

Wilmot Historical Society

#26 Sheffield Halsey Interviewing Glenn Odette in Concord

(Also heard are Lida Gross, Florence Langley and Mrs. Odette)

Transcribed by Kim White, 2/ 7 /2021 16:35 min.

[Starts right in] . . .

Glenn: I have a friend—a big Swedish fella—he’s down at Curley’s now. He’s quite a woodcarver.
See the wooden horse that he carved us out?

Audience: Oh, yeah. I see that. He does a wonderful work.

Lida: We had an old carver, Ezra Walton, you know? And he carved “Mountain View” outside my house on a sign—big sign—and whittled it with his jackknife on the piazza after supper.
He’d sit out there and whittle.

Sheffield: It was all made by hand, that sign I see?

Lida: Oh, yes.

Sheffield: I’ll never forget being up to Albert Neilson’s. He had that little place down in the sand bank down toward the Flat. One night, watching the moon come up—he had a beautiful view of Kearsarge Mountain—and watching the moon come up right over the top of the mountain, just as though it was sittin’ right on top of the mountain.

Woman: Who was the singer that sang that song?

Lida: Kate Smith. Wonderful. I think we think of her every time we see that mountain . . . that comin’ over the mountain. In the fall it seemed to be right up over that mountain.

Sheffield: I’m getting along breathing pretty good this afternoon. I’m on oxygen all night. It’s the only way I can get any sleep at all. Have you seen the bowls over there under the tube? table with the rosewood set into them?

Lida: How would you do those spots on it?

Glenn: I bore holes and I put the rosewood plugs in.

Lida: Oh, my goodness sakes. Isn’t that something.

Glenn: And they laugh. That was one of my first lathe jobs.

Lida: You could have a business of your own.

Glenn: I did, quite a bit of it.

Mrs. Odette: Did Tally work for the railroad?

Glenn: Did he work for the railroad? Yeah.

Mrs. Odette: He didn't have any children, did he?

Glenn: Yes, he had three. Only one living now.

Lida: When I think of Tally, I always think of what happened one day at school. I don't know what he did, but he did something. So the teacher said—I don't remember who the teacher was—but she said, "Get up there and sit up on top of that cupboard." He was pretty tall, and her back was to him, but he sat there and amused the rest of us all the way after that.

(Laughter) She didn't know what was going on, but Tally was amusing us.

Glenn: He worked for Prescott's same as I did, for years. But Tally was awful slow motion. He never jumped around fast or anything. But Frank Prescott wanted to speak to him one day, the boss, and he said to tell him to wait a minute. He says, "Tally, don't hurry." Tally says, "Don't worry. I won't. Well, Mary is Tally's daughter ... is the only relation we've got around here, now. Our daughter is in Florida with four children down there.

Lida: Is that year-round? Do you go down to Florida to visit?

Mrs. Odette: No, we've been down twice, but that's all.

Glenn: This is our oldest great-granddaughter.

Lida: Isn't she attractive.

Glenn: And this is our youngest great-grandson.

Mrs. Odette: He lives in Texas.

Sheffield: Glenn, going back to your memory of the Prescott place, remember as you passed the wagon sheds, there were two parallel stone walls running off in the direction of Ragged Mountain. Do you remember those? They were about 15 feet apart and it's like an avenue running down between them.

Lida: That sounds like a cow run.

Glenn: A cow lane for the cows to get to pasture.

Sheffield: How did he get them to pasture after they got out of the end of those? Because now, no way could you get across the brook.

Glenn: Well, they might have had barbed wire fences up—come up so they could cross the shallow part of the brook. They might have, I don't know. I can't remember steering cows out to

pasture at all. He must have. The funniest thing to me now is to go up there and not see the Pinnacle.

Mrs. Odette: It's all covered up with trees.

Glenn: Tilton used to have cattle, and they'd keep all the bushes chewed down and nothing but grass in between the rocks, so that Pinnacle was just a rocky pile is all. Now you can't see any of it with those trees.

Sheffield: Were there plenty of sheep around in 1920?

Glenn: No, I don't remember any sheep.

Sheffield: Prior to that there had been though, right?

Glenn: I think there must have been, but I don't . . .

Sheffield: Go back another generation?

Lida: Back then, every farmer had them marked to identify his sheep.

Sheffield: The reason I asked that—and going back to my house again—when you go out through the house itself—and they had an attached winter barn in the end—a part of the construction showed that they had about foot square beams running about a foot and a half off the floor from one side to the other. It was not to hold the building up. It was to hold something in, and I was wondering if they used to keep sheep back there.

Glenn: Could have, but not in my time.

Lida: John Prescott's sister was Martha McEnroe, you know. Martha Prescott.

Glenn: Martha, that's right. Was whose sister?

Lida: John Prescott's.

Glenn: Well, I don't know. We always called her his housekeeper.

Sheffield: Yes, you speak of her in this paper you've prepared . . . his housekeeper, Martha.

Glenn: Yeah. I never remember what her last name was. Who else lived in that house where I say that Will Langley lived?

Florence: I think Dickie Homan lived there at one time.

Glenn: All I can remember is . . .

Florence: Oh, I know. Elsie, Arthur Seavey's wife, did she live there?

Glenn: Not that I know of.

Lida: Didn't they live in the Prescott place?

Florence: No.

Glenn: I think she went back to Potter Place to live, Arthur Seavey's wife, Elsie.

Lida: Well, where did Arthur live? I thought he lived on the Prescott place.

Florence: Didn't he at one time? That must be after they left town. Remember?

Glenn: I remember May and John Leonard. I know he run a grain store, because people used to come down there and get grain. But how he got the grain up to that store, I don't know. This Murphy that bought the . . . well, where the new road [Route 11] was put through, come on here from the west. He bought up four or five old farms and was going to raise horses. And I don't know how many carloads of big western horses and saddle horses that he brought on here, but all they did was take out dead horses in the spring. It never amounted to anything.

Sheffield: The New Hampshire weather didn't agree with the western horses, too much.

Glenn: No. But I can remember, I had a cousin, Louis Jacob? Worked for him too. And he'd go down to Cilleyville, I think, to get grain. And they'd take an enormous great wagon with six horses, and he'd stop down to the . . . in front of my house, and let me climb up and I'd help him drive those six horses. And that was something. There was six big reins in each hand.

Sheffield: Take your hands a couple of hours to get back in shape, right?

Glenn: He had a stallion up there. I don't know what breed it was. But you could lay a yardstick on his hips and both ends of the yardstick would touch. That's how broad he was. That Murphy. Oh, he had a beautiful pair of driving horses. So, he'd come down to Potter Place . . . that was the nearest barroom, there was, and he'd always take Armstrong, his horseman, with him. They met an automobile coming towards them. He damned near run over the ??? instead of driving by the car. They were beautiful horses. You remember when the old hotel fire burned.

Mrs. Odette: Yes, I do.

Glenn: I was working at the railroad then. And we loaded the flat car with the pumper from ??? Shipped it out, but by the time they got there it was all gone.

Lida: Potter Place [was] like Wilmot Flat. Those stores, Greeley's store, you know, we had a store there. Now, we have the monument there, and it just took a lot out of our little town.

Glenn: What was the store that burned there in Wilmot Flat?

Lida: Yeah, that was Greeley's store. Clark, uh, Howard Greeley owned it.

Glenn: I remember going down there the day after it was burned and picking up melted glass and stuff.

Sheffield: You know, they're talking about picking up that railroad track that runs through Potter Place and White River.

Glenn: Boy, and there were seven or eight trains a day.

Lida: And the whistle. It gives you some feeling all over ya' when you hear a train whistle, I think.

Glenn: I'll never forget, when I was ... first got my job working in Franklin, working the garage. I wanted to work the Benson's garage—there were a couple of young fellows, and my father worked for Prescott's, so I thought it would be better if I could get into Benson's. But the Benson boys were both away, and so I hung around the Prescott's garage about all day. Finally, Brad come out and turned around to my father and says, "How much money does this yap of yours want to work to the end of the summer?" Finally, I ended up getting a job working for Prescott. Well, I was so tickled to get a job that I took the midnight train out of Franklin. They didn't stop in West Andover. They stopped at Potter Place. I got off at Potter Place, walked up to Wilmot Center, and dark, oh boy, was it dark! Went up Messer Hill and down Harriman Hill. It was so dark you could hardly see where you were walking. I come out into the opening in the meadow. Boy, I thought I was getting along pretty good. Got up to a big elm or maple tree there hung over the road; and there was a pile of stuff in the middle of the road, and I thought it was just horse manure so I didn't pay any attention, kept right on walking and just about the time I got there that horse manure jumped on to its feet. It was a dog that had been hit by a car. Oh, what a yelp he made when he jumped out. Scared! My hair stood up so straight. (Laughter)

Sheffield: Glenn, we certainly appreciate you and your remembrances. We'll go back and let some more people hear this now, and it kind of keeps the wheels turning.

Glenn: Did they get any use out of the old sled that I left up to the . . .

ALL: Yes, we did. Sure did. Yes.

Lida: We have the bridle, you know, that was on the horse that came back to Wilmot, there.

Glenn: Well, that sled, my Uncle Charlie gave it to me. And it used to be written on the back "1907", but I don't think, last I knew, you couldn't read it.

Lida: We must put that down on there. I didn't know whose sled it was.

Glenn: Yeah, Uncle Charlie gave that to me in 1907. That was a few years ago.

Lida: Frank Langley gave us an old radio, you know, with the cylinders. I don't think it goes, does it? But anyway, they have it.

Mrs. Odette: The phonograph?

Lida: Yes.

Glenn: Well, why don't you folks go out on the porch and see my doll house stuff I made last winter. I used to make. I don't make anymore. END