is a funny thing.

Leaving Hawaii, I arrived back at Camp Mathews and prepared for the Marine Corps Matches at Camp Pendleton. I don't recall doing very well in that competition but did compete for the Lockenheimer Trophy again, an aggregate of scores fired over both the National Match Rifle and Pistol courses. The winner of this prestigious match was usually a pistol shooter as the course of fire for pistol totaled 300 points vs. 250 for rifle, giving pistol shooters an advantage. By that time I had moved again, this time to a house in Pacific Beach, a suburb of San Diego next to La Jolla. I shared the house with several other Marine shooters; DeJong from the Northwest somewhere, who was an excellent cook; Shanahan from Chicago, who stuck us for a big telephone bill when he left, and a couple others I can't remember. We enjoyed the house and gardens, even though they were kind of run down. The house belonged to a naval officer who was off somewhere on an "overseas". We cooked out every night on a charcoal grill, barbecuing such delights as abalone, western beef, and Pacific lobster. Shanahan had scuba gear and dived off Point Loma for the fishy stuff.

Once the 1957 Matches were over the Marine Corps didn't know what to do with me. My three year commitment was up in October of 1957, so having me around for a couple of months wouldn't be of much benefit to the Corps, therefore I was released on the west coast and was paid my expenses to New Hampshire, thus ending my active duty. I wasn't officially discharged until 1962 when I was asked to take the physical for Captain and didn't respond, at which point they mailed me my honorable discharge. Traveling home alone in the '55 Mercury, I took a northern route through Salt Lake City and into Montana, and made it home in four or five days, stopping only a couple times to sleep. I vividly recall going exactly 89 miles once in one hour flat in Montana, even slowing down once in that stretch to watch a herd of antelope cross the road, and this was on a wide two lane road, not a divided highway. Of course, there was hardly another car on the road. I also recall stopping in the middle of the night in upstate New York somewhere, trying to find my way to Rutland and Route 4. I got out of the car, located the North Star by the Big Dipper, determined the right road at a 4-way stop, and came out in Whitehall, N.Y. following the Erie Canal. Soon after, I was waking Gloria at her apartment in West Lebanon. Oh, it was good to be home!

CHAPTER SEVEN

HOME AGAIN

Mother and Dad had moved to their new house when I was home on leave earlier, and I moved the few civilian clothes I had into the large upstairs northeast bedroom. It was a big change over all the different bunks I had occupied in the service. I had purchased a diamond ring for Gloria while in San Diego and waited for several months so we could get to know each other again before popping the question. We had been writing steadily for quite awhile, and I had made up my mind. I wasn't so sure she had made up hers, though. During that fall and winter I played and hunted while Gloria worked. I think I hunted something nearly every day, exploring country I had never seen before. It got so I would do miles in the woods, climbing all the hills and following a compass much of the time. I also helped Dad in the store, but the big supermarkets were coming in, and people were traveling to them rather than patronizing the locals. I remember Dad saying that he could often buy groceries at the supermarkets cheaper than he could buy them wholesale for the store. The only thing that kept him going was the Post Office. The old store had put three of us through college, though, and only Gail remained. By 1962, he and mother had had enough and sold out; building, fixtures, stock and post office. They loved retirement and thoroughly enjoyed and deserved it. The old Chadbourne house (where Annette and Jeff live) was perfect for them, and the gardens that they kept were a sight to behold. They had also planted apple trees, blueberry and blackberry bushes, and grapes. Mother canned and froze quantities of everything. They lived off their vegetables and fruits, only buying fresh meats and staples. Dad would have a table out by the road with a "FREE" sign, giving away all of the stuff they couldn't take care of or eat themselves. Relatives would come calling whenever the berries, asparagus, and other vegetables were ripe, and Dad always came through.

I called at the Thayer School of Engineering at Dartmouth that fall to discuss resuming my studies for my Civil Engineering degree, but found that I would have to wait awhile to get the

courses I needed. I found also that I really didn't want to go back, that I had studied enough and wanted to go to work. I did worry about getting a job though, and in early January of 1958, I got an appointment with the personnel office at Dartmouth to see what was available. Luckily, Dick Olmsted, the Business Manager, was looking for an assistant to help run his rapidly expanding office, and I fit the bill well enough and got the job. I started work right away, commuting from Plainfield in the '55 Mercury. The office work was interesting but not what I really wanted. Dartmouth was just starting a major building campaign, and Dick was directly in charge, spending more and more time away from the office with architects and engineers, then attending meetings on campus with the various building committees as the programs developed. Building plans were coming in by the hundreds and each new set had to be sorted and perused for errors and changes. I had enough familiarity with plans and buildings that I quickly became the person in charge of all this and soon found myself with increasing responsibility in construction. The next year Dick hired another assistant (Jack Skewes) to take over the regular office duties, and I was assigned full time to construction. I even got help a couple years later when Gordy Dewitt was hired to coordinate the furniture buying for Hopkins Center as it finished up. During those years I assisted in building the Wigwam Dorms, Bradley-Gerry Hall (now torn down), Hopkins Center, Remsen (Medical School), Leverone Field House, Kellogg Auditorium, Strassenburgh Hall (soon to be torn down) and several additions and major alterations. This was interesting and rewarding work, meeting and working with the architects and engineers, attending the building committee meetings, pouring over the plans and explaining them to the future occupants, making changes, and then following the construction from the first day until completion. I also organized the move of the occupants from their old building into their new quarters and worked to solve their startup problems. Tearing down the old medical buildings and relocating the departments to Remsen in 1960 was a serious challenge that I managed successfully, but it didn't compare with the problems at Hopkins Center later. We had taken bids on partially complete architectural plans, and the contractor was determined to make us pay. Negotiations on the added cost of changes were often stalemated, and Dick asked me to mediate these disputes. I spent months sitting at a table, often over three hour lunches, trying to hammer out agreements. I think I lost a lot of respect for architects during these sessions, and later in similar disputes on other buildings.

Gloria and I were married in the spring of 1958. I had proposed during the winter, and she had set the date for May 24th. It was a happy but busy time, making plans and meeting family, and we were both excited. The old South Reading stone church was selected for the ceremony, and a hall in Reading served for the reception. Only at the last minute did we find a minister to conduct the ceremony. The church was full as Steve, my best man, and I waited near the alter for the organist to start the wedding march. He played on and on, lost in the rapture of the moment, until, finally, with my beautiful bride waiting at the rear of the church, I stepped forward to the alter and got his attention. Then the wedding march started, the bridesmaids began their stroll, and I have no idea what happened until we were outside; pictures were snapping, Clyde (Gloria's father) was beaming, and we were man and wife. The reception is a blur, too. All I can remember is throwing some cherry bombs that I had in my pocket as we left in someone's car. Later, in Plainfield, we changed upstairs, then I sneaked out the back way and down through the field to the '55 Merc', which was hidden in the pines, and Gloria met me on the run

as I came out to the street. Steve and others chased us as we drove slowly away, trying to fasten some tin cans to our bumper. They never succeeded. We headed for upstate New York, stopping at Niagara Falls for a few days, then it was back to the camp at Crystal where we lived for the summer and fall before moving in with the folks for a few weeks, then finding an apartment in West Lebanon. We enjoyed the lake, but the weekends were busy as many family members and friends visited when the weather was warm, and it tied us down. We had returned from the last Dartmouth football game that fall when the gas ran out while we were cooking supper, so we packed up and moved in. Camp at Crystal was never really the same after.

Beginning in 1958, the year after I was released from my Marine Corps commitment and the year I joined the College, I started my annual "huntin' camp" at the Dartmouth Grant. Dave Stone, Dad, Wallace Pickering and I made the initial trip to the Grant in the fall of that year, staying for a couple days in the Management Center, at that time the only facility available (except for the Outing Club cabins). We were mildly successful in hunting (I got a small deer), but wildly enthusiastic about the Grant and vowed to return as often as we could. Thus was started a succession of 50 years of hunting camps. Early on, it was always with Dave as my partner, plus Dad and my sons (as soon as they were old enough and could get out of school for a few days) and a revolving circle of friends, Dave especially loved to come to hunting camp, and he was an excellent hunter, too, often getting the biggest deer even though he limped through the woods on an injured ankle. He gave up hunting entirely anywhere else, saving his vacations for those trips that we planned far in advance, staying in all of the Grant camps over the years and exploring every corner of that wild country. Dad and a friend, Corb Thornton in the early years, then Harold Stone later, loved hunting camp as much as we did and filled their tags a few times. It was sad when in the early 1980s Dad became disoriented one day and fell near camp, not to be discovered for a short time. That proved to be the deciding factor in his dropping out of the annual trip. In later years I would bring him pictures and tell him all that happened so he could enjoy the hunt through my eyes. Dave became ill with cancer a few years later and was forced to drop out also. I missed them both greatly and have gradually lost my "killer instinct", unless I see a buck with a big rack. I still love to go to hunting camp, though, but it is now at our own camp where I go, and I often think of those past years when we had so many good times.

Douglas was born in 1959, and Bruce and Annette followed a couple of years later. While Gloria was expecting Doug, we had found the house we wanted on what was then called Pine Plain on Route 12A south of West Lebanon, a partially finished concrete block house that Ed and Mary Drake had constructed themselves overlooking a beautiful meadow high above the river, and which was full of features that I admired, like fresh, sweet water that ran in by gravity. We closed the deal using most of the savings I had accumulated in the service and financing the balance with a loan from a bank in Hanover, and I worked like crazy to get it ready to move into while Gloria was still in the hospital with Doug. I recall living for several days on a diet of cheese, crackers and beer, putting in as many as sixteen hours every day, painting and carpentering. Over the years we made many improvements on the place, finishing the back room for the boy's bedroom, putting a toilet in the cellar and opening up the play room down there, drilling a well after the spring went dry, adding a garage and dining room to the south end,

etc. It was a fine place to live then, even with the coming of the crushed stone plant and later the asphalt plant just up the street. We had traded the old Mercury for a second hand jeep wagon when we bought the house on 12A, so that we could explore the back country and use it for hunting and fishing. (We have continued to have at least one four wheel drive as one of our cars since those early years.) A succession of Jeeps followed: another wagon, a basic Wagoneer, then a premium Wagoneer. With three kids, though, we needed more room, even though I had a college truck to drive to work, and in 1974, we bought a three seater Mercury wagon that had imitation wood sides and a huge V-8 engine. It could pull our boat up the highway at 70 MPH and not even strain. Gas mileage, of course, was poor, and soon we were right in the middle of the first oil crisis.

By the end of 1962 at Dartmouth, I could see that the building campaign was beginning to slow, although I was working even then with the building committees for Gilman and Kiewit (the latter now torn down), and when the purchasing agent for the college was asked to leave, Dick tapped me to take it over and begin to develop a larger, more centralized operation involving the whole college. I moved into the Purchasing Office, which was still in McKenzie Hall at that time and went for a week of school in Chicago to learn more about the ethics and methods of being a college purchasing agent. Gradually, and with Dick helping pave the way, I developed new systems and procedures and put them into effect. Later, I hired Jules Pellerin to take over medical purchasing and moved into new quarters in the old Rogers Garage building next door on Lebanon Street, expanding and relocating the central stores there at the same time. By 1968, things had progressed to a considerable degree although there were still parts of the college that were holding out, writing their own orders and not always getting the best deals. I had set up a computerized system using IBM punch cards for Central Stores, finally getting a handle on the amounts and value of the stock we carried. From the results we were able to publish a catalog that increased sales and resulted in significant savings and better service.

In 1968, the Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds, Jim Wilson, announced his retirement. He had had several heart attacks and wanted a warmer climate. In those days the college wasn't required to make national searches, and Dick Olmsted turned to me again and offered me the position. I accepted right away and asked to have the job title changed to Director, which Dick agreed to, and once again moved back into McKenzie Hall, this time with an office staff of a dozen or more, and 250 (more or less) maintenance workers. It was a big responsibility, as Jim told me while we walked across the Green to effect the changeover one day. It was a position I would hold for twenty-five years, often working six and sometimes seven days a week, especially in the early years and never taking more than a few days off at a time. Chief among the accomplishments during my watch at Buildings and Grounds were: Energy Management and Conservation, resulting in the saving of millions of dollars in oil and electricity; computerizing and reducing the budget; upscaling the Utility Plant & Distribution Systems, including the construction of a utility tunnel bisecting the campus; taking over and preparing for demolition the old Mary Hitchcock Hospital buildings while maintaining the Cancer Center in full operation until it could be moved; and identifying and budgeting for future building maintenance out twenty years in the future. I greatly enjoyed my work at Dartmouth and can't imagine any other position that could have given me the same sense of satisfaction. I was offered similar positions in several institutions over the years, some with attractive pay increases, but I turned

these down in favor of staying in the Upper Valley where I was born, never regretting the decisions.

It was in 1969 that we began considering the adoption of another child. Gloria was unable to have another of our own, and with the other kids all in school, the house seemed empty. In those days children for adoption were much more available than they are today, and not too long after we put our names in to the state agency and got everything approved, we received a phone call that a baby girl was available in Portsmouth if we wanted to go and have a look at her. We did so immediately, and soon we were picking Sheila up and driving her back home, with the other kids taking turns holding her. I think it was about this time that we opened up the basement for more bedroom space; also started to think about a larger car to hold us all.

We spent many summer vacations at the Grant over the years the kids were growing up. I would often combine a work trip to one of the cabins with a few days at one of the camps. Sometimes we would take canoe trips on the Dead Diamond, and I remember one time we had two canoes and put them in the Magalloway. We put Doug, Annette and Bruce in one canoe, and Mom, Sheila, me and a dog (Benji?) took the other. We launched off the south end of the air strip, paddled down the Diamond a short way, then up the Magalloway into Maine. The kids loved it. We also took motorized trips on the Connecticut River, first with our 14 foot Whitehouse (35 HP outboard, later a 40 HP) and later still our bigger MFG with a 60 HP outboard. These trips started above Wilder Dam and usually went to Piermont, N.H. where there was a place we could pull over and picnic. Sometimes we would ask three or four friends with boats join us. We also used the boats for water skiing at Crystal Lake. I had skied a little in the service and took to it rapidly when I had my own boat. With the larger boat I could ski on one ski, finding it a lot more fun than two. We never used life jackets; didn't even own one until the law required them.

Meanwhile, the kids were growing up, thanks primarily to Gloria, who was driving a school bus while also raising the kids plus a few horses, a dog or two, several cats and other odd animals. We even had a bunch of chickens once, and later, up on the hill, several goats and some ducks. Goat's milk cheese and homemade goat's milk ice cream were turned out on special occasions. We had a garden right from the start and "put down" quite a few vegetables and wild berries for later use. The kids all went to Lebanon High and attended numerous activities there after school. Doug had a trap line for awhile and Bruce followed in his footsteps after we moved. All except Sheila played in the band, but only Sheila went out for an organized sport, soccer, a game I hated. She learned to play in grammar school in Meriden and did well at Lebanon for awhile. All learned to ski and skate, of course, just as Gloria and I did as kids.

As Doug neared college time, we journeyed west to New York State and visited the campuses of Clarkson, St. Laurence and Paul Smith, accompanied by Will Rogers and Ernie Kenyon from my office, to look over a new Honeywell System at St. Laurence (a good excuse to use a college car). Doug had an appointment with the admissions people at Paul Smith, and I sat in. I remember hearing Doug's reply when the interviewer asked him if he wanted forestry management (a desk job), or hands on forestry, working outdoors in the woods. Doug answered positively that it was outside work he wanted, never a desk job. This was quite a

surprise to me, who had worked a desk for all those years while he was growing up. Doug ended up at Paul Smith and greatly enjoyed it, I think, although he never did spend much time in forestry after he graduated. At least he got his wish to work outdoors (at KUA), and soon he and Karen were married and settling down. Bruce never did decide what he really wanted to do while he was in high school. He lived to hunt, fish and trap, in season, and books were something to be avoided. Vermont Tech took him for awhile and tried to tame him, but he had never been away from home before and the social life was too much. So it was on to Vo-Tech in Claremont where he learned electronics and met and wooed Sue, not necessarily in that order. Annette, on the other hand, was a serious student and went to Colby College, far up in Maine, where she met Jeff. I remember the day we took her and all her gear in the little Toyota wagon up the long Maine Turnpike. After everything had been jammed inside or tied to the top, Annette somehow wedged herself into a corner of the back seat, and we were on our way. Sheila played soccer and studied a little in High School, but she found her niche in life when she started retailing at Cherry-Webb. Only a few schools offered the courses she needed, and she settled on Mt. Ida as soon as she saw the campus. Mt. Ida rounded off some of the rough edges (but not all), and after graduation and a few courses at Plymouth State she began her career, changing from store to store as the offers came in, as that vocation seems to demand, and settling in southern New Hampshire. Later, she, too, found her life's partner and was married to Chris in 1999.

Fishing has also played a big part in my recreational life. What started out in little Clay Brook on the west side of Plainfield village, catching tiny native trout with a three section telescoping pole and worms among the alders, gradually changed to plug casting with a bait rod for bass and pan fish on Crystal Lake, then trolling with various artificial lures and lead core lines for trout and salmon in the larger lakes, using bigger and bigger boats and special rods and reels. Dad and I would sometimes go up to the Pittsburg area with friends and fish the Connecticut Lakes, and at least a few times we fished Aziscoos and Mooselookmeguntic near Rangeley, Maine. In the mid-1960s, Dad, Corbin Thornton (a friend of Dad's) and I were invited to visit Parmachenee Lake in western Maine as guests of the Brown Company. The Parmachenee Club was one of the older fishing camps popular at the turn of the century. It was then owned and operated by the Brown Company (also owners of the paper mills in Berlin and Gorham plus a good share of northern New Hampshire) and used for entertaining employees and clients. Built on an island the club consisted of about ten log cabins raised on stilts in a line, and connected by a boardwalk to the Wangan (office, store), lodge and dining room structures. The club was fully staffed with a cook, assistants and housekeepers plus a guide, if requested. To reach the club you drove to Wilson's Mills, Maine, showed your pass to a gatekeeper, then drove through the gate and north over a dirt road for more than twenty miles to a landing on the lake. By the time you got there, a boat would be waiting, the gatekeeper having radioed ahead, and the guide would motor the party out to the club. Licenses were issued, bottles of booze handed out if you were inclined, and information offered as to meal times, how to operate the fleet of small boats, catch limits, etc. I caught the largest landlocked salmon of the year (1965 ?) and the manager traced the fish on a piece of plywood and nailed it up with other largest fish from previous years. Quite a thrill for someone who had never caught a salmon before. Through Dad's and Corb's connections with a paper wholesaler in White River we visited the club three times, but soon

after the Brown Company came on hard times and the club was closed. In the 1980s, I got permission from a woods manager at Brown Company to make day trips into the lake again, and did so, with others, staying at the Dartmouth Grant each night and motoring in with our trailered boats each day. Soon after, Brown Company closed off the road to the lake and sold twelve leases to specific sites for "significant" cottages. It was the end of an era. I've been back since only in winter via snowmobile when the gates are open. Several of the log cabins of the club are still there and are being used, but the main structures are long gone.

Lake fishing reached its peak for me in the late 1980s when I was invited to join John and Larry Morse on visits to Lake Ontario where we caught huge King Salmon on down-riggers, using Larry's large inboard boat. We usually stayed out there for a full week, renting a cabin in one of the little fishing villages. Trolling for hours and hours was boring, especially when the fish weren't biting, but when you were fighting a 30 pound salmon on a light rod, often for up to 20 minutes, it was really something. I ended up driving the boat most of the time but got my turn when we had strikes. The lake was often crowded with 75 to 100 boats milling around where the fish were biting. We went back to Lake Ontario for five consecutive years, but the fishing went downhill and we stopped going in the early 1990s.

Sometime in the '80s we had sold our MFG boat with the big outboard (a gas hog), and I had turned to canoes and fly casting. I had a taste of this at Parmachenee in the '60s but had never gotten serious, and had sent home from Japan two bamboo fly rods which I longed to try out. I never took any lessons, nor did I really get into all and the lore it takes to catch fish this way, but I did gain an appreciation of the craft and achieved a small measure of success. When the fish were biting, I could usually catch them on one of the flies I carried. When they weren't, I hadn't a clue as to what flies (wet or dry) to try or what line to use.

Pond fishing from a canoe was the most fun, and in the mid-1980s I got a real chance to perfect my technique when I was invited to go with others to northern Maine to visit a camp owned by a great old character named Harry Melendy, a retired Bartlett Tree Company supervisor who had saved and invested enough money to live comfortably in the wilderness. The camp was on Spyder Lake which is a few miles east of Churchill Dam where the Allagash Waterway changes from lake to river in its northerly course. Harry had built his log cabins in the 1960s with the help of Joe Cloud, one of my retired assistants at the college, and lived out his retirement spending as much time as possible there. He even spent a few winters in almost total isolation there with Celia, his wife, enjoying occasional visits from a flying Maine Game Warden named Jack McPhee, who had become a close friend. The first year I visited the camp, there was Wilfred Wheeler, V.P. at Large of the Bartlett Tree Company and Carl Cathcart, Bartlett employee and a friend of mine, Joe Cloud and me. We drove to Shin Pond near Patton, Maine, where we had engaged Scotty's Flying Service to take us in. The weather was cool and rainy with a low ceiling, but we all piled into the Cessna 180, with Joe in the baggage compartment, and the pilot took off. Our luggage was put in a Super Cub to be flown in later. As soon as we were airborne, we were immediately scraping the low cloud ceiling, and hadn't gone far before the pilot aborted and turned around. I didn't think there was any way we would be able to find Shin Pond again, as the clouds sunk even lower. All I could see below were the tops of trees a few feet below the pontoons, but soon we passed over a road and the pilot banked sharply and flew

right down the road, turning and twisting to stay lined up. Finally, we broke out right over the docking area and quickly landed and taxied back to the landing. It was quite an experience. The next day we were able to get into Spyder by flying west to the waterway, up Chamberlain and Eagle Lakes to Churchill, then east to the lake. The following year Carl and I also flew in, taking off from the Penobscot River at Lincoln, Maine, and flying up over Baxter State Park, but in later years we took a pickup and a canoe so we could fish the ponds nearby Spyder. We never caught any really big square tails because it was usually mid-summer, but the country and lakes were so beautiful and remote that I would go back in a minute. (I did catch an 8.5 pound lake trout one rainy day the second year we fished Spyder. I gave it to some very wet and miserable Maine University students who were camping nearby but hadn't caught anything. They cooked it on an open fire and had a feast.) Unfortunately, Harry passed away one cold winter, and Carl and I had to forego our annual trips to that wonderful spot. I'll never forget Harry and Celia, and that beautiful lake.

I think it was the second year we stayed at Harry's that we engaged Jack McPhee to fly us into a couple of remote ponds for the day. He would pick us up in the morning with his state plane (Carl would sit on my lap in the tandem rear seat), and pick us up after work in his own similar plane. We went to Desolation Pond the first time, a quite long, narrow pond near the Canadian Border, where we fly fished all day, eating our lunch in a small deserted cabin, the only sign of life on the pond. Another day we flew into Ugh Lake, a shallow, muddy pond nearly round in shape with a large island in the middle. There were no signs of anyone ever being there before, except for a few poles and a sleeping pallet where a warden had stayed overnight when they seined the lake years before. We caught nothing in Ugh, and Jack came in after awhile and tried to assist in catching some of the huge square tails he knew were in there, but to no avail. It was almost dark when we loaded up to leave, and that was some experience. Jack taxied to a point half way between the island and shore, gunned the engine to full power downwind, and when both pontoons were up on their steps, picked up his right pontoon while turning 180 degrees around one end of the island, then as we straightened out, set the pontoon down and headed for the other end. We cleared the trees by a few feet (my heart was in my mouth), and a half hour later landed in the dark at Spyder. We all went into Harry's camp for a few well-earned drinks, and long after dark we escorted Jack down to the dock to his plane where he cranked it up and taxied across the lake to his sporting camp. I don't know how he found it, considering how dark it was and the condition he was in, but I could see the plane hooked to his dock the next morning.

In 1977, we were forced out of our home on Route 12A when the field behind us was turned into a gravel pit. We couldn't bear the thought of it. We fought the plan through the Lebanon Planning Board, got all the neighbors together, hired a lawyer and attended the meeting, but our efforts were to no avail as they approved the application (illegally, we thought), and I put up a "For Sale" sign the next day. A few weeks later we found our spot on Old County Road and bought it from Polly Chase. That winter we cleared the land, and with snow on the ground and during the kid's spring vacation, built a big fire which Gloria and the boys kept burning for a week, and then succeeded in getting a percolation test done for the septic tank approval. When spring came, we were ready and began construction on the house, which we had designed ourselves, sub-contracting the foundation, the septic system, and the building shell, then

finishing most of the inside ourselves, including the electrical, plumbing and heating system. We “subbed out” the drywall finishing and the ceilings, and the garage was a package job. Several friends from the college helped with the utilities, checking my work and making all the terminal electrical and plumbing connections. When we finally moved in the fall, nearly everything was painted at least one coat and all systems were working. The first night we stayed over, with the cats in residence, several mice chewed on the of the cellar door trying to get out. In the middle of the night one of the cats brought a live mouse up on the bed to show us, and I killed it with a 16 gauge shotgun (with the butt end, of course). A year or two later I used all the good hemlock studs and pine boards from the trees we had cut on the property to build the barn. Gloria helped me pour the cement foundation tubes, and the boys helped install the plywood roof, but I did most of the carpentry myself. I was real proud of it when I had it done. The horses were happy, too; the first winter they had had to stay in an open sided shed.

By 1979, the big Mercury wagon was getting old, and cognizant of the energy crisis , we bought a series of compact cars (I still had a college truck to drive to work), starting with a Plymouth Wagon (a real dog), a Dodge K-Car Wagon (no better), then three Toyotas in a row, all with 4-wheel drive. The latter were well built, dependable cars for local travel, but not really the thing for going long distances, so when I retired, we bought a new 1993 4-wheel drive Ford Pickup and later a 1995 Ford Taurus Wagon. Both of these cars were excellent and gave us good service. American auto manufacturers had caught up with the Japanese!

We bought a new Fiberglas canoe in the early-'80s to go along with the old Coleman, which was heavy and handled like a tank. Soon after, one of my engineers, and his wife, did the same and invited us to go down the White River with them, claiming that the water seemed high enough and “just right” for a fun trip. Well, it wasn’t much fun. We put in at Sharon, Vermont, and by the time we got to where the river goes under the Interstate we had cracked the keel in three places and water was pouring in. In a couple places we had to go over small falls, and there were many rocks just under the surface that we couldn’t miss. As we passed under the bridge at White River Jct. we struck a piece of steel just above the water that punctured the right side at the waterline. Finally, after stopping to dump a couple of times, we reached the KMart parking lot and took out. We stuck to flatter water after that, often going down the Connecticut from KMart to Windsor. (The canoe was repaired by a friend at the Dartmouth Rowing Club, and much later Bruce and I repaired it again after it blew off the roof of his pickup while he was on the way to camp.)

I didn’t start snowmobiling until the late 1980s. Before that I had been on a sled only once, when Gary Pillsbury was a neighbor and his friend Bernie Corrette took me out one night on a spare machine. I wasn’t hooked until much later when Bernard Godfrey asked me to go with him one day on a trip (with about ten others) from Lyme to Haverhill, N.H. via Rumney and Warren. The snow conditions were perfect, the trails just groomed, and we went like the wind, or so it seemed at the time. I remember driving home in my truck afterwards, down the Interstate at nearly eighty miles per hour before I realized it.....and slowed down. I guess the feeling of speed had taken me over. Soon after that trip, I bought Bernard’s old Polaris and was soon tooling around the back woods of Plainfield. I was hooked then, solid. Since those early trips I have graduated to larger, faster and more comfortable machines, traveling great

distances on the trails in both New Hampshire and Vermont and, occasionally, in Maine. The most fun is going up to our camp in Dix's Grant where a main trail runs right by our driveway. Earlier, I had stayed at John Morse's camp. One year we came south along the Connecticut from Colebrook to Lancaster, then east to Berlin and back through the White Mountain National Forrest. We have been to Rangely, Maine, several times, making a circuit by going north and east, then coming back down the lakes south and west, sometimes getting back to camp long after dark. When the trails are rough, I hate it, and say to myself "What am I doing here?" But then I look at the snow and the scenery, and the trail flattens out, and I'm back on cloud nine again. It's hard to explain to someone who has never done it. We cover more ground in one day, and see more country in all its winter beauty than a person on foot or skis would see in a week.

Just before I left the college, Bruce told me of a camp in Dix's Grant, just to the west of the Dartmouth Grant, that was for sale. I called the number Bruce had given me, talked to the owner and soon arranged to meet him there. Jim Crary and I traveled there one summer day, and after looking over the structure I agreed to meet his price. The old logging camp wasn't much to look at nor very large for what we wanted, but the lease and location were worth the price. Only about thirty leases have ever been issued in that whole area, and none since the Brown Company folded years before. It was a good move, one that we've never regretted. All of the red tape of ownership was finished in the fall of 1992, and I was able to get in a couple of hunting trips before winter. By spring I had worked out plans to build a second structure, the cook shack. Boise Cascade, the landowners at that time, objected slightly, but when I showed them plans of what I had bought, they approved. We started building in August, shipping up the rafters and studs from some hemlocks I had had milled from trees cut when we installed the pool, and purchasing the rest at Perras Lumber in Northumberland. Jim Crary and I escorted the truck in from Perras with our load, then got started laying out the corners of the 16' X 20' cook shack. We spent the better part of two months, off and on, and moved in late September, hauling the old gas refrigerator and stove across from the bunk house. I was fortunate to obtain a fine base cabinet, stainless steel sink and wall cabinets from the old Mary Hitchcock Hospital which the college was stripping at the time, getting ready to blow it up. By fall we were comfortably situated and thinking about more improvements we could make, and after suffering the inconvenience of living in two camps for several years, I decided to join them with a third structure in 2005 and this completed our "compound".

There are about thirty camps in the valleys surrounding our camp, and each year on Labor Day weekend there is a celebration that's quite unique. On Sunday morning the Roarin' Brook Rowdies (our team) prepare to meet the Fourmile Guzzlers in a whiffle ball game to decide the championship of the Diamonds. The playing field alternates each year, and the visiting team forms a parade of vehicles and other contraptions, arriving at the game site with much fanfare. The National Anthem is played, a scoreboard set up and a colorful announcer is seated by a microphone. The game is played by a mix of seniors and young men and women, with disputes mediated by neutral referees. After the game is over and the champions crowned by The Queen of the Diamond, everyone returns to their camps and gets ready for the Beanhole Bean Supper at Tibbetts' camp. The beans and various meat roasts have been "in the hole" since midnight the day before, and the pit is opened at 4 PM, the bean pot and roasts removed, and

the supper gets underway. The person count usually approaches 250 when the last plate is filled, and no one goes back to camp hungry. In 1999, our whole family (including five dogs) came to camp for the weekend, participating and helping to win "The Game" and then enjoying the supper. Tents were erected on the lawn at camp for the overflow. (Sadly, this affair died a few years ago when the Tibbetts were forced to sell, and the current owner (Guy Johnson) has no desire to continue the tradition.)

In the winter of 2000 a trip we made to our camp that was especially enjoyable. Bruce and I opened camp on Friday noon, leaving our truck and trailer in the parking area in Millsfield, and hauling in our gear on my two sleds over the Corser Brook Road. After getting shoveled out (the snow was four or five feet deep), both stoves going and water heating, we rode perfect trails north on Fourmile Road to the Hellgate area, then west on the West Branch of the Dead Diamond to Cedar Stream Road, turning south on Cedar Mountain Trail and the new Roarin' Brook Trail. We also broke trail out the Greenough Pond Road to the Red Gate entrance to the Dartmouth Grant where, at 8:00 PM that night, we met Kevin Hammond who had driven his pickup (with Bruce's machine) that far on the plowed part of the road. The next morning Kevin and Bruce got up early and called in and shot a coyote across the river, then we rode groomed trails all day. On Saturday night, Bill and Nancy Corrette and nephew came to visit after dark, having bushwhacked in from Johnson Brook Camp in the Grant via the north side of the Swift. I still don't see how they did it, with snow depths about four feet and soft to the bottom. On Sunday, with the temperature about fifteen degrees below, the boys got up and left before daylight to hunt again. I went back to bed, telling them that I would have their breakfast ready when they returned. They were nearly frozen when they got back and had had no luck. Kevin left soon after, and Bruce and I took another long ride before locking up and heading home. Great weekend!

Mother and Dad were still living in the house in Plainfield as the '80s were coming to an end. Dad was healthy enough physically, but his mind was beginning to misfire, and I hired in help to take care of him. Then Mother had a stroke in 1989 and later fell and broke her hip, but soon recovered well enough to get around, although she had to use a wheelchair most of the time. I had a difficult time finding acceptable care givers, and even when I did, weekends were not usually covered, so someone had to stay over. Dad continued to get worse and finally caught pneumonia and passed away. I had spent the afternoon at the hospital with him, and came home for a quick supper. When I returned, his room was empty, and when I inquired, they told me he had gone. It was a sad day. I rushed to Plainfield to tell Mother, but I think she knew he was dying and took it well (better than I did). For the next few years we had a series of live-in people or couples to help Mother. She had fallen and broken her hip at one point, but recovered well and used a wheel chair, although she was still mobile, with help. Her mind remained sharp. Gradually, however, her health began to fail, and another trip to the hospital couldn't help her, and she died quietly in her sleep. I have always felt extremely lucky to have had such loving and caring parents. Even though raised when times were hard and experiencing first hand a terrible depression, and living through four major wars (WW 1 and 11, Korea and Vietnam), they were always able to be there when any of us kids needed them; supporting us, encouraging us, and praising us for whatever we accomplished. They also passed on some pretty darn good genes to the Plummer progeny.

I was named executor of the estate after Mom died, and I hired a lawyer, Larry Kelly, to get me through it. I liquidated all of the remaining mutual funds, the savings accounts in several banks and the few remaining coins in Dad's collection, and hired Bill Smith to auction off all the furniture and other stuff stored in the house and barns. The latter turned out to be quite valuable, far beyond expectations. It seems that all of the old stuff from the store, the signs, the display racks, the old apparatus and show cases, etc. were in great demand. We cleaned up! But selling the house and camp was another matter. I had the properties listed with several different real estate agencies for several years before, much to my extreme pleasure, Annette called one day and said she and Jeff were interested in buying the house. Happy day!!!! I was ecstatic! I called my siblings immediately and told them to set the price (I would have given it to her), and soon we closed the deal. Having her and Jeff and the kids nearby has been rewarding in a big way. How could we be so lucky? We didn't sell the camp until several years later when we reduced the price below its assessed value, but none of my siblings wanted to take it on, even though I know the girls miss it. I was glad to be rid of it, though, it was a burden that I didn't need any more.

Retirement from Dartmouth came suddenly and unexpectedly in 1992. A new vice president was making things uncomfortable for a lot of administrators, and changes were being made or threatened. Many of us felt like dead wood and even wore badges to that effect to commiserate. An early retirement program had been phased out during the McLaughlin years, so I, like many others, planned to stay on to age 65. However, this all changed when the college decided to bring back the program for a one shot deal. The offer for me was to accept a modest cut in pay for two years (1992,1993), then retire and get paid for a full year at the same rate (1994). In the meantime my retirement contribution (18%) from the college would continue in the full amount. It was a fair deal that worked out well for us. Thirty-five other administrators signed up for the program, including Jay Bliss, my first assistant; Jack Skewes, my boss; and Jules Pellerin, my old friend from Purchasing. I don't think any of us ever regretted these decisions. I'm sure I didn't.

I enjoyed the last two years as a lame duck and was given several slam-bang retirement parties in May and June of 1993 when the time came to step down. Besides receiving several nice gifts, I also received the gate keys to the Dartmouth Grant as the official "custodian". These have been appreciated over the last seven year as our north country camp is located just to the west of the Grant, and it's an enjoyable trip to traverse the familiar roads inside that special place. I still serve on the Grant Advisory Board.

For me, retirement has been all I hoped for. Gloria and I have been able to do a number of things we only dreamed about while we were working. At one point we had given thought to spending cold weather in Florida because Gloria had experienced several bouts of pneumonia, but after a few trips there, and with Gloria enjoying better health, we have abandoned that idea for the moment. We still plan to visit there occasionally, and perhaps other warmer places during the winter, but we love our home in Plainfield near our children and grand children and want to remain near them. We have also enjoyed some long trips via auto to different sections of the country. Trips to Acadia National Park in Maine, to the Southwest to visit the parks, to Corpus Christy, to the Great Northwest and to Georgia have been exciting and highly

successful. More recently, we toured Nova Scotia to see what that country is like, traveling there from Portland, Maine, via The Cat, a high speed boat driven by water jets, the same as the tiny boat I helped christen on the Connecticut River many years before. Our pictures and trip logs attest to how much we have enjoyed ourselves on these ventures, and we aren't done yet.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SOME OF THE FAMILIES AND THOSE WITH CHILDREN MY AGE THAT I RECALL

Charlie and Ernestine Crary, with sons Stanley and James lived for awhile on Hayward Road, then purchased a house, now gone, on the corner of 12A and Stage Road. Charlie was one of the best hunters I have ever known, and when he fired, he never missed. He almost never failed to get a deer in both Vermont and New Hampshire. He also had hunting dogs and used them to chase rabbits, 'coons and bobcats. Charlie became friendly with an ex-Colonel from Massachusetts who had a share in Corbin's Park. The Colonel installed a small prefabricated cottage behind Charlie's house and took many of us hunting in the park over several years. Dad shot a large elk there one year, and once when I was home on leave, I got a deer there, my last chance for the duration of my tour of duty.

Roy and Sophie Morse, with sons Howard, John and Max, moved to the house across from the store about 1943. Roy was caretaker for the Platt Estate in Cornish, and it was there I saw at working ram pump in Blow-Me-Down Brook, pumping water up to a tank which served the houses there. This fascinated me and I never forgot it, and many years later, when we moved to Old County Road and I noted the brook crossing the property, I had the pleasure of seeing my own home-built ram pumping water up to our horse trough and later our kids pool. (Many of the old estates in Cornish employed townfolk to maintain them, but as the colony died out, some the houses and grounds were abandoned and the caretakers had to look for work elsewhere. Today, most of the estates have been restored by new owners.)

The Spalding girls, Beatrice, Eleanor and Joan lived next door in the big brick house with their parents Tracy and Emma. Tracy had a garage and then a grocery store in one of his relocated barns, and Emma taught grammar school. The girls were about the same ages as Steve, Polly and I, but for several years the family lived in Iowa when Tracy had a job there, and when they returned they were all grown up. I had missed them.

The Harold Wilders lived at the top of the hill above the mill at Mill Village. They had a lot of kids, but one, Howard, was my age, and we entered KUA together in 1946; however, Hoogie dropped out two years later and finished up at Windsor High. Later, he had a successful career at Goodyear in Windsor. The Wilders had a pony (Sally) when we were growing up, and one of the kids would always ride her down to the plain to visit and give us rides on her back. She was kind of a town pet

Aunt Grace (Grammie's sister) and Uncle Morris (French) lived in the little house just north of the Grange Hall. Morris was a house painter and later worked in the shops in Windsor. They had no children. I remember the day he died, which must have been in the 1940s. He was

mowing his lawn and just keeled over. Roy Morse came running into the store to tell us, and Dad called a doctor to pronounce him dead, then a hearse came and took him away. It was my first encounter with death.

Ralph Jordan and wife Susie lived on the big farm where John Meyette lives today. Ralph was highly respected among the townsfolk as a country philosopher. He had a keen mind right up into his nineties, remembering events, where people lived and happenings years before. His farm was a busy place right in the middle of town, and we kids were always hanging around in the barn. The first money I ever earned was cutting and hauling in corn stalks to be chopped and blown up into the silo. Ralph had a special long wagon to haul the stalks, drawn by a pair of horses. After the stalks were cut and laid in a straight line, Ralph would bring the wagon and we would lay them across the three long logs that joined the front wheels to the rear ones. It was so long that it took half an acre just to turn it around or line it beside the chopper. Another job I had was to climb up a ladder on the side of the silo, enter it and distribute evenly the silage while tramping it down. This was scary when the silo was almost full.

Ned and Eunice Waite lived across the road from Annette and Jeff's in the big two story house with attached barn (then a carpenter shop). Daughter Sylvia and Harvey lived on the second floor and had two boys, Robert and Richard. Ned was a finish carpenter and did much of the fine work around the village. The house was unique in that it had second story well access on the outside. One could draw up buckets of water from either the first or second floor, using a rope and buckets from a wheel under the second floor porch roof. With the advent of electricity, of course, it was no longer needed, but it was useful in earlier days. Ned built both Bobby and Richy small shacks nearby where they slept and hung out in warmer weather, getting into mischief there with the rest of us. Sylvia and Harvey built their own house later further on down Daniels Road, and after Harvey died, Sylvia, living alone, was murdered nearby, a crime that has never been solved. (People in Plainfield were slow to get over this and started locking their doors after, having never thought it necessary before.)

The large **Gibson family** lived on the corner of Westgate and Hayward Roads. Hallie and Robert had many children, most older than I, although the twins, Joe and John, were only a few years difference. Older son Paul married my mother's niece, Stella, and started a tool company in Florida at one time, which later went bust, wiping out the savings of a few friends and families who had invested.

The large **Stone family** lived in the next house on Hayward Road. Harold and Willa, at an earlier time, lived down a long lane within the fence around Corbins Park in Meriden. They had a number of children, mostly boys. Son Hiram was killed in the service, but Bud, David and Harold, who also served, all returned safely. Sister Barbara, one of my sitters while I was growing up, married Fred Sweet Jr. next door and lived nearby. (Fred had a sister named Elizabeth who was about my age. Their mother committed suicide by jumping into the Connecticut River.) Harold Sr. was a butcher and pedaled products from a cart at one time before starting a shop in a shed near his house. He also delivered milk via horse and wagon, and kept a cow on Peterson Road for awhile. I can remember hearing his wagon come clapping up the street after dark, with an oil lantern hanging from the rear axle to warn off cars.

Milton and Stella Morse lived in the house across from the Gibsons on Westgate Road. They had three kids, Clayton, Lawrence and Marion. Clayton had a great voice and loved to sing with our choral groups. He was our anchor. At one time, under the tutorage of Mrs. Hodgeman, we had a group of eight or nine kids and sounded pretty good. We sung at any kind of social and were in great demand. Some also sung in the church choir.

The Bernards lived south on 12A just before the present gas station/convenience store. Eva and Ed were good friends of my folks. Ed was an engineer at Sullivan in Claremont, while Eva taught school, at one time teaching in the Black Hill School just below the intersection of Beauty Hill and Black Hill Roads. I've been told that she actually walked the distance from the school to Plainfield Village daily, where she lived. Daughter Yvonne married Walter Gobin and lived in the same house for years and were members of the rifle club. They had two sons, Walter Jr. and Dennis.

Charlie and Bessie Hill lived far up on Westgate Road near the top of the hill on the right. Charlie was a carpenter and often came to the store and talked politics with Dad. Bessie lived to be over one hundred years old, and I remember delivering groceries to her a few times after Charlie died. They had two daughters, Vera, who married Don MacLeay, and Margaret, who married a famous gunsmith and marksman named Creighton Audette. I looked up and found Creight at the National Matches at Camp Perry, Ohio, in 1956 where he was competing. Later, he was able to help the U.S. Biathlon Team when they were struggling to solve a problem with their rifles.

The Jordans lived on the top of the same hill on Westgate Road. I don't remember Mrs. Jordan, but Otis was still alive and farming their extensive property when I was growing up. Otis went to Brown university and was deeply respected around town. There were several children but some were older and had moved away. Bill and Ray ran the farm after Otis died. Sister, Sylvia, was Steve's age, a vivacious girl who turned heads wherever she went. Alice, Bill's wife, survives the family today along with several of her children who have built houses nearby.

Wallace and Buelah Pickering lived just beyond the present Post Office on 12A. Pick was a good friend of everyone, and helped start the Plainfield Rifle Club. He also helped in getting the government loan to install the water system for Plainfield and later served on the board. "Pick" loved to hunt and fish, but was born a flatlander and was never able to adapt to being alone in the woods. He loved all us kids, though, and would often ask us into their home for a soft drink. Sadly, Buelah became ill with Alzheimers at a fairly young age and eventually ended up in the county home where she was later joined by Pick, who had his own problems.

Bill Jenney Sr. with son Bill and several sisters lived at the foot of the hill north of the school house. Bill Sr. was a taxidermist among other things, and at one time raised mink in cages just over the fence from the grammar school. This was an odorous occupation and stunk up our classrooms when the wind was right. Bill Jr. became a potato magnate, raising them in rented fields all over the village and employing a number of people, men to run the equipment that plowed, cultivated and sprayed the fields, and women to operate the processing machines in his large barns. In winter, one of my chores was to clear snow from the yard in front of the store, using a large snow scoop, and I will never forget the relief I felt when I heard Bill's big John

Deere tractor pop-popping down the road when he came to assist and finish up. (At a younger age I recall sitting in Ralph Scruton's lap on another big tractor, steering it down the lane behind the store to get water for the potato sprayer. Ralph was a great guy who later married Helen Hoisington and moved to California, and I never saw him again.)

The Berwick family moved to Plainfield in the 1930s (I think) and lived north of the village several miles. They had two sons, Harry and Donald and two nieces, Jean and Joan Bushold, who lived with them. Donald and Jean entered grammar school the same year I did, competing with me always for top honors. Jean was the darling of our class and later became a full professor with advance degrees. Don skipped eighth grade and went directly to KUA, but I caught him at Dartmouth where we both graduated later. The first year I went to KUA I rode with Harry and Donald in their family's Chevy over Stage Road to Meriden, which was mostly a narrow graveled surface beyond Hell Hollow, and during the winter we lived in fear of meeting Forrest Chase in his big truck hauling cans of milk to the creamery. After several near misses, Don took over the driving even though he wasn't old enough to have a drivers license. In the spring, we had to detour through Cornish to get to and from school when the mud season occurred. The Berwick's ran a steel drum restoration business for many years and later turned successfully to trucking.

The Read family lived in the large farm that overlooks Plainfield from the north on 12A. Palmer and Lena dabbled in politics when I was growing up, and son Junior (Palmer) and Lucille ran the farm. There were several daughters, too, and a couple married local men and lived in Plainfield their entire lives. Son Abe and wife Kitty ran a farm south of the village in the house where Sara and Chief Gillen live now. They had four children, all younger than I was. In those days there were large barns on the left where a church sits now. I recall one year when Junior raised potatoes on the land where Skip and Norma Hazleton now have their house on Old County Road, and when harvest time came, many of us kids pitched in to pick them up in the field, bag them and load them on a truck. I got \$4.00 for two days of hard work. (This was far more than my father got for working all summer haying at the Town Farm across from Bruce's house. Dad's pay for the summer was \$12.00.) I helped Junior other times distributing and tramping silage inside their big silo at the farm. (Abe and wife Kitty later bought Uncle Ted's farm on Black Hill, and even later they sold out there and bought a lovely farm in Claremont next to the Connecticut River.) Both Abe and June were great deer hunters, and their group accounted for many taken in Plainfield over the years.

Another prominent family were **the Kings**, on Black Hill, in the house where the Stephensons now live. They, too, had a lot of kids, some my age. Clarence ran a dairy operation, primarily, but he also had a sawmill near where the Bingers live now and a sugar house. The whole King family often participated in the farm operation, and I recall one of the older girls working like a man (rare in those days) and helping to operate a large combine that was harvesting the King fields at a demonstration of its ability.

Uncle Ted and Aunt Lucia and sons Ed and Bill lived on the farm where Mogeilnickis live now, and in those days the road went up and over the saddle north of Black Hill and down into Coryville. Between the Daniels and the Kings they owned nearly all the fields and woods from

Old County Road to Porter Road. I don't recall that Ted ever had much of a dairy operation, although he did have a few cows most of the time, instead he raised sheep, beef cattle and chickens at different times. He and a hired man built the dam at Ski Ranch Pond which still holds water today, and they also built a fine large swimming pool next to the house where we loved to go and swim on hot summer days. Aunt Lucia, Mother's half sister, was the first liberated woman in the area, I think. She was a registered nurse, drove her own car, did everything on the farm and even learned to fly on the old airport in White River where the Toyota and Ford Dealerships are now. I spent many happy times with cousins Ed and Bill on the farm, getting into all kinds of mischief with few to oversee us. Unfortunately, Ted, who until that time was in fine physical shape, became ill and couldn't stand the cold winters of New Hampshire, so near the end of the war they sold out and moved to Florida. I missed them.

Francis and May (Read) Atwood lived high up on Dodge Road and farmed large fields that overlooked the town. They had two children, Louise, who was a year or two younger than me, and Caleb who was younger. My folks were friendly with the family, and we often had picnics higher up in the pasture where Francis had built a fireplace. I recall spending several vacations at our camp on Crystal Lake with both families, the fathers leaving early every morning to return to work in Plainfield.

The Ben Lewins lived where Jeff Grobe lives now, and their son Benny was the best athlete in our grammar school. He excelled in both basketball and baseball and was always chosen first when we were choosing up sides. His father, Ben Sr. operated a meat cart for awhile around the community.

Earl Kenyon lived in Hell Hollow with his parents Mike and Henrietta. I used to deliver to his grandparents who lived just up the hill. Mike was a member of the Rifle Club and competed with us for several years.

The Fleming Family lived on the north side of Prospect Hill on Hedgehog Road. Mr. and Mrs. were fine people and had four children that I remember. Fred was the oldest, I think, then there was Hazel, and Bernard, who was in my class, and a younger girl (can't remember her name). A man named St. Peter lived in the house they later occupied, but after the old folks passed away, Bernard moved there from his own house nearby and lives there still with his wife, Clarette. The oldest, Fred, was a strapping youngster and was drafted into the army and later killed in Korea. My Dad told me that from the day he left, he never came home again but was rushed through training, sent to the front and his family never saw him alive again. Tragic beyond words!

EPILOGUE

The year is 2008 and Gloria and I have just completed fifty years of happily married life, and for all that time I have thanked myself every day that I was smart enough to find and marry my wonderful wife. Her Grandmother Barber told me that Gloria was "special", and she was right! She has truly been the light of my life since the day I met her, and we have had a wonderful life together, at least as far as I'm concerned. A perfect wife and a wonderful mother is what she turned out to be, and it is primarily her doing that we are truly blessed with four great kids plus

six lovely grand children who brighten our lives every time we see them. How could one man be so lucky?

And that's it. That's the story of my life as I recall it. I have few regrets, as I think about it, and if Gloria, the children and grand children are satisfied with me and with their own lives to this point, then I guess I can live out my days happily, wishing the family the best always as they go down there own life's road. (Yes, I do have one regret. I never learned to dance, but Gloria loved it and would have been happy if i could have joined her on the floor more often. Oh, I can move around and even wiggle to the music, but the whole thing turns me off and I guess my shyness takes over whenever I try it. Too bad. Maybe in my next life)