This is a recording of the **Reminiscences** at the Wilmot Historical Society Meeting, February 10th, 1991. **Connie Forsham and Mary Jane Ogmundson, 2/10/91**

Connie Forsham: This is a continuation, and I might add, a conclusion, of excerpts from my mother's childhood memories of Wilmot Center as she remembers them, and this would be in the 1890s. So, it's about 100 years ago. And, of course, I think the first year, Betsy read them while I was away. And so, if anything sounds familiar here, bear with me, because Betsy couldn't remember what she had told—there may be some repetition. And also, I've left out a lot.

Mother (Edith Goodhue Campbell) wrote this as though she was strolling up one street after another and talking about each house and each family that she remembers as a child living there. And she not only gives the husband and wife but the wife's maiden name, and in the case of the children, frequently she tells who they married. While it's of no interest to most of you, it's nice from a genealogical standpoint, but I've left most of that out.

However, there is one name that appears a couple of times and that's Upton, because Annie Thompson tells me her grandmother was an Upton.

Now, Edith Marion Goodhue was the daughter of Fred E. Goodhue and the granddaughter of Seth Goodhue, whose wife was Susan Stearns. The Goodhues and the Stearns came to Wilmot in the early 1800s and settled in North Wilmot. Later, some of the Goodhues moved to the Center, and it was here that my mother was born.

Last year I covered the homes along the roads north and west of the village and also the buildings that were right in the Center itself. So, we're finishing up with east and south, and we'll start on Bunker Hill.

And she writes, "Only eight homes are included in my early memories of Bunker Hill. At the foot was a large set of buildings erected by my grandfather in the 1850s, and this was what became the Goodhue Homestead, which unfortunately burned. Its location is the little house right on the corner and that was the cabinet shop which sat at the back of the lot.

Above the Goodhue place was and is the Steven's Homestead now occupied by the Halls.

Mrs. Stevens, who was Auntie Stevens to many, was the most remarkable woman I've ever known. She was a member of the Upton family and highly intelligent. Her older brother, Samuel, was a judge in Manchester and the younger, Kendrick, first assistant Treasurer of the United States during many administrations. She was equally an ardent Congregationalist and enthusiastic Republican. And whether dispensing affairs of church or state, was never found to be uninformed.

The house at the top of the hill, the present Langley home, was owned in my youth by Sylvester Bunker, son of Benjamin Bunker, who first settled on the hill henceforth to be known as Bunker Hill. Mr. Bunker was sexton of the cemetery for many years. A sister, Mrs. Susan Bunker, had been a member of the family until she died during the famous snowstorm of 1888. This was before my arrival, but my parents related how the men in the village gathered and shoveled a path up from the Center to the Bunker home and also over to the gravesite in the cemetery. Thus, people were able to attend the funeral of the lovely lady who died.

Beyond the Bunker house on the left of Cross Hill Road was the home of Cyrus and Martha Langley. You'll notice the houses were quite far apart, and, of course, that was because they were all farms and each house was surrounded by pastures for cattle or sheep or whatever. And so, this Langley house is in the location which is now—the house was demolished just recently—where there's a cellar hole with some timbers. This was the Cyrus and Martha Langley house.

The two older children, Frank and Amber, had gone on to establish themselves in larger places. Frank to become, in time, editor of the Barre, VT, *Times,* and then the *Concord Monitor*. A third child, Florence, married my Uncle Seth, while his son Aubrey was at home until he married Abby Williams. Aubrey and Abby eventually bought the Bunker place, and it is their younger child Frank (Langley) who, with his wife, Clara, lives there today.

Later when death claimed Amber and left five children motherless, the Langley home became theirs. Not far beyond the Langley's was the dwelling of James Currier, a widower with two children. The Nicholsons now live in that house.

On the other side of the road was a little house owned by an elderly bachelor named David Dean. My recollection of David was limited to a rather small but very religious man who was one to indulge in frequent verbal duels with my grandfather. Though as I later learned, both were Adventists, I was aware that their ideas differed violently. I now believe they both enjoyed these encounters.

The next home on the left at the top of the hill, and here, we are all the way to the bright big white set of buildings where the Taylors live right on the crest before you start down Cross Hill. That was the home of Michael Graney and his wife, two refugees from the Emerald Isle who had fled from the Great Irish famine of 1848 to make a life for themselves in the New World. The only sons I remember were Charles and Thomas. Both contributed much to the affairs and government of the town. I used to love to listen to Mrs. Graney, though I never understood a word she said since I had no knowledge of Gaelic.

Now I'll come back to the Graneys at the end here. Opposite the Graney home was the home of Augustus Phelps, his wife, and two daughters. Their home, I now believe, was the original Cross Place for which the hill was named. Sadly, it burned several years after the Phelps family moved away.

And now returning to the Center, you go down the hill, past the Kearsarge School Practice, which is now the Academy Apartments, to the next house below, in which lived Deacon and Daniel Farnum. This dwelling is the oldest in town and the gathering place of the first Town Meeting. The next house was the home of Mrs. Wheeler, her son, Mason, and his family. The oldest son, Harold, was slightly older than I, and occupied the seat behind mine in the district school—that would be District #1. Unfortunately, my hair was long and heavy and presented an occasional temptation to Harold who would adroitly tie my braids together under the brace in my seat. When I was asked to stand to recite, 'Wham!', I sat down again abruptly. That boy, now an elderly man, lives in Springfield, however, I cannot read his name in the Franklin transcript without getting a kink in my neck.

Across the road was the home of George and Flora Gove. George was not well and died in 1902 at age 38. The family moved from town, but the property has remained in the family until just last year, when it was bought, and we're happy to see that it's being restored.

Back across the road was the home of George and Serena Wothen. They were among the first residents of Wilmot to engage in the summer boarder enterprise. And the home became known as the Wilmot House, and that house still has "Wilmot House" above the front door.

The next house where the Springsteens now live was that of Will and Annie Gove. Will was a carriage painter and could draw the most perfect strip free hand on a newly created vehicle.

On down the hill was the Howard Woodard home and then in a little house just below the Woodard's a Mrs. Hoyle lived alone. This house no longer exists. She used to walk up the hill assisted by a staff on which she leaned heavily. Also, she wore a long cape presenting a perfect replica of the picture in my Mother Goose book of the old woman who lived under the hill. I thought she was truly the subject in that nursery rhyme.

The next owners were Helen Barnum and her son Herbert. Herbert, much later, became the father of four sons, one of whom still lives in Wilmot, Joe Barnum.

Across the road in the house now occupied by Susan Lik lived Gilbert and Eliza Briggs. Gilbert was a Civil War veteran as was George Jewett who lived next door. Beyond was a low, wood-colored house surrounded by lilacs where an elderly lady, Amanda Upton, lived. The house is gone but the lilacs remain.

The house across from Mrs. Upton's was the retirement home of the first minister of the Congregational Church whom I can remember, Rev. Henry Thurston. Farther along was the home of Franklin Clough, another Civil War veteran. This building also no longer exists. And now crossing to the left of the, then, country road was the showplace of the town – the Parker Whittemore residence. This is a big, gray house where Dana Davis now lives that used to be Mr. Seiver's. The grounds were elaborately landscaped judging by the standards of the country village home—a fountain on the side lawn played constantly, the water pouring from the upheld hand of a bronze statue of a boy into a pool beneath. Below the wall was a rose garden and flowers were abundant. Mr. Whittemore, his wife and aged mother comprised the human family, but a fine, black horse and a King Charles Spaniel named Pansy, were important members of the household.

Mr. Whittemore was a traveling magician and being a fine-looking man was impressive as he drove forth in his shining black carriage drawn by his handsome horse. He always wore a black suit and a tall silk hat and presented a truly stunning appearance, especially when accompanied by his wife. She had been an actress and was a blond of the type which caused raised eyebrows of the women of a more conventional past. She always wore black silk and a black picture hat and always Pansy sat in her lap with a supercilious expression of a King Charles spaniel seemingly turning up at his nose at the rest of creation. In due time, Pansy died. Mourning was in order and finally he was buried in a casket in the rose garden and his resting place marked by a small marble tombstone. The stone is no longer there. Evidently some later owner of the property refused to perpetuate Pansy's memory.

After Parker Whittemore's death, his widow left town and having no knowledge of how to handle finances, died alone and in poverty. The end of a story that had its high moments, its humor, and its tragedy.

Again, we take a diagonal course to the right to the home of Seth and Clara Maxon. The Maxon's had a fine maple orchard. And one afternoon, every spring, my mother, brother and I were invited for sugaring off. Plain doughnuts enhanced by syrup boiled down to soft, creamy sugar and finally sugar on snow, called leather aprons were an annual treat as well as the visit to the sugar house. This is where Ricky Registaris lives today.

The three remaining houses as we stroll toward the Andover line, were all on the left side of the road. The first was occupied by Jack and Dora Tenney. The next by John Prescott, and the last, now known as Quickwater Farm, by Augusta Cilley, his wife, his son Otis, and widowed daughter Carrie. Carrie was the first organist to play the new church organ in 1896. This was in the Congregational Church and that organ is still in use and nearly a hundred years old.

Now in conclusion, go back with me to Cross Hill and to Michael Graney. Michael, you remember, was from Ireland and had come to settle with his family in Wilmot. He had a very special friend, also an Irishman, who lived in Elkins. I remember my mother telling this story as it had been told to her, but I can't remember the name of the man in Elkins, so we'll call him Patrick. These two friends enjoyed getting together over a glass of hard cider occasionally, and so, one cold winter evening Patrick trudged to Wilmot to pay Michael a visit. And they reminisced about the old country, and with each new story, it was punctuated with another glass of hard cider way into the night until Patrick realized how late it was and declared he must be getting home. Well, Michael couldn't stand seeing his friend go home alone along that wintry road, so he said he would accompany him. And so, the two trudged rather unsteadily, all the way to Elkins. And when they got to Patrick's doorstep, Patrick said, "Well, I can't let you walk alone back to Wilmot, and so they came back until they reached the Graney place, and there the process was repeated. And so it was, they went back and forth until, I think, they sobered up enough to realize how fruitless this enterprise was.

(Applause)

MC: Thank you, Connie. And for the benefit of the tape, which I didn't start until after I introduced you, I'm gonna say that you've just been listening to Connie Forsham reading from the writings of her mother, Edith Goodhue Campbell.

Next, direct reminiscences, Mary Jane Ogmundson is going to read excerpts from 'Sarah of Wilmot, NH', a pamphlet prepared for Old Home Day in 1973, by John Teal of Concord, Massachusetts. Sarah Teal was John's great aunt, and there are some copies of the "Sarah of Wilmot, New Hampshire" here. Judy brought those? 19:50 So, what's to happen to these?

Well, John said we could give them away, but if anyone would like to make a donation . . .

Mary Jane Ogmundson: That's a hard act to follow. I'm afraid that this one is not quite as humorous and close to home, but it may be close to home to some of you.

I'll read a little introduction, and then I'll read only what Sarah wrote in her journal.

Sarah Teal, more properly identified as Sarah Teal Smith, so far as to include her married name, was born in Wilmot, NH in 1848, which makes her almost 100 years older than I am. Her birthplace was a farm known as Mountain View, located about a mile and a half from Wilmot Center. And who lives at Mountain View? John and Julie Morse, perhaps? Yeah. On the Richards Road.

When she was about 2 years old, her father, Samuel Teal, bought another farm nearer the village, and there her childhood was spent. This farm was located on the North Wilmot Road on the right hand side going north and a little way beyond Pinnacle Lane. And who lives there? Oliver and Fran Wilcox. Sarah lived there until she was about 14 years old. I'd like to know what happened to her before and after but we don't find that out either. Living in the center of Wilmot, as she saw and remembered it, is the basis for this unpublished family memoir—a bit of ancient history.

Sarah Teal, in the summer of 1914, wrote this account of farm life in Wilmot just before the Civil War at the urging and with the help of her niece, Mary Gove, who lived—Mary Gove Smith-- . . . I was hoping Connie . . . You mentioned two Goves, and I was trying to figure which one that was when you read.

Audience member: In fact, there was a Gove who lived in my house. . . (another) there was a meeting house . . . 22:02

Mary, herself, was born just about across the road in the homestead now owned by the Campbell family.

In order to simplify things and to refer to Sarah Teal Smith in a manner suitable to all stages of her life, we'll simply call her 'Sarah'. (I'm halfway, I need bifocals and I'm not quite ready for them. My arms aren't quite long enough.)

(Sarah Teal's recollections)
"My father used to say that the name 'Teal' was spelled 'Tell'. The first Teal in this country was William who landed in Charlestown in 1640. The following year, came Benjamin of Malden, Samuel of Medford, and Aaron of Woburn, who married Rebecca Tweed in 1786. Aaron migrated to Goffstown, NH, and later became a pioneer in Wilmot when he moved there about the time the town was incorporated in 1807. His son, Samuel, my father, was very young at the time. On my mother's side, Samuel Guile or Guild, was wanderer who came over from Scotland in 1636. In the 4th generation from the emigrant ancestor was Sarah, my grandmother, born in New London, 1781, who married Obadiah Clough of Wilmot. Okay, these are excerpts.

Her grandparents: After a few years, the pair wandered farther into the unsettled barren country-- all their possessions consisting mostly of children heaped upon an oxcart—and pitched their tent among the rocks of Wilmot. It is a dreary spot now after a hundred years of civilization, where they settled. What must it have been then? You can't imagine the desolateness of it with neighbors miles away.

Sarah on her family's home: The only heat in the house beside the kitchen stove was the big fireplace in the settin' room, but it was a fireplace and always going. We used to get up, the boys and I, at 4 o'clock in the morning, in the dead of winter; build a roaring fire in that cold kitchen, and study our lessons by the light of a tallow dip. And they had two kinds of candles: Run and dip. The run candles

were made in the tin mold and the dip ones by dipping wicks into a kettle of hot grease. Doesn't seem very tempting to you, does it?

Sarah on the old house: Of the house where Aaron and Rebecca Teal lived, I found only a pathetic suggestion of an old ground cellar with a bit of lilac bush still struggling beside the half-buried flat stone which served as a doorstep.

The farm: The work is hard on the farm and never finished, and I don't blame the boys for deserting. We had no machinery at all. We raised all our food on our farm, the corn, and wheat and the rye were ground at the mill and used in the kitchen. Pigs and sheep were raised and a beef critter put by for the household use, but fried salt pork and boiled potatoes were eaten once every day, and we had lots of hot bread. Autumn brought the harvesting, the apple gathering and the cider making. Autumn was the time for making soap, dipping candles, killing the pig, and putting down the beef critter. Another work which was made a pleasure was the husking of corn. There were sure to be a good many huskings during the winter when, on invitation, all the young people about gathered in the barn to do a big evenings work. I must not forget to mention the threshing—a big, two-horse machine with two men came every fall and usually spent at least two days at our house. I remember the fascination of watching those poor horses walking, walking their everlasting treadmill and never getting anywhere. I have seen men threshing with a flail on the barn floor, but that method really belongs before my day.

On grandmothers: I was named for my grandmother Sarah Clough, and she used to tell me I was to have her gold beads, but I never did. She was the real story grandmother who always had doughnuts and sage cheese for the young'uns. We were sure to find her in the front room with her knitting work, sitting beside an open fire, the cat lying on the braided rug at her feet. My paternal grandmother, Rebecca Tweed, deserves more than a passing remark than she was my grandmother. She was a Scotch-Irish lassie whose forebears prove, thus far, very elusive. She married Aaron Teal when she was 19 years old. Together this bride and groom went to Goffstown, NH, where they settled upon a farm in the wilderness. How desolate it is—even now. After a few years, they went farther on and settled in North Wilmot. The house was standing in my day, and even to me, was a wonder—a wonder because here beside inheriting the cares that always fell to the lot of a farmer's wife, she spun the yarn, and knitted the stockings for her brood—ten children—wove the cloth for their clothes and gave them healthy food and the necessary spankings. I remember her--a tiny little woman who at eighty used to walk from her house to ours—a distance of two miles over hill and dale—to spend a day with 'Sam's family'.

The barn and family labor: There was always the big barn for a playground: hide and seek, hiding up amongst the cobwebs in the hay, the feats of jumping from the high scaffold down to the knob and the stumpy hunting for eggs in the corners. Father had a large flock of sheep, and at sheep washing time they were driven over to the brook near the Center to wash the wool white. Then immediately after they were sheared before there was time to get dusty again. The wool was packed up in the back chamber to wait for a good price. We children always went barefoot from the first patch of bare ground in front of the barn door until the snow came. In this big barn, we had cattle, horses, pigs, sheep, and hens besides the big racks and scaffolding packed with hay. Summer brought the hardest work of the year: the planting and the haying. I used, sometimes, to drop the potatoes and corn and often used to load hay or rake after. I can recall at this moment how I hid my face in an old wool coat of father's hanging in the

hot kitchen, and cried and cried because Mother would not let me go to the meadow to rake after at 2 o'clock on a hot August day. Perhaps the ride in the hay rack was the fascination.

Father: My father**, Samuel Teal,** was no ordinary man and was recognized as one of the first citizens of the Town. I might call him a well-read man except that opportunities for reading were few in his life. He was regarded with great respect by the townspeople, both in matters political and religious. He was a justice of the peace, and often called upon to give advice in legal matters as well as to perform the marriage ceremony. It was always a great amusement to us to watch the bridal couples and sometimes to be called into the parlor as witnesses—the parlor that was seldom open for anything less important than a wedding. I can see those six haircloth chairs tight against the wall, a table and a stove and nothing else. He was a staunch republican, my father, a know-nothing republican in the days of 'know-nothingism' and a most ardent hater of slavery. Uncle Tom's Cabin and The Dread Scot Decision were popular books in our house. Beyond a few books of this kind, and the family bible, the house contained no literature. There was a weekly paper to be sure—a church paper, The Morning Star, published in Dover, NH. This my father read from A – Z sitting by the fire holding the candle between the paper and his eyes. He had no time to read by daylight, and we only had candles when I was little. I well remember with interest in our first kerosene lamp, and the care we took lest it explode. The atmosphere of our home was most warmly religious as I remember it. No matter how loudly the farm work called, there was always time for family prayers directly after breakfast. When Father read a chapter from the bible, and we all knelt by our chairs for prayer. I think he had great faith in his children, for he never seemed to know we played hide and seek while he was praying. But we did.

Town Meeting: I mustn't forget that Town Meeting came in March--about the most important function of the year. We always had company on Town Meeting Day—someone from way back who only came to the Village once or twice a year, would spend the day with us and some of the men folks were sure to come for dinner. It was a great outing for a woman to get away from the whole family for a day with no dinner to think of except to eat it. On this day, the boys who were up and doing earned a pretty penny selling oranges and popcorn, and someone was sure to be fore-handed enough to lay in a stock of oysters—frozen solid, and furnish oyster stew at 15 cents per, also of oranges. We always gave our Town Meeting day visitors baked beans and Indian pudding—a rare treat. Political feeling got very warm on this day and my father spent his entire day in that old hall on the hill.

On Mother: In the winter of '59 my mother died and left 5 children to take care of themselves as they could. She was 47 years of age, and the only wonder is that she endured life so long. Wife of a country farmer and mother of eight children is a combination little to be desired. What a multitude of cares we set her from morning to night. There was the milk from a dozen cows to cared for in the way to produce the largest quantity of cream; butter to make; and cheese, too; hens to feed, always women's work; and maybe the cows to milk if the men folk were too busy. A baby in her arms and another under her feet; bread to bake; the everlasting pie three times a day; water to pump; stockings to darn; clothes to fashion and mend—such a hubbub of cares. What wonder that most of the headstones in the country churchyard bear the notice: 'Here lies 'so-an-so', second wife of 'so-and-so'. And what was her reward? The minister at her funeral preached a long sermon from the text: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present hour are not to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed to us." I'd rather have some of the

glory as I go along. I can't imagine my father ever thinking Mother was tired or ever saving her a step or giving a word of praise. Her condition was, however, as good, and even better than her neighbor's because my father, if he wasn't very sentimental, was a good man and pious, as I have said. And as I look at my mother's life, it looks dull and hard, but maybe she thought herself the most blessed of women.

Winter: I always loved the winter in the country, you know, the anticipation of the long, hard winter never troubles me now. If we had a pair of steers or colt, and we usually had both, winter was the time for breaking them. And during the winter, father and the boys got in a year's stock of wood. Day after day, in pleasant weather, they would start out in the early morning with the oxen and sled and their dinners, and spend the whole day in the woods, returning with their load in season to do the milking and evening chores. Sometimes I was allowed to go with them on a Saturday and eat my dinner with them beside a big fire on the crest. What piles of wood they put in for the winter! The houses cold as out-of-doors, you know. After a big storm the farmers turned out with ox sleds with plows on both sides to break out the roads. You have no idea of the snow we used to have. We had a chain pump near the back door where we pumped all our water, and I have seen the snow so deep that the boys made a tunnel through it from the door to the pump. You can imagine the temperature. It was pleasant to recall all of this and remember how cozy it was gathered about that rousing fire. I recall, too, how we hated to go up to those cold chambers.

My brother was enlisted in the 7th New Hampshire Regiment. I can see my father now, coming home from the Post Office with a paper which contained Joseph's name among the missing. This news soon followed that he had been killed at Ft. Wagner. When we heard of the surrender of Lee, on April 9, of 1864, we had a big jubilee. We had a big meeting where there was lots of cheering and patriotism. We all, boys and girls, wore a band of black crepe on our arm. I felt quite honored because I had a brother killed in the war. I felt as though they were cheering me too.

School: Now our school—the building, the North district school, stood and stands now just below the house near the little river where I used to wade at recess time. The school was hated by . . .no it was HEATED by two stoves, one at each side of the room. The desks were arranged for two, and I suppose the room would accommodate 40 pupils. The school age was from the time the parents wanted to send their children to school until the children, themselves men and women, were ready to call themselves finished. So, the school was made up of all ages from 4 to 25. The length of the school year depended upon the amount of money raised by taxes. The highway taxes were usually worked out by the farmers—so much per man per day and so much per oxen, but the school tax was hard cash. There was a much larger attendance in winter, because the big boys were kept busy on the farms in summer. Of course, the school was ungraded, and there were almost as many classes as pupils. In those days, the teacher always boarded around. I was always glad for our large family for this kept the teacher with us longer—so many days to a pupil. We felt a sense of ownership when she was so long with us.

The Church: Our whole family went to church—not sometimes, but always. Every child was there. We never thought of asking to stay home. Sunday morning, the boys hurry with the work, and by 10 the farm settles down. The critters are attended to, the chickens fed and the cat is disappeared. On Sunday morning, our quiet little lonesome road was almost gay. In the country, nearly everyone drives and the

road is full of teams, buggies, and concords. The occupants dressed in the prettiest things they own. There are no stained-glass windows, but the singing is full of life and sweetness and it reaches the heart. The teams come up, and there is the bustling of departure. The grinding of the wheel against the body of the carriages as they cram to turn around. I can hear it now. And one after another the teams start off into the open country for another week of quiet, busy farm life.

MC: *When I suggested to Judy that, with Lida Gross' help, I might pass on to you some of the information I've been finding from some writings of Stella Collins, I didn't know that there were gonna be 3 others. And I think we will delay this until, perhaps, the August meeting . . . it might fit in with what we might do then. This is the type of thing which I'm working from—pencil copy on pieces of the back of broadsides. There are some almost 400 pages like this. I've transcribed quite a bit of it on to the computer and putting it up in such a way that Lida and others can annotate and indicate who the present occupants of some of the places are that are referred to. But we'll get on to that a couple of meetings from now. So, we will conclude this afternoon then, of Reminiscences with Donald Hall offering more of his mother, Lucy Wells Hall Remembrances, and as Judy wrote in the notice of the meeting, perhaps, some of his own.*