

Winter 12-2014

Horace Kennedy

David A, Chase

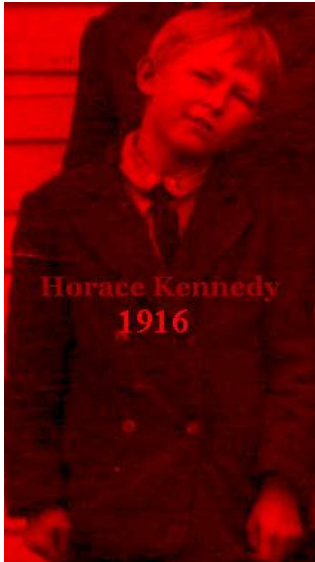
none - town of Whitefield, davidachase@gmail.com

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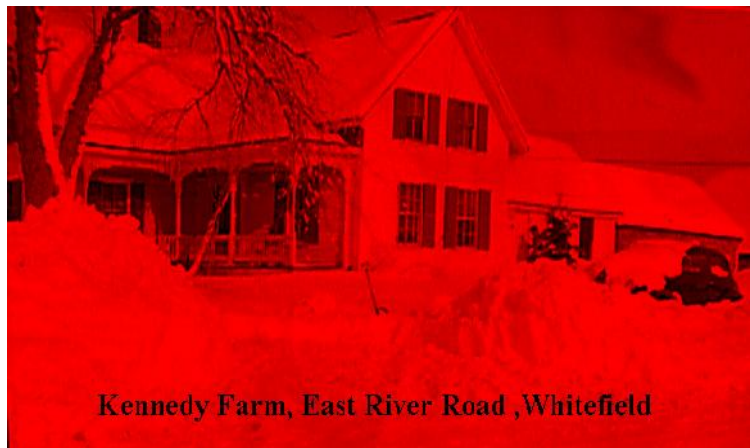
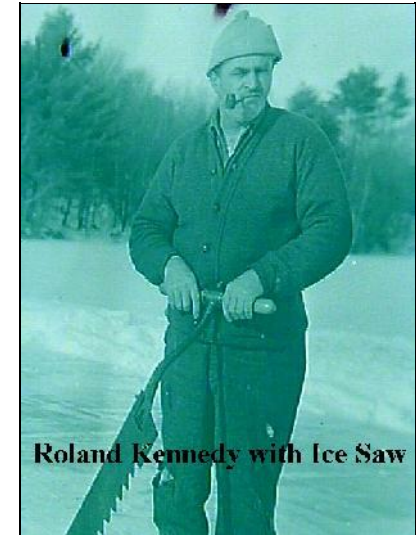
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My father called him "Horace Vincent Kennedy", so I always thought that *Vincent* was his middle name. And, something dad could use as a anecdote to the nickname "Hoddy". Norman Chase had a nickname for everyone, and thought Hoddy needed to be elevated.

When I looked him up in the 1906 Whitefield "census" I noted he is listed as Horace J., son of W.A. (Walter) and Annie M. (Hapgood) Kennedy. His older brother was Roland G. who attended the University and was an master electrician at the Ship Yard in Bath.

Walter is listed as a "carriage maker". Once when I asked what Hoddy remembered about his youth, he'd say that he spent his youthful days pumping the huge leather bellows that provided the air for his fathers forge – hour after hour, yet he never learned smithing.



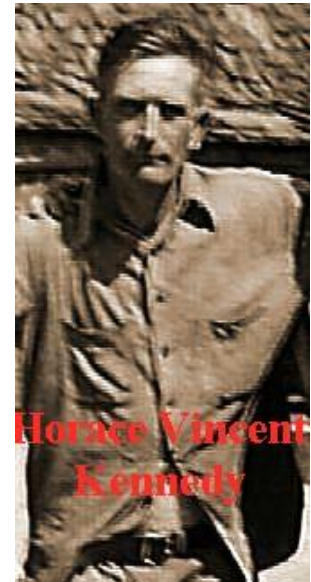
Their farm was located at 511 East River Road. It was later the home to the Torberts until it burned in the 90's. The carriage and blacksmith shop was across the road. Hanging on the wall in that shop was a fantastic 19th century pencil drawing on pine board of a man in a bowler hat operating an up and down saw. This rare image was used in a State Museum publication on early saw mills in Maine and is recreated supersized at the entrance to the museum in Augusta.

I knew Hoddy all my life. Up until his death in the 70's, he "hung out" a lot with my father; either at the "store" where Dad and Mom provided general merchandise - from boots to molasses and later, International Harvester farm equipment – new and used. After Dad's commercial ventures had rendered their lessons and he entered his political phase - it was in our dairy barn that Hoddy liked to visit and "tip a few". Hoddy didn't drive. We were all his designated drivers.

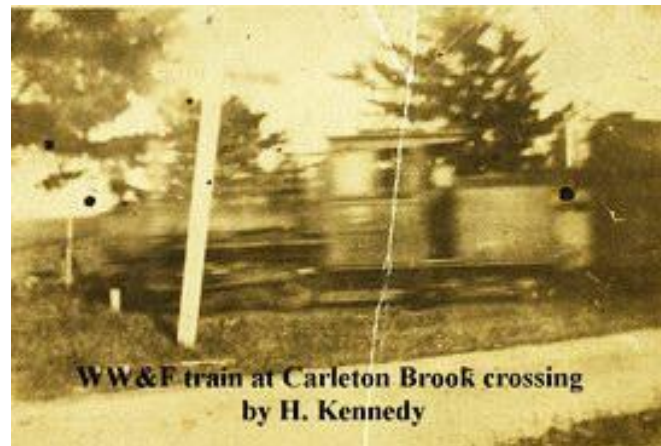
"Vincent" was an inspiration when it came to philosophy. Often when the topic of conversation involved a physical process or event and had matured to a conclusion and it was his turn to contribute, Hoddy would reply, with perfect timing, that it was all the result of " *...some unknown factor* ". This invariably brought howls and repeats from the group of locals. This insightful phrase provided an often used retort around town when others too, were up against it in a discussion, for to the uninitiated, it had the ring of science.



It was from his mother that Horace's artistic side developed. She would play the parlor organ for neighbors who would gather there in the evening. Annie was known in the community as one who would not tolerate anyone who spoke unkindly of others. Vincent learned to play the violin. He was also a photographer. He had a 1898 Schmidt wooden box camera that used glass plates for negatives, but there was no evidence he used the complex device. He did however, use a Kodak box camera with its own celluloid roll film.



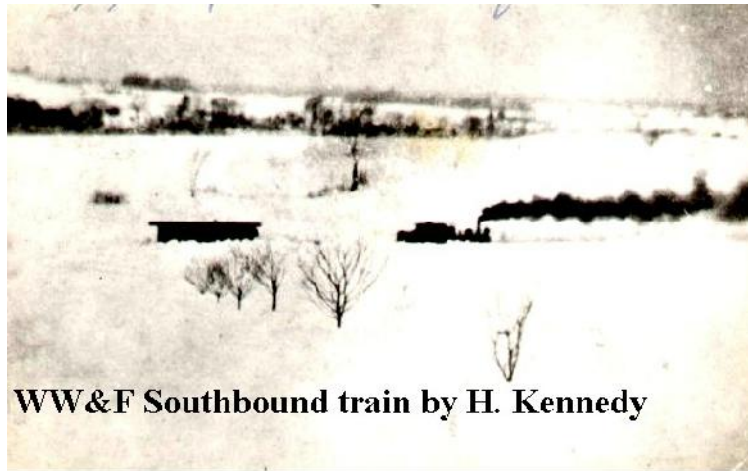
All through Hoddy's youth the WW&F narrow gauge railroad would rumble through his pasture on its two daily trips between Wiscasset and Albion. Hoddy captured several memorable images of that train. Indeed, when writers were researching the railroad they always searched him out for his images and stories.



Horace also captured his friends and townspeople on film. He took hundreds of images around town, often capturing the spirit of the moment as well as that of the characters. His images of the destruction of Ford Mill in a flood are dramatic as a series.

It is interesting to note here, that even though we have a large collection of images from Whitefield's historic past in the "Friends of Whitefield" archives, it is unusual to find Horace Kennedy in front of a camera because he was usually behind it ! There is a message here : Take more pictures, and share your creations !

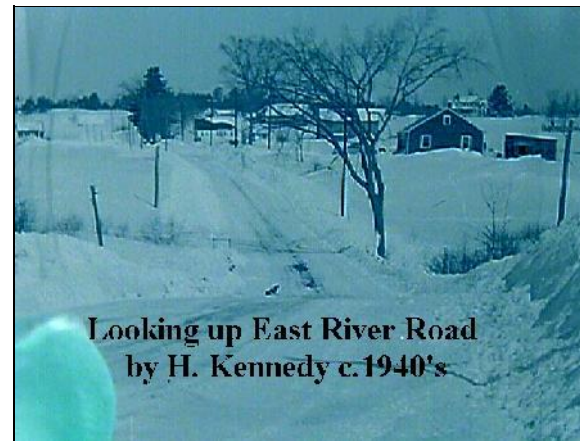
Horace wanted to serve in WWII. Although in his 40's, he enlisted and went to boot camp, but returned home to



WW&F Southbound train by H. Kennedy



Farm Auction at Hall's by H. Kennedy



**Looking up East River Road
by H. Kennedy c.1940's**

Whitefield before he could finish his training. When he returned from New Jersey he said "*Norman, you don't realize, it's a big world out there*" This unfulfilled service bothered

him, but he proudly wore his uniform whenever the occasion presented itself and he considered himself a veteran and patriot – indeed to that end, his name was included in the memorial to soldiers from Whitefield at the Church in Kings Mills. I remember more than one 4th of July parade where Hoddy proudly marched in his uniform – sometimes the only veteran.

Horace Vincent Kennedy had a remarkable face. It was not a long face, but with long features. Like most of us, as he aged, his nose and ears continued to grow. Only, Vincent's started long. Hoddy always had hair – something we Chases notice. Dad had said the women always considered Horace quite handsome, and was often the focus of their attention at the Fish and Game dances upstairs at the Union Hall in King's Mills.

It was Hoddy's nose that fascinated me. Actually it was the way that Hoddy could move his nose. As you can see it was in most respects, a noble nose. A nose that "lends character". But, as it grew with age it came very close to being level with his top lip. When Hoddy had "had a few", he would often cry about some mention of things past. He was very, very nostalgic. Anyway, this would start his nose running, and in rural fashion he would first use a handkerchief then with elbow held high, Horace would draw the back of his hand up the forearm across his nose – like wind to a tree – back and forth two and sometimes three times quickly. This action would



Winter in Kings Mills by Horace Kennedy

cause Hoddy's nose to bend and flex to the extent that it would lay almost flat first against one cheek then on the backstroke flat against the other cheek. This fete of flexibility would spellbind young and old.

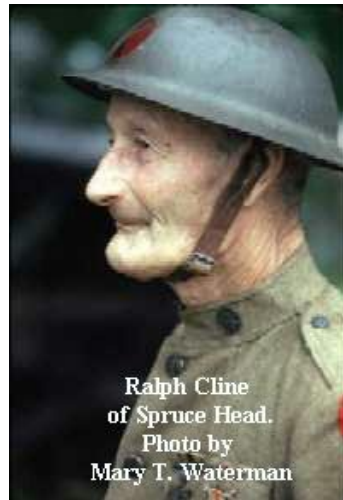


When I was in Art School I acquired the ability to make quite realistic portrait drawings from life. It was this ability, my interest in aesthetics and

Vincent's wonderful face that led me to ask if he would sit for a portrait. It took several pleas before he agreed. It was in our kitchen that we sat. I wanted a profile and Hoddy patiently sat. What a enjoyable departure from the perfect professional models in the life studio at art school. I was very satisfied with the product, and of course thought Hoddy would also be pleased at my realistic rendering. The planes, wrinkles and contours stood off the paper with my carefully shading. I gave the drawing to him but failed to understand Hoddy's cool acknowledgment of my work. I gave him a ride home, he was silent. It was several years later that it dawned on me, after I had asked him if he still had his portrait, that I had failed miserably in portraying the inner man through my drawing. Hoddy told me he didn't know where the drawing was. It was then that I remembered Andrew Wyeth's tempera of The Patriot, a portrait of Ralph Cline of Spruce Head.

Here was a man with a face not unlike Hoddys but Wyeth had created a portrait of the man and not the face. It was a lesson well learned, but not nearly early enough for me.

I like to think Vincent forgave me.



Horace was not a church goer. The closest he ever came to a proclamation with spiritual overtones was when he would advise - *"be calm in the hour of peril"*, to the delight of his peers. This declaration forced me to consider the origins of Hoddy's name . The Roman poet Quintus Horatius Flaccus, better known as **Horace**, born in Apulia, Italy (65 B.C.) was best known today for his Odes, poems about ordinary events like drinking wine or saying goodbye to a friend. He wrote, *"Think to yourself that every day is your last; the hour to which you do not look forward will come as a welcome surprise."* Ah, that's Hoddy !

When he died, Horace J. Kennedy left his entire estate to be divided between the Union Church in Kings Mills and the Protestant Church in North Whitefield.

I will always remember **Horace Vincent Kennedy** as a thoughtful, kind and generous man and a friend of Whitefield !

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D.C.
2003