

Wilmot Historical Society

#9 Four More Reminiscences —Roland Gove Speaking About his Family Home on 4A, Wilmot Center; Lida Gross; Mildred Howard; Connie Forsham

This is a recording of the Wilmot Historical Society Meeting on February 18, 1990.

Roland: . . . It was owned by Flora Gove, who was the shoemaker's wife, and she was quite elderly. She had two children, Winifred and Harold. And at that time, Harold was in his 30s or 40s. He has since died. And the property has gone from Harold to his son Kenneth who lives in Concord. And apparently, for some reason or other, Kenneth hangs on to the house but does nothing to it. It's strange to say. I've talked with him, my wife and I have both talked with him about what he's going to do with the house, or what he might wish to do with it. It was suggested to us, in fact, Florence Langley mentioned, it would make a nice place for the Historical Society, so we broached the subject to Kenneth, and got nothing--no reaction at all. As you know, it's been going downhill in the last few years, and the trees are getting worse and worse, and shingles are falling and it's too bad. We can't seem to get him to move off dead center. He's a man, let's see, he was born, I guess, in 1914. So, he's getting along in years. He's not married. He's got no children to give it to. What happens from now on is anybody's guess. It's just too bad. It's a beautiful house. It's a nice piece of property. And it's got a lot of history behind it, but I can't tell you much more about it.

Okay, well, we'll proceed to our program proper then. And this program isn't exactly what we started out with, before we got snowed out the other Sunday. In the interim, Louise Danforth had a chance to go to Florida, so we won't have her today. And Don and Jane Hall are in Italy, so that cancels them out to another time. However, our old faithful, Lida, who always rises to the occasion, has agreed to fill in as one of the speakers, and I think we'll start with Lida.

Lida: I'm gonna surprise you this time. I'm not going to talk about myself. I've been in all the papers lately and so. It's about my grandmother, Ellen Fellows, and she was 71 years old. This was a poem that was written by this Stella Collins that you've heard. This is an old history that Walter and Judy [Walker] or Florence [Langley] found in the old safe up in the Town Hall. And Walter looked it over and said, "There's nothing in there that I know they're talking about." So he handed it to me. Well it says:

'So-and-so lives there now, and I know who it was then.

So I said, "Oh, I know a lot about that--different things. A lot of people's names I do not know, but I'd try to help him out as much as I can. So that's why Annie[Thompson] and Mildred [Howard] were up to my house and we went through it, and Mildred says, "If you weren't here, we wouldn't know what we were talking about". (Laughter) But anyway, I tried to do it. So this is a poem that was written by this Stella Collins that wrote this old history. And I have to use this cuz' it's kind of tattered and torn. So, I don't know how to use this thing either, so, I'll try my best if you'll put up with me.

*It's known that custom has prevailed,
Considering now a rule,
If you've accepted a bundle April 1st,
Someone might call you a fool.*

*To a humble home where many children laughed and played,
The stork brought a bundle small, slyly winked and flew away
The good man and his wife,
their kind hearts with love swelling
quickly looked the little bundle over
and thought it was no trick.*

*The 13th child, unlucky but the warning came too late
Their love for the tiny stranger,
course, discredited Father Fate.*

*With counsel wise they reared her
And when they were growing old
The love and care they gave her
She repaid a hundredfold*

*To her husband's aged parents
She gave a daughter's care,
The death of her only son,
Was a sorrow that she must bear.*

*Then came the sad great pardon
From the husband of her youth
But of God's "Lo, I am with you"
She did not doubt the truth.
Three daughters seeked her counsel.
Three good men called her "Mother,"
A band of happy children,
Think there was no other.*

*It is hard to forfeit that maybe dame
Fought fortune down
Good luck may attend those
Who bear superstition power.*

*Time proves all things in years
Three scores and ten have passed away
We know it was a dear home angel
Sent that April day.*

This was my grandmother, and she was a perfect woman. Those days they had no hearse and they had nothing but oxen to work—this is what I’m told, I weren’t there—but, they worked the farm with the oxen and my grandmother walked every day down to the church and sang in the choir—alto singer. And every Saturday night, we’d sit down with our Sunday school books, and she went through them. We had our lesson with her help. Thank you. (Applause)

Thank you, Lida. I think next we’ll have Mildred who’s also ever faithful whenever we need anyone.

Mildred: You’ll be sorry before I leave. (Laughter) This is gonna be too statistical, but then I’m not good at this. So anyway, it’s mixed up, too. And I’m gonna sit here and read it--part of it and I’m gonna talk, too, ad lib? So, it’ll be, you know, it’s mixed up.

Anyway, my reminiscing this afternoon is based on the lives of Frederick J. and Lillian Caroline LaJoie—two citizens of Wilmot who contributed of their time and talents, for practically all of their lives to better our community. I was prompted to speak of them because of an article entitled, “An Appreciation of Two of Wilmot’s Most Loyal Citizens,” handed to me by their daughter, Esther LaJoie Grace. There was no date on this story, but from references therein, I can safely say it was written prior to 1967 and was read at some gathering held in their honor. I have also chosen them because their life in Wilmot parallels mine as the original families came to Wilmot at about the same time, and I knew and grew up with both of them.

Later I will inject stories of how our paths crossed. The article is entitled “An Appreciation of Two of Wilmot’s Most Loyal Citizens—Frederick J. and Lillian Caroline LaJoie.” It starts:

It is a tradition of the early settlers of our great country and our own town’s first landowners, even many of those who in later years braved the rugged, rock-ribbed hills and the rigors of distance, slow travel and hard winters, that courage and the will to conquer adverse circumstances was the mighty power which drove stout-hearted men and women, too, to settle and maintain our small New Hampshire towns. To this tradition, the story of our good friends and neighbors, Fred and Caroline, rings true.

Fred was born in Haverill, MA, on August 16, 1890 and was the youngest son of Samuel Joseph and Emma LaForest LaJoie. He attended school in Haverill, but at the age of eleven, set out for the Hilltop Farm in Wilmot with his father. (I don’t know how they acquired this Hilltop Farm, but anyway, they had it—they set out for it.) This was the spring of 1901. The journey was horse and buggy. It was a three-day pilgrimage. The first night was spent in Hooksett, the second in Salisbury, and the third at the home in Wilmot. On the last lap of the journey from Wilmot Center to North Wilmot, Fred remembers stopping at the Old Town Hall.

Mildred: Now the Old Town Hall was replaced by the present Town Hall in 1907. And after that time, the town tractor was housed there, and after that disappeared, the site is marked by the boulder with the plaque on it, which Wilmot Grange bought and purchased and gave to the Town in 1974. And Annie Thompson who is a descendent unveiled the plaque—a descendant of Mr. Upton’s—that’s interjected. Okay.

He stopped to see the tax collector, whose name was August Cilley, locally known as “Gus” Cilley. The furniture came by freight to Grafton, so the father and young son went to the depot to get a barrel of bedding for the first night in the new homestead. When the barrel was unpacked, behold, it contained a feather bed, but no blankets. Mr. LaJoie, Sr. had arthritis so severely that when fall came he had an auction and he and Fred returned to Haverill, MA, by train.

Mildred: Can you imagine an auction in 1901? How did people get there? Well, anyway.

After four years, (this is 1905) the lure of the Wilmot farm persisted, and the whole family, which included the parents, Fred, and his older brother and sister, Joseph and Mary, came to Wilmot transported by a pair of horses and a Sears Roebuck farm wagon.

Mildred: I don't know how many in this room remember the Sears Roebuck farm wagons, but I do.

The furniture was sent by freight. At Penacook, one of the horses gave out, so they hired a freight car in which horses, wagon, and family completed the journey to South Danbury. It was here that Fred saw little Janice Atwood...

Mildred: Now, you remember Lou because it was only just a short few years ago that she died.)

...for the first time. It seemed she was sitting on the store steps, apparently watching the world go and come. Fred and brother Joe spent the night with the horses in the freight car, and the next day, the family possessions were all moved to North Wilmot. From now on, farming was the family's occupation.

Lillian Caroline was born in Wilmot, the eldest living child of Edgar Leslie Fowler and Lillian Prudence Hewitt Fowler. Her birthplace, now gone, stood at the junction of what is now Route 4A and Stearns Hill Road. The family later moved to East Springfield. Caroline attended schools in Springfield and Wilmot and a short while in Franklin. In her youth she taught school in East Springfield, and at the North Road School in Wilmot.

Mildred: Now, let's see, where do I go?

Four children were born and reared on the Hilltop Farm. They were Lilly and Emma, born in April 1919; Alice Jenny born in September 1920; Frederick William born in August 1924, and Esther Ruth, (who was just here today), born in September 1929.

Fred and Caroline first met at a Grange meeting in Danbury. After that they kept steady company.

Mildred: I guess this paragraph should have gone before.

They were married August 1, 1918 and lived in the LaJoie homestead at Wilmot. They were married by Reverend Jackson in the parsonage at Wilmot Center...

Mildred: And Reverend Jackson, at that time, was the minister of both for both the Center and Flat churches—from 1917 to 1919 and the place at Wilmot served as the parsonage for both churches. Matter of fact, I think he also was included at the North Church at the same time.

...They were serenaded that night at their home in North Wilmot.

At the farm they produced beef, poultry, and pork for their own use as well as the garden crops. They also raised turkeys for the holiday market and sold them to stores in Franklin. Friends and neighbors joined them for the fall huskings with the traditional baked bean supper for all. But life at the farm was not always serene thanks to the fury of mother nature. It was not unusual for them to be snowed in two or three days at a time. In those days the roads were rolled...

Mildred: I don't know how many in the room remember that, but I do.

...and the advent of plowing. Fred and another man would shovel huge drifts near what is now the Clayton Nowell's home, so that the tractor could push through...

Mildred: If you remember the tractor, it was one of those clear track things that the track rolled around and all.

...And many times during the mud season after they had a car, it would become necessary to leave the vehicle, and Fred would walk home to get the oxen to drag the car home.

Mildred: I'm interjecting now. This also applied to the sorrier transportation. Our oxen became so accustomed to this procedure that they would automatically turn around, back up to the car, you can almost hear them say, "Well, what are you waiting for? Let's get started." It usually happened halfway up Teal Hill.

At one time when the LaJoies were snowed in, Esther had pneumonia. Fred took the oxen and sled and went to Atwoods' to call Dr. Clough. The Atwoods' was the nearest phone. The roads were opened at Atwoods' so the doctor travelled by car there; Fred waited for him and transferred him to Fred's sled to make the rest of the trip. In 1938 the hurricane struck. When it had passed, the barn had no shingles, the shed had no roof, the hen house was flat, most of the hens had been killed, the cornfield ruined, the sugar house destroyed, and the beautiful maple orchard, gone forever.

In October 1942 lightning entered the house and exploded. All the windows on the first floor were blown out, damage was heavy to the house, Caroline was severely burned, but, undaunted, she drove herself to the New London Hospital for treatment and then drove home.

That same fall, the chimney fire ignited the house through. The quick work of Fred and a neighbor held the fire in check while Caroline drove to a telephone and summoned the fire department...

Mildred: The neighbor was a half a mile distant, and as I say, the nearest phone was at Atwoods'.

...The quick work of Fred and the neighbor held the fire in check until the fire department arrived.

Three years later in 1945, Fred and Caroline moved to Wilmot Center. They lived for a time with Mr. Jared Button. And then in 1947, they purchased their own home...

Mildred: Which some of us know it as the ‘oldest house in Wilmot’. It had a sign, presented by the Historical Society, which was only just recently taken down because the house has been renovated.

...Caroline’s mother and father owned the home, Edgar and Lillian Fowler, and they purchased it for \$700. When Fred moved to Wilmot Center, he remarked that in his younger days, Wilmot Center’s main thoroughfare was called “Easy Street.” He lived on it now. He also recalled that they seldom came to Wilmot Village except to vote, but why should they when, they could get milk at a neighbors for 3 cents a quart and eggs at 12 cents a dozen; they purchased their flour in Grafton for \$3.50 per 200 pounds.

Fred and Caroline served the Town of their choice in many capacities. Fred was Supervisor of the Checklist for over 40 years serving his last term due to ill health in 1971. He was a Deputy Fire Warden, Road Agent for more than 10 years, Director of Civil Defense, school janitor, assistant Post Office and Town janitor...

Mildred: I’m interjecting. I’m telling you, being Town janitor at one time entailed filling those darn kerosene lamps, stoking the wood-burning stove—later, a wood-burning furnace, not just pushing the button as one does today . . . but sometimes you don’t push the button, because last Friday night, we tried to have the Grange meeting, and there was no heat.

...Many a time it meant staying at the hall to get the building warm for the evening’s engagement, all day.

Fred and Caroline joined Grafton Grange in 1917 and transferred to the Wilmot order in 1937. Caroline joined Wilmot Grange when she was 14 years of age but had to take a demit when her children were growing up on the farm. As soon as possible, she was reinstated, and to those of us who are Grangers, she served as chaplain, series promoter, and lecturer; and in Pomona Grange, as series promoter and lecturer and was a member of the State and National granges.

Caroline served on the school board for five years, as Library Trustee, and Clerk of the Republican Party. She was a member of the North Wilmot Congregational Church, was active at the Congregational Church at Wilmot Center, where she served as Treasurer, Trustee, and Sunday School teacher, and was an officer of the Ivy Guild. She was a loyal and devoted member of the Nimble Thimble Club of North Wilmot. In 1950 she became Post Mistress in the Wilmot Center Post Office and continued until the Office was closed in 1967. After the closing of the Post Office, she worked until 1978 as a cook at the New London Hospital. She was hospitalized after a fall in the kitchen when she sustained a broken pelvis. After recuperating, she could no longer carry on this type of the work, but her love of people in the hospital prompted her to do

volunteer work, day by day, with the Occupational Therapy Department. The nurses and patients called her “Gram”. In fact, she became known by this to many. She was an active member of the Community Action Program and the Senior Citizens Group and received recognition and awards for her friendliness and caring for each individual’s problem. Fred and Caroline celebrated their 45th wedding anniversary with a party at the North Church.

Mildred: Fred didn’t sleep for three weeks worrying about it. So, when their 50th anniversary came, Esther had it at her home as a surprise, and he thoroughly enjoyed himself, and I had a ball, too.

Fred worked at the New London dump until he was 80 when ill health caused him to retire. He died at 82 on February 12, 1973 after a long illness at home lovingly cared for by Caroline. I recall dropping in at the house that day, and who could know, that the next morning, the house would be practically destroyed by fire—another tragedy for Caroline. I also recall stopping in to welcome her back after the house was renovated, and she came to the door with the same spirit. How many of us could take a hurricane, be struck by lightning, endure two fires, overcome the trauma of a major operation, two bouts in the hospital, and come up with a smile. I never saw Caroline down. She loved people—especially young people. Her home was a refuge for many who needed a lift or were lost for a time. Some stayed with her for years. Her cookie jar was always filled, and you could count on her for delicious rolls. She was a good sport. She loved going places, and especially visiting Granges nearby—a true friend to many, and the community owes much to Fred and Caroline Lajoie. Caroline died September 15th, 1983. Someone wrote, “There are loyal hearts, there are spirits brave, there are souls that are pure and true. Then give to the world the best you have, and the best will come back to you.” Certainly, Caroline gave her best. (Applause)

Judith: Thank you, Mildred. It’s wonderful to have these memories, isn’t it? When Walter and I were going to get married, and we were looking for a place to build, we just about despaired, and then, Frank Langley’s mother, Abby, was talking with Fred, and he said, “Well, I’ve got a piece of land I’d sell them,”—which is where we are now. It had been used for sheep pasture, and Fred used it for his garden at that time. And there are still a lot of us that remember Fred and Caroline with great affection.

I wish we had someone living in Wilmot Center now who would have the memories that Lida and Mildred have. We don’t, but we have Connie Forsham’s mother, Edith Marion Goodhue Campbell, who had the foresight to start writing down her memories. And Connie is going to share some of those with us today, plus some of her own.

Connie: These are excerpts from my mother’s memoirs of Wilmot Center in the 1890s. She was then Edith Marion Goodhue. These memoirs tell about the people and places which she remembers from her childhood. Starting at the Center, her comments followed the Turnpike, as 4A was then called, up the Turnpike west to the Springfield line, mentioning each home and occupant, their children, and in many cases, who their children married, which would be too tedious for this, but would be great for genealogical purposes. Next she does the same thing going down Center Hill to the Andover line, and then she came back to the Center and discussed all the homes and families up Bunker Hill Road and Cross Hill. This is a continuation of readings

which my daughter, Betsy, gave last year, and she couldn't remember which ones she had read (Laughter), so I'll concentrate on some of the side roads, hoping not to repeat what she's already covered.

First of all, I'll describe the Center as it was in the 1890s. And by the way, there's a little exhibit in the room off of here showing some of the buildings right there in the Center as well as a few other themes and then some little cards, little advertisements that you'd find in the old store buildings and some old Valentines and Christmas cards. So, you'll want to look at those after the meeting.

Where Bunker Hill Road intercepted the Turnpike, it's divided, creating quite a large triangle of ground there, in the middle of which was located—as mother writes—a huge watering trough built and maintained by my grandfather—that would be Seth Goodhue. It was round and had an iron interior. Inside was a wooden tub with insulating material between. On cold nights, my grandfather placed a cover over the tub, so that only a thin sheet of ice was the obstruction in the morning. The tub was so large it never froze completely.

And we have pictures of that in here.

Later that tub was removed, and they replaced it with some hay scales so that the horses could pull the load of hay up on the scales, weigh the load, and then, go down the other side. And we kids used to play games on it. (Laughter)

My grandfather also used to shoot off fireworks every 4th of July right at that triangle and the townsfolk would gather. This was their celebration. I think he got more enjoyment out of it, maybe, than anybody else. But we kids thought it was great.

Opposite this watering trough was “the old store” building under the caption S. and F. E. Goodhue. That means “Seth and Fred E. Goodhue”—Fred being my mother's father when they were young men. The building had been owned previously by Meryl Cross and was the site of early town meetings, church services, and other informal gatherings. Mr. Cross had been Town Clerk for 30 years and lived in the house where the Kiefers now live.

Mother writes: *My father, F. E. Goodhue, was Postmaster. The building was the property of Uncle James Stearns who, with his wife Eunice, lived in an apartment above the store. As old age approached, the store building became a burden, and its improvements too much to consider. It was then that my grandfather built “the new store” for Uncle Seth.*

That's also shown in the exhibit. And the new store was just above the old store.

It was in these stores that the men of the community gathered in the evening around a box stove to exchange news or comments on the events of the day.

Now, on the other corners where Bunker Hill intercepts the Turnpike, below the road was the Kearsarge School of Practice—a building which most of it is still there. It's now the Academy Apartments. And west of the intersection and across the Turnpike from the new store, was a

large set of buildings erected, as mother says, by my grandfather in the 1850s. Many of the happiest recollections of my childhood center there with farm animals to pet and feed, hay mounds, and my grandfather's carpenter shop to play in, family gatherings and the coming of distant relatives who had settled in various parts of the west.

Grandpa was tall—6' 1"—stately, and kind. Besides his own home, he built the Whittemore place at the foot of Center Hill, now owned by Dana Davis, the Warren Langley home, now the Bisailles, and many other buildings in Wilmot and surrounding towns. He was in demand as a builder of water wheels and a cabinet maker. He once had a cabinet shop downstream on Kimpton Brook near the falls. The foundation can even now be seen at the edge of the brook. Grandpa was also an undertaker and until such items could be obtained commercially, built the coffins and caskets which his profession required. He drove the town hearse and owned the span of black horses which always drew the vehicle. He succeeded Meryl Cross as Town Clerk and served for 25 years. Grandpa was an Adventist and attended that church in South Sutton. He also had one strange profession as such it might be called.

So, this grandfather she keeps talking about is Seth Goodhue.

And he had this one strange profession. He owned a set of dental instruments kept shining and carefully wrapped. And when a neighbor suffered a toothache, Grandpa was consulted. One thing is certain, when Grandpa's 6' 1" frame was pitted against a mere molar, Grandpa always won.

Incidentally, when a voluntary patient arrived and I was present, I sought the silence of the hay mound.

Grandma, Susan Stearns Goodhue, was always the helpful, serene, kindly, philosophical person a grandmother is supposed to be. She was definitely a homebody and a lover of flowers. Also, in the family was Uncle Seth Goodhue who became the owner of "the new store" built about 1898, and his lovely wife, Aunt Florence Langley. I loved them both and spent every possible minute with them. They were active in church and community, and everyone was saddened when Uncle Seth died at age 34

I think he had TB, I'm not sure.

Besides the two sons, Seth and Fred, there was a daughter, Mary, who became the wife of Dr. Charles Lamson of New London.

You may have heard of him.

Alright, so now we'll leave the Center and go up the Turnpike—there's one bridge, you may remember, and then as you continue on there's another little bridge. And about halfway between, was the lane. Again, I quote:

A little further west was the lane which trailed up, over, and around the hills adjacent to Bog Mountain to the Silas Prescott place.

This was right at the foot of Bog Mountain, I guess you all know where that is. It's pretty deserted and far from most anything up there.

A low weathered Cape Cod house and the large barn were surrounded by pastureland and a few well-kept fields. Here Silas lived with his widowed mother. He was a mild mannered and courteous man whose personality included a certain gentleness and pride in work well done. Wood sawed by Silas was a work of art and the result piled evenly in the woodshed, a mosaic of closely fitted pieces. Silas was an authority on bees and kept many hives. He could work with them without protection and never acquire a sting. I have listened to his stories of bees with fascination and only regret that somehow this wealth of practical information was not preserved. Silas was one of the regulars who spent most evenings at the store, trudging home at 9 o'clock with provisions or a sack of grain on his shoulders. To me, a child, the little house near the foot of Bog Mountain seemed as far away from people as the mysterious North Pole.

There's another story about Silas, that he would go down to Cilleyville to the mill and have someone hoist a hundred pound sack of grain on his shoulder and would walk up to the Center and then stop at the store to rest, relieving himself of his load for a while, then have someone hoist it back on, and again, trudge up the Turnpike and then up through the hills and the lane back to the foot of Bog Mountain before he dropped it again.

I do not remember his widowed mother, but I do recall my father relating the difficulties encountered when she died. No horse-drawn vehicle could safely transport a coffin over the narrow, uneven lane, so several men carried the casket on their shoulders to the home, and in like manner, brought Mrs. Prescott down to a waiting conveyance.

Not far from Silas Prescott Lane, above the second bridge on the Turnpike and on the opposite side, Pedrick Road leaves the highway, continuing up a hill, then turning back down toward the Center and forming a loop, which again, meets the Turnpike down near where the Town Garage now is.

And it's called Pedrick Road for a good reason—there was a Pedrick living at each end of the road. At the top of the hill opposite the Henchcliff home, was the home of Horace Pedrick, and I quote:

Horace was a veteran of the civil war and the officer in charge when the goodly number of veterans then living, assembled on Memorial Sunday and attended church. I was thrilled beyond my powers of expression when the troops came marching in, all in uniform, with banners flying and swords rattling.

To a little girl that must have seemed really impressive.

They marched, halted, and proceeded at Horace's command.

Continuing down the Pedrick Road toward the Village, we come to a set of buildings which are still standing. This was the farm of Isaac Tenney and his wife, Abby. They were parents of three daughters.

And now in this case, I will mention the children because they married people whose names are familiar still in the area.

Roxanna, married Byron Tenney; Pamela, wife of Fred Piper—

Now they both settled in Elkins and those are familiar names still over there.

And then Mary, who married Newell Grace.

And she remained on Tenney farm, and I knew the place, and it's known today as the "Grace Place," and there are descendants still living right in the immediate area.

Now we'll go back to Isaac, or Ike as he was called, locally. He had two passions: hard cider and Camp Meeting. He trafficked in the former all winter, to the distress of the wives in the area, then, was converted every summer at Camp Meeting. The conversion lasted until the next fall. There were other farms along that road and also a schoolhouse.

And my mother mentions her aunt having been a teacher there--May, who became a Lamson--when there were children from 13 farms up there on Jones Hill or Granite Hill, Grace Hill Road. But those farms are all gone until we come almost down to the garage, and there was another Pedrick Place, which recently burned, where the Weavers are now living. It was owned by a Pedrick, Joseph and his wife, Sabrina. Mother writes:

In my youth Patrick Loeb lived in the Pedrick place.

I wondered. I found a tintype of Patrick Loeb, and I wondered who he was, until I read her memoirs and then, he was the man who lived in the old Pedrick Place. He had worked many years for my grandfather, who owned the Pedrick Farm at that time and who raised the roof to its present height. And this answered another mystery, because, we could tell from looking at that old house as it was sort of falling down before the Weaver's bought it, there seemed to be a transition, and this was because the roof had been raised later.

Originally the house was so low-posted that the Pedrick children must have left home early for several were above normal height. Returning to the Center, let us turn north across the bridge.

This would be on North Wilmot Road. Ironically, mother had covered all roads leading from the Center, except North Wilmot Road when her account abruptly ends terminated by advancing years and quite impaired eyesight. One wonders what she might have written about the Fisks who owned our house. This was the same Fisk who sold bits of land for the schoolhouse, Congregational Church, and the horse sheds. Or what would she have said of the Trussells, now the Schoelers, who lived opposite, the Warren Langley house, now the Bisailons, which was built by her grandfather, or of the James Richard farm, now home to

Julie and John Morse. Of these and others, we'll never know, however, there are two other buildings I'd like to mention. One is the old Town house, which is marked by just a stone up beyond the Schoelers at the present time. Mother writes:

My memory of the Old Town House at the top of the hill just north of the Nellie Trussell home recalls a large barn-like structure from which paint had long since disappeared. The buildings had three windows on each side and in front, one either side of the door. Each window had 24 small panes according to a count made in later years. I also learned that my great grandfather, Josiah Stearns, made the sashes by hand when he was superintending a certain stage of the building of the first meeting house on Bunker Hill, which I understand was never really completed, and which structure furnished material for the Old Town House of my youth. The clapboards were of the narrow antique variety, and the windows were protected by wooden, outside shutters. The chimney was small and was attached to a stove which gave forth more smoke than heat. The interior was sparsely furnished with wooden benches around the wall (distortion then laughter)

Alright, I'll repeat the sentence.

A raised platform at the north end served election officials at Town Meeting for males only, and occasionally was the scene of shows put on by medicine men who presented programs while they advertised their wares. I remember one group of entertainers who were extremely popular—they were glass blowers, and their creations intrigued both adult and child audiences. Occasionally the Village school presented a program and exhibition on the evening following the last day of school. I well remember one such occasion. The stove had been removed leaving a gaping hole in the chimney, which may have been scheduled for repair. I was taking my turn in the program by speaking of peace when a brick fell down the inside of the chimney crashing into the assembly thus disrupting the audience and my oratory. I believe I finished my assignment, but amid no little confusion. In a few years, these programs were discontinued since the old building was declared too decrepit for comfort or safety.

And then, finally, a poem, which she wrote much later about the Town's first snowplow that we mentioned. It must have been something. It was a tractor-type vehicle, the mechanics of which were a mystery to those who heretofore had only to deal with a snow roller and teams of horses. It was housed in approximately the same location as the Old Town House where the marker now is; and, of course, many years after it had been torn down, maybe in the 1930s when we finally bought the new tractor. And I'll end my speech with this poem which she wrote. You've probably noticed by now she had a sense of humor which went well with history. It's called, "Departed Glory".

*I tell ye, Bill, you'll have to see the thing our town has got.
'Tis a brand new, first-class, tractor plow—the best that can be bought.
It's painted up to beat the band—silver, yellow, red.
Why, when that glory's on the road, the sun just goes to bed.*

*Phew, it well-nigh caused financial war and broke our bank to smash,
To pay the price the dumb thing cost, \$4,000 in cold cash.*

*But I'd sworn, I believe it's worth it, to see the monster go,
Just like an ocean liner plowing through a sea of snow.*

*And the crew, why half the boys in town were perched aboard that clipper,
While up aloft there's a little coupe all cozy for the skipper.
And when that ship is off the ways, I tell ye what, my son,
You'd think each boy in that there crew was sure Napoleon.*

*We build a corken boat house to keep the cruiser in,
To let that paint get faded would be a shameful sin.
We made it tight and snug and warm and painted it with care.
We made a first-rate jewel box to hold our treasure rare.*

*All through the autumn weather, we let the doors swing wide,
To show the world of the wondrous thing we prized so much inside.
But like the haughty spirit that goeth before a fall,
Our castle is decaying, our backs are to the wall.*

*Just like a cloud floats cross the sky and covers up the moon,
Depression hit our humble town, a little mite too soon.
Just when the snow descended and the wind caroused all night,
That glorious invention was shut up snug and tight.*

*The snow grew deeper and deeper, and the roads were lost to view,
The wind came from the northwest and blew and blew and blew.
And still our splendid tractor, our greatest joy and pride,
Was harbored safe from wind and snow, was fast asleep inside.*

*Our golden age is finished, there's crepe up on the door.
And the thing that once was famous, will be seen never more.
Our pride is stricken, humbled, lies broken in the dust.
While the famous Wilmot tractor plow, is overgrown with rust.*

Applause.

Thank you, Connie. We know Marion Campbell well. She had a wonderful sense of humor. She was a wonderful person. And I think it's really kind of a minor Town tragedy that she wasn't able to finish her writings. I just want to mention a couple of things. The old store that Marion talked about is the one that's pictured on the front of Florence Langley's *History of Wilmot*, her last book. And the Seth Goodhue, who married Florence Langley and he died so young, she later married Walter's grandfather, so we have a connection with that family.

I want to thank everyone who participated. I think it's been a wonderful afternoon, and I hope you all think so, too, and that you'd like to have it again.

Unidentified man: I'd like to ask a question though. I understood that down the hill from Wilmot Center there was a blacksmith.

There was a blacksmith shop. There were two. There was more than one.

Lida: Was it where that store was?

There was one where the Town Hall now stands, as I understand it, long ago.

Lida: Long time ago. There was one down the road there.

Man: I heard it was below the old house there on 4A and there was a bridge across Kimpton Brook at the foot of the hill.

That went over to my great, great grandfather's cabin . . . you're right, there was a bridge.

Mr. Gove: My great, great-grandfather who built this little house here that's in this picture I brought in, was a blacksmith, and as I understand it, it was below his house, next door to this house was the store that was run by a man named Joyce. But just below that was, originally a blacksmith's shop, and I think later, it became a cabinet shop maybe. I think. I've been trying to read up on the history of what I have of it.

Unidentified woman: There was a cobbler shop in there, too.

Man: Well, the cobbler shop was in this house. This was the house that William T. Gove, the blacksmith, built. And he had his shop next door beyond the store down the hill. His son, George Byron Gove, was a blacksmith. And he only lived to be something like 39 years old, and he had the cobbler's shop in the house, and there were several blacksmith shops in town. In fact, I think one was across the street for a while. I think one of the old maps shows a blacksmith shop, across the street from, or below where Alan Haskins' farm was. It was called "the Wilmot House." There was a blacksmith shop just below that house, somewhere in that area.

Man M/C: Thanks again to Lida and Mildred and Connie, and the Hospitality Committee has prepared some refreshments, and remember that Connie has some pictures on the tables in the Historical Society Room. Thank you all for coming. (Applause)